

Liberty University

**Believers But Not Followers: The Unstoppable Misconduct And Neglect Of Christians
Outside Ministries Duties**

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Abstract

Christianity is embedded in moral conduct, values, and norms which require believers to project a Christ-like nature. While the whole concept of Christianity is embodied in faith and righteousness, the current generation of believers has exhibited an increased state of secularism which contradicts biblical morals and drifts them further from the religious faith. This research stems from the increasingly common notion of “believers but not followers,” where Christians wittingly abandon their ministerial duties and engage in misconduct. The selection of this topic emanates from the deep concern regarding the rising trend of hypocrisy among believers and mainly propagated by events and factors within the social scene. To adequately address the study problem, the researcher sought to answer the question of why most Christians are mere believers, but not followers, and the ways through which the issue can be resolved. The objectives dwelt on determining the precipitating factors, the extent of the problem, and effective mitigation approaches. The mixed-method research was preferred due to the capacity to depict both quantitative and qualitative data outcomes, collected through semi-structured questionnaires. The outcome substantiated the claims of unstoppable misconduct among Christians in the ministry. The recommended mitigation approaches include unity among Christian denominations, installation of positive values, responsible use of the internet and social media, and intensified gospel preaching. It is envisaged that the outcome will equip Christian believers with knowledge regarding the appropriate conduct, thereby, enabling them to be able to resist temptations at different levels and experience spiritual growth. The findings bridge the knowledge gap regarding the notion of “believers but not followers” in the social scene.

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1.0 Chapter One

1.1 Background of the Problem

Christians living in the present age experience immense challenges stemming from multiple factors such as industrialization and globalization, technology, media, the rise of materialism, the modern upbringing of children, secularism, and education among others.¹ The interaction between each of the above factors within the social system has led to a rise in transformation, weakening, and erosion of social values and norms that have formed part of the human religiosity for decades. In the wake of the challenges, researchers have stepped up efforts to uncover the cause and effect of this pattern of increased immorality and secularism among Christians. In analyzing the cause of sinning among Christians living in the current age, Zust pointed at factors such as increased economic downturns; politics through ungodly policies; the social media proliferation of new cultural beliefs; false doctrine in churches; and increased cultural amalgamations that have brought about new belief systems in the social setting and raised the levels of secularisms.² The contemporary social environment is marred with multiple factors that have propagated false doctrine, mischief, ungodliness, secularism, and lack of reverence for God's word. As a result, presumptuous sinning patterns are on the rise, where despite knowing the right thing to do, most believers resort to sinning; this leads to a decline in the moral values within the different social environments.

The mutually dependent nature of the factors has led to the creation of a system that has weakened the Christian faith and abilities to fully serve God and exude the righteousness

1. Philip Hughes, "Why Young People Are Leaving the Church," *Pointers: Bulletin of the Christian Research Association* 25, no.1 (2015): 1.

2. Barbara L. Zust, Jaclyn Housley, and Anna Klatke, "Evangelical Christian Pastors' Lived Experience of Counseling Victims/Survivors of Domestic Violence," *Pastoral Psychology* 66, no. 5, (2017): 679

described in the Bible.³ As Christianity is the largest religion practiced in the world, most social settings follow biblical principles and precepts causing Christian values to be domineering in most social factors. Various forms from the past centuries have been based on Christian values, which in most cases have defined the code of conduct among different groups of people. Nonetheless, the notion of globalization has become widespread leading to the increased multiculturalism among different populations. Compared to the early church, present-day Christians have grown cold in their love for God⁴, and they are engaging in misdeeds contrary to the predefined Christian values. While the early church under the guidance of the apostles was involved in true worship, the present-day believers have mixed Christianity with worldliness leading to inconsistency in serving God.

1.1.1 Christianity in the Modern Day

Christianity hinges on the doctrines of believing and following the teachings of Jesus Christ. The early church described in the book of Acts shows sheer commitment and belief in Christ as the savior and Lord. It illustrates how the early Christians spiritedly supported each other, prayed for one another, and expressed commitment to the Christian teachings⁵. Some Biblical cases, however, depict the misery that fell upon the people that deviated from the doctrines and practiced hypocrisy or sins that went contrary to the teachings of Christ. For example, in the case of Ananias and Sapphira who pledged to sell a portion of their land and give the money to the apostles, acted in deceit and were stricken down by the Holy Spirit.⁶

³ Dana Sawchuk, Thomas St James O'Connor, Richard Walsh-Bowers, Christopher Ross, and Maria Hatzipantelis, "Exploring Power and Gender Issues Emergent in an Institutional Workshop on Preventing Clergy Sexual Misconduct," *Pastoral Psychology* 55, no.4, (2007): 511.

⁴ Matt. 24:12.

⁵ Acts 2:46.

⁶ Acts 5:1-11.

The story of Ananias and Sapphira presents an instance where God revealed loathe for disobedience to his doctrines and principles. Since the days of the apostles, Christianity has been preached on different parts of the globe and has disintegrated into dissimilar denominations that confess to follow and pursue the will of Christ.⁷ Through the denominations, the gospel has disseminated to diverse regions around the globe with many people turning to Christ and professing righteousness. Nonetheless, the subject of holiness and true worship remains common among many believers as the forces of secularism increasingly affect Christians living in the modern age.

1.1.2 Religion and Culture

Studies on the various religious affiliations reveal huge demands regarding moral obligations and values in conformity with the doctrines.⁸ Islam, for example, has numerous doctrines, which require the members to adhere to a specific code of conduct within the social setting.⁹ A similar trend exists for Christians and Buddhists who also have particular doctrines that define their beliefs and moral obligations within the social systems.¹⁰ The demands placed by each of the religious groups on the members cause them to express commitment to the doctrines and demands and be loyal to the instituted religious authorities within the respective social settings.

At the commencement of the 20th century, the Church has faced intense adversity and crisis that have caused divisions, backsliding, and lukewarmness¹¹ among the members as they have left their first love. While the majority of the church members are believers, they

⁷ Züst et al., “Evangelical Christian Pastors’, 677.

⁸ Linda Hansen Robison, “The Abuse of Power: A View of Sexual Misconduct in a Systemic Approach to Pastoral Care,” *Pastoral Psychology* 52, no.5 (2004): 404.

⁹ John, Corrigan, Frederick Denny, Martin S. Jaffee, and Carlos Eire. *Jews, Christians, Muslims: a comparative introduction to monotheistic religions*. Routledge, 2016. 20

¹⁰ Ibid, 34

¹¹ Rev. 3:15

lack the moral values that Christ and the apostles projected.¹² The modern-day Christian has been influenced by various issues occurring in the social system leading to the decline in their faith in God. Multiple studies have illustrated instances of Christians preaching the gospel but not showing conformity to the biblical code of conduct.¹³ Over the past decade, social media has been awash with cases of Roman Catholic priests engaging in sexual misconduct, Christians being alcoholics, believers committing sinful deeds while not caring for the impacts of their behavior, and priests who focused on material wealth rather than preaching the word of Christ.¹⁴ The proliferation of such practices within the church scene has precipitated the deterioration of moral values within the respective social settings.

Studies have also revealed cases of massive exoduses from churches, where pastors are leaving their ministries due to immense opposition from other religious groups, adversities such as persecutions from unbelievers, and difficulties in executing their ministerial tasks.¹⁵ The oppositions stem from rising conflicts among the society members about the implementation of various social values. Adversities, on the other hand, emanate from the increased suffering and persecutions that Christians face during their interactions. Difficulties related to the rise in issues such as poverty, poor economic growths, and inflation cause the servants of God to experience lack during their servitude. As secularism has continued to mount, many Christian leaders have continuously abandoned their duties and engaged in malpractices. News reports have featured priests and pastors abandoning their noble tasks for the sake of immoral love, extramarital affairs, selfish ambitions, and material wealth. Church leaders have also deviated from their ministerial responsibilities of providing direction to the

¹² Zust et al., "Evangelical Christian Pastors", 679.

¹³ Tormod Kleiven, "Sexual Misconduct in the Church: What Is It About?" *Pastoral Psychology* 67, no. 3 (2018): 278.

¹⁴ Tormod Kleiven, "Sexual Misconduct in the Church: 279.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 280.

saints and instead have begun to focus on increasing their wealth. As a result of the leadership's neglect, confusion looms in Christianity as the lack of direction is slowly setting in. In the wake of such confusions, many believers have gone astray, attempting to walk into other ways contrary to God's will.

Another significant element that has precipitated the rise of secularism is the proliferation of wrong and deceptive teachings in the church. As stated in the epistle of 2 Timothy 3:2, in the final days, people will turn away from righteousness and develop selfish behaviors and turn to false doctrines that suit carnality but not providing any spiritual enlightenment.¹⁶ Paul's word can adequately be applied to the modern-day church, as people have increasingly become selfish, absorbed in the love of money, and are further susceptible to the doctrines that befit their evil lifestyles. For instance, social media is awash with news of priests encouraging members to become drunkards, engage in homosexual relationships, sing secular music, and subscribe to political affiliations, vices that are completely against the Christian doctrines inscribed in the Bible.¹⁷ Christian doctrines constitute a body of beliefs and values guiding the conduct of believers. Deviation from the doctrines has led to falsehood among believers and conformity to self-perceived values. Besides, many priests have even gone as far as preaching about the non-existence of God and encouraging the members to worship angels rather than God.¹⁸ The media has also been characterized by instances of churches openly supporting homosexuality, a factor that strongly contradicts the biblical precepts.¹⁹ The emergence of different denominations has also raised the levels of controversy regarding

¹⁶ 2 Tim 3:2

¹⁷ Andrew S. Denney, Kent R. Kerley, and Nickolas G. Gross, "Child Sexual Abuse in Protestant Christian Congregations: A Descriptive Analysis of Offense and Offender Characteristics," *Religions* 9, no. 1 (2018): 27.

¹⁸ Torrance, Kirby. "The Hermeneutics of Richard Hooker's Defence of the 'Sensible Excellencie' of Public Worship." In *Literature, Belief and Knowledge in Early Modern England*, pp. 63-83. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2018.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 27.

the role of Christians and the church in the current setting.²⁰ The doctrines spearheaded by such leaders tend to define the overall directions pursued by the followers. Doctrines that divert from the true precepts of godliness such as support for secular music tend to cause many to stray from the true gospel as preached by the apostles of Christ. Thus, the emergence of different Christian denominations can be attributed to the rise in misperception leading to the secularism evidenced in the church today.

Christians living in the present age, therefore, have become vulnerable to confusion, false doctrines, increased secularism, lack of strong and sufficient prayer lives, increased ungodliness propagated by mixed doctrines, and lack of reproach from the church and other believers.²¹ The present-day generation of Christians, therefore, comprises professing believers but not true followers; a group of people that believe in the existence of God, and profess to be Christians but lack the character and godliness prescribed in the Christian doctrine. The prevalence of such events and actions have resulted in many people falling away from the faith, increased hypocrisy, people extensively engaging in sin, and lack of fear of God in most social settings. The introduction of new cultures has also stirred uncertainty among Christians as they attempt to pursue new cultural systems and values.²²

1.2 Motivation for the Study

Over the centuries, Christianity has been the leading denomination in most social and cultural systems. Most social values have founded and established on Christian precepts leading to a system of belief that hinges on biblical principles. Christianity pegs on a deep commitment to not only emulate Christ's example in conduct but also to preach the gospel to

²⁰ Emile Lester, "Two Types of Pluralism and the Catholic Church Scandal," *Journal of Church and State* 47, no. 2 (2005): 331.

²¹ Kleiven, "Sexual Misconduct," 280.

²² Eliot, Thomas Stearns. *Christianity and Culture: The Idea of a Christian Society and Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1960, 45.

draw other people to a saving knowledge of Christ and bring about inward transformation. The great commission given by Christ required the disciples to travel throughout the world and transform people into believers.²³ While for generations Christians fulfilled the Great Commission, the contemporary age has ushered in a period of wickedness where Christian values have been mixed with secularism, which instead of bringing about transformation, has led to a disintegration of the already established moral values in most social settings. Believers are gradually falling prey to the deceptive ways of ungodliness leading to the erosion of vital Christian values and a replacement with the new cultural beliefs due to the globalized system. The globalized system has led to the amalgamation of many cultures resulting in the dilution of the social values founded on Christianity. The nature of the contemporary Christian Character has led to many people drifting from their faith and belief, causing discouragement and disbelief among the other members.

The Bible prescribes severe punishment for lukewarm persons. Revelation 3:16 speaks to the church in Laodicea; the message reads, "But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth!"²⁴ A similar perspective is seen in Luke chapter 6 verse 46, where Jesus while presenting a parable, asked, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"²⁵ These words imply that Christians that only claim to be believers but do not live according to the faith are to be punished by God. The current Christian misconduct depicts a similar scenario, and its continuation could lead to a highly compromised group of believers that outwardly confess Christ but inwardly subscribe to the worldly affairs and doctrines. Akin to the biblical instances where God's instant punishment befell humanity, such scenarios could replicate in the contemporary social setting. Given my strict Christian upbringing, the unfolding trend presents a challenge not only to my

²³. Matt. 28:16.

²⁴. Rev. 3:16.

²⁵. Luke 6: 46.

spiritual growth but also to the ministry of the gospel. Focusing on why the majority of Christians are mere believers but not followers illuminates the factors that precipitate the ungodly trends.²⁶ Uncovering the factors causing the unbecoming behaviors leads to the coining of potential solutions that could be used to prevent the looming damnation. It is envisaged that the findings of this study will enable Christians to become less ignorant of impact from their environments and become aware of the sound doctrines regarding the appropriate conduct for believers. Conducting research and informing Christians about the dangers of their hypocritical actions, the social challenges, and the mitigation approaches could positively lead to a change in the ungodly lifestyle and fully focus on the sound Christian doctrines.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The Pew Research Center revealed that Christianity remains the largest religious group around the globe at approximately 31.2%, followed by Islam at 24.1%, then unaffiliated groups at 16%, then the Hindus at 15.1% then the other minority religious groups.²⁷ Even though Christianity holds the largest percentage, the PEW research also revealed that compared to other religious groups, the number of Christian believers is in a sharp decline as reports indicate people abandoning the gospel for other evil ways. Yet, on the contrary, the religion of Islam is on the rise, and the gap between the figures referred to in the PEW study is gradually thinning. Christian doctrine stems from emulating the character and conduct of Christ, which is indicated throughout the New Testament.²⁸ In the wake of the rise in secularism, the majority of Christians have become merely believers but not followers. The perverted doctrines teach Christians to engage in specific ungodly actions that largely affect their

²⁶ James D. Davidson, *Catholicism in Motion: The Church in American Society*, (Liguori Publications, 2005): 56.

²⁷ Brian, Grim and Phillip Connor. "Changing religion, changing economies: Future global religious and economic growth." In *Yearbook of International Religious Demography 2016*, pp. 120

²⁸ Acts 11:19-26.

faith and beliefs in God.²⁹ Priests and pastors have also neglected their roles as leaders and mainly focused on preaching the gospel of prosperity and wealth, leaving out the virtues prescribed in the Christian doctrines. Believers have equally become vulnerable, and only seeking to listen to aspects of the gospel that favors their misconducts, attempting to justify their evil deeds.³⁰ Technology has also been on the rise, causing people to shift their beliefs from God to other inventions and knowledge systems.

Other factors such as economic crisis, adversity, and persecution of Christians has led to an increased exodus of believers from genuinely following Christ to embracing the false doctrines and hypocrisy that has risen with secularism. The believers have increasingly engaged in unrighteous acts such as fornication, immorality, lying, idol worship, love of material wealth, and alcoholism among others. The economic crises have also stricken the church resulting in divisions and deviation from the real gospel of Christ.³¹ The giving of tithes and offerings has also declined with many believers perceiving the church leaders to be money-oriented. Such perceptions have caused the church leaders to seek other income-generating activities to improve their livelihood. The dwindling global economy has also led to the establishment of a set of believers that mainly seek to live by preaching the false gospel to make a living.

The overall social and economic atmosphere around the globe presents an imminent challenge for Christian leaders to execute their ministerial duties of abiding by the doctrines outlined in the church. The propagation of such vices within the social paradigm across the globe presents a major issue of concern regarding the spread of Christianity around the world.³² The great biblical commission requires the preaching of the gospel to all nations and

²⁹. Davidson, *Catholicism in Motion*: 57.

³⁰. *Ibid.*, 58.

³¹. Quentin J. Schultze, *Christianity and the Mass Media in America: Toward a Democratic Accommodation*, (MSU Press, 2005): 13.

³². Robison, "The Abuse of Power," 396.

making followers of Christ out of large populations. However, the current trend of growth in the number of believers but not followers tends to limit the ability to achieve the set goals. This project seeks to address the issue of rising cases of having Christian believers but not followers of the sound Christian doctrines.

1.3.1 Research question

i) A Christian denomination is founded on the principle of faith and sound beliefs in biblical precepts and values. While the majority of people across the globe confess to be Christians, only a few abide by the Christian doctrine of the churches. The changes in social and cultural demographics have led to numerous transformations in social values. This research, therefore, seeks to answer the reason why most Christians are mere believers but not followers and in what ways the issue may be resolved.

1.3.2 The following study objectives will help in addressing the research question:

- Determine the factors leading to Christians increased participation in misconduct behaviors;
- Determine the extent to which such behaviors have increased within the social scene;
- Suggest approaches that could reduce the unbecoming Christian behaviors within the social setting.

1.4 Statement of Limitations

The study of Christian religion covers a broad scope given its global coverage. The preaching of the gospel to different regions, societies, and cultures has led to the establishment of different denominations. Besides, the multifaceted nature of the Christian denominations such as Protestants, Catholics, eastern orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, restoration and non-Trinitarians, independent Catholics, and other minor branches tends to practice spirituality and religiosity at distinct levels. The Catholics, for instance, pray to God through Mary,

while the Protestants pray through Jesus whom they consider the only way to God.³³ A similar distinction exists between the other Christian faith affiliations leading to increased inconsistencies regarding the ideal thresholds for measuring the religiosity and spirituality of Christians from distinct backgrounds. Dissimilarities in the approach to various Christianity issues could limit the ability of the study to set similar grounds for determining the misconducts that qualify the actions by the Christians as either godly or secular.

1.5 Theoretical Basis

The concept of the rise in the number of believers but not followers hinges on several mutually dependent factors that establish strong controls over the propagation of secularism in the social scene. Some theoretical models have been placed to explain the relationship between the rising trends of ungodliness among believers relative to the best practices in the ministry field, alongside the biblical, theological, and historical data that corresponds with the same. Multiple theoretical models have been stepped up to explain the rise in secularism in the current social paradigm. The theories attempt to provide the basis through which each of the propagating factors can be defined and justified through the lens of the theological, biblical, and historical body of knowledge regarding the subject.

1.5.1 Relationship between the Current Best Practices and Topic

The subject of rising cases of presumptuous sinning among Christians traverses a myriad of best practices within the social setting. As articulated in the modernity theory, the major concept of secularism dwells on the proliferation of malpractices among believers resulting in influence in their beliefs, faith, and characters.³⁴ The matters are mainly stirred by

³³. Davidson, James D. *Catholicism in Motion*, 56.

³⁴. Brian H. Smith, *The Church and Politics in Chile: Challenges to Modern Catholicism* (Princeton University Press, 2014): 67.

the influence of modern issues and elements relative to the challenges experienced in the social environment.³⁵ Edge postulates that the occurrence of the current events was prerecorded in the biblical context, and they mirror various issues that were spoken of in the New Testament.³⁶ Jesus, while referring to the signs of the end in chapter 24 of the Gospel according to Matthew cited many factors that would come into play among believers. The factors include wars and rumors of wars, the emanation of false Christ, pestilence, famine, and persecution of Christians, the rise of hatred, the appearance of the false prophets that deceive many believers, and the increase of lawlessness in the world.³⁷ Jesus' depiction of the end time is gradually becoming evident, with the signs gradually uncovering. The rise in modernity creates an atmosphere that befits their propagation in diverse social scopes. The elements such as war and rumors of wars among nations have led to significant division among believers. The article by Lester postulates that the increased number of cases of wars and conflict in various regions has led to a decline in the spread of Christian doctrines.³⁸ Christians in such areas have been scattered, limiting their abilities to unite and fellowship with one another. As a result, such areas experience a sheer decrease in Christian values.

Jesus also referred to the rise of false prophets who will deceive many believers with false doctrines and cause them to drift from their faith.³⁹ The current social setting is awash with self-proclaimed prophets from multiple religious backgrounds who propagate different teachings and beliefs among believers. The prophets claim to have direct communications with God and can make predictions about future events. The instructions given by these

³⁵ Davidson, *Catholicism in Motion*, 9.

³⁶ Peter W. Edge, "Believer Beware: The Challenges of Commercial Religion," *Legal Studies* 33, no. 3 (2013): 389.

³⁷ Matt. 24:3-14.

³⁸ Lester "Two Types of Pluralism, 320.

³⁹ Matt. 24:24.

prophets, in most cases, suite their agenda and do not embrace the biblical doctrines that genuinely reflect the nature of Christ. Robison, in describing the abuse of power by the clergy, observed that many Christian affiliated religions tend to permeate certain evils into their doctrines leading to a significant impact in the conduct of Christians.⁴⁰ For instance, certain denominations such as Catholics permit members to engage in alcoholism, stating that the bible supports such conduct. Besides, other modes of teaching include the notion that only through adherence to church doctrines will people enter the kingdom of God.⁴¹ Relatively, Denney, Kent, and Nickolas also observed that most protestant churches embraced sexual sin in their midst. The prevalence of such sins and the lack of effective address mechanisms propagate the spread into other religious settings.⁴² Arguably, the majority of issues described by Jesus have been fulfilled in the modern days, and they seem to be on a sharp rise and are hurting multiple people in the contemporary setting.

Paul also gave a prediction of the occurrence of the above issues. According to the second epistle in 2 Timothy 3:1-13, just before his death, Paul spoke of the perilous times that would take place during his final days. The issues include departing from the Christian faith, people become self-centered, the rise of hedonistic society, and lack of godliness.⁴³ In terms of deviating from the Christian faith, many believers today are abandoning the Christian doctrines and pursuing factors that befit them. Christians have become weakened and developed a high preference for worldly things rather than heavenly things. People have also become self-centered, only caring about the issues that concern them rather than having the

⁴⁰. Denney, Kerley, and Gross. "Child Sexual Abuse," 27.

⁴¹ John, Hammett. *Biblical foundations for Baptist churches: A contemporary ecclesiology*. Kregel Academic, 2019.

⁴². Smith, *The Church and Politics in Chile*, 48.

⁴³. 2 Tim. 3:1.

mindset of assisting their fellows. Such problems have marred the modern social system leading to the rise in the evils.⁴⁴

From the theological viewpoint, Karen suggests that the rising cases of Christian misconduct are attributed to falling away from religion and its replacement with science and rationality.⁴⁵ Marshall argues that western Christianity is increasingly facing the challenge of the anthropocentric versions of various faiths due to the reformations that have taken place in the church. Sawchuk, Thomas, Richard, Ross, and Hatzipantelis on the other hand, argued that the present age has created a scenario where religiosity is considered an option rather than a core virtue in the social setting.⁴⁶ The outcome is a radical pluralism leading to immense challenges in the church environment. Despite the pastoral training provided in theological schools, the various social issues continue to present significant problems that in the end would affect the leaders' ability to become effective in their ministries — vast historical data related to the rise in secularism within the social scene. The Majority of early works of literature reveal the cases of misconduct among Christians and the factors that have limited their abilities to remain active in developing or growing in their faith. Dagmang presents arguments that justify the rise in vile conduct among believers living in the current age.⁴⁷

According to Dagmang, modernity has led to the demythologization of life and the elimination of humanity from the realms of sacredness. Dagmang's arguments point to the fact that the role of religion in human life includes the reinforcement of beliefs regarding social and personal lives. He believes that humans mainly seek a means to frame identities and

⁴⁴. Robison, "The Abuse of Power" 397.

⁴⁵. Karen J. Terry, "Child sexual abuse within the Catholic Church: A review of global perspectives." *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice* 39, no. 2 (2015): 140.

⁴⁶. Sawchuk. "Exploring Power and Gender," 502.

⁴⁷. Ferdinand D. Dagmang, "Ecological Way of Understanding and Explaining Clergy Sexual Misconduct," *Sexuality & Culture* 16, no. 3 (2012): 289.

further shed meanings to their lives, highlighting significant historical factors that define humanity. Dagmang notes that religion has played such a role for decades and its failure to uphold similar values leads to the rise of another alternative system of beliefs that largely influences the conduct of people within society.⁴⁸

When researching similar issues, O'Neill, Gabel, Huckins, and Harder, observed that humanity is characterized by the constant search for elements of identities and implication of meaning to personal lives.⁴⁹ Such factors tend to provide a focal point through which people unite and form policies that regulate their daily livelihoods. O'Neill, Gabel, Huckins, and Harder, however, warned that the depreciation in the religious values and elements has led to the rise in various alternative systems of beliefs that have not sufficiently met the inherent human needs described above. The evolutions in social settings have led to multiple challenges that undermine the ability of the religion to become the epitome of the social order and formulate policies and frameworks that people can identify with. The current replacement of religion covers a limited scope and cannot sufficiently define the crucial elements such as death, life, and the afterlife. The contemporary social setting has therefore created a myriad of challenges that have increasingly affected the role of religion among humanity. Christians, therefore, tend to lack the moral values and principles that in the past age stood revered and provided significant support to Christians. The diminishing authority of the church makes it difficult to define certain social issues and set limits on their spread within society.

The above theoretical perceptives, therefore, gives a clear link on the escalation of the presumptuous sinning and neglect of ministry among Christians. The modernity theory shows

⁴⁸. Dagmang, "Ecological Way of Understanding, 292.

⁴⁹. Erin Olson O'Neill, Jodi Gabel, Stephanie Huckins, and Jeanette Harder, "Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Through Church and Social Service Collaboration," *Social Work and Christianity* 37, no. 4 (2010): 402.

a framework through which the study problem can be analyzed and understood within contemporary society. The perspectives examined in this section, mainly including biblical, theological, and historical elements that all point at the various factors that have contributed to the rise in misconduct among Christians. One aspect that dominates the arguments dwells on the notion of replacement of religious value systems with other alternatives that cannot effectively meet the inherent human needs of belonging, origin, and future life and death. The gradual erosion of Christian value dominance largely affects the conduct of believers as they lack role modeling and people to advise them on the ideal values.

1.6 Statement of Methodology

Several literary works have delved into the subject of Christian believers engaging in presumptuous sinning and neglecting their ministerial duties. The current study, therefore, incorporates various thoughts regarding the matter to shine more light on the research problem. The researcher will include four chapters in the thesis. Each chapter will be mutually dependent with the subsequent sections overwhelmingly supporting the preceding ones. Below is a summary of the chapters and their relative contents.

The first chapter presents the reader with a foundation on the subject, introducing the problem and the subject through the lens of background literature, the ministry setting and the factors leading to the selection of the project subject. Its focus is the background about the problem, statement of the problem, theoretical overview, methodology statement, and a brief review of the existing literature. The background offers extensive information regarding the occurrence of the issue and the likely causative factors. The statement of the problem introduces the existence of the issue within the social and religious background and the possible impacts. It justifies the need for research in the given area. Theoretical models conceptualize the problem under specific theories and the likely consequences leading to an in-depth understanding of the cause and effects of the research problem. The statement of methodology

summarizes the entire project in terms of chapter summaries and the overall structure. Then the final part is the literature review that integrates studies into the subject and justifies the findings between multiple authors.

The second chapter sets out to apply research concerning the questions regarding participants, the rationale for selecting the given study, and the current findings on the topic. Quantitative analysis will be applied to examine the extent to which the problem has spread within the social setting i.e., determining the link between modern-day Christians and the propounded perception in this analysis. Understanding the literature about such issues provides a clear perspective of the extent to which the problem has become inherent in the social scene. The collected data will be analyzed using the SPSS analysis tool. The penultimate chapter presents the outcome of the research. The result presents a critical view of the responses provided by different groups of people and shows them through tables, graphs, and charts. The section will also include an in-depth discussion of the study problem relative to the research problem and the outcomes. The final element will include a conclusion of the findings, piecing up together the results of the research and the literature review. A conclusion is made regarding the prevalence and the mitigating approaches that could limit the spread of the issue in modern societies.

1.7 Review of Literature

The concept of the rising number of believers not adhering to sound Christian doctrines been voiced by various authors. The publications have drawn inspirations from the need to understand the factors precipitating presumptuous sinning among Christians and interventions that could be used to mitigate the challenges. The religious setting plays an integral role in determining the social values, laws and regulations, norms, and conducts within the social environment. Studies have cited various elements within the current social system that have led to increased misconduct among Christians and abandonment of their ministerial

duties. Below is a summary of the books, journals, and biblical verses that relate to the concept of rising cases of misconduct among Christians in the current social setting.

Dagmang presents one of the factors purported to raise the levels of moral decline, industrialization, and globalization.⁵⁰ According to Dagmang, humans are influenced by alterations in their mindsets triggered by social changes. Despite having a historically maintained belief system of morality, the increased interaction due to globalization and industrialization has exposed believers to distinct issues within the social order that makes them vulnerable to engaging in presumptuous sins. Dagmang argues that unlike Christian faith and values, the social elements ever exist and directly influence the levels of interactions between people.⁵¹ As such, the majority of social elements tend to influence the mind rather than build the spirit. The lack of balance between the two areas causes Christians only to remain believers by name but conforming to the social values of the secular community.

1.7.1 Technology

The other contributing factor that has been subjected to analysis includes the spread of technology across the global arena. Lester considers technology a significant roadblock to spiritual growth among Christians.⁵² Despite all the technological advancements being of great use today, the studies have shown that they have a significant negative impact on the nature of livelihood among people. Lester notes that most people had shifted to the use of technologies as their primary means of communication, replacing the contact form of interaction that has been used over the years.⁵³ Whitehead also observed that while the Christian fellowship through household and church meetings proved productive, the embrace of the new

⁵⁰. Dagmang, "Ecological Way of Understanding," 290.

⁵¹. *Ibid.*, 291.

⁵². Lester, "Two Types of Pluralism," 309-34.

⁵³. Lester, "Two Types of Pluralism," 333.

technology has limited interactions to communicating through phone calls and the online interaction platforms.⁵⁴ Other Christians go as far as attending and watching sermons over electronic media instead of engaging personally in the Christian community. Such factors have drastically led to the erosion of a healthy Christian culture, which incorporates brotherly love, fellowship, and sharing of bread. Furthermore, the internet has brought social vices such as pornography, secular music, and unsuitable social media interactions close to people. Morality has largely depreciated among believers. The decline in the moral values across multiple social setups limits the ability of people to study the Bible, pray, engage in fellowships, and other commitment gestures that have been elaborated in the Bible.

Schultze cited the media among the factors contributing to the increased state of secularism in the social context. According to Schultze, the media feeds the human population with vast unethical information mainly emanating from distinct cultures.⁵⁵ The assimilation of the various information results in destabilization of the Christian faith and distracting them from leading Christian lives. The critical points of arguments expressed by Schultze encapsulate the notion that the unbecoming behaviors commenced through the media and gradually proliferated into the social scene, causing many Christians to become an addict and fall away from their faiths.⁵⁶ Within the biblical context, Christ, while talking with the disciples, informed them of the signs that will accompany the end times. One of the significant signs included a rise in wickedness and the love of many growing cold — the increase in evil stems from the many godly activities that traverse the social paradigm, leading to the falling back of

⁵⁴. Andrew Whitehead, “Gendered Organizations and Inequality Regimes: Gender, Homosexuality, and Inequality within Religious Congregations,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 52, no. 3 (2013): 479.

⁵⁵. Schultze, *Christianity and the Mass*, 23.

⁵⁶. *Ibid.*, 24.

the believers. The above signs strongly align with the end time indications that Christ and the apostles referred.⁵⁷

Christ also spoke of deception that would come in the rise of ungodliness. According to Christ, people will conform to the teachings that favor their interests rather than the Christian doctrines prescribing the true values for believers.⁵⁸ Such gospels will stem from people claiming to be Christian whose conduct will cause many people to go astray. Their doctrines will keep people from listening to the true word of Christ causing the believers to fall astray in the wind of the false doctrines.⁵⁹ For instance, Paul, the apostle, also referred to various instances that could explain the existence of the social vices in the contemporary setting. According to Paul, God will give people over to the desires of the flesh, causing them to become ungodly.⁶⁰ In speaking to Timothy, Paul observed that God would give people over to their lustful desires, cravings, love of money, and all forms of evil.⁶¹ The Bible also speaks about the rise of homosexuals that have increasingly become common within the present social setup.⁶² Such occurrences are gradually unfolding, and people are increasingly falling prey; this trend accounts for the rise in the unbecoming conduct among Christians within the social scene.

Studies have also referred to the rise in materialism among people in the present age.⁶³ Many people have increasingly become covetous due to the rising sufferings and poverty that have frequently affected the social setting. Christians have also been entrapped as the quest to become wealthy takes shape. Besides, the current era of materialism has caused

⁵⁷. Matt. 24:8

⁵⁸.Matt 24:5

⁵⁹. Ibid.

⁶⁰. Rom 1:24.

⁶¹ 2 Tim. 3:2-3

⁶². 2 Tim. 2:22.

⁶³ Schultze, *Christianity and the Mass*, 22.

many Christians and clergy to engage in deceptive activities such as false miracles, prophecies, and the manifestation of spiritual gifts for monetary gains rather than pleasing God. The rise of such evils has led to many people falling astray and departing from the faith. Besides, Christians have found themselves in tough economic situations such as unemployment causing them to compromise their true values and seek means of survival.⁶⁴ The lack of job opportunities causes them to become easily vulnerable to various ungodly activities.

The above studies support the fact of the rising ungodliness among Christians. It is, therefore, evident that a plethora of events and activities has led to the rise in the number of believers that do not truly own to the Christian faith. The events and factors have caused a large section of Christians to become ignorant of the biblical doctrines and pursue the events and issues that conform to the present-day social setting. As the various social values attempt to replace the religious roles in most social environments around the globe, many Christians have fallen victims and failed to abide by the true biblical doctrines. Besides, most practices within various societies around the globe tend to incline towards modernity and technology. Given the already existing trend of rising instances of moral decadences, many Christians are easily ensnared and unable to experience any significant spiritual growth.

1.8 List of Books, Journals, and Scriptures Used in the Research

Bielo, James S. "The 'Emerging Church' in America: Notes on the Interaction of Christianities." *Religion* 39, no. 3 (2009): 219-232.

This article discusses the emerging Christianity in the United States through the lens of ethnographic, literary, and historical perspectives. The study argues from distinct dimensions namely the ancient future, missional evangelism, deconversion, and post-foundational

⁶⁴. Michael Zuckerman, "Holy Wars, Civil Wars: Religion and Economics in Nineteenth-Century America," *Prospects* 16 (1991): 205.

theology. This article will provide the basis for analyzing Christianity within the American context and the changes that have occurred over the years.

Burdett, Michael S. "Assessing The Field of Science and Religion: Advice from The Next Generation: with Andrew B. Torrance, "Should a Christian Adopt Methodological Naturalism?"; Victoria Lorrimar, "The Scientific Character of Philip Hefner's 'Created Co-Creator'"; and Michael S. Burdett," Assessing the Field of Science and Religion: Advice from the Next Generation. ".” *Zygon* 52, no. 3 (2017): 747-763.

This source focuses on the concept of Christianity and science. It attempts to address the contention that exists between Christian beliefs and scientific findings that contradict each other. The argument from this article will help in justifying Christian perspectives of science and whether they should embrace it.

Casanova, José. *Public Religions in The Modern World*. University of Chicago Press, 2011.

This book looks into the various religions in the modern world alongside the belief systems associated with each. Particularly, this book provides information about the different Christian denominations in terms of their beliefs, values, and perspective of Christianity. It illuminates the variances in the religious beliefs and the implications of such differences.

Dagmang, Ferdinand D. "Ecological Way of Understanding and Explaining Clergy Sexual Misconduct." *Sexuality & Culture* 16, no.3 (2012): 287-305.

This article delves into the current trend regarding the numerous claims made about the misconduct among the Christian clergy. It attempts to relate sexuality and culture in a bid to illuminate the issues that could cause such happenings in the churches. The significance of this article in the study hinges on the analysis of factors that stir misconduct among believers especially the leadership.

Davidson, James D. *Catholicism in Motion: The Church in American Society*. Liguori Publications, 2005.

The Catholic Church constitutes one of the very first churches around the globe. This book provides an overview of its past and present activities and how they affect the present-day Christian. Its importance emerges when assessing the history of the early church when the popes flourished in wealth and power, and how the church gradually lost its glory.

Denney, Andrew S., Kent R. Kerley, and Nickolas G. Gross. “Child Sexual Abuse in Protestant Christian Congregations: A Descriptive Analysis of Offense and Offender Characteristics.” *Religions* 9, no.1 (2018): 27.

This article addresses the issue of sexual misconduct in protestant churches, as aforementioned in the introduction; social media is awash with instances of sexual misconducts occurring in churches. This article looks into the cause of such offenses and how they can be prevented. The article helps in augmenting arguments regarding the rising cases of sexual misconduct in churches.

Eccles, Janet B. “Changing ‘Emotional Regimes’: Their Impact On Beliefs and Values in Some Older Women.” *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 33, no. 1 (2012): 11-21.

This article looks into the social value and belief systems and their impacts on the overall character and personality of individuals. By analyzing people’s emotional responses to social values and beliefs, it predicts the relative impacts it causes in their behaviors. This article offers the basis for understanding the diverse cultural belief systems and their relevance in the social scene.

Edge, Peter W. 2013. “Believer Beware: The Challenges of Commercial Religion.” *Legal Studies* 33, no. 3 (2013): 382-406.

This article focuses on the commercialization of religion in the present Christian context. As articulated in the analyzed studies, the gospel of materialism and prosperity has

strongly gripped the church, leading to clerics that masquerade as preachers but merely having financial or materialistic ambitions. Its significance in the study emerges when analyzing the impact of finances on the continued trend of secularism.

Eliot, Thomas Stearns. *Christianity and Culture: The Idea of a Christian Society and Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1960.

This article looks into the link between culture and Christianity and presents a chronological perspective of how societies were formed based on Christian beliefs and doctrines. The authors present a clear analysis of the Christian foundation in most societies and how the current changes could affect the already established systems of beliefs.

Elkington, Robert. "Adversity in Pastoral Leadership: Are Pastors Leaving the Ministry in Record Numbers, And If So, Why?" *Verbum et Ecclesia* 34, no. 1 (2013): 1-13.

This research journal investigates the authenticity of the claims that pastors are increasingly leaving and abandoning the ministry. It creates a vivid picture of the current state of religion in most social settings especially the United States and attempts to investigate the issues that could lead to the massive abandonment of pastors from their ministerial tasks.

Fazzino, Lori L. "Leaving The Church Behind: Applying A Deconversion Perspective to Evangelical Exit Narratives." *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 29, no. 2 (2014): 249-266.

This journal also focuses on the reasons behind evangelists abandoning their ministerial duties and returning to the ungodly ways. The authors critically examine the contemporary religious environment and the factors that influence the preaching provided by most clergy. The significance of this journal emerges when assessing the causes of misconduct among Christians and the lack of role modeling from the persons perceived to provide a sense of direction such as the priests.

Francis, Leslie J., and Mandy Robbins. "Not Fitting in and Getting Out: Psychological Type and Congregational Satisfaction Among Anglican Churchgoers in England." *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 15, no. 10 (2012): 1023-1035.

This looks into the levels of satisfaction derived from church attendance among churchgoers. It considers the psychological impacts of the biblical teachings and how it transforms perceptions of believers. This helps in analyzing the survey response on whether attending church has any impact on the life of Christians.

Fuller, Michael. "Big Data, Ethics, and Religion: New Questions from a New Science." *Religions* 8, no. 5 (2017): 88.

This journal article looks at Christianity from the context of science, technology, modernity, and the relative findings. It attempts to address the controversial questions regarding scientific beliefs and value systems. The relevance of this journal stems from the ability to augment understanding of factors leading to contentions between religion and science alongside the intervention techniques.

Hout, Michael, Andrew Greeley, and Melissa J. Wilde. "The Demographic Imperative in Religious Change in the United States." *American Journal of Sociology* 107, no. 2 (2001): 468-500.

This journal provides an overview of the demographic system and its impact on Christianity. The major points of reference include the social influence following the increased changes in Christian conduct. The journal describes the social elements that have suffered immediate changes after the emergence of the strong wind of globalization. The significance of this article dwells on defining the various demographic changes that have come with the new trends and social values that attempt to replace Christianity within the social scene.

Hughes, Philip. 2015. "Why Young People Are Leaving the Church." *Pointers: Bulletin of the Christian Research Association* 25, no. 1 (2015): 1-8.

This article focuses on the reasons behind young people leaving the church ministry and following other evils ways. It looks into the theory of modernity and its influence on the youths and the entire social system of belief. It provides the basis upon which the causes of the youths abandoning the ministry are perceived and analyzed.

Jackson, Darrell R. “Constructing Futures: Outlining a Transhumanist Vision of the Future and the Challenge to Christian Theology of its Proposed Uses of New and Future Developments in Technology.” (2012).

This discusses the rising and future trends in technology. It describes how various technologies have inspired change into the social setting and how the changes present challenges to Christians.

Kleiven, Tormod. 2018. “Sexual Misconduct in the Church: What Is It About?” *Pastoral Psychology* 67, no. 3 (2018): 277-89.

This journal article presents the cases of sexual misconduct in the church. The key areas tackled include the prevalence of sexual sin and misconduct and the factors that largely cause Christians to become vulnerable to the same. Some of the elements cited as predisposing Christians to sexual sin include the availability of erotic materials on the internet, social media, and increased interaction among people from diverse social groups. This interaction causes them to become entrapped in various activities that do not conform to godly standards. The relevance of this journal dwells on the discussion of the impacts of technology on religion. It provides a clear perspective and context through which the impacts of technology on the believers can be analyzed and understood based on the current scenario.

Kraft, Charles H., and Marguerite G. Kraft. *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Orbis Books, 2005.

This book focuses on Christianity and culture. The authors attempt to describe the relationship between Christianity and cultures from the perspective of the manner the two have

influenced each other. The argument is built on the notion that most cultures in the contemporary setting conform to the religious affiliation of the members. The author explores the nature of the relationship and the factors precipitating its rise or decline. Furthermore, it presents a background of the origin of various Christian and cultural values and how they have changed in recent times.

Zust, Barbara L., Jaclyn Housley, and Anna Klatke. "Evangelical Christian Pastors' Lived Experience of Counseling Victims/Survivors of Domestic Violence." *Pastoral Psychology* 66, no. 5 (2017): 675-687.

This journal article presents the experience of evangelical Christian pastors during their interaction with persons experiencing gender-based violence in the church. The journal particularly looks into the factors instigating the violence, the impact on both the victim and the church, and finally, the intervention approach used. The relevance of the experience to the current study dwells on the insight provided regarding the causes of gender-based violence in the church. Besides, the findings of the journal study directly contribute to the dissertation subject by illuminating the presence of gender-based violence among believers and how it relates to misconduct in the church.

Zuckerman, Michael. "Holy Wars, Civil Wars: Religion and Economics in Nineteenth-Century America." *Prospects* 16 (1991): 205-240.

In this journal article, Zukerman discussed American religion and economics in the 19th century, alongside the influence on Christians. In the analysis, Zukerman points at how the economy has influenced the nature of gospel preached in the church; one of the key emerging issues from the analysis is that the majority of churches based their teachings on wealth and prosperity rather than the true gospel. As a result, believers have increasingly en-

gaged in misconduct such as hypocrisy, love of money, lies, and false doctrines. This reference is relevant to the dissertation as it depicts the issues contributing to the rising misconduct among Christians.

Wyss, Hilary E. 2003. *Writing Indians: Literacy, Christianity, and Native Community in Early America*. University of Massachusetts Press.

This book mainly refers to the native Indians from the perspective of religious impact on their culture. Wyss uses the concept of literacy to examine the cultural influence of Christianity on the Indians community in America. One of the factors that are strongly evidenced is that Christianity to some extent intertwined with the community culture leading to the creation of values and norms that uphold Christian principles. One of the major observations in the book is that modernity, technology, and science is gradually replacing religion in the social setting. As scientific knowledge increases, religious values decreases. This association can be used to determine the cause of the rising cases of misconduct among Christians in the ministry. By highlighting the influence of social changes in technology, the factors precipitating evil misdeeds among believers are highlighted.

Whitehead, Andrew L. "Religious Organizations and Homosexuality: The Acceptance of Gays and Lesbians in American Congregations." *Review of Religious Research* 55, no. 2 (2013): 297-317.

This research journal provides an insight into the strongly emerging issue of homosexuality and religion in present-day society. One of the emerging trends from the analysis is that most nations have passed homosexuality laws that permit the behavior to be constitutionally approved. The constitution is above the church leading to the proliferation of the vices among believers. In the wake of the legalization of homosexuality rights, Christians have been entrapped into doctrines that encourage such behaviors leading to increased misconduct among Christians. The relevance of the journal article with the current study dwells on the

causes of misconduct among Christian believers. The subject of homosexuality is becoming a norm in the contemporary social setting despite its prohibition in the bible. It, therefore, presents an obstacle among Christians leading to increased misconduct.

Webster, Peter. “Technology, Ethics, and Religious Language: Early Anglophone Christian Reactions to “Cyberspace.” *Internet Histories* (2018): 1-16.

This journal article focuses on technology, ethics, and religious language in the contemporary social setting. One of the key arguments provided in the current study is that technology has led to the rise in secularism in the global arena. The technological gadgets have paved the way for access to different materials on the internet, most of which contradict the biblical principles. As a result, believers have increasingly found themselves at conflict between Christian values and technological demands. This fits into the context of the current study regarding the existence of misconduct among Christians.

Toft, Alex. “Re-Imagining Bisexuality and Christianity: The Negotiation of Christianity in the Lives of Bisexual Women and Men.” *Sexualities* 17, no. 5-6 (2014): 546-564.

In the article, Toft analyses the current issues about bisexuality and Christianity. Toft pointed out that the Christian doctrines do not embrace bisexuality, and only recognizes the union between a man and a woman. Nonetheless, the social setting has introduced the concept of individual rights that has largely influenced people’s perceptions over the subject of bisexuality. Most Christians lack knowledge about the biblical perspective of bisexuality, and therefore, continuously engage in such vices. The relevance of the article to the current study hinges on the perceptions that bisexuality negatively affects Christians and precipitates the occurrence of misconduct in the social and religious space.

Snow, David A., Rens Vliegthart, and Pauline Ketelaars. “The Framing Perspective On Social Movements: Its Conceptual Roots and Architecture.” *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* 45, no. 9 (2018): 392-410.

Snow et al. focuses on the framing theory from the perspective of the various social movements that exist in contemporary communities. The framing theory presents distinct beliefs between various social environments regarding certain common behaviors such as alcoholism, Christian practices, secularism, and technology. The movements influence the Christian members since most of the doctrines encouraged do not align with the biblical commands. As such, the journal aligns with the dissertation subject regarding the rising cases of misconduct among Christians. By encouraging contradicting beliefs among Christian believers, the social movements stir confusion and abandonment of ministerial duties.

Smith, Brian H. *The Church and Politics in Chile: Challenges to Modern Catholicism.*

Princeton University Press, 2014.

This book dissects the distinction between the church and politics alongside the inherent challenges faced by both. Smith commences by presenting the history of the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and politics. According to the analysis, the ancient Roman Catholic Church was largely characterized by strong political will, where the Popes controlled armies and commanded governments. Over time, political systems have dissociated with the church causing the relationship to weaken. The modern Catholic Church, therefore, despite having certain levels of global influence still lacks the political will that enabled it to exercise control over governments. The diminishing of such control and influence could signify the rise in secularism in the current setting.

2 Timothy 3:2 – Increase in Inequity and Wickedness in the Last Days

The above scripture describes the perilous times that would mark the last days. Paul points to Timothy that the times will be characterized by people becoming lovers of themselves, boastful, proud, disobedient, unholy, and bearing a form of godliness but denying the power that comes with the faith. This concerns the present study which hinges on the subject

of believers but not followers. As the outcome of the rising cases of ungodliness mainly affects Christians compared to the non-believers, it is important to address the issue in-depth. By people “having a form of godliness but denying its power,”⁶⁵ Paul referred to the levels of hypocrisy that would become prevalent in the last days. The scripture is, therefore, relevant to the study as it describes the cause of ungodliness.

Matthew 28:16 – The Great Commission

This scripture refers to the great commission, given to the disciples, Christ informed them that all the heavenly and earthly authority has been given to him. Therefore they should make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. Despite knowing the great commission, most Christians have failed to preach the gospel and convert people into believers. Contrary to the commissioning, the majority of Christians have engaged in misconducts that have led people further away from the true doctrines of Christ. This has slowed down gospel preaching, culminating in a major knowledge gap among Christians who continuously lack the sense of direction. The misconduct among Christians also reflects the neglect of religious duties by the clergy and other church leaders tasked with the responsibility of caring for Christians. By obedience to the great commission, Christians can fulfill the mandate of converting people into believers.

Rev 3:16 – The Lukewarm Christians

This verse concerns the Christians that consider themselves believers but do not follow the precepts of God. It terms them as lukewarm Christians, since they are neither hot nor cold – an implication that they follow Christ but at the same time engage in sin. The verse reflects God’s hatred towards sin, and much more the believers that do not fully embrace the

. 2 Tim 3:2

godliness. In the revelation, God told John that he would spit them out. This justifies the need for Christians to remain consistent in serving God and not waver between two opinions.

Luke 6: 46 – Doing the Will of God

This verse refers to one of Christ's teachings about engaging in the will of God. Jesus told the disciples that on the Day of Judgment, people would cry out, confessing how they engaged in good deeds, but He will deny and cast them away. This scripture depicts the biblical stance about lukewarmness that directly links to the subject of the dissertation. It establishes the ground for analyzing the conduct of Christians in the present age alongside the factors that influence their abilities to do the will of God. Besides, it sets the premises for the ideal godly conducts, which causes people to become Christians.

Matt 24: 3-14 – Signs of the End Time

These verses refer to Jesus' teaching to the disciples about the signs of the end. According to the scripture, the signs will include increased hatred for Christians, people betraying each other, the rise of false prophets, and ungodliness among believers. The end-time reflects terrifying days during which Christians will face temptations and lose faith due to the rising cases of misconduct. Most of the signs Christ mentioned are evident in the present-day social setting and could be symbolizing closeness to the end time. The contemporary events can be linked to the overall theme of Christian believers who do not follow the precepts of God.

Matt 24: 24 – The Rise of False Prophets and Teachers

The scripture refers to the signs of the end spoken by Christ. In this context, Christ cited the rise of false prophets who will deceive people, and largely manipulate Christians into following their ungodly ways. Various social settings have reported cases of prophetic manifestations causing people to go astray. Most self-proclaimed prophets have emerged with doctrines that have misled Christians. Knowledge of this scriptural fulfillment helps in

the interpretation of the current social context and could be used to explain the imminent lack of direction among Christian believers.

2 Tim 3:1 – The Signs of the Last Days

The primary theme of this scripture is the events of the last days during which people will embrace and thrive in committing ungodliness. It augments the perception of people becoming more sinful to the extent of Christians engaging in sin while at the same time serving God. Similar to Christ, Paul indicated that the last days would present perilous time during which people will embrace wickedness and drift away from the fear of God. This scripture can be related to the theme of misconduct that forms the title of this dissertation. The scripture strongly refers to the notion of people abandoning their religious mandates and actively engaging in ungodly misdeeds.

Romans 1:24 – Rise in Wickedness

This scripture refers to the rise in evil during the final days. Paul wrote the epistle to encourage the Roman church on how people have chosen the path of wickedness. Paul pointed out that due to the rise in sin, God will allow the uncontrolled cravings such as unnatural sexual orientations, manifesting through homosexuals and bestiality. This scripture has been fulfilled in the present generation, where people have developed such sexual cravings as bestiality and homosexuality, which are becoming social norms. Such unusual acts have raised the level of wickedness in the social setting, and many Christians have fallen victim to the same.

2 Tim 2:22 – Flee Evil Desires

The verse presents a solution to the wickedness that has become inherent in nearly every contemporary social setting. Paul advised Timothy to flee youthful lusts and pursue righteousness. The scriptural message provides advice that can be used to tackle the issue of ungodliness common in the current age. Christians should abandon the desires of the flesh to

help them remain strong in their faith and further influence fellow cohorts. As the objective of the research is to delve on the problem of believers but not followers, the scripture can be applied in coining the best way forward and enable believers to resist temptations. This makes the scripture relevant and significant to the current study subject.

1 Corinthians 1:18 – Message of Cross

This verse utilizes the cross symbolically to refer to the sufferings and death of Jesus, which makes little or no meaning to unbelievers. This explains the reason for the continued ignorance of the gospel and unrighteousness among believers. Christians equally experience numerous challenges while preaching the gospel to such people; resistance culminates to sin that affects both believers and unbelievers. This predisposes people to evils that ensnare most Christians, causing them to engage in sin. As evil becomes a norm in most Christian settings, the message of salvation seems to lose its meaning.

2 Tim. 3:12 – Evil Doers Going from Bad to Worse

Paul spoke of Christians undergoing persecutions to test their faith while at the same time unbelievers thriving in sin. The rise in evil-doing makes Christians vulnerable to sin and other malicious vices that affect their beliefs. This letter to Timothy explained how people would embrace wickedness and turn away from God. The relevance of this verse stems from the reference to the reasons for people straying from the gospel and pursuing false doctrines. The wickedness limits Christians from fully fitting into the respective environments without sinning. This scripture explains the causes of the rise in misconduct alongside the factors precipitating the sinful trend.

2.0 Chapter Two

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an introduction to the applied research through the auspices of the research participants, the rationale for the selection of the research approach, and the current findings relating to the subject. The applied research section offers details about the selected research methods, data collection and analysis, and the means of presentation. The participants are defined from the perspective of their settings and rationale for their selection. The current findings present a review of the past works of literature on the subject from the perspective of the theories and implications relative to the existing practices within the social scene.

2.2 The Applied Research

This study adopts the mixed-method research to investigate the reasons behind the recurring and escalating trend of the presumptuous sinning among Christians and the cause of neglecting the assigned ministerial duties such as preaching, teaching, and becoming one another's keeper. The subject of Christians engaging in presumptuous sinning spans a broad perspective and can cover multiple studies. Considering that Christianity is the largest global religion, understanding the factors affecting its existence strongly builds the general perception. The analysis integrates diverse Christian followers from different religious settings, and analyses the responses to determine the authenticity of the literature. As revealed in the introductory section, the prevalence of Christian misconduct has culminated in a major issue in the United States with many groups attributing it to distinct social, political, and economic structures. The findings of the study will offer a vivid outline of the issue and place it within the desired social context. Specifically, this study sought to achieve the following goals and objectives:

- Determine the factors leading to Christians increased participation in misconduct behaviors;
- Determine the extent to which such behaviors have increased within the social scene;
- Suggest approaches that could reduce the unbecoming Christian behaviors within the social setting.

The mixed research approach seeks to include diverse Christian denominations and their relationship with the existing trend of secularism. The researcher will collect both quantitative and qualitative data that will justify the existing trend of misconduct within the social settings, and make recommendations that would aid in eliminating its existence. The quantitative approach will be used to quantify the extent of the presence of the problem within the social setting while the qualitative approach will augment the responses through the provision of brief explanations for the choice to add to the clarity of the details and enable a clear understanding of the problem.

The proposed research design provides sufficient grounds for answering the research questions, providing the rationale for the existence of the above problem, and proposing the various ways and means of improving Christian behavior within the current social scene. In so doing, the outcome will provide valid grounds for concluding the research problem.

The Research Design and Procedures Table

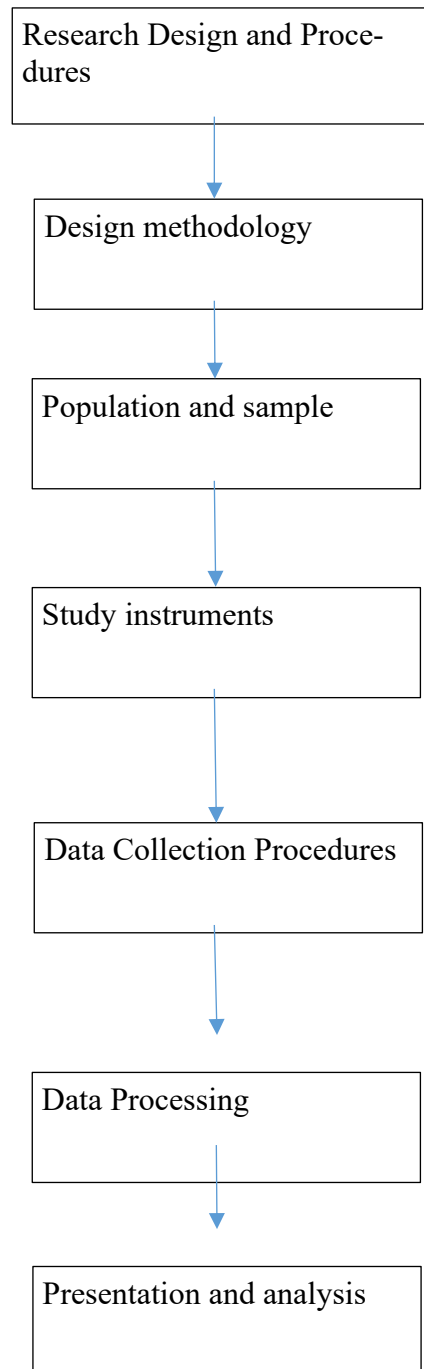


Fig: Table showing a summary of the research design

2.3 Selection of Participants

The study participants were selected from various Christian denominations. The researcher was keen to select at least a representative sample from the various Christian groups: Catholics, Protestants, Adventists, and Eastern Orthodox. Based on the above selection criteria, a non-random sample selection was used. The pastors and priests of the various Churches were contacted via email and telephone to inform them of the intentions to carry out the research. Several follow-ups were made to ascertain their acceptance to proceed with the research. Besides, the selection criteria involved Christian participants aged 18 and above and the voluntary willingness to participate in the study.

The participants were also issued consent forms and informed of the freedom to withdraw from participation at any time they wished. The privacy of the responses was also considered a significant factor, and the participants assured that the coding nature of the survey questionnaires would help in concealing their personal information from the researchers and other groups that may access the data. The participants did not receive any financial remuneration for their participation in the research. The survey questionnaires were sent via email and analyzed through various statistical tools.

2.4 Description of the Study Instruments

The study included the use of semi-structured questionnaires comprising both closed and open-ended survey questions. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale to help in the quantification of the responses provided in the survey. The survey questions mainly revolved around the research questions of the prevalence of the presumptuous sinning among Christians, the factors leading to the occurrence, and the approaches that could help to mitigate the above problems from the social scene. The questionnaires, therefore, commenced with a brief description of the demographic information, followed by open-ended and closed questions regarding the various components related to the research question.

2.5 Procedures

The process commenced with contacts with the church leaders, particularly the pastors. The majority of the churches were visited after the church services and during the weekdays to obtain an audience with the pastors. The participants were informed of the research objectives and given consent forms to sign with the option of withdrawing from the study at any stage at will. Upon seeking an audience with the entire church, the pastors made formal announcements requesting the members to willingly participate in the research and provide any information needed to achieve measurable outcomes. The members who volunteered to participate in the research were issued informed consent forms that were coded to keep the user information private. The willing participants provided email addresses that were kept under a password-protected email to limit illegal access. The respondents were instructed to sign the research consent forms and return them, after which the questionnaires were signed and sent to the participants. The data was collected, coded, and analyzed.

2.6 Data Processing

The collected data was quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed. The quantitative data were analyzed using the SPSS tool version 24. The first step included the generation of frequency distribution tables to explain the percentages of the responses for each category, and graphs generated to support and justify the outcomes. The next step involved the performance of the normality and Cronbach tests to determine the suitability of the questionnaire responses in the analysis. The Cronbach tests revealed a value of .73 which was considered befitting to the research and provided a sufficient basis for using the Likert scale. The normality tests also revealed values of significance levels of below 0.05, an implication that they were

suitable for the study.⁶⁶ The qualitative data, on the other hand, was processed through a series of qualitative procedure which involved analysis of the common terms, phrases, or statements in the responses. The terms were then analyzed to form themes whose meanings were used to interpret the perception of the respondents in the analysis.

2.7 Data Analysis

The concept of data analysis remains significant in any research. The data collection technique will be performed through both qualitative and quantitative approaches to boost the overall outcome. The questionnaires will comprise both structured and unstructured questions to allow the respondents to provide further explanations for their responses. In analyzing the outcome, the quantitative data will be analyzed through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software that will be used to gather responses from the questionnaires, quantify, and then used to generate the results. The selection of the SPSS tool dwells on its success in multiple pieces of research as a data analysis tool. The software generates tables, visual charts, and comprise of concepts that can be analyzed to present the social issue.

The qualitative outcome, on the other hand, will be described with common terms and phrases in the responses. After the analysis, themes are extracted to form a meaningful explanation of the responses. The adoption of this approach was preferred due to the ability to present the respondents' opinions regarding the research problem sufficiently. A clear understanding of the rationale for the quantitative responses augments the researcher's argument regarding social vice. In the end, the quantitative and qualitative outcomes will be merged to aid in the analysis of the findings and marrying the outcome with the literature review content.

⁶⁶. Asghar, Ghasemi and Saleh Zahediasl. "Normality Tests for Statistical Analysis: A Guide for Non-Statisticians." *International Journal of Endocrinology and Metabolism* 10, no. 2 (2012): 486.

2.8 Methodological Assumptions

The study stems from the assumption that the validity and the reliability of the testing instruments were based on the endorsements from the previous researches. The study assumed that the issues affecting the believers fall under the umbrella of Christianity regardless of denominations and differences in beliefs. Another assumption dwells on the notion that the researcher did not have any previous knowledge about the respondents' answers about the research problem. The survey responses mainly comprise of the choices as perceived by the selected sample population.

2.9 Ethical Assurances

The study ensured minimal risks to the participants. The participation was voluntary, and every individual had the choice to leave the study at any point during its progress. The respondents were also assured of the data safety, and that no other party would gain access to the data. They also have the right to view the final results of the research.⁶⁷ Through the above measures, the participant data remained concealed to shield their privacy.

2.10 Current Academic Studies Relating to the Research Problem

A plethora of literary works including journal articles, biblical perspectives, Christian teachings, and theological perceptions postulate the emerging trend of unstoppable misconducts and neglect of Christians outside the ministries. Despite the popularization of the concept of the escalating pattern of believers but not followers among Christians, several publications tend to drive towards a common belief that misconduct among Christians is significantly on the rise. Academic studies have analyzed the subject through the lens of various theoretical models leading to a succinct understanding of the problem from its roots. Three theories have been extensively explored to explain the increase of secularism and misconduct

⁶⁷. Martin Bulmer. "The Merits and Demerits of Covert Participant Observation." *Social Research Ethics*, 1st ser., 2, no. 1 (1982): 225.

among Christians. The models include science and technology theory, modernity theory, and frame theory.⁶⁸ The second chapter looks into what the current academic studies reveal the subject. The initial section analyses the theories followed by commentary from the biblical, religious, and historical data. The analysis of the subsequent chapter will rely on the findings from the various academic studies on the subject.

2.10.1 The Science and Technology Theory

The advent of science information technology has led to momentous changes in various social paradigms and cultures. As technology advances and integrates with cultures, it spreads both positive and negative influence across societies leading to assimilation and dilution of cultural values.⁶⁹ As such, a rich literature exists relating to the impact of technology on secularism, Christianity, and the overall social setting. Authors such as Berger and Barbour have extensively covered the subject of technology and science relative to their impacts in propagating paganism, secularization, and weakening of the Christian faith.⁷⁰

Berger commences by applauding the positive impacts of technology in the social setting. According to Berger, technology has eased the mode of communications and provided different solutions to issues that initially proved difficult and challenging within the social paradigm.⁷¹ Further, Berger argues that it offered better solutions to life challenges compared to religion leading to a shift in focus and behavior.⁷² Technology and science have directed to the provision of specific solutions and answers to problems that have increased mainly the religious paradigm. For instance, while Christian doctrines teach people to have faith in God

⁶⁸. James D Thompson. *Organizations in Action: Social Science Bases of Administrative Theory*. Routledge, 2017:67.

⁶⁹. Robison, "The Abuse of Power," 401.

⁷⁰. Peter Berger, and Michaela Pfadenhauer. "Modernity and Pluralism." In *The New Sociology of Knowledge*, pp. 17-32. Routledge, 2017: 368.

⁷¹. Berger, and Michaela. "Modernity and Pluralism, 369.

⁷². Ibid.

to get healed, technology explains each condition from the root of it and proposes effective medical interventions.

In most cases, the responses stemming from science and technology seem logical and useful compared to the faith-based approach preached in most Christian settings. Berger articulates that the specific, accurate, and promising nature of science and technology has led to providing alternatives that answer the significant questions that most people seek relating to a sense of origin with the past, present, and future perspectives.⁷³ As in the case of the creation story, science and technology have also developed myths that many researchers have attempted to prove scientifically. For instance, Darwin's theory of evolution has received overwhelming support from a wide range of people given the logic that is presented in the story.⁷⁴ The articulation of scientific proofs into such theories makes them more logical compared to the faith-based beliefs propagated in the Christian doctrines.

Berger also argued that some aspects of technology cannot be easily reversed and are inevitable for regeneration across different generations.⁷⁵ A similar thought is expressed by Bruce, who noted that the forces of secularism tend to define the scope and nature of techniques propagated.⁷⁶ For instance, specific technologies such as the internet brought the ability of people to access any content they wished from the billions of online postings. They include both the good and the bad, most of which pose as temptation to many people. One of the significant challenges of the internet that has been extensively cited by both Bruce and Berger is widespread access to pornography. According to Berger, the majority of reports on

⁷³. Ibid., 370.

⁷⁴ Tong, David. "The Relationship between Christianity and Science: A Brief Historical Study on Darwinism and the Old Princeton Theologians." *Societas Dei: Jurnal Agama dan Masyarakat* 1, no. 1 (2017): 96.

⁷⁵. Ibid.

⁷⁶. Steve Bruce, *Choice and Religion: A Critique of Rational Choice Theory*. Oxford University Press on Demand, 1999: 34.

the rising cases of adultery in churches stem from increased access to pornography through computers and mobile phone devices.⁷⁷ Bruce cites that both the priests and the believers have been entrapped into the social vice and adversely affects their abilities to abide by the biblical doctrines strictly.⁷⁸

Bruce also perceived the impact of science and technology from the notion of causing people to become less religious and embracing the modern trends that come with new technologies. The contemporary world is defined by scientific and technological findings that create and validate the existence of individual issues within the social setting. The present-day society is mainly defined by digitization and the scientific approach to various social problems. For instance, science and technology currently determine the nature of foods taken, the clothing selections and trends, language evolution, music listened to, and the new social and cultural lifestyles adopted.⁷⁹ Technological advancements have led to the generation of genetically modified foods that not only thrive in hostile environments but also mature fast and can bring huge profits. Celebrities mainly propagate clothing trends that have largely infiltrated the church.⁸⁰ Most celebrities introduce various styles they consider right and appealing, and such clothing styles become popular within social settings, causing both believers and non-believers to follow in pursuit of beauty and personal contentment instead of focusing on the honor of God. The digitalization in the current era has equally compelled people into copying the new trends after the majority are labeled or stereotyped as antique and befitting the modern changes. Technology has also led to social media where people from all walks of life interact on a common platform and share ideas and opinions regarding distinct issues within the cultural and social setting. As such, cultural practices such as homosexuality have emerged

⁷⁷. Berger and Michaela, "Modernity and Pluralism", 371.

⁷⁸. Bruce, *Choice and Religion*, 68.

⁷⁹ Berger and Michaela, "Modernity and Pluralism", 369.

⁸⁰. Hughes, "Why Young People," 5.

into the social environment.⁸¹ Bruce argued that the pluralism of the above issues within the social setting has led to the erosion of Christian values, doctrines, and beliefs that have formed a significant portion of the social norms.⁸²

The philosophies postulated by both Bruce and Berger reveal that given the tendency to prove the existence of various issues and the causes have led to the same on the spiritual matters. Scientists have actively propagated the notion of God's non-existence. Amidst such contentions, many Christians have fallen victims into believing that God does not exist; the result is the refusal to obey the doctrines and thus experience the loss of the sense of commitments. Technology and science have further set new thresholds through which social issues are measured, compared, and eliminated. For centuries, Christianity has formed the epitome of social norms and values in multiple social settings. Nonetheless, the changes emanating from science and technology have minimized the norms and values leading to little conformity to the biblical standards initially set. The religious thinking model and concept are therefore quickly losing grip and significance, making people stray from the true gospel.

The final element of changes brought about by technology and science is the transformation in perceptions relating to social and personal life. Human beings love and yearn for a sense of origin and socialism. Religion played a significant role in designing the value system in the traditional paradigm. As Christianity mainly dwelt on faith and believing, the current technological elements supersede evidence taught in the Christian doctrines. The contradiction between Christian values and technological findings create immense contrast in the beliefs. While religion has formerly provided man with a sense of identity and origin, technol-

⁸¹. Alex Toft. "Re-Imagining Bisexuality and Christianity: The Negotiation of Christianity in The Lives of Bisexual Women and Men," *Sexualities* 17, no. 5-6 (2014): 547.

⁸². Bruce, *Choice and Religion*, 69.

ogy and science have provided an in-depth understanding of human history leading to the denial of the biblical beliefs regarding the origin of man. Humans are beginning to establish a new sense of identity through the elements of scientific research such as cloning, robotics, and stem cell activities, which have changed how people view various social components.⁸³ The ability to modify the genetic structures of living things and come up with new items and creations is gradually eliminating the position of God as a sovereign supernatural being into a non-existent entity whose presence remains a myth.⁸⁴

The overwhelming literature on the impacts of science and technology on religion strategically places technology at the center of explanations for the spread of secularism and weakening of Christian followers, reducing them to mere believers.⁸⁵ This theory is supported by empirical evidence and anecdotal data about the scriptures, teachings, theology, and historical events that have unfolded over the years. The strong belief in science and technology has led to the transformation of the various societal belief systems, causing Christians to depart from their faiths. The opposing nature of religion and technology causes each to undermine the other; hence, an increase in one leads to a significant decrease in the other. As science and technology provide people with various logics, the rise within the social arena leads to the decline in religion causing many people to fall astray and neglect their Christian duties.⁸⁶ The era of science and technology marked the epitome of intellectualism and logic which outweigh spirituality and faith by all standards used in the current world. As religion is gradually losing intellectual arguments, many people are departing from it, engaging in beliefs that seem sensible, and having a proper basis. For instance, many people are slowly de-

⁸³ Ibid,56.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 78.

⁸⁵ Berger and Michaela, "Modernity and Pluralism", 384.

⁸⁶. Christopher Southgate, "Environmental/Ethics" and "Science/Religion": Converging Streams in Barbour's Work," *Theology and Science* 15, no. 1 (2017): 70.

viating from the biblical explanations of the man's origin and believing in the theories propagated by other individuals. Specific social settings also have related Christianity to poverty, citing it as a source of consolation for people seeking solace and comfort to their problems.

2.10.2 The Modernity Theory

Bruce and Berger postulate this theory as a critical influence of the present-day Christian character exhibited by many professing Christians. Despite being mentioned in the initial section of the analysis, the approach of modernity has been extensively used as a rationale for change within the religious atmosphere. The concept shares much with science and technology, as they both relate to the contemporary system — modernism hinges on the notion that various forces in the modern social setting have precipitated the decline and erosion of religious values within the social context. The modernity concept covers a broad span, which encapsulates governments, political systems, the social culture, religion, economic system, technology, modern education and science, and the individual rights and freedoms in the social corridors. In the wake of modernity, most governments have increasingly demonstrated the need to run countries and nations without any religious inclination.

Furthermore, such leadership systems fail to regard the impact of religious values in any leadership situation leading to the lack of a strong value system that would embrace the concept of fear of God among the members. Relatively, the majority of the governmental and social systems tend to advocate for policies and values that promote individualism rather than communal sharing of beliefs. For instance, most social settings encourage people to have a set of beliefs that befits their lifestyles and abide by such systems. Furthermore, rights activists have also advocated for the establishment of value systems that require upholding individual rights and policies that correspond to the given values.

Diversity

Diversity has also had a significant level of influence on the rise of secularism across the social scene. The modern social system integrates many and diverse groups of people that stem from distinct settings. The different nature of the social networks leads to the formation of laws and regulations that govern the rights of every individual, and not compelling them towards subscribing to particular sets of beliefs. For instance, unlike the traditional paradigm where Christian communities could advocate for policies requiring all people to attend church, practice certain religious norms, and abhor certain taboos, the present-day social system permeates people to practice all sorts of vices. The political class has instituted laws and policies that justify such actions and punishing any group that attempts to demean such practices. The dominance of multiculturalism and the related methods led to the decline of religious authority. People can easily abandon religion and engage in practices that befits their lifestyles.

2.10.3 The Framing Theory

The social framing theory has remained a significant concept for evaluating various social issues and perceptions. The framing theory relates to the notion of traditional setting but widens through the focus on elements of issues at hand rather specific subjects or topics. The coining of the forming theory emanated from the notion of the media paying attention to specific issues and attaching meanings relevant to the context of occurrence. While the concept was initially considered a media issue, its use has expanded to various settings such as organizations, churches, politics, and other social scenes. The gist of the framing theory suggests that how which a subject is presented to an audience determines how people chose to process or review the information. Studies on frames have considered them obstructions that

delink people from normal events and refocusing them on other issues within the social scene.⁸⁷

From a Christian perspective, the framing theory relates to how believers relate to their environments and perceive the issues that occur. The framing theory has been divided into two major perspectives spanning the social problems and social movements. The social problems take into account the various claims made within the social environment and attempt to justify their existence through distinct analysis.⁸⁸ The social movements, on the other hand, focus on the frames existing within their environments. Both the frames and claims represent symbolic challenges within the social domains and determine the meanings attached to certain events and happenings. The framing perspective has been applied in determining the different ways in which Christians perceive the social settings in terms of benefits and challenges and the mitigating factors.

According to Robbins et al., Christianity comprises diverse religious groups such as the Protestants, the Roman Catholics, Orthodox, and the seventh day Adventists among others.⁸⁹ Each of the above Christian groups has distinct doctrines that guide their faith and messianic perceptions. For instance, the Catholics believe that Mary is the only way to reach Christ and God, the Protestants, on the other hand, believe that Christ is the only way through which we can reach God, while the Adventists believe that the essence of true Christianity dwell on worshipping God on the Sabbath day as required in the biblical Ten Commandments.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Rymarz, Richard. "Religious Identity of Catholic Schools: Some Challenges from A Canadian Perspective." *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 31, no. 3 (2010): 311.

⁸⁸. Peter Webster. "Technology, Ethics and Religious Language: Early Anglophone Christian Reactions to "Cyberspace", *Internet Histories* (2018): 9.

⁸⁹. Robbins, Joel, John Barker, Fenella Cannell, Simon Coleman, Annelin Eriksen, Carlos Garma, Olivia Harris et al., "Continuity thinking and the problem of Christian culture: Belief, time, and the anthropology of Christianity," *Current Anthropology* 48, no. 1 (2007): 9.

⁹⁰. Richard Rymarz. "Religious Identity of Catholic Schools: Some Challenges from A Canadian Perspective." *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 31, no. 3 (2010): 309.

Thus, framing theory derives from the matters mainly stirred by the influence of modern issues and elements relative to the challenges experienced in the social environment.

Many studies have indicated that the occurrence of the current events was prerecorded in the Bible, and they reflect the various issues that were spoken of in the New Testament. The rise in modernity creates an aura that befits their propagation within the social scene.

Christian Denominations in the world

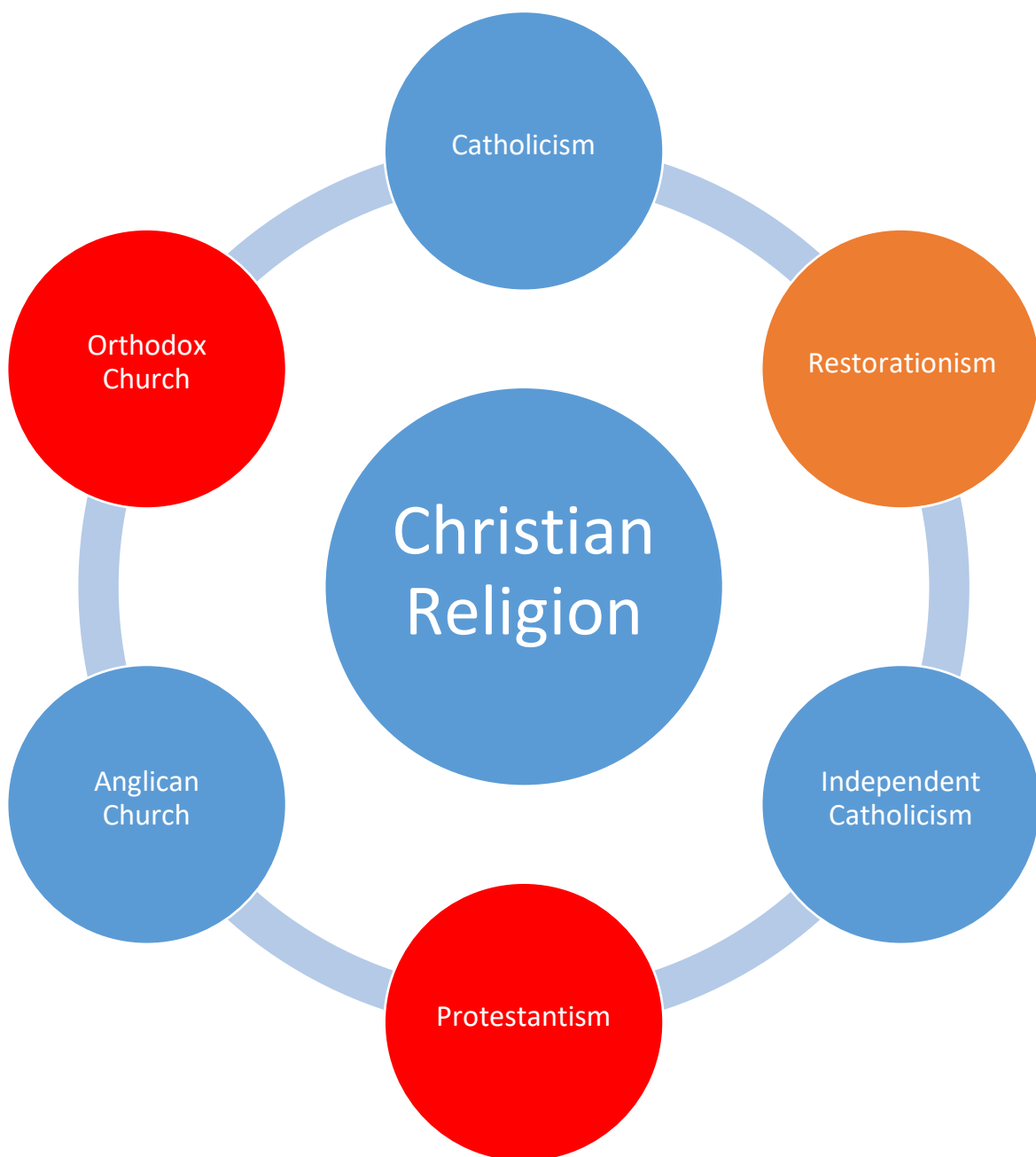


Figure 1: Showing the division of the Christian Church into religious denominations.

The distinction in the perspectives of the above Christian groups has been viewed through the lens of the frame theory in several studies. The primary outcome has revealed that a large number of Christian denominations have led to a distinction in terms of their moral beliefs and doctrines about the Bible.⁹¹ The biblical interpretation by each group is determined by the foundation laid by the founding leaders. For instance, the Protestant Christian branch was founded on rebellion against perceived errors by the Catholic Church in interpreting certain parts of the bible such as repository, Catechism, and celibacy. The contentions that arose regarding Catholic doctrines such as implying the presence of Christ in the Eucharist among other things led to the separation into other denominations.⁹² How the Catholics framed certain elements of their doctrines led to the separation of the Protestants and other groups of believers.

In the contemporary social system, the various groups affiliated with the Christian religion have distinct belief systems that determine their moral thresholds. For instance, the Seventh-day Adventists believe that taking pork is unholy while Anglicans believe that all foods are clean and should be taken with thanksgiving. Besides, Catholics consider the holy rosary a significant tool for prayer and the only means to reach God in prayers; Protestants disregard such beliefs.⁹³ Thus, while the majority of Christians use the Bible as the threshold for standards of living, the different Christian groups have diverse doctrines that distinguish their beliefs leading to a major difference in their perceptions. This peculiarity creates contention on how an ideal Christian should conduct themselves. The framing of the different groups makes it difficult to determine the ideal standard or measures of conduct that defines true Christianity.

⁹¹. Steven M Buechler, *Understanding Social Movements: Theories from the Classical Era to the Present*. Routledge, 2016: 17.

⁹². Smith, Brian H. *The Church and Politics in Chile*: 23.

⁹³. Ibid.

Based on the framing theory issues such as politics, economics, cultural affiliations, and other doctrines are framed differently by diverse Christian groups. While one group permits the members to engage in such actions freely, the other forbids, and warns the members against the same. The framing theory is, therefore, of great significance in this analysis as it provides the context upon which the distinct Christian beliefs and doctrines are analyzed and improved. As articulated by Benford and Rens, the frames normally develop through the process of negotiations; its use will be relevant in determining the conflicting nature of the diverse Christian beliefs and the significance of such beliefs within the social setting.⁹⁴

2.10.4 Theoretical Views versus Biblical Perspectives

The above theories provide the rationale for the rising cases of Christian believers that merely seek to profess Christianity but lack the ideal character defined in the tenets of Christian doctrines. The theories define the social confines that dictate the characters and mode of behaviors in the present setting vis-à-vis Christianity demands. Further, the theories explain the rationale for the erosion of the Christian culture, norms, and replacement with a new weak value system mainly fueled and propagated by the distinct cultural diversity among people. The social media has exposed people to social evils that have largely changed their views and beliefs about spiritualism, supernaturalism, and divinity of God.

The Bible has been described as having been written through God's inspiration; hence, it provides the basis for Christian teachings. The bible describes the nature of life Christians should live with the basic principles governing their livelihoods. While various elements of technology embraces the Bible, studies are increasingly causing people to adapt and conform to the more logical form of beliefs that have been attained through experiments and studies that unearth different understanding of the phenomenon. In 1 Corinthians 1:18,

⁹⁴. David A. Snow, Rens Vliegthart, and Pauline Ketelaars, "The framing perspective on social movements: Its conceptual roots and architecture," *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* (2018): 392.

Paul describes the gospel as foolishness to unbelievers since they lack the proper knowledge about the coming of Christ and salvation to mankind; nonetheless, it is life and salvation to the believers who understand its significance in any Christian setting.⁹⁵ Besides, the rise in knowledge has increased intellectualism across the social scene, causing many people to launch deliberate attacks and challenges on Christian doctrines on matters of principles such as the existence of God and the creation of the Universe. Besides, scientific innovations have led to increased rational thinking. Given the rising contentions between science and gospel, many scientists, such as Steven Hawkins, have attempted to table proofs that indeed God does not exist, and that the entire universe emerged from the big bang. Most people refer to the Bible as a religious book rather than a substance that can quickly change and transform their lives. Given the widespread perceptions of Christianity as a myth rather than a religious setting that establishes the path for many people, most scientific and technological findings and innovations have created shifts in belief systems. The Bible presents numerous instances through which Christ and the apostles referred to the last days, an insinuation of the risks to the Christians. Many journals relating to priests committing sexual sins depict a strong link to pornographic materials, violent media, and other information on social media which makes them culpable to committing such evils.⁹⁶ Dagmang pointed out that the majority of reports implicating Catholic priests into the sin of sexual misconducts showed a close association with the access of pornography and related materials from the online web and then practicing them in real life.⁹⁷ Christ predicted an overall rise in the levels of evil among humankind.⁹⁸ He said, a brother will turn against a brother, a sister against a sister, and they will have each

⁹⁵. I Cor. 1:18.

⁹⁶. Marshall, William P. "Separation, Neutrality, and Clergy Liability for Sexual Misconduct." *Brigham Young University Law Review* no. 5 (2004): 1921.

⁹⁷. Dagmang, "Ecological Way of Understanding, 343.

⁹⁸. O'Neill, Gabel, Huckins, and Harder, "Prevention of Child Abuse" 406.

other put to death.⁹⁹ This element of selfishness has been seen through the increased love of money that has caused many people to lose their lives and suffer numerous forms of atrocities.

2.10.4.1 Biblical Perspective of the End Times

Jesus also spoke of people becoming blasphemous, in which case they will be speaking evil things against the almighty God without any fear.¹⁰⁰ The unfolding of such events has caused many Christians to fall astray and deviate from the ministerial callings. The emergence of false teachers and Messiahs was strongly featured in the teachings of Christ about the grand deception in the end times. According to Christ, false messiahs will come and convince many people that they are the Christ. During such times, confusion will arise, and many will be led astray.¹⁰¹ False Christs have also appeared and taught people different teachings causing them to go away. The false messiahs tend to exalt themselves above God and teach people to follow them. People have increasingly fallen prey to such vices, leading to the pursuance of teachings and gospels that conform to their needs rather than the biblical doctrines.¹⁰² Most of the deceptions tend to promote idol worship among the unsuspecting members, causing them to go astray.

The Bible speaks extensively about idol worship. In the Ten Commandments, God warned people against bowing to any created image of the things in heaven, on earth, and under the seas.¹⁰³ Many people in the current age have formulated their gods and built idols to which they pray through or worship. For instance, scholars such as Hamrick have criticized

⁹⁹. Matt. 10:21.

¹⁰⁰. Mark 3:28-30.

¹⁰¹. Matt. 24:24.

¹⁰². 1 Tim. 3:12.

¹⁰³. Exod. 25:21.

the Catholics' use of the rosary and praying to God through the Virgin Mary,¹⁰⁴ Hamrick argues that Jesus is the only way, the truth, and the light and that no one can get to the Father except through his son.¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, Hamrick says that the Roman Catholic Church is the origin of all denominations and that the doctrines and beliefs hinge on the notion that Jesus is the way to the father.¹⁰⁶ Nonetheless, the Catholics pray to God through Mary, a practice that defies the biblical belief of reaching God through Christ. Contentions, therefore, arise regarding the Catholics' perception of praying to God. The use of Mary as a link between God and man has led to the Catholic Church facing sharp criticism for engaging in idolatry.¹⁰⁷ The emergence of false doctrines has led to increased deception among Christians living in the present generation.¹⁰⁸ The majority of people have become unable to identify the disparities and distinctions between the false and the biblical doctrines. According to Christ, true Christians will be known through their actions. The people entrusted to preach the gospel should emulate Christ in word and deed; such people should preach the gospel and influence others with their conduct.¹⁰⁹

Love of Money

Apart from idolatry, love for money has been cited among the elements that would cause people to fall astray and further propagate wickedness among people.¹¹⁰ The epistle of 1 Timothy describes the love of money as the root of all evils.¹¹¹ The current generation is

¹⁰⁴. Stephen Hamrick. *The Catholic Imaginary and the Cults of Elizabeth*. Routledge, 2016: 1570.

¹⁰⁵. Hamrick. *The Catholic Imaginary*, 1571.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 1558.

¹⁰⁷ Hughes, "Why Young People," 6.

¹⁰⁸. Bruce, "The Demise of Christianity, 59.

¹⁰⁹. Matt. 7:16.

¹¹⁰ Donna, Taylor. *Financial Empowerment in the African American Church: Examining the Attitudes of Congregants to Adopt Christian Stewardship and Debt Management Principles*. (Balboa Press, 2018). 37.

¹¹¹ 1 Tim. 6:10.

entangled with the love of money and other material substance.¹¹² Churches have increasingly placed the burden of financial gains on the inferior members. Hughes in describing why the young people are leaving the church has noted that most pastors preach about the prosperity gospel and in turn, cause people to go to church with the primary objective of financial gain.¹¹³ Most preaching about money and wealth peg on the concept of giving and receiving; in which case, those who give generously to the church will receive abundant blessings from God.¹¹⁴ The Roman Catholic Church used this concept in the early days to gain massive wealth and power that enabled the church to exercise massive authority over the governments. The pope grew strong in power and command enabling them to lead the countries to wars.¹¹⁵ The power coined through the wealth gained through indoctrination has led to the establishment of many churches that lack the objective of preaching the true gospel, rather, having people believing in the false teachings and engaging in practices that fulfill the selfish leaders' ambitions.¹¹⁶ Hughes, therefore, noticed that despite the rise in the number of churches across the globe, the majority only exists to extort money and other material wealth from the members. In the wake of burdening the believers with the gospel of giving, many have given up their faiths and gone astray, while others have lost belief in the church and Christianity, terming it as evil. Besides, biblical authors such as Peter have compared the present-day scenario to the case of the biblical Sodom and Gomorrah in which God gave people over to bodily lusts, causing them to develop cravings that in the end ignited God's wrath against them.¹¹⁷ Arguing from the perspective of Sodom and Gomorrah, one could assume

¹¹² Ibid, 38.

¹¹³. Hughes, "Why Young People," 4.

¹¹⁴. Snow, David A., Rens Vliegenthart, and Pauline Ketelaars, "The Framing Perspective on Social Movements": 402.

¹¹⁵. Hamrick, *The Catholic Imaginary*, 1558.

¹¹⁶. Ibid.

¹¹⁷. 2 Pet. 2:6.

that perhaps in the wake of God's anger, he has allowed humankind to suffer different types of lusts and other sins to fulfill the last day prophecies.

The baseline for the biblical reference to the rise in wickedness sought to warn against falling victims to the gospels propagated by false teachers. Christianity encapsulates many denominations and each of these has a distinct set of beliefs that guide their code of conduct. Hughes noted that while the views and manners portray Christianity, they lack the godliness that comes with the true gospel.¹¹⁸ Besides, Paul spoke of people living in dangerous times, where political, economic and social forces will take over leading to immense sufferings.¹¹⁹ Politically, many governments have provided the members with the freedom of worship, permitting them to revere anything or anyone they want. Such privileges have allowed people to introduce all forms of idols and evils leading to change in the belief system across various social paradigms. Before-mentioned beliefs have led to shifting from the religiously established cultural norms to the new norms propagated through modernism, science, and technology.

Other biblical contexts also refer to contemporary times when Christians shall fall away from their faiths. In the biblical book of Daniel, the author stated: "But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."¹²⁰ The above statement falls within the context of end-time revelations given to Daniel, the prophet. According to the reading, "Many shall run to and fro" is an implication of increased traveling from place to place.¹²¹ This phenomenon is evidenced in the present-day social setting where through technology, the world is envisioned as a global village, and people can easily commute from place to place. The final portion of the verse

¹¹⁸. Hughes, "Why Young People," 6.

¹¹⁹. 2 Tim 3:1-13.

¹²⁰. Dan. 12:4.

¹²¹. Ibid., 12:5.

states, "and knowledge shall increase,"¹²² an implication that people will engage in extraordinary inventions due to the increased knowledge. The verse relates to the present-day when knowledge has significantly increased, and the communication and interaction tools such as social media have suddenly sprung and transformed the social setting. Such changes have led to the rise in wickedness through the propagation of evil vices and cultures over social media.

Most Christians in contemporary social environments have shown a strong inclination towards ungodliness rather than pursuing the righteousness prescribed in the bible. The Apostle Paul says in Romans 12, "Do not conform to this world but be ye transformed by the renewal of your spirit."¹²³ While the majority of Christians have increasingly forsaken the values and doctrines, they have conformed to worldly standards. Such standards have strongly deterred their abilities to fulfill the gospel mandates of becoming Christians. Several studies such as Bobkowski noted that in the wake of social media use and increased technological knowledge, belief in Christianity had lost relevance as the majority of the proponents have failed to justify the rationale behind the ardent faith and beliefs.¹²⁴ Persons considered Christian scholars have increasingly forsaken the title in a bid to gain credibility among academic and social peers.¹²⁵ For fear of rejection and mistreatment, many Christian scholars have chosen not to talk about their religion and to engage in certain practices to gain peer acceptance. In the end, many people get confused and commence deviating into the true doctrines and following the new line of teachings that lack biblical foundations. The economic perspective, conversely, dwells on the increased poverty and financial strains leading to people developing selfishness that in the end affects their spiritual growths. Besides, the gospel of prosperity

¹²². Dan. 12:4b.

¹²³. Rom. 12.

¹²⁴ Piotr S. Bobkowski, Autumn Shafer, and Rebecca R. Ortiz, "Sexual Intensity of Adolescents' Online Self-Presentations: Joint Contribution of Identity, Media Consumption, and Extraversion," *Computers in Human Behavior* 58 (2016): 64.

¹²⁵. Geoffrey P Goodwin. "Moral character in person perception." *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 24, no. 1 (2015): 38.

has caused many people to go astray when they give and still fail to get rich as preached by the church leaders. Many people, therefore, join churches to get rich, and failure to get rich causes them to disregard the gospel. The social forces encompass issues such as changes in belief systems and values due to globalization. The global paradigm has led to interaction between different cultures; the cultural interaction has led to the mixing of religions and other cultural practices within the social setting. Such issues have precipitated changes in the value systems causing people to stray and at the same time departing from the true gospel of Christ.

2.10.5 Theoretical Views versus Theological Perspectives

Theology forms the basis for the training of pastors. The concepts taught in the theological schools conform to the biblical teachings and places specific requirements upon the saints to make them committed to their beliefs.¹²⁶ Theology enlightens the servants of God on the impending challenges likely to be faced in the social setting and the mitigating approaches that are deemed relevant. As discussed in the biblical context and analysis, theology mentors church leaders into modest persons capable of sufficiently nurturing the young and already established believers. The teachings of the apostles and Christ, alongside other religious theories, have formed the basis for the training content and enabled many spiritual leaders to develop the skills required to lead within a Christian setting.

The concept of the technology, modernity, and the framing theory provide the basis upon which the presumptuous sinning of Christians gets analyzed and placed within the context of the current social setting. Theology presents a critical and in-depth nature of God's divinity. The theological perspectives form the basis for understanding the factors affecting

¹²⁶. Michael Hout, Andrew Greeley, and Melissa J. Wilde, "The Demographic Imperative in Religious Change in the United States," *American Journal of Sociology* 107, no. 2 (2001): 468.

Christian behavior within various social settings around the globe. Multiple reports about modernity, technology, and the framing theory tend to focus particularly on the concepts of ethnicity, race, and a few multicultural studies.¹²⁷ Religion has not strongly featured in the studies and therefore limiting the existing knowledge on how the theories affect religion.

According to the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor fact sheet, from 2011, approximately 85% of the world population embrace certain religious beliefs and uses them as guiding principles.¹²⁸ The various religious groups have increasingly faced prejudice, opposition, ridicule, and abuse from the population, the government, the community and social setting, and other secular groups that do not subscribe to the gospel. The report by the Federal Bureau of Investigations indicated that many cases of religious abuse are increasingly reported, most of which over 50% relate to Christians.¹²⁹¹³⁰ The height of such mockery and hatred of Christians has been cited among the key factors leading to people diverting from the true doctrines and beginning to conform to the standards set in the social settings. Edge noted that the majority of Christians in the current setting tend to believe in the concept of modernity and technology and are slowly giving in to the notion of scientific beliefs and drifting from the faiths.¹³¹

According to Meulemann, modernity has caused a significant impact and improvement in scientific knowledge across multiple fields.¹³² Such knowledge is propagated in schools and religious settings, to increase learning. However, most of the teachings relating

¹²⁷. Whitehead, "Gendered Organizations and Inequality, 476.

¹²⁸. Heiner Meulemann, "The Two Faces of American Religious Exceptionalism: Religiosity and Dogmatism in the USA and Europe in 2007," *Social Compass* 60, no. 2 (2013): 253.

¹²⁹ Markku Ruotsila, "The FBI and Religion: Faith and National Security before and after 9/11. Edited by Sylvester A. Johnson and Steven Weitzman. Oakland: University of California Press, 2017." *Church History* 87, no. 1 (2018): 328

¹³⁰. Meulemann, "The Two Faces of American," 254.

¹³¹. *Ibid.*, 253.

¹³² *Ibid.*

to science and technology tend to oppose the divinity attached to Christianity.¹³³ The scientific facts and findings in most cases have been considered unable to authenticate the presence of God, and therefore, consider him a myth. Engraving such perceptions on the thoughts of children and adults within the Christian social settings gradually wears out the strong beliefs about the existence and value of God.¹³⁴ As propounded by Salamuddin, religion is gradually becoming a myth, and many social settings no longer hinge on it as a sense of identity or belonging.¹³⁵ This dynamic shift has cast a dark shadow on the propagation of the gospel and crippled the ability of Christians to preach the gospel freely and authoritatively.¹³⁶

2.10.5.1 Distinct Perceptions between Faith Groups

The distinction like Christian doctrines around the various faith groups tends to spell the existing difference in perceptions. As afore-mentioned, Christianity is multifaceted and having diverse attachments and affiliations that have different views, opinions, and perspectives on the role of God in society.¹³⁷ While one group considers certain issues completely ungodly, others consider them right and not having any negative impact on their lives. Besides, Christianity has been affected by cultural affiliations in which case different cultures have merged to come up with distinct value systems that in most cases contradicts Christianity. The religious components are conjoined with the culture to define the people's way of living. Most Christian affiliated cultures have distinct beliefs in terms of dressing, language, morality, and foods taken. In places where certain foods are considered taboo and unacceptable, the Christian values often tend to support such and provide the members with sufficient

¹³³. Ibid., 251.

¹³⁴. Whitehead, "Religious Organizations and Homosexuality, 297.

¹³⁵. Salamuddin, "Seyyed Hossein Nasr's Concept, 34.

¹³⁶. Charles H. Kraft and Marguerite G. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2005): 56.

¹³⁷. Zuckerman, "Holy Wars, Civil Wars, 205.

grounds to reject such foods.¹³⁸ The same applies to clothing, mode of conduct, and social morality.

2.10.6 Theoretical Views versus Historical Perspectives

The history of Christian engagement in misconduct commenced many centuries ago and has become widespread in the present age through propagation by various technological elements. The spread of secularism into the social scene marked the beginning of the decline in Christian doctrines in various parts of the community. Zuckerman argued that although secularism has been considered a key opposing issue to Christianity, it lacks the merits of qualifying as arguments against Christianity.¹³⁹ According to Zuckerman, the secularism concepts in any social setting do not put in question Christian conducts, but rather, aids in their advancements through actions that conjoin both the elements. Departing from Zuckerman's perception of secularism, Beckford argued that it stems from social science and mainly develops from the tenets of social issues.¹⁴⁰ One of the major strengths of the growth of Christianity and its consideration among the largest doctrines stemmed from its separation from the political scene and distinguished as a sacred body.¹⁴¹ The term "secular" commenced from the church in which they referred to priests that were ordained outside the church. The process of secularization, therefore, involved the relief of priests and other religious leaders from their sacred vows to break the commitments made in church servitude. The term rolled out into the social scene and gained wide use in referring to the presumptuous sinning propagated in many countries reducing the religious influence on the social, political, and economic elements.¹⁴²

¹³⁸. Ibid., 205.

¹³⁹. Ibid., 209.

¹⁴⁰ James A. Beckford, "Response to Adam Possamai," *Journal of Sociology* 53, no. 4 (2017): 839.

¹⁴¹. Zuckerman, "Holy Wars, Civil Wars," 203.

¹⁴². Ibid., 232.

Since the time of the Roman Empire and the church dominance, the social settings have been awash with various religious doctrines that have formed the basis of conduct among different groups of people. While the early aged marked increased and rapid spread of Christianity, the reduction in political influence had a major impact on the strengthening of the Christian doctrines around key setups.¹⁴³ The ability to recruit people into the churches has significantly declined, and at the same time, the pursuit of Christianity has been taken for granted. The decline in the church's political influence also led to the weakening of the ethical prescriptions that the religious systems had placed on the various social systems. As such, the historical context of secularization is defined by the act of various political groups breaking away from the ethical standards and thresholds set by the Church and establishing institutions of power that lack or have weakened Christian influence.¹⁴⁴ The religious situation around the globe is therefore increasingly becoming complex as the power structures attempt to establish systems that lack conformity to the church rules and regulations.

The elements of religion perception at the individual and collective levels have defined the depths of religious grip within the social scene. In terms of the individual religiosity concept, majority of Christians confess their belief in God and express willingness to pursue the tenets of the Christian doctrines, however, the rise in secularism and establishment of political systems that lack ideal moral virtues has led to the weakening of many believers' faiths and erosion of other support systems that encouraged Christian ethics.¹⁴⁵ As a result, nearly 50% of believers have dropped or had their faiths weakened by vast social events.¹⁴⁶ The

¹⁴³. George Pattison, *Thinking about God in an Age of Technology*, (Oxford University Press on Demand, 2005): 5.

¹⁴⁴ Michael S. Burdett, "Assessing the Field of Science and Religion: Advice from the Next Generation," *Zygon* 52, no. 3 (2017): 747.

¹⁴⁵. Pattison, *Thinking about God*, 8.

¹⁴⁶. Webster, "Technology, Ethics and Religious, 7.

contemporary age of science and modernity has led to the formation of non-religious and secular systems that do not uphold the basics of Christian doctrines and virtues.¹⁴⁷ Such systems advocate for other rights and structures that quell the significance of Christianity in most sectors. Despite being established as the worlds' largest religion, the age of secularism and modernity has ignited a spirited war against Christianity leading to the falling of the weak and timid believers.

The drastic transformations in most political systems from religious affiliations to non-religious set-ups have led to a generation of religiously lawless people that confess belonging to a given denomination but are not bound by the principles that govern the codes of conduct. Contentions have also risen over the impact of modernity and the evolution of social systems on Christianity. One of the arguments tabled by Casanova indicated that the concept of modernity and globalization might not justify the decline in Christian doctrines around the globe. Casanova further argues that the Christian values and doctrines have undergone successful transitions into the modern trends and, therefore, may not justify the explanations provided regarding the secularization that has become widespread in the present age.¹⁴⁸ Casanova presents the evidence of countries such as France, East German, and the Czech Republic where religion is at its deathbed and not attributed to modernization but facing strong debates for its removal from national politics. Such countries established governments that did not allow religion or related activities to dominate the social-economic and political scenes. As such, Casanova's argument hinges on the notion that when referring to the decline in religious beliefs, focus on the historical patterns should take preeminence over the issue of modernity and technology that have been widely propagated in various studies.¹⁴⁹ The lack of

¹⁴⁷. Pattison, *Thinking about God*, 9.

¹⁴⁸. José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (University of Chicago Press, 2011): 47.

¹⁴⁹. *Ibid.*

political empowerment has significantly weakened the religious structures in most nations and denying the power it initially had during the reign of the Roman Empire.

The emerging trend of presumptuous sinning among Christians, where despite knowing the biblical precepts and commands, they chose to sin, has been justified through factors spanning decreased church attendance, with a large portion of the congregation strongly believing in the doctrines but lacking the commitment to sustain the virtues.¹⁵⁰ Interestingly, the majority of Christian believers tend to confess belonging and affiliation to certain faith groups but they fail to abide by the codes of conduct and standards of living that are set for the society members. Religious groups tend to act as the source of consolation during times of crisis, disasters, or in the performance of certain rites that require religious involvement. The churches have been attributed as instruments of peace, but only considered important when divine intervention seems inevitable.¹⁵¹ Despite the recognition of the church as a source of consolation, its duties have been significantly reduced to coronary perspectives, where their roles become effective only during certain occasions. The rise in the perceptions of various social factors and elements from scientific points of view and lacking religious interpretation has been seen as a major threat that has largely influenced the growth of Christianity.¹⁵² The modern social elements have led to the establishment of people that are less dependent on religion and highly knowledgeable of the various societies. The elimination of illiteracy among the population has provided many people with sufficient grounds to abhor religion and view it as an inconsiderable issue within the social setting. The debate on illiteracy

¹⁵⁰. Michael Fuller, “Big Data, Ethics and Religion: New Questions from a New Science.” *Religions* 8, no. 5 (2017): 88.

¹⁵¹. Marvin K. Mayers, *Christianity Confronts Culture: A Strategy for Cross-Cultural Evangelism* (Zondervan, 1987): 56.

¹⁵². Darrell R. Jackson, “Constructing Futures: Outlining a Transhumanist Vision of the Future and the Challenge to Christian Theology of its Proposed Uses of New and Future Developments in Technology,” *The Journal of Faith and Science Exchange*, 2000: 23.

and Christianity has drawn varied responses as the majority of the groups consider them to have a strong correlation based on the historical context.¹⁵³ Multiple studies attempting to relate Christianity and illiteracy have shown that Christianity thrives in most less literate regions compared to the illiterate ones. In supporting the notion, Berger argued that the majority of the illiterate persons tend to lack the common knowledge required for survival within the social settings and therefore peg their beliefs in God for sustenance and help.¹⁵⁴ Casanova, however, argued that the biblical emphasis on the poor could be the reason for the strong attachment and correlations with the illiteracy.¹⁵⁵ The people are compelled by their situations to hope in the supernatural for their help. The literate and educated rather tend to have most possessions causing them to work hard to earn living.

Such persons tend to have little or no regard for God, and in most cases do not subscribe to any religious belief. While secularization commenced from continents such as Europe and spread to other parts, the forces of modernity and technology have made them widespread, leading to its promulgation around the globe.¹⁵⁶ The commencement of westernization led to a significant decline in the religious belief systems that once held most social settings together. As aforementioned, the role of religion in any setting aimed to provide a source of belonging and origin, and further provide a rationale for present and future events.¹⁵⁷ Through religion, most people perceive their lives and get the assurance of the future. However, the scientific inventions and innovations slowly disapprove of the religious

¹⁵³. Hilary E. Wyss, *Writing Indians: Literacy, Christianity, and Native Community in Early America* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2003): 34.

¹⁵⁴. Don Kulick and Christopher Stroud, "Christianity, Cargo and Ideas of Self: Patterns of Literacy in a Papua-New-Guinean Village," *Man* (1990): 287.

¹⁵⁵. Casanova, *Public Religions*, 34.

¹⁵⁶. Alastair Pennycook, "The Modern Mission: The Language Effects of Christianity," *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education* 4, no. 2 (2005): 138.

¹⁵⁷. Zust, "Evangelical Christian Pastors' Lived," 676.

beliefs of God's existence and replace them with scientific facts that are strongly and extensively evidenced. The rise and propagation of such belief systems cause a gradual dilution of the social values that have existed over the years.¹⁵⁸ Besides, most social scenes have been proliferated with the notion of human rights where the states grant individuals the authority to practice their preferred religious beliefs without exercising much control on the moral standards set in religion.¹⁵⁹ With the states protecting such fundamental rights, people have engaged in all sorts of worship, which have led to a significant decline in Christian virtues. To this extent, Hughes observed that issues such as Satanism and devil worship had proliferated the social scene, and increasingly causing many people to fall away from the biblical gospel and pursuing the other religious beliefs that have co-exists within the social scene.¹⁶⁰ The related forms of worship have further preached secularism and reinforced the scientific knowledge over the Christian doctrines that initially formed the basis of most social foundations.

Based on the above historical overview, it is evident that Christianity is facing internal opposition from various forces within the social, political, economic, and cultural paradigm. The demotion of Christianity from political structures have exposed the people to distinct vices that have caused them to increasingly become ungodly and engage in activities that do not embrace the biblical doctrines. The inclusion of the church into the state political structures significantly led to a spirited growth and strengthening of the church in various regions around the world; the age of knowledge has however limited the church strength to the illit-

¹⁵⁸. Robert Elkington, "Adversity in Pastoral Leadership: Are Pastors Leaving the Ministry in Record Numbers, and If So, Why?" *Verbum et Ecclesia* 34, no. 1 (2013), 9.

¹⁵⁹. Toft, "Re-Imagining Bisexuality and Christianity, 549.

¹⁶⁰. Jeanine Thweatt-Bates, *Cyborg Selves: A Theological Anthropology of the Posthuman* (Routledge, 2016): 89.

erate and poor societies where the populations are easily convinced into believing in the supernatural forces for divine assistance and intervention. Jeanine postulates that akin the case of the ancient Roman Catholic Church where religion was a key issue, and had political dominance due to the provisions made by the members through offerings and tithes, such is the case in the poor regions where the vulnerable persons are convinced to give to God and in turn receive God's blessings.¹⁶¹ Jeanine further notes that whereas the thoughts regarding faith in receiving God's blessings after giving is widely circulated, little scholarly evidence has proved its existence.¹⁶² The scriptural perspective supporting the notion of giving has been highly misused in most societies as some pastors, and other religious leaders use it as a method to accumulate wealth from the unsuspecting members. Most churches in the current social setting have also faced increased criticism for majorly preaching about tithes and giving rather than focusing on the edification of the members.¹⁶³ Christopher notes that most people tend to run from church due to the rise and spread of the prosperity gospel that seeks to gather wealth from believers.¹⁶⁴ Moreover, studies have further indicated that such perceptions have been used as a defense by secular groups for not joining Christianity.

Yet, Christianity is based on the concept of emulating Christ and becoming a role model to others in the social setting. Schultze argued that the Disciples of Christ were identified by their deeds rather than telling people that they were with Christ.¹⁶⁵ At Antioch, the disciples were first called Christians, an indication that they acted like Christ, and therefore earned the title.¹⁶⁶ Christianity in the current social context hinges on various doctrines that

¹⁶¹. Ibid.

¹⁶². Ibid., 234.

¹⁶³. Southgate, "Environmental/Ethics", 67.

¹⁶⁴. Lori Fazzino, "Leaving the Church Behind: Applying a Deconversion Perspective to Evangelical Exit Narratives," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 29, no. 2 (2014): 251.

¹⁶⁵ Schultze, *Christianity and the Mass*, 53.

¹⁶⁶ Acts 11:20-21.

over time have been attached to the cultural and social setups leading to a strong connection between the believers' actions and the action of the believers.¹⁶⁷ In most Christian settings, people are taught to remain modest and conduct themselves in a certain manner conforming to the doctrines relating to the same. Besides, the concept of Christianity hinges on the notion of self-sacrifice, love, and accepting to suffer for Christ's sake.¹⁶⁸ The society, therefore, has various expectations from Christians, in terms of conduct, actions, and upholding of values deemed to define the tenets of the biblical values and the significance of committing and submitting to the same.

Morals in various societies are distinctively perceived depending on the various established value thresholds and standards. While actions may be regarded differently in distinct cultures, the significance tends to affect the meanings they portray about the individuals. The aforementioned theories point at various factors as the sources of Christians falling or engaging in unacceptable conduct within the social settings. Unlike the other eras, the present-day social setting has increasingly exhibited cases malpractice among Christians, with many falling apart, and abandoning the commitment and intentions of preaching the gospel and leading people into the Kingdom of Christ.¹⁶⁹ The trend has been characterized by increased engagement in issues such as alcoholism, sexual misconduct in the church, lack of preaching the gospel, increased wrangles among Christians, and people preferring scientific beliefs over Christianity.

¹⁶⁷. Leslie Francis and Mandy Robbins, "Not Fitting in and Getting Out: Psychological Type and Congregational Satisfaction among Anglican Churchgoers in England," *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 15, no. 10 (2012): 1023.

¹⁶⁸. Janet B. Eccles, "Changing 'Emotional Regimes': Their Impact on Beliefs and Values in Some Older Women," *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 33, no. 1 (2012): 13

¹⁶⁹. Joel Robbins, "The Anthropology of Christianity: Unity, Diversity, New Directions: An Introduction to Supplement 10," *Current Anthropology* 55, no. S10 (2014): S000-S000.49

In the modernity theory, the element of technology and the contemporary trend seems to cause the overall impact in which the majority of Christians prefer to conform to the new standards and abandon the biblical teachings and doctrines. According to Robison, modernity has set new standards upon which various elements in the society are measured and weighed to determine the overall direction.¹⁷⁰ For instance, the expansion of the social scene to include multiple cultures has led to the dilution of the social and religious values that held Christianity in place over the years. The moral grounds upon which Christianity was based are gradually wading as different thoughts, theories, and values take over the social scene. Unlike the past years, many societies have come to terms with issues that were once considered taboo, and unheard of in most societies. For instance, homosexuality and idolatry were unmentionable in most societies and the persons engaging in such acts did so in utmost secrecy to prevent social profiling and lack of acceptance. However, the present-day social system has been permeated by various social vices that allow people to participate in such activities freely and not consider the likely impacts on the existing and the upcoming generations.

The process of cultural integrations has also led to the acceptance of certain deeds within social settings. Many people have over the years believed that Christianity is defined by certain key tenets that existed since the beginning of the gospel. However, the introduction of new cultures mainly propagated by the element of globalization has permitted all sorts of evil behaviors and beliefs within the social scene.¹⁷¹ The Christians in the current age conform to the new social standards and at the same time confessing Christ. Confusion has in most cases arisen over the notion of whether Christians should conduct themselves in a given manner or not. For instance, in the music industry, the introduction of new cultures has led to the integration of secular and gospel music, a factor that has strongly affected the content of

¹⁷⁰. Robbins, "The Anthropology of Christianity," 52.

¹⁷¹. Elkington, "Adversity in Pastoral Leadership," 4.

the music and the original intent of the producers. One of the factors that have remained inherent in the current social scene is that the rising majority of Christian music tends to lean towards artistic development and financial benefits rather than preaching Christianity to people around the globe. The Majority of Christian artists also tend to adopt secular models into their music to make them appealing and draw large followings. Such perceptions have led to double standards in Christianity, where many people especially new believers consider such individuals as role models and attempt to emulate their characters that in other instances embrace secularism. The artists in most cases tend to copy secular music from the mode of dressing, the style of singing or presentations, which in most cases involve rapping or dancing in a certain manner, and furthermore, the nature of messages sent via the songs. Sawchuk argued that whereas the majority of the songs mention the name of God, the content does not explicitly imply the underlined concept.¹⁷² Many people have therefore become victims of such actions causing them to fall astray.

Globalization has also been attributed to the rise of new communication channels. The current social scene is awash with various means of communication such as television, radio, mobile phones, and the internet. Each of these communications has replaced the verbal contact that people have enjoyed over the years. The past social settings were characterized by increased physical interactions and communications between parties. However, the current trends and changes in technology have minimized the use of physical contacts in communications and mainly let people engage in online connections via phone calls, social media, print media, and the internet. This trend has largely and extensively been cited among the issues affecting the rise and growth of Christianity in the current age. The introduction of certain elements such as Christian programs over the television was considered positive moves to ensure that the word of Christ was communicated to many people across the social setting;

¹⁷². Sawchuk et al., "Exploring Power and Gender," 504.

however, it acted as a double-edged sword, ushering in both positive and negative impacts among the believers.

2.10.6.1 Christian Programs on the Media

In the present American context, a majority of the population would prefer to watch Christian related programs over the televisions compared to attending a church service.¹⁷³ While television disseminates information relating to Christianity, studies have revealed that the impacts are significantly different compared to when attending a local church service. Sawchuk argued that during services, people tend to praise and worship God, actions that have formed the tenets of Christianity for decades. Besides, the clergy and the pastors often engage the believers through sections of prayers and intercession (Protestants) which has been cited as an increasing personal connection with God. The new methods of worshipping God from the comfort of the houses have been cited as not having any significant impact on Christian growth. The majority of Christians practicing such actions have not displayed strong commitments towards embracing the Christian mode of conduct that is prescribed within any setting. Numerous studies have emphasized the importance of direct contact during social relationships. According to Bandura, the concept of social identity stems from both indirect and direct contact between individuals. Bandura considers direct contacts to hold more weight compared to the indirect contacts that mainly involve virtual forms of communication. One of the key observations made by Bandura is that the concept of direct interaction is driven by the notion that it strongly influences social conceptions.¹⁷⁴ The lack of first-hand contact leads little or insignificant influence on a persons' character. The use of the internet and the media mainly provides a virtual link between individuals rather than direct contact. Besides, only certain selective information is delivered to the viewer, an implication that they

¹⁷³. Hout et al., "The Demographic Imperative," 500.

¹⁷⁴. Albert Bandura, "On Deconstructing Commentaries Regarding Alternative Theories of Self-Regulation," (2015): 1029.

do not fully connect with the society in its entirety. Normal direct social interactions are characterized by corrections, learning, and unlearning through a series of actions. However, the introduction of the indirect contacts has led to the development of characters without proper guidance on the ideal paths and ways of relating or emulating certain vices. The result is Christians and other members of the population blindly emulate the newly introduced forms of actions without any corrections on the likely impacts in their livelihood.¹⁷⁵ This trend justifies the secular dressing that has become common among Christians who believe in modest living. Southgate noted that people need to constantly interact with one another to experience social growth and development.¹⁷⁶ The intrusion of the erroneous beliefs makes it difficult for Christians to correlate smoothly with one another since people live in virtual worlds through which they engage in actions that in the end affect their lives.

The present-day Christian's perception is therefore clouded with uncertainties regarding the right or moral thresholds for conduct. The lack of interactions makes them believe in the new erroneous beliefs and indoctrinations that lack conformity to the word of God. As many Christians embrace technology and increasingly engage in actions that do not edify their lives, they lose the sense of social contact and therefore cannot freely interact with the others within the social scene.¹⁷⁷ The negative influence in their beliefs leads to the distortion of the strong Christian values that guided their modes of conduct leading to conformity to the new standards propagated by the media. Besides, Festinger argues that humans tend to possess the innate drive to compare themselves with others.¹⁷⁸

The comparison helps in the formation of social identities which in the end leads to the transformation of individual thoughts and perspectives regarding certain social values. As

¹⁷⁵. Burdett, *Assessing the Field*, 751.

¹⁷⁶. Southgate, "Environmental/Ethics", 63.

¹⁷⁷. Pattison, *Thinking about God*, 34.

¹⁷⁸. Leon Festinger, "A theory of social comparison processes." *Human Relations* 7, no. 2 (1954): 119.

people compare themselves to others within the social paradigm, their overall perception changes and causes them to view issues from different perspectives. The new technologies and modernity developments have therefore led to a change in perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs surrounding the interpersonal values among Christians.¹⁷⁹ As the current developments deny people the chance to physically interact with one another and limit them to the shared online contacts, they establish a set of personal values that in the end erodes their Christian values. The result is conformity to the new social standards set within the social settings.

The theories also point at the inherent lack of fellowship among Christians within the current social setting. The Bible encourages the concept of Christians coming together and sharing their thoughts, words, and belongings. The apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:26 urged the church not to give up the habit of meeting together as it edified their relationship with God.¹⁸⁰ In the current setting, this concept can be attributed to the notion of grouping where various groups within the social setting tend to influence the nature of an individual's character. Studies on the role of groupings within the social paradigm have revealed that it plays a major role in defining the nature of the relationship between individuals. One of the theorists such as Bandura attributed grouping as an instinctive human need. The study by Van Veelen considered group membership as an essential element in the provision of directions, reproof, corrections, and security among others.¹⁸¹ The grouping process enables people to share resources and develop beneficial affiliations based on the common knowledge and beliefs shared among them. The majority of in-group formation occurs through voluntary actions from the members while others stem from the social forces that compel people into coming

¹⁷⁹. Casanova, *Public Religions*, 67.

¹⁸⁰ 1 Corinthians 14:26.

¹⁸¹. Ruth van Veelen, Sabine Otten, Mara Cadinu, and Nina Hansen, "An Integrative Model of Social Identification: Self-Stereotyping and Self-Anchoring as Two Cognitive Pathways," *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 20, no. 1 (2016): 26.

together to form the groups. Others are obtained by virtues of ethnicities or parental ties.¹⁸²

Religious groupings have also been considered a major part of social influence that influences the lives of people.

Studies on religious affiliations have revealed that approximately 60% of Americans were brought up from a religious background grouping.¹⁸³ Nonetheless, the decision to maintain ownership of such groups remains upon the individual. Many people tend to dissociate themselves from religious backgrounds and affiliations upon which they were brought due to factors such as social influence. One of the major observations by Tropp and Wright is that the extent of group identification dwells on how the person includes the group attributes and beliefs in his social identity.¹⁸⁴ The extent of group relations tends to consider contacts as a major cognitive element in the interaction process. Such collaborations define the group goals, beliefs, actions, and commitment towards common objectives. Through group connections, people develop the ability to become a significant part of the greater whole. The similarities shared between members causes them to become fully engaged and actively participating in the behaviors of the other members. The group values and attitudes often lead to the establishment of norms that define the standards of actions between them. According to Tropp and Wright, norms tend to guide and predict the acceptable form of conduct within the social setting.¹⁸⁵ The shared norms in most cases regulate the group beliefs, values, and choices relating to certain issues within the social setting.

The current social paradigm consists of norms and beliefs that have largely defined and controlled the events within the social paradigms. Believers' affiliation to such roles has rapidly determined the strength of their faiths alongside the commitments towards believing

¹⁸². Casanova, *Public Religions*, 68.

¹⁸³. Ruotsila, "The FBI and Religion, 329.

¹⁸⁴ Joel A. Tropp and Stephen J. Wright, "Computational Methods for Sparse Solution of Linear Inverse Problems," *Proceedings of the IEEE* 98, no. 6 (2010): 948.

¹⁸⁵. Thweatt-Bates, *Cyborg Selves*, 35.

is such faiths. The social groupings have been mainly formed through the inherent diversity that is spread through shifts in work locations, easy transportation from one place to another, the exchange of cultures through inter-marriages, and the use of technology that virtually creates a social interaction setup where people continuously share and exchange ideas. As foreign cultures increasingly penetrate Christian societies, people tend to observe and copy various actions and conducts that others have. Other groups such as workplaces tend to expose people to different cultures that make them depart from the Christian moral values to the ideals of the new environment. Such has been attributed to the rise of ungodliness among Christians and the rising cases of departure from the ministry.¹⁸⁶ The groupings formed in the current societies tend to lack the religious ingredient that once defined the norms that governed their modes of conduct.

The final element in the Christian history dwells on the framing theory. As aforementioned, Christianity has disintegrated into different parts since its formation in the early years after Christ ascension.¹⁸⁷ The Roman Catholic has been cited as the initial Christian church and the body from which the other churches stemmed. One of the factors that led to the separation of the Roman Catholic Church from the others is the sharp difference in Christian doctrines relating to celibacy and repository among others. The Catholic Church has a set of doctrines that govern the conduct of the members and regulate their actions and commitments. The other parties, such as the Protestants, also while separating from the Catholic Church, had a set of beliefs and doctrines that governed their mode of conduct. The framing theory considers such issues as the frames that determine the various points of view upon which social elements are perceived.

¹⁸⁶. Fuller, "Big Data, Ethics," 88.

¹⁸⁷. Wyss, *Writing Indians*, 78.

The framing theory describes the rise of contentions in the various social actions and the factors leading to such contentions. The present-day social setting is marred with various beliefs and actions that raise contention between the churches and their mode of worship. For instance, the Protestants have in most cases considered the Catholic use of the image of the Holy Mary as an idol and not conforming to the biblical standards. The Catholics have also pointed fingers at the other churches for not practicing certain parts of the gospel.¹⁸⁸ The difference in the beliefs causes people to engage in certain actions that in most cases lack conformity to the biblical standards.

The above theories lay the foundation upon which the modern-day Christian actions that can be analyzed and interpreted in the context of the research problem. The escalating trend of the behavior and malpractices among Christians has been considered a major threat to the spreading of the gospel. The increased occurrence of the various social trends tends to explain the rise of ungodliness in the current society. The biblical prophecies provide proper grounds upon which the current events can be judged and justified based on their contexts and impacts on the believers. The literature reviewed from the theoretical perspectives justify the occurrence and spread of unstoppable misconducts that in the end cripple the relationship between Christians and God. As the societies develop, and globalization shaping the future, the changes in trends seem inevitable and require Christians to engage in much stronger actions that will lead to the edification of their relationships with both God and fellow believers.

The rise in contradictive social values tends to erode the strong Christian doctrines that have been in existence over the years. The subsequent analysis focuses on the theoretical points of view upon which the research problem will be viewed. According to multiple social studies, the precipitating factors for the unstoppable misconduct and neglect of Christians

¹⁸⁸. Smith, *The Church and Politics in Chile*, 34.

outside the ministries' duties usually stem from the factors relating to modernity, technology, and the framing theory. Most of the above factors have precipitated cases of secularization and led to the increased departure from the gospel and causing people to dwell strongly on other beliefs that do not sufficiently portray the ideal Christian attributes.

2.10. 7 Approaches for Reducing the Occurrence of the Above Behaviors among Believers

Given the many researches about Christian deviation from the teaching, studies have proposed various methods through which the misconducts can be reduced. Most of the proposed techniques peg on the need for the church to transform its approach towards social dealings. One of the major steps that have been proposed by various scholars is unity among Christians. Christians tend to lack unity due to the increased denominations around the world. The denominations have distinct teachings and doctrines that in some instances contradict one another. As such, most Christian denominations are often at constant conflict, wrangles, and lashing out criticism on one another. The rising criticism between denominations has cast many Christians into confusion regarding the ideal means of worshiping or ways of conduct. While certain denominational doctrines prohibit some conduct, others allow members to engage in the same freely. For instance, the Catholics recommend prayers through the Rosary while Protestants believe in literally praying to God. Eliminating such conflicts in beliefs can harmonize Christians and unite them through common values and belief systems.

The other approach for eliminating the issue within the social scene includes increased preaching of the gospel. The biblical book of Hosea chapter 4 versus 6 states that "My people perish due to lack of knowledge."¹⁸⁹ Most Christians lack the knowledge about the appropriate conduct that is expected within the social system. Churches should, therefore, take the mandate of teaching people about the best way to avoid sin and engage in practices that are supported by biblical precepts. Most churches have deviated from the true doctrines

¹⁸⁹. Hosea 4:12

leading to misguidance among believers. Sound Christian teachings will help in defining the path toward godliness leading to reduced instances of sin.

Increased presumptuous sinning among Christians is increasingly becoming a common trend in the current social paradigm. The above review of literature has shown that whereas most societies and cultural beliefs were established on Christian values, factors such as technology, modernity, and social media influence the Christian values embedded in the social and cultural norms. From the analysis of the above literature, it is evident that technology has influenced Christian conducts several ways. Educating believers on technology and its benefits provide enlightenment regarding its positive and negative impacts. Priests, believers, and even the governments should consider intensifying teachings about the effect of technology and modernity on social values. The presence of such teachings educates them on the responsible use of social media and preventing the temptations to access irrelevant content. Finally, churches and other religious groups should set up educative pages on social media to spread Christian values and teachings. The findings of this paper will provide clear perceptions regarding the levels of secularism around the globe, and how Christians can overcome the evils.

3.0 Chapter Three: Results

This section presents the results of the survey. The questionnaires used were semi-structured due to the need to collect both quantitative and qualitative data regarding the occurrence of the study phenomenon. The data presentation section divides into three portions, namely the demographic data, quantitative survey responses, and the open-ended questions responses. Each of the portions reflects the outcome of the survey.

Table 3.1.1 Demographic Data

This section the personal information of the respondents is described. The data is visualized into tables and charts to provide a clear perspective of the demographic information.

Statistics

	What is your age	What is your gender	Do you identify with any Christian faith	How Many Years
N Valid	120	120	120	120
Missing	0	0	0	0

The statistics on table 3.1.1 represents the number of participants and demographic information. The age, gender, identification with any faith-based group, and the number of years are taken into account.

Table 3.1.2 What is Your Age?

What is your age?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 18-25 Years	44	36.7	36.7	36.7
26-35 Years	48	40.0	40.0	76.7
36-45 years	24	20.0	20.0	96.7
46 and above	4	3.3	3.3	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

From the information on table 3.1.2, the largest number of respondents fall within the 26-35 age category, followed by the 18-25 years, then 36-46, and finally the 46 and above categories.

Table 3.1.3 What is Your Gender?

What is Your Gender				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	52	43.3	43.3	43.3
Female	68	56.7	56.7	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Gender constitutes a key element in any church setting. People from different gender groups tend to have different levels of religious affiliations. The participants in this survey

include both genders, although the female gender emerges among the largest group. From table 3.1.3 outcome, 56.7% comprised females while 43.3% comprised the males.

Table 3.1.4. Do You Identify with any Christian Denomination?

Do you identify with any Christian Denomination				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	120	100.0	100.0	100.0

Christianity comprises various denominations with distinct doctrines. Membership to a given denomination determines the extent of commitment to the faith. In table 3.1.4, all the respondents indicated that they belonged to a faith-based group, an affirmation that they were active believers.

Table 3.1.5 How Many Years Have You Been in The Denomination?

How Many Years Have You Been in The Denomination?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Below 5 Years	52	43.3	43.3	43.3
Valid 6-10 Years	48	40.0	40.0	83.3
Valid Over 11 years	20	16.7	16.7	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

The number of years spent with the denomination is also assessed to determine the levels of attachment and commitment. Based on the outcome of table 3.1.5, the largest number of respondents indicated that they had been members of their respective denominations

for under five years, followed by the respondents for 6-10 years' group, and finally the over 11 years' category. All the participants, therefore, are attached to the specific denomination for a significant number of years.

3.2 Survey Responses

This section required the respondents to provide feedback on various statements given about the Christian lifestyle choices. Most of these statements relate to the daily events and activities in which Christians were engaged and which they perceived to negatively or positively influence their lives. Below are the survey responses in terms of the frequency. The responses reveal their perceptions of the elements observed in the literature review as having a direct impact on Christians.

Table 3.1.6 I Attend At least 75% of the Church Meetings

At Least I Attend 75% of the Church Meetings.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	44	36.7	36.7	36.7
Agree	60	50.0	50.0	86.7
Valid Neutral	8	6.7	6.7	93.3
Disagree	8	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

For a Christian, church attendance remains a highly significant determinant of their faith in God. The outcomes illustrated in table 3.1.6 revealed that 86.7% of the respondents attested to attending at least 75% of the church services. 13.4%, on the other hand, confessed to either remaining neutral or disagree with the perception.

Table 3.1.7 Church Attendance is on Decline over the Past Years**Church Attendance is on the decline over the past years.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	52	43.3	43.3	43.3
Valid Agree	36	30.0	30.0	73.3
Valid Neutral	16	13.3	13.3	86.7
Valid Disagree	16	13.3	13.3	100.0
Valid Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Reports on the reviewed literature indicated a significant decline in church attendance. This question sought to assess the participants' perceptions regarding the same. According to table 3.1.7, 73.3% agreed that there is a significant decline in church attendance over the years. The remaining 26.6% either remained neutral or disagreed with the notion.

Table 3.1.8 Money Determines How Well One Is Treated in the Church

Money presents one of the major factors that have dominated the doctrines in the present-day religious groups. The respondents provided their perceptions regarding the impact of money in the church.

Money Determines How Well One Is Treated In the Church

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	52	43.3	43.3	43.3
Valid Agree	52	43.3	43.3	86.7

Neutral	16	13.3	13.3	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

According to the responses, 86.6% agreed that money determined how people were treated in the church while 13.3% remained neutral.

Table 3.1.9 I Know Fellow Believers Who Practice Secularism despite Confessing Being Born Again

I Know Fellow Believers Who Practice Secularism despite Confessing Being Born Again

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	44	36.7	36.7	36.7
Agree	48	40.0	40.0	76.7
Neutral	16	13.3	13.3	90.0
Valid Disagree	8	6.7	6.7	96.7
Strongly Disagree	4	3.3	3.3	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

The table 3.1.9 depicts responses for knowledge about other Christians practicing secularism. The responses received many positive responses with 76.7% agreeing that the majority of believers within their circles engage in ungodly practices despite confessing to belong to the Christian faith. The remaining 10% and 13.3% disagreed and remained neutral respectively.

Table 3.2.0 Secular Music Excites Me

Secular music entertains me					
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	Strongly Agree	20	16.7	16.7	16.7
	Agree	64	53.3	53.3	70.0
	Neutral	20	16.7	16.7	86.7
	Disagree	12	10.0	10.0	96.7
	Strongly Disagree	4	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Secular music has dominated the current social scene, and it is increasingly becoming a norm. The table 3.2.0 responses reveal that 70% of the respondents agreed that secular music entertained them, 16.7% remained neutral, while 13.3% disagreed with the notion.

Table 3.2.0. I Believe Listening to Secular Music but Not Practicing What It Says Has No Effect on a Christian

I Believe Listening to Secular Music but Not Practicing What It Says Has No Effect on a Christian

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	Strongly Agree	48	40.0	40.0	40.0
	Agree	56	46.7	46.7	86.7

Neutral	16	13.3	13.3	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Furthermore, the feedback was sought to inquire about the impact of secular music on Christians. The outcome revealed that 86.7% believed that listening to secular music and not practicing what the music teaches has minimum effect on their Christianity.

Table 3.2.1 When Alone I Access Erotic Materials on the Web

When Alone I Access Erotic Materials on the Web

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	60	50.0	50.0	50.0
Neutral	32	26.7	26.7	76.7
Valid Disagree	24	20.0	20.0	96.7
Strongly Disagree	4	3.3	3.3	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Access to erotic content has been encouraged with the rise of smartphones and computers. Technological gadgets such as computers and smartphones provide instant access to erotic contents, predisposing people to adultery and evil desires. The table 3.2.1 responses revealed that about 50% of the respondents get access to erotic materials on the web when alone, 26.7% remained neutral, while 23.3% disagreed and strongly disagreed with the perception.

3.2.2. At Least Every Day I Am Tempted to View Explicit Contents on the Web

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	64	53.3	53.3	53.3
Agree				
Neutral	36	30.0	30.0	83.3
Disagree	12	10.0	10.0	93.3
Strongly Disagree	8	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

The responses to this question took into account that the access to the erotic content becomes a habit, and therefore inquired the frequency of engagement. The table 3.2.2 outcome shows that 53.3% agreed to view the erotic content each day, 30% remained neutral, and 16.7% disagreed.

3.2.3. Prefer Online Sermons to Attending Church Services

I Prefer Online Sermons to Attending Church Services

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	36	30.0	30.0	30.0
Strongly Agree				
Agree	56	46.7	46.7	76.7

Neutral	24	20.0	20.0	96.7
Disagree	4	3.3	3.3	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

The Responses to this statement demonstrates that 76.7% agreed that they love watching church sermons at the comfort of their homes rather than gathering with the other brethren in church services, 20% of the respondents indicated neutral while 3.3% disagreed with the perception.

Table 3.2.4. I Study the Bible Daily

I Study the Bible Daily

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	12	10.0	10.0	10.0
Agree	32	26.7	26.7	36.7
Neutral	48	40.0	40.0	76.7
Disagree	24	20.0	20.0	96.7
Strongly Disagree	4	3.3	3.3	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

The extent of Bible study defines the strength of a believer's faith. In table 3.2.4 context, the analysis required an indication of frequency of studying the bible. The outcome shows that 36.7% studied the Bible at least once per day, 40% expressed uncertainty on their bible study consistency, while 23.3% disagreed that they did not study the bible daily

Table 3.2.5. Peer Influence Is a Major Issue in My Christian Life
Peer Influence Is a Major Issue in My Christian Life

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	24	20.0	20.0	20.0
Valid Agree	56	46.7	46.7	66.7
Valid Neutral	36	30.0	30.0	96.7
Valid Disagree	4	3.3	3.3	100.0
Valid Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Peers both in youthful and elderly ages influence an individual's character. The respondents were asked to indicate whether the relationship with peers had any impact on their Christian faith. The table 3.2.5 shows that 66.7% agreed, 30% remained neutral, and 3.3% disagreed that interaction with peers had a significant impact on their relationship with others.

Table 3.2.6. I Regularly Teach My Friends about Christ

I Regularly Teach My Friends about Christ in a bid to Convert them to Christianity

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	4	3.3	3.3	3.3
Valid Agree	20	16.7	16.7	20.0
Valid Neutral	48	40.0	40.0	60.0

Disagree	40	33.3	33.3	93.3
Strongly Disagree	8	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Preaching to other people constitutes a Christian mandate. The table 3.2.6 outcome reveals that 20% agreed that they frequently talked to their friends about Christianity, 40% remained neutral and could not tell if they talked about Christianity to others, while the other 40% disagreed not making any effort.

3.2.7. I Strongly Believe My Character Inspires Others to Join Christianity

I Strongly Believe My Character Inspires Others to Join Christianity

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	8	6.7	6.7	6.7
Agree	12	10.0	10.0	16.7
Valid Neutral	52	43.3	43.3	60.0
Disagree	44	36.7	36.7	96.7
Strongly Disagree	4	3.3	3.3	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

The table 3.2.7 outcome reveals that 16.7% of the respondents agreed that their character could inspire people to become Christians, 43.3% were not certain, while 40% disagreed that they did not inspire other people to become Christians.

Table 3.2.8 I am Always Afraid that Others May not like Me If I Confess My Christian Values

I am Always Afraid that Others May not Like Me If I Confess My Christian Values

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	36	30.0	30.0	30.0
Valid Agree	64	53.3	53.3	83.3
Valid Neutral	20	16.7	16.7	100.0
Valid Total	120	100.0	100.0	

The table 3.2.8 outcome of the above statement shows that 83.3% of the respondents agreed that they are always afraid while 16.7% remained neutral over the same.

Table 3.2.9. Occasionally I Steal/ Lie/ Covet/ Fornicate/ Abuse/ Drink/

Occasionally I Steal/ Lie/ Covet/ Fornicate/ Abuse/ Drink/

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	28	23.3	23.3	23.3
Valid Agree	68	56.7	56.7	80.0
Valid Neutral	24	20.0	20.0	100.0
Valid Total	120	100.0	100.0	

The table 3.2.9 question examined the respondents' perspective about engaging in presumptuous sins such as stealing, lying, coveting, fornication, and drinking. In this context, the respondents provided feedback on whether they occasionally found themselves engaging in such practices. The table 3.2.9 outcome shows that 80% of the respondents agreed while 20% remained neutral, expressing uncertainty on whether their conduct could be considered presumptuous sinning.

Table 3.3.0. I Don't Care What People Think about My Christianity

I Don't Care What People Think about My Christianity

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	20	16.7	16.7	16.7
Agree	48	40.0	40.0	56.7
Neutral	52	43.3	43.3	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Public opinion and perceptions tend to define Christians and further mold their characters. According to table 3.3.0, 56.7% of respondents indicated that they do not care about people's opinions regarding their Christian conducts while 43.3% remained neutral and could not tell if they were concerned about other people's perceptions of their characters

Table 3.3.1 In the Workplace, I Fear People Knowing That I Am a Christian**In the Workplace, I Fear People Knowing That I Am a Christian**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	8	6.7	6.7	6.7
Agree	24	20.0	20.0	26.7
Neutral	48	40.0	40.0	66.7
Disagree	36	30.0	30.0	96.7
Strongly Disagree	4	3.3	3.3	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

The workplace remains a major part of the believers' livelihood and defines their conduct.

The responses to the question on table 3.3.1 indicated that 26.7% agreed, 40% remained neutral, and 33.3% disagreed that they feared people knowing that they were Christians.

Table 3.3.2 At times I believe Scientific Beliefs Compared to the Biblical Myths**At times I believe Scientific Beliefs Compared to the Biblical Myths**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	44	36.7	36.7	36.7
Agree	64	53.3	53.3	90.0

Neutral	12	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Scientific facts have populated the current social scene with information regarding a certain natural phenomenon. The table 3.3.2 outcome shows that 90% of the respondents agreed with the vast scientific beliefs and innovations while 10% remained neutral and could not express their independent opinions.

Table 3.3.3 I Fear Sinning so that I am Not Judged by others but not God

I Fear Sinning so that I am Not Judged by others but not God

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	36	30.0	30.0	30.0
Valid Agree	52	43.3	43.3	73.3
Neutral	32	26.7	26.7	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

The responses to this question indicated that 73.3% agreed that they only fear being judged by other people and not God, 26.7% remained neutral. No persons disagreed with the notion.

Table 3.3.4. Going to Church Positively Shapes My Christian Behavior**Going to Church Positively Shapes My Christian Behavior**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	8	6.7	6.7	6.7
Agree	24	20.0	20.0	26.7
Neutral	36	30.0	30.0	56.7
Disagree	44	36.7	36.7	93.3
Strongly Disagree	8	6.6	6.6	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

The participants expressed opinions on whether church attendance affected their Christian behavior. The table 3.3.4 outcome revealed that 6.7% of the respondents strongly agreed, 20% agreed, 30% remained neutral, 36.7% and 43.3% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively that indeed going to church had an impact in their Christian lives.

Table 3.3.5 Most People within My Workplace and Home Environment Are Christians**Most People within My Workplace and Home Environment Are Christians**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	12	10.0	10.0	10.0
Agree	12	10.0	10.0	20.0

Neutral	24	20.0	20.0	40.0
Disagree	48	40.0	40.0	80.0
Strongly Disagree	24	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

The table 3.3.5 examined whether the majority of people within the respondents' work environments were Christians. The outcome showed that 10% strongly agreed, 10% agreed, 20% expressed neutral responses, while 40% and 20% disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement. A large section of the believers indicated not working with Christians in their respective environments.

3.3 Descriptive Statistics

The mean response of the variables shows the strength of each response and could be placed on the Likert scale to deduce meaning and implications. The scale represents different levels through which the responses can be quantified and ideal meaning construed from the values. The table below represents the Likert scale used and the values represented by each figure or range of figures. Placing the mean values of variables on the scale reveals the overall inference from distinct persons.

Table 3.3.6 Showing the Likert Scale Used in the Analysis

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

In terms of age, the average responses settled at 1.9, an implication that the majority of the respondents stand between 18-25 years of age. This age group comprises mature believers perceived to understand the Christian values and precepts as prescribed in the respective church doctrines. On gender, the majority of the responses reveal that the participants were mainly comprised of males. The identification with Christian faith, on the other hand, had a score of 1, an implication that they strongly agreed with the survey queries. On the key survey responses, the mean for the persons attending at least 75% of the church meetings stood at 1.83. On the Likert scale, the figure represents agreed and strongly agreed, an implication that the majority of the participants attended at least three-quarters of the church meetings.

Table 3.3.7 Summary of Personal Information

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
What is your age	120	1	4	1.90	.845
What is your gender	120	1	2	1.57	.504
Do you identify with any Christian faith	120	1	1	1.00	.000
How Many Years	120	1	3	1.73	.740
I at least attend 75% of the church meetings	120	1	4	1.83	.834

Church Attendance is on the decline over the past years	120	1	4	1.97	1.066
Money determines how well one is treated in the church	120	1	3	1.70	.702
I know of fellow be- lievers who prac- tice secularism de- spite confessing be- ing born again	120	1	5	2.00	1.050
Secular music enter- tains me	120	1	5	2.30	.988
I believe listening to secular music but not practicing what it says has no effect on a Christian	120	1	3	1.73	.691

When I am alone, I access erotic materials on the web	120	2	5	2.77	.898
At least each day I am tempted to view explicit content on the web	120	2	5	2.70	.915
I prefer to watch sermons over the media than attend church	120	1	4	1.97	.809
I study the Bible on a daily basis	120	1	5	2.80	.997
Peer influence is a major issue in my christen life	120	1	4	2.17	.791
I regularly teach my friends about Christ	120	1	5	3.23	.935

and attempt to convert them to Christians					
I strongly believe my Character inspire others into becoming Christians	120	1	5	3.20	.925
I am always afraid that others may not like me if I confess my Christian values	120	1	3	1.87	.681
Occasionally I steal/ lie/ covet/ fornicate/ abuse/ drink/	120	1	3	1.97	.669
I don't care much about what people think about my Christianity	120	1	3	2.27	.740

In the workplace, I fear people knowing that I am a Christian	120	1	5	3.03	.964
At times I believe scientific beliefs compared to the biblical myths	120	1	3	1.73	.640
I fear to sin so that I am not judged by others but not by God	120	1	3	1.97	.765
Going to church positively shapes my Christian behavior	120	1	5	3.17	1.053
Most people within my workplace and home environment are Christians	120	1	5	3.50	1.225
Valid N (list wise)	120				

The questionnaire responses have mean scores ranging between 1 – 1.99; an indication that the respondents affirmed the inquiries. The responses could be termed affirmative, an indication that the majority admitted the existence of the above issues within their environs. Other responses such as knowledge of fellow believers that practice secularism, the notion of secular music entertaining, accessing erotic materials when alone, the temptation of viewing the erotic contents, not caring about what people think of their Christianity, and studying the bible daily had scores ranging 2-2.99. The overall implication, in this case, reveals that the responses to the above issues are affirmative, although not strongly exhibited as in the case of the scores with figure 1. The responses that scored 3 points include questions relating to “teaching friends about Christ, believe that the believers’ character affects other people into becoming Christians, the fear of people knowing that one is a believer, and positive impacts of the Christian behaviors on other people within the social setting.” The respondents expressed uncertainty in each of the issues, an implication that they could not sufficiently address the issues. None of the means scored 4-5, an implication that the majority agreed while the remaining expressed neutrality or uncertainty.

3. 4 Normality tests

The normality test conducted below aids in examining if the data set is properly modeled through normal distribution and a computation of the likeliness for random variability in case of a normal distribution. According to the case processing summary, the responses for every question were 100 percent with all the 30 respondents providing feedback.

Table 3.3.8 Normality Tests

Case Processing Summary	
	Cases

	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
What is your age	120	100.0%	0	0.0%	120	100.0%
What is your gender	120	100.0%	0	0.0%	120	100.0%
Do you identify yourself with any Christian faith	120	100.0%	0	0.0%	120	100.0%
How Many Years	120	100.0%	0	0.0%	120	100.0%
I attend at least 75% of the church meetings	120	100.0%	0	0.0%	120	100.0%
Church Attendance is on decline over the past years	120	100.0%	0	0.0%	120	100.0%
Money determines how well one is treated in the church	120	100.0%	0	0.0%	120	100.0%
I know of fellow believers who practice secularism despite confessing being born again	120	100.0%	0	0.0%	120	100.0%
Secular music entertains me	120	100.0%	0	0.0%	120	100.0%

I believe listening to secular music but not practicing what it says has no effect on a Christian	120	100.0%	0	0.0%	120	100.0%
When I am alone I access erotic materials on the web	120	100.0%	0	0.0%	120	100.0%
At least each day I am tempted to view explicit content on the web	120	100.0%	0	0.0%	120	100.0%
I prefer to watch sermons over the media than attend church	120	100.0%	0	0.0%	120	100.0%
I study the Bible on a daily basis	120	Ep	0	0.0%	120	100.0%
Peer influence is a major issue in my christen life	120	100.0%	0	0.0%	120	100.0%
I regularly teach my friends about Christ and attempt to convert them to Christians	120	100.0%	0	0.0%	120	100.0%

I strongly believe my character inspire others into becoming Christians	120	100.0%	0	0.0%	120	100.0%
I am always afraid that others may not like me if I confess my Christian values	120	100.0%	0	0.0%	120	100.0%
Occasionally I steal/ lie/ covet/ fornicate/ abuse/ drink/	120	100.0%	0	0.0%	120	100.0%
I don't care much about what people think about my Christianity	120	100.0%	0	0.0%	120	100.0%
In the workplace, I fear people knowing that I am a Christian	120	100.0%	0	0.0%	120	100.0%
At times I believe scientific beliefs compared to the biblical myths	120	100.0%	0	0.0%	120	100.0%
I fear sinning so that I am not judged by others but not by God	120	100.0%	0	0.0%	120	100.0%
Going to church positively shapes my Christian behavior	120	100.0%	0	0.0%	120	100.0%

Most people within my workplace and home environment are Christians	120	100.0%	0	0.0%	120	100.0%
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The descriptive statistics on table 3.39 below shows a confidence interval of 95% with the upper and lower bounds close to the mean of each variable. The distribution of the variables reveals that the items are evenly distributed.

Table 3.3.9

Descriptive

		Statistic	Std. Error	
What is your age	Mean	1.90	.154	
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	1.58	
		Upper Bound	2.22	
	5% Trimmed Mean	1.85		
	Median	2.00		
	Variance	.714		
	Std. Deviation	.845		
	Minimum	1		
	Maximum	4		

	Range		3	
	Interquartile Range		1	
	Skewness		.566	.427
	Kurtosis		-.386	.833
	Mean		1.57	.092
		Lower Bound	1.38	
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Upper Bound	1.75	
	5% Trimmed Mean		1.57	
What is your gender	Median		2.00	
	Variance		.254	
	Std. Deviation		.504	
	Minimum		1	
	Maximum		2	
	Range		1	
	Interquartile Range		1	
	Skewness		-.283	.427
	Kurtosis		-2.062	.833
	Mean		1.73	.135
How Many Years		Lower Bound	1.46	
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean			

		Up- per Boun d	2.01	
	5% Trimmed Mean		1.70	
	Median		2.00	
	Variance		.547	
	Std. Deviation		.740	
	Minimum		1	
	Maximum		3	
	Range		2	
	Interquartile Range		1	
	Skewness		.480	.427
	Kurtosis		-.972	.833
	Mean		1.83	.152
		Low- er Boun d	1.52	
	95% Confidence In- terval for Mean	Up- per Boun d	2.14	
I at least attend 75% of the church meet- ings	5% Trimmed Mean		1.76	
	Median		2.00	
	Variance		.695	
	Std. Deviation		.834	
	Minimum		1	
	Maximum		4	
	Range		3	
	Interquartile Range		1	
	Skewness		1.097	.427

	Kurtosis		1.320	.833
	Mean		1.97	.195
		Lower	1.57	
		Bound		
	95% Confidence In-	d		
	terval for Mean	Up-	2.36	
		per		
		Boun		
		d		
Church Attendance is on the decline over the past years	5% Trimmed Mean		1.91	
	Median		2.00	
	Variance		1.137	
	Std. Deviation		1.066	
	Minimum		1	
	Maximum		4	
	Range		3	
	Interquartile Range		2	
	Skewness		.802	.427
	Kurtosis		-.571	.833
Money determines how well one is treated in the church	Mean		1.70	.128
		Lower	1.44	
		Boun		
		d		
	95% Confidence In-	d		
	terval for Mean	Up-	1.96	
		per		
		Boun		
		d		
		5% Trimmed Mean		1.67
	Median		2.00	
	Variance		.493	
	Std. Deviation		.702	

	Minimum		1	
	Maximum		3	
	Range		2	
	Interquartile Range		1	
	Skewness		.499	.427
	Kurtosis		-.781	.833
	Mean		2.00	.192
		Lower Bound	1.61	
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Upper Bound	2.39	
I know of fellow believers who practice secularism despite confessing being born again	5% Trimmed Mean		1.91	
	Median		2.00	
	Variance		1.103	
	Std. Deviation		1.050	
	Minimum		1	
	Maximum		5	
	Range		4	
	Interquartile Range		1	
	Skewness		1.147	.427
	Kurtosis		1.122	.833
	Mean		2.30	.180
		Lower Bound	1.93	
Secular music entertains me	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Upper Bound	2.67	

		Boun d		
	5% Trimmed Mean		2.24	
	Median		2.00	
	Variance		.976	
	Std. Deviation		.988	
	Minimum		1	
	Maximum		5	
	Range		4	
	Interquartile Range		1	
	Skewness		.947	.427
	Kurtosis		.841	.833
	Mean		1.73	.126
		Low er Boun d	1.48	
	95% Confidence In- terval for Mean	Up- per Boun d	1.99	
I believe listening to secular music but not practicing what it says does not affect a Christian	5% Trimmed Mean		1.70	
	Median		2.00	
	Variance		.478	
	Std. Deviation		.691	
	Minimum		1	
	Maximum		3	
	Range		2	
	Interquartile Range		1	
	Skewness		.409	.427
	Kurtosis		-.770	.833

When I am alone, I access erotic materials on the web	Mean		2.77	.164
		Lower Bound	2.43	
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Upper Bound	3.10	
	5% Trimmed Mean		2.70	
	Median		2.50	
	Variance		.806	
	Std. Deviation		.898	
	Minimum		2	
	Maximum		5	
	Range		3	
	Interquartile Range		1	
	Skewness		.804	.427
	Kurtosis		-.465	.833
	Mean		2.70	.167
		Lower Bound	2.36	
At least each day I am tempted to view explicit content on the web	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Upper Bound	3.04	
	5% Trimmed Mean		2.61	
	Median		2.00	
	Variance		.838	
	Std. Deviation		.915	
	Minimum		2	

	Maximum		5	
	Range		3	
	Interquartile Range		1	
	Skewness		1.237	.427
	Kurtosis		.798	.833
	Mean		1.97	.148
		Lower Bound	1.66	
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Upper Bound	2.27	
	5% Trimmed Mean		1.93	
	Median		2.00	
	Variance		.654	
	Std. Deviation		.809	
	Minimum		1	
	Maximum		4	
	Range		3	
	Interquartile Range		1	
	Skewness		.482	.427
	Kurtosis		-.184	.833
	Mean		2.80	.182
		Lower Bound	2.43	
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Upper Bound	3.17	
I prefer to watch sermons over the media than attend church				
I study the bible on a daily basis				

	5% Trimmed Mean	2.80	
	Median	3.00	
	Variance	.993	
	Std. Deviation	.997	
	Minimum	1	
	Maximum	5	
	Range	4	
	Interquartile Range	1	
	Skewness	-.018	.427
	Kurtosis	-.298	.833
	Mean	2.17	.145
		Lower Bound	1.87
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Upper Bound	2.46
Peer influence is a major issue in my christen life	5% Trimmed Mean	2.15	
	Median	2.00	
	Variance	.626	
	Std. Deviation	.791	
	Minimum	1	
	Maximum	4	
	Range	3	
	Interquartile Range	1	
	Skewness	.132	.427
	Kurtosis	-.444	.833
	Mean	3.23	.171

I regularly teach my friends about Christ and attempt to convert them to Christians	Lower Bound	2.88		
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Upper Bound	3.58	
	5% Trimmed Mean	3.24		
	Median	3.00		
	Variance	.875		
	Std. Deviation	.935		
	Minimum	1		
	Maximum	5		
	Range	4		
	Interquartile Range	1		
	Skewness	-.232	.427	
	Kurtosis	-.043	.833	
	Mean	3.20	.169	
		Lower Bound	2.85	
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Upper Bound	3.55
I strongly believe my Character inspire others into becoming Christians	5% Trimmed Mean	3.24		
	Median	3.00		
	Variance	.855		
	Std. Deviation	.925		
	Minimum	1		
	Maximum	5		

	Range		4	
	Interquartile Range		1	
	Skewness		-.706	.427
	Kurtosis		.613	.833
	Mean		1.87	.124
		Lower Bound	1.61	
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Upper Bound	2.12	
I am always afraid that others may not like me if I confess my Christian values	5% Trimmed Mean		1.85	
	Median		2.00	
	Variance		.464	
	Std. Deviation		.681	
	Minimum		1	
	Maximum		3	
	Range		2	
	Interquartile Range		1	
	Skewness		.170	.427
	Kurtosis		-.715	.833
	Mean		1.97	.122
		Lower Bound	1.72	
Occasionally I steal/ lie/ covet/ fornicate/ abuse/ drink/	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Upper Bound	2.22	
	5% Trimmed Mean		1.96	

	Median		2.00	
	Variance		.447	
	Std. Deviation		.669	
	Minimum		1	
	Maximum		3	
	Range		2	
	Interquartile Range		0	
	Skewness		.037	.427
	Kurtosis		-.589	.833
	Mean		2.27	.135
		Lower Bound	1.99	
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Upper Bound	2.54	
I don't care much about what people think about my Christianity	5% Trimmed Mean		2.30	
	Median		2.00	
	Variance		.547	
	Std. Deviation		.740	
	Minimum		1	
	Maximum		3	
	Range		2	
	Interquartile Range		1	
	Skewness		-.480	.427
	Kurtosis		-.972	.833
In the workplace, I fear people knowing that I am a Christian	Mean		3.03	.176
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower	2.67	

		Bound		
		Upper Bound	3.39	
	5% Trimmed Mean		3.06	
	Median		3.00	
	Variance		.930	
	Std. Deviation		.964	
	Minimum		1	
	Maximum		5	
	Range		4	
	Interquartile Range		2	
	Skewness		-.317	.427
	Kurtosis		-.205	.833
	Mean		1.73	.117
		Lower Bound	1.49	
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Upper Bound	1.97	
At times I believe scientific beliefs compared to the biblical myths	5% Trimmed Mean		1.70	
	Median		2.00	
	Variance		.409	
	Std. Deviation		.640	
	Minimum		1	
	Maximum		3	
	Range		2	

	Interquartile Range		1	
	Skewness		.291	.427
	Kurtosis		-.554	.833
	Mean		1.97	.140
		Lower Bound	1.68	
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Upper Bound	2.25	
I fear to sin so that I am not judged by others but not by God	5% Trimmed Mean		1.96	
	Median		2.00	
	Variance		.585	
	Std. Deviation		.765	
	Minimum		1	
	Maximum		3	
	Range		2	
	Interquartile Range		2	
	Skewness		.058	.427
	Kurtosis		-1.233	.833
	Mean		3.17	.192
		Lower Bound	2.77	
Going to church positively shapes my Christian behavior	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Upper Bound	3.56	
	5% Trimmed Mean		3.19	
	Median		3.00	

	Variance		1.109	
	Std. Deviation		1.053	
	Minimum		1	
	Maximum		5	
	Range		4	
	Interquartile Range		2	
	Skewness		-.355	.427
	Kurtosis		-.472	.833
	Mean		3.50	.224
		Lower Bound	3.04	
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Upper Bound	3.96	
Most people within my workplace and home environment are Christians	5% Trimmed Mean		3.56	
	Median		4.00	
	Variance		1.500	
	Std. Deviation		1.225	
	Minimum		1	
	Maximum		5	
	Range		4	
	Interquartile Range		1	
	Skewness		-.724	.427
	Kurtosis		-.248	.833

a. Do you identify with any Christian faith is constant. It has been omitted.

Open-Ended Questions Responses

The open-ended questions sought to understand the in-depth perceptions of the respondents regarding the problem. The researcher adopted the qualitative approach to analyze the responses and extracted major themes as evidenced in each case. Below are some of the questions and the keywords attributed to each response.

Table 4.0.0 Open-ended Questionnaires

Question	Key terms/ phrases/statements
I attend at least 75% of the church meetings	Prayer, Bible studies, fellowship, inspiration, encouragements, knowing each other, tradition, improvement in social stature and perceptions from cohorts
Church Attendance has been on the decline over the past years	Discouragement, prayerlessness, secular, deception, money, false teachings, role models, lack of motivation
Money determines how well one is treated in the church	Love of money, favoritism, tithes, prosperity gospel, poverty, threats, sin, giving to receive, giving from the heart
I know fellow believers who engage in secularism despite professing Christianity	Lack of faith, prayerlessness, secular, deception, money, false teachings, role models, lack of motivations

Secular music entertains me	Most secular music not vulgar, the music relate to social issues, the music has an entertaining tune, I don't do what the messages speak
I believe listening to secular music but not practicing what it says does not affect a Christian	Entertainment, talent development, teachings, social issues
When I am alone, I access erotic materials on the web	I am tempted to view, repent after viewing, available on the internet, many sites provide similar content.
At least each day I am tempted to view explicit content on the web	Feel good, I am tempted to view, repent after viewing, available on the internet, many sites provide similar contents, addictive, irresistible.
I prefer to watch sermons over the media than attend church	Time-saving, convenience, no bad teachings, spiritual
I study the bible daily	Busy schedule, no bible, the bible on smartphones, fellowship, bible study
Peer influence is a major issue in my Christian life	Spend most of the time with them, character influence, bad influence, habits

I regularly teach my friends about Christ and attempt to convert them to Christians	Ridicule, non-believers, bad influence, spend most of the time with them, character influence, bad influence, habits, they know my weaknesses
I strongly believe my Character inspire others into becoming Christians	Christianity perceived behaviors, virtues, different faiths, lack of practice, biblical command, priests and clergies
I am always afraid that others may not like me if I confess my Christian values	Christian expectations, value system, societal expectations, ridicule, rejection, considered weak, low class
Occasionally I steal/ lie/ covet/ fornicate/ abuse/ drink/	Tempted, biblical, wine taking, priests drink too, repent after
I don't care much about what people think about my Christianity	Good characters, ridicule, non-believers, master of my faith, bad influence, spend most of the time with them, character influence, bad influence, habits
In the workplace, I fear people knowing that I am a Christian	Christianity perceived a set of behaviors, strong virtues, and values, different faiths, lack of practice, biblical command, priests and clergies,

<p>At times I believe scientific beliefs compared to the biblical myths</p>	<p>Technology, improving lifestyle, Christianity could be a myth, proving God does not exist, wisdom from God</p>
<p>I fear to sin so that I am not judged by others but not by God</p>	<p>Fear of judgment, stereotyping, God does not see us, No instant actions</p>
<p>Going to church shapes my Christian behavior positively</p>	<p>Church shapes character, Christian values, Proper doctrines, role modeling, character building, the establishment of proper morals</p>
<p>Most people within my workplace and home environment are Christians</p>	<p>Not Christians, unbelievers, not believing in Christian morals, aware of Christian values and doctrines</p>
<p>Suggest means through which the rising trend of Christian misconduct can be reduced</p>	<p>The church uniting, elimination of denominational boundaries, reinforcement of Christian values within the social settings, intensity in the ministration of the gospel, increasing the quantity of Christian based contents in the various schools' curriculum, educating church members on proper and productive use of the internet, teaching believers about secularism and its impact</p>

i) I Attend at Least 75% of the Church Meetings

In providing explanations to the above response, a majority of the participants asserted that they regularly attend church meetings. The regular attendance was inspired by multiple factors prescribed in the major terms exhibited in the responses. The identified words mainly "commitment, follow up, intergroup setups, fellowship, prayers, and bible studies" tend to explain the cause for people attending church. The responses indicate that most believers associate church attendance to commitment to the respective denominational doctrines. Apart from the above reasons, the participants noted that frequent visiting of each other and fellowships enabled them to share scriptures and walk encourage one another. The keywords and terms attributed to this question depict a theme of religiosity where the respondents expressed commitment to their faith groups. The element of Bible study and prayers depict Christian growth. This implies that individuals seek to grow in their faith and become truthful followers of Christ.

ii) Church Attendance is on the Decline over the Past Years

Church attendance decline was also deemed a major issue prevalent in the contemporary Christian community. Knowledge of the church attendance was deemed to illuminate the extent to which the believers understand the downward trend in Christian faith from multiple perspectives. The responses, in this case, revolved around issues such as "discouragements, prayerlessness, secularism, false teachings, role models, and deception". The respondents attributed the decline and erosion of characters to the above factors that purportedly have caused Christians to abandon their faiths and pursue worldly issues that have dominated the social scene. Considering the words featured in the responses, it can be deduced that issues such as believer discouragements, prayerlessness, deception, and false teachings have led people away from the true and sound Christian faith. Those in the study cited the biblical prophecies of the last days, indicating the well-established presence of false teachers within

the social scene. The participants further indicated that the majority of Christians had fallen victims to the false teachings and deceptions leading to the decline in godliness and an increase in ungodly activities. The responses further illustrate that many Christians have become discouraged as they lack role models and increasingly witness ungodly deeds such as the love of money from the church clergy and members of the Christian faith. The escalations of such happenings have led people astray, causing them to avoid church and prefer to engage in ungodly activities. Besides, the notion of prosperity gospel dominated the discussions as the participants indicated that most churches and televangelists tend to incline their teachings to prosperity.

iii) Money Determines How Well One is treated in the Church

The majority of the respondents pointed at money among the issues causing preferential treatments. A plethora of literature relating to the conduct of Christians depicts money as a major factor that determines the strength of the church in a given social setting. Qualitative analysis of the responses reveals the prevalence of terms and statements including "love of money, favoritism, tithes, prosperity gospel, poverty, threats, and wealth". Most respondents insinuated that issues relating to tithes and offerings tend to cause the priests to prefer certain congregants to others. The element of prosperity gospel dominates the respondents' perceptions, as it emerges that the priests inspire them to give with the selfish motivation to receive. While the majority consider the notion of Christian giving as biblical, they depict it as a major theme surrounding teachings and treatment of people in the church. A section of the respondents further expressed the belief that poverty among Christians correlates with their negative attitudes towards giving. Factors such as promotions and church appointments were attributed to the believers' financial capabilities supporting the proof that money influences the way believers' are treated in the church or ministries.

iv) I know of fellow Believers Who practice Secularism despite Confessing Being Born again

The current generation of Christians comprises people that partially believe in God, and at the same time engaging in secular activities. The believers, in this case, attested to knowing fellows that increasingly practice secularism while at the same time actively participating in the church events and related activities. The common words in the responses include "lack of prayers, not attending church fellowships, bad company, lack of role models, absence of guidance and directions, and increasingly engaging in secular habits without rebuke." The vast responses to this question show that it is common and frequent within the social scene. Failing to have the Christian guidance and discipline makes believers vulnerable to temptations and trials and the corresponding inability to resist. The outcome showed that the believers express willingness to pursue godliness but suffer from the inherent inability to resist due to social and cultural influence.

v) Secular Music Entertains Me

The rise in secular music has cast doubt on many Christian values leading to confusion on whether it has any significant impact on Christian listeners. The analysis sought to investigate the participant' thoughts on whether Christians should listen to secular music. The common words in the responses include, "Most music not vulgar, relate to social issues, entertaining tune, not doing what the messages speak". The response that "most music is not vulgar", point at the acceptance of such music into the social system and normalizing their purpose. This makes people consider them as entertaining and projecting certain important social issues that should be addressed at different times and levels. The extent of secularism spread wide as the people consider the music important in sending certain messages within the social scene. They noted that listening to such music keeps them entertained and more at-

tached to their social networks. Besides, the notion of secularism in society and culture is evidenced by the response that the music in most cases is not vulgar and therefore not having any impact in their lives. The element of "not doing what the music says" also evidenced the proliferation of secular music among Christian believers. Although they expressed keenness in preventing the negative influence, they accept the entertaining part of the music. Other comments related to secular music to beautiful tunes that kept them entertained in the workplace, during special occasions, or when having a good time with friends and families. Based on the above responses, it is evident that the majority of the responses accept secular music.

vi) I Believe Listening to Secular Music but Not Practicing What It Says Has No Effect on a Christian

This survey question relates directly to the perceived entertaining nature of secular music to Christians. In responding to this subject, the participants agreed that they listen to specific secular music. The major words that featured in the responses include "entertainment, talent development, teachings, and social issues". The above words provide the rationale for believers' acceptance of secular music and justifying their embrace of the music. Whereas the believers expressed awareness of the scriptures refuting conformity to the worldly standards, they indicated that mere listening to the music without engaging in the acts results in minimal effects on their faiths. Besides, they only attested to listening to specific music while ignoring others. Others differed in opinions by indicating that the notion of listening to secular music does not meet the ideal Christian standards, and emanates from false teachings that have been propagated by non-Christians to dilute the various Christian values. Factors such as participation in community and school activities involving the integration of social and cultural elements in talent development were also cited among the key issues that made Christians listen to secular music. Most of the respondents cited cases where

they prepare their children for social and professional talents through secular music. The majority of social elements also hinge on secularism and therefore compelling people to engage in the characters propagated. For instance, the music often comes with certain dance styles that may not be conforming to the Christian doctrines but accepted within the social settings. In providing further illustration, one of the respondents cited being a waiter, and always spending time at the cafeteria full of secular music. The presence and nature of the music affect the Christians and cause them to deviate from the biblical ways.

vii) When I am alone I access Erotic Materials on the Web

The internet has predisposed people to various contents whose access is unregulated. People engage in many activities in their lone moments, and whereas some of the activities could display moral values, others exhibited complete deviation from the Christian code of behaviors. The responses to this question revealed key terms and statements spanning “am tempted to view, repent after viewing, available on the internet, many sites provide similar contents”. The above statements show that most of the Christians have access to erotic content, and consider it a weakness of the flesh. The urge to view such contents emanates from the increased use of smartphones and the internet that enable people to access the content. Besides, the notion of hiding from other people and watching the content makes them easily lured. Other responses indicated that they repented after watching the materials; this response had dominant and insinuated presumptuous practice and engagement in the activities with the hope of repenting after the act. The easily available nature of the content also makes them tempting and becoming habitual to many people within the social scene.

xi) At Least Each Day I Am Tempted to View Explicit Content on the Web

The urge to view the explicit content has been strongly propagated in the current social scene. The respondents cited terms such as “feel good, I am tempted to view, repent after viewing, available on the internet, many sites provide similar contents, addictive” as common

in the majority of the survey answers. Analysis of the above terms indicates that the key point in this context indicates that pornography is addictive and gradually becomes a habit that must be strongly fought to get over. Others indicated that they feel good viewing the material, although they reported repenting after engaging in such practices. One of the responses to the question revealed that its benefits are short-lived and that the guilt of sin makes them repent. As many websites provide such contents, they come in many assortments making them irresistible. This explained the reason behind certain Christians falling into temptations to view the erotic contents on the web.

xi) I Prefer to Watch Sermons over The Media than Attend Church

Sermons form the basis of Christian doctrine as it enables people to be taught and experienced encounters with God. The traditional social scene had people attending churches for sermons and preaching to encourage their faith and strengthen beliefs in Christianity. Relatively, the advent of social media and the internet has led to the establishment of televangelist ministries that mainly reach out to people via the media. While the presence of televangelists was seen as an effective way of preaching the gospels in the present generation, its shortcomings have had adverse impacts on believers. The responses reveal that many Christians have developed the habit of listening and watching the messages at the comfort of their homes rather than attending church services. The responses featured terms such as "time-saving, convenience, no bad teachings, and spiritual". Analyses of the above responses indicate that whereas the respondents ardently attended church services, they preferred to watch and listen to the televangelists rather than attend church services. They considered it timesaving, convenient, and not easily vulnerable to bad teachings that in most cases cause Christians to go astray. The burden of Christianity upon the believers causes them to seek easier and convenient alternatives that limit times wastage and shields them from engaging in undesired activities.

xii) I Study the Bible Daily

The Bible study constitutes a key element in Christian life and fellowship. The participants were queried on their levels of commitments to bible study, and whether each day they dedicate a portion of their time for the same. The responses to this question featured words such as "busy schedule, no bible, and the bible on smartphones, fellowship, and bible study." Most of the responses were negative and cited a busy schedule, no bible, and fellowship with fellow Christians. The busy work schedules fully engage the individuals thereby limiting their abilities to study the bible and have fellowship with fellow Christians. Others mentioned having the bibles on their smartphones but lacking time to read through. Overall, the respondents exhibited weakness in Bible studying due to a busy schedule and lack of fellowship with one another.

xiv) Peer Influence Is a Major Issue in My Christian Life

Peers have a significant impact on determining the nature of a life lived by individuals. The responses, in this case, relate to the impact of peer influence on the Christian character. The responses revealed common terms used by the participants to include "spend most of the time with them, character influence, bad influence, and habits". The above words and statements imply that peer influence constitutes a major issue among the believers, causing them to deviate from the truth and pursue other interests that do not relate to the godly doctrines. One of the major factors strongly attributed to the peer influence includes the cultivation of bad habits that gradually affect the individuals and cause them to lose focus in their Christian paths. The time spent with the peers also influences their characters, and further defining the common interests shared in the groups. As such, the responses reveal that the peer characters could adversely affect the believers' characters. The bad influence has been cited as a key element that promotes secularism among individuals.

xv) I Regularly Teach My Friends about Christ and Attempt to Convert them to Christians

Teaching people about Christ remains among the key pillars of Christianity. Preaching Christ presents the opportunity for believers to teach people about the right ways, and further compel them into adopting the right behavior propagated through various biblical doctrines. In the context of the survey questions, the responses indicate that the frequently used words include "ridicule, non-believers, bad influence, spends most of the time with them, character influence, bad influence, and habits". The above words and statements reveal the themes of rejection, discrimination, fear of negative judgments, and the influence of peers within the social environments. According to the responses, most social systems associate Christians with certain moral values that once breached results in negative stereotyping. Besides, the instances of the media get awash with negative reports about Christian misconduct stirs hatred and dislike of Christians causing the non-believers to accuse them of hypocrisy and other negative social vices. The element of "ridicule" reveals that most Christians face prejudgment resulting in fear of preaching to people and revealing their identities as Christians. Further, the respondents noted that close association with the peers causes them to become vulnerable to certain habits that may not be considered godly or conforming to the Christian values.

xvi) I strongly believe my Character inspire others into becoming Christians

The participants also expressed beliefs on whether their characters and social conduct could inspire other individuals into becoming Christians. The common terms that featured in the responses include "Christianity perceived behaviors, virtues, different denominations, lack of practice, biblical command, priests and clergies". The participants exist in environments that associate Christianity to certain moral standards that must be met to become effec-

tive. Affirmative response to this notion is low, revealing that most respondents do not understand or are uncertain of the impact of their characters on other people. The explanations relating to the perceived lack of practice reveal that most believers do not fully relate and engage with others to develop the ideal and sound characters and experience prescribed in the social setting.

The responses depict Christian behaviors and values from distinct perspectives that the respondents considered capable of influencing non-believer's decisions. For instance, in the case of "Christian perceived behaviors and virtues," the respondents point at the association of believers to a specific code of conduct that defines their character. As Christians are considered to emulate Christ, the majority of people expect them to behave in a Christ-like manner. Deviation from such characters could lead to people neglecting Christianity and the perceived set of values. The perspective of different faiths shows that to a large extent, an affiliated faith group could determine how persons are perceived within the social scene. Different faiths have distinct doctrines and value systems that are related to their perceptions of Christ. Based on the above issues, the majority of the respondents indicated that they do not agree or not aware of whether their characters inspire people into becoming Christians.

xvii) I am always Afraid That Others May Not like Me If I Confess My Christian Values

The respondents also expressed fear of rejection from cohorts if they confess their Christian values. According to the outcomes, Christianity has many expectations from its members that cause individuals to face challenges within the social setting. The respondents noted that the expectations cause the public and the entire community to perceive Christianity from a different light. The respondents also cited the social value system that stereotypes Christians, linking them to specific characters and behavioral traits. Most of the respondents noted that they lack perfection and therefore may not properly suit the context of the value

system set by society. The social expectations caused Christians to cease from confessing their faiths. Aside from the value system, the levels of expectations also remain in tandem with the former. The communities stereotype Christians through a given perceptive and therefore establishing norms that define the code of conduct between the members.

Another reason attributed to the fear of confessing Christian values dwells on ridicule and rejection. According to the terms included in the responses, most of the participants noted that ridicule and rejection were universal among Christians that publicly professed their faiths. The rejection often stems from the frequent mistakes that befall Christians while attempting to interact with other people within the social setting. The mistakes committed by the Christian believers tend to cause them to suffer ridicule and rejection from people that expect high levels of morality from them. Stereotyping of Christians as inferior and weak also featured in the responses; the responses depicted Christians as a weak and low class due to their lack of interest in the various activities. The above shortcomings related to Christians have been seen to present various obstacles that cause many people to veer off their faiths and further develop the fear of not being liked when confessing Christian faith.

xviii) Occasionally I Steal/ Lie/ Covet/ Fornicate/ Abuse/ Drink/

This attributes to the notion of engagement in sins and other presumptuous actions then seeking divine clemency. The respondents indicated that the majority of people tend to engage in the presumptuous sins and later on engage in confession. The sins such as lying, fornication, stealing, abuse, coveting and drinking have become highly rampant and mainly precipitate by the current technological advancements. The respondents noted that issues such as stealing took several forms such as using other people's online and physical properties without their prior knowledge or hacking into applications and using them without prior permission from the owners.

On the issue of lying, the respondents noted that it mainly involves the simple things that people find themselves doing daily. The explanations attribute to this form of lying revealed that some of the Christians believed in certain sins and not others. On the issue of lying, other believers indicated that it was fine and normal to deceive fellow friends and other believers regarding small and immaterial things that seemed not as bigger sins. For example, telling lies about the exact time of arrival, one's location, how one felt about the other, and constantly coveting. The individuals confessed to having engaged in such sins and that it was mainly due to the effects of technology that caused them into such activities.

Regarding the sin of fornication, the majority of the respondents indicated that they constantly viewed contents that caused them to lust over the internet. For instance, they view the mode of dressing from women and inwardly admire and fornicate. The believers indicated knowledge of the biblical notion that the mere looking of a woman lustfully constitutes fornication. Others pointed out that they were not aware of such doctrines, and that fornication would only be implied in cases of physical engagement in the given act. As such, the sin of fornication remained the most committed by the believers since they were not aware of it, and in most cases, it occurred subconsciously.

The study reveals how the consumption of alcohol dominates among the activities committed by believers. Most of the responses revealed that the urge to take alcohol mainly stemmed from peer influence from the various groups of people in the workplace or other social settings. The age of secularism has made many Christians take alcohol, and never feel a shred of guilt. This lack of guilt causes people to engage increasingly in activities without suffering any impact.

xxi) I Don't Care Much about What People Think about My Christianity

The keywords on this response include "Good characters," "ridicule," "non-believers," "master of my faith," "bad influence," "spend most of the time with them," "character

influence,” “bad influence,” and “habits.” Analyzing the above terms and phrases from the primary statement reveals that the believers affirmed spending a portion of their lives with the people around them. Such moments bring about peer influence, the establishment of bad habits, and influence on the characters. On the other hand, the subject of ridicule remains common among unbelievers that keenly watch the actions of believers and attempt to correct their wrongdoings. The bad influence from the social environment has led people into developing characters that do not reflect nor embrace the recommended Christian values. As much, the responses depict that the respondents care about the public judgments and perceptions of their characters.

xx) In the Workplace, I Fear People Knowing That I Am a Christian

The place constitutes a major area that clearly defines an individual’s character. Considering that most people spend nearly half of their time in the workplace, it largely defines their personality, moral values, and strengths at different levels. The keywords relating to this response comprised words and phrases such as, “Christianity perceived a set of behaviors,” “strong virtues and values,” “different faiths,” “lack of practice,” “biblical command,” and “priests and clergies.”

As aforementioned in the previous responses, the believers had reiterated that the society has a set of behaviors attributed to Christians and that such behaviors tend to define the social perceptions projected towards them. Many Christians, therefore, live in the knowledge of people around them having certain levels of expectations about their characters. Based on such expectations and belief systems, the majority of Christians tend to avoid mentioning to other people that they are Christians to prevent others from looking at them from the other perspectives. The majority of the respondents noted that engaging in presumptuous sin is easier in cases where they are far from the glare of the public. Others also noted that the various workplaces comprise of people from various faiths, and confessing such faiths automatically

sets the standards for preferential interests and actions in their respective behaviors. In other instances, the respondents noted that they tend to emulate the characters of the priests and clergies that often inform them of the ideal mode of conduct for Christians.

Thus, the majority of the respondents noted that they did not fear people knowing that they are Christians; however, they were uncomfortable expressing and practicing their Christian faith due to the value systems that have been set by the expectations surrounding Christian norms. They noted that it is easier to practice strong Christian virtues privately than when people have various levels of expectations about your character.

xxi) At Times I Believe Scientific Beliefs Compared to the Biblical Myths

The question regarding scientific beliefs drew a myriad of conflicting responses as the majority of the respondents could not establish a clear distinction between Christianity and scientific beliefs. The common words and phrases that featured in the responses include "technology, improving lifestyle, Christianity could be a myth, proving God does not exist, and wisdom from God." Placing each of the terms in the context of the research reveals certain themes that relate to the research problem, certain themes can be deduced and used to analyze the trend herein.

The first theme evidenced in this case is that technology is highly beneficial in the social setting. The majority of the respondents depicted the notion that technology had improved livelihood and made life much easier. The elements of technology such as communication and transport have undergone various changes that largely improved livelihood regarding business and other avenues. The respondents also noted that the scientific innovations and findings mainly stem from knowledge given by God. A large section of the responses support the notion that technology is good, and that the scientific findings from the basis upon which various social issues are perceived and improved.

On the other hand, a section of the responses revealed doubt in the existence of God's divine ability. Certain individuals noted that Christianity is hinged on faith, and has not been substantiated by any evidence like in the case of scientific researches. The evidence for the existence of God is mainly recorded in the bible and lacks the physical merits of proof to substantiate the claims. Some noted that at times, they conceive the thoughts that perhaps God does not exist and that the notion of Christianity is inscribed on casting certain fears to make people develop divine moral obligations with one another. While the majority of the responses reveal a strong belief among respondents that God truly exists, a few scientific claims have hypothesized that God does not exist. Most believers despite having faith in God expressed a strong belief in scientific findings and therefore limiting their perceptions about God and whether God exists, and the different ways through which God's power is manifested.

xxii) I Fear to Sin So That I Am Not Judged by Others but Not by God

The fear of sinning has been assessed from the perspective of having been judged by other groups of people or God. Most respondents expressed their opinions regarding the fear of judgment through terms such as, "stereotyping, God does not see us, no instant actions." In terms of stereotyping, societies have value systems and behavioral expectation standards through which Christians are perceived. Most believers, therefore, fear judgment from people to prevent discrimination that could influence their respective relationships. Besides, the majority of the respondents noted that the fear of sinning has declined due to the perception that God does not see. While most Christians subscribe to the notion that God is omnipresent, the proof of his existence remains a myth as the majority of God's manifestation occurs through faith. Besides, the divine punishment for persons engaging in evil is never instant, and therefore people can easily be engaged in the practices without anyone directly judging their consciousness.

Based on the above line of argument, the majority of the respondents indicated that they do not fear being judged by God, but rather fear being judged by other people within their surroundings. As the punishment for engaging in evil practices is not instant, the majority of the respondents noted that they feared judgment from men that resulted in the immediate gratification rather than of God that manifests over time.

xxiii) Going to Church Shapes my Christian Behavior Positively

Church attendance constitutes a key issue in Christianity as it defines the level of fellowship the persons engage in. This question sought to investigate the extent to which attendance defines a Christian, and whether it positively affects their behaviors. The terms and phrases common in the responses include "Church shapes character, Christian values, and proper doctrines." Analysis of the terms reveals the commonality of positive influence in church attendance. The respondents attributed the attendance to issues such as articulation of Christian values, sound Christian doctrines, and the transformation of character. It can, therefore, be deduced that regular church attendance yields a positive behavior among the Christians causing them to adopt the desired code of conduct.

xxiv) Most People within My Workplace and Home Environment Are Christians

The final question in the study sought to investigate whether the believers operate in an environment full of fellow Christians, and their perceived impacts of such relationships. The common words and phrases among the responses include, "Not Christians, unbelievers, not believing in Christian morals, aware of Christian values and doctrines." The above phases point at an affirmative response; most respondents do not work among fellow believers, a factor that could affect their association with one another.

The absence of fellow Christians in the workplace was also seen to predispose them to various factors such as lack of awareness to the ideal religious values and morals, and further lack of reproof and corrections from fellow Christians to guide them through the ideal values

and norms considered important among believers. One of the major observations made by the respondents is that reproof from fellow Christians enables them to become mindful of their behaviors and characters, and further ensures proper behavior between them. As such the notion of having fellow Christians in the workplace is deemed to influence the behaviors in the workplace significantly.

xxv) Suggest Means through which the Rising Trend of Christian Misconduct be Reduced

The respondents proposed a number of measures that could be used to reduce the rising cases of misconduct. Some of the approaches include embracing church unity, elimination of denominational boundaries, and reinforcement of Christian values in various social settings. Furthermore, the ministration of the gospel should be intensified; Christian based content featured in learning curriculums, and believers are taught about secularism and its impact in their lives. The above approaches have been deemed effective by the respondents as capable of reducing the existence of the vice within the social scene.

The above findings depict both quantitative and qualitative outcomes of the research. The quantitative data aimed to quantify the responses and make deductions regarding the overall feedback of the respondents. The quantitative and qualitative findings depict significant support for the rise in secularism among Christians. The element of technology is the primary precipitating factor for the rise of secularism among Christians. The qualitative survey outcome shows that the majority of Christians although having a strong attachment to their church doctrines are easily lured into the worldly affairs causing them to deviate from the expected code of conduct among Christians. Apart from technology, cultural integration take the center stage in the influence of Christians into secularism. The sound biblical principles that initially defined the social values seem to be weakening with the rise in globalization. Christians are easily influenced by the new cultures within their environments.

4.0 Chapter 4

This chapter presents the findings from the analysis and the deductions made based on the research outcomes. The primary objective of the study focused on proving the existence of presumptuous sinning of Christians and neglect of roles and values. The study took into account both the qualitative and quantitative research approaches to establish the existence of the vice within the social setting. The quantitative portion of the study involved closed-ended questions that require "no" and "yes" answers. The responses are measured using a 5-point Likert scale, and then SPSS software used to quantify the outcome and compare it with the literature review findings. The outcomes were then analyzed in terms of the common phrases and statements used by the respondents, and consistent themes were derived from each of the selected words and phrases to form a consensus meaning. The rationale for the approach dwelt on the need for both qualitative and quantitative information to illustrate the existence of the issue within the different societal setup. The chapter, therefore, provides a summary of the findings from the perspective of both qualitative and quantitative researches.

4.1 Summary of the Quantitative Outcome

The demographic information of the participants provides a brief understanding of the respondent's background in terms of age, gender, affiliation to any Christian groups, and the number of years of membership to the Christian social group. From the analysis, it is evident that all the respondents were above 18 years old, with the majority being 18-35 years old. Besides, more persons aged 35 and above participated in the study. The above selection sufficiently varies and presents the ideal number that could sufficiently respond to the research problem. The subject of the study concerns the increasing misconduct of believers across different ages. As the selection of the study ensures that every age group is sufficiently represented in terms of gender, the females outweighed the males, although the difference is not largely significant, and may not affect the outcomes. In identifying with the various religious

groups, all the respondents affirmed that they at least belonged to a given Christian group and most of the respondents cited membership of 1 to 10 years, while others confessed having been members for over 11 years. Based on the above demographic data, it can be concluded that all of the 30 respondents were well suited for the study and sufficiently capable of providing sound responses that could be used to define and interpret the behavior of the modern-day Christians.

An analysis of the study confirms that Church attendance by the participants is considered high, as the majority indicated that they at least attend 75% of the church meetings. Most of the meetings include weekly Bible studies, intercessory church sessions, and Sunday services, where people meet together and listen to the word of God. The open-ended responses showed that the attendance mainly stemmed from the need for fellowship with one another, encouragement; other respondents cited the church norms of regular meetings through house fellowships. The above responses indicate the effort and determination by believers to develop and grow their faith and become more influential in their Christian lifestyles. Whereas the majority of the respondents confessed attending church regularly, a significant portion of the respondents noted knowing fellow believers that had stopped attending church.¹⁹⁰ The qualitative responses regarding the evidenced reduction in church attendance mainly dwelt on the impact of secularism that has caused believers to cease praying, reading the Bible, and becoming susceptible to deceptive teachings. The responses revealed a common theme of secularism, in which case people find themselves entangled with issues not about Christianity within the social space. Furthermore, many churches have emerged that teach about prosperity and other deceptive gospels that discourage people from following

¹⁹⁰. Mayhew, Matthew J., Alyssa N. Rockenbach, Nicholas A. Bowman, Marc A. Lo, Matthew A. Starcke, Tiffani Riggers-Piehl, and Rebecca E. Crandall. "Expanding Perspectives on Evangelicalism: How Non-Evangelical Students Appreciate Evangelical Christianity." *Review of Religious Research* 59, no. 2 (2017): 209.

Christ. As indicated in the Bible, Christ noted that the true disciples would be known by their fruits; thus, the churches not teaching the sound biblical doctrine may be considered the wolf in sheep clothing that the Bible referred to as capable of leading many astray and causing them to fall from the gospel.¹⁹¹

The perception of money as a key factor in determining how believers got treated in the church elicited strong support from the respondents. Biblically, the love of money is considered the root of all evils¹⁹², and in the context of the research, money emerged as a determining factor in the recipe for ungodliness in church. By showing favoritism among members based on the size of their contributions in the church, ungodliness increases, causing many to fall away. The preferential treatment stems from the high expectations of the clergy and the belief that such persons form the financial pillar of the church. The presence of such persons in the church has precipitated the notion of the prosperity gospel, where the majority of preachers focus on informing the believers about giving to get rich, rather than giving as a Christian gesture. Another issue that emerged from the responses and was strongly articulated in the literature review is that most of the wealthy members of the church do not abide by the Christian doctrines. The levels of their influence blind the church to their mistakes, causing them to flourish in church while at the same time engaging in corrupt evils. One of the respondents admitted to knowing some of the rich members that prospered through corrupt deals. The respondents also revealed that most of the church leadership selection was based on the financial strength of individuals. Most churches selected as church elders, deacons, teachers, and assistants to the priests' individuals who were rich in material wealth and not committed Christians. Such persons have caused many Christians to walk away from their faiths and get discouraged from pursuing the godly ways described in the Bible.¹⁹³

¹⁹¹. Matt. 7:16.

¹⁹² 1 Tim. 6:10.

¹⁹³ 1 Tim 6:6.

Aside from rich members flourishing and gaining top posts in church, the issue of believers practicing secularism also strongly emerged as common among the members. The respondents pointed out that within their social circles, they were aware of fellow believers that out rightly engaged in secular practices such as watching pornography and listening to secular music. The presence of such believers within the social circles have been increased by lack of regular meeting among believers, low church attendance, a bad company in both workplaces and at home, and little or no reproach from fellow believers. Young Christians or persons willing to join the Christian faith increasingly get discouraged from pursuing the sound Christian values and begin following the ways shown by such believers. Besides, the existence of such people within the social domain predisposes the young Christians to emulate the wrong character causing them to lengthen their sinning. The proliferation of such Christian characters in the workplaces, schools, churches, and other social venues increasingly encourages people to engage in unbiblical acts and practices. Further, the study revealed that ungodliness was seen to be strongly encouraged by secular music that has become common within the diverse societal environment. The responses on whether secular music entertained the Christians were also surprisingly met with above-average affirmation. The study revealed that Christians love secular music, although most claimed that they did not practice actions encouraged in the music lyrics. The terms revealed that most of the secular music preferred by the Christians did not contain vulgar language or misleading messages. This implies that the music was accepted within the social setting and formed part of the social norms. As articulated in the literature review, music has formed a major part of communication and formation of links with supernatural beings in the spiritual realms.¹⁹⁴ In the church, music is used as means of glorifying God and giving him praises; yet in the secular world, music is made to praise other beings such as popular persons, politicians, or even

¹⁹⁴. Whitehead, "Religious Organizations and Homosexuality," 299.

other gods within the social scenes. In the epistle to the Romans in Chapter 12, Paul warned them against being conformed to the patterns of the world.¹⁹⁵ The patterns of the world depict through ungodliness and reflect through the choice of music, dress, and language; in cases where people prefer the worldly music, ungodliness thrives while a selection of godly music Christianity strengthens. Based on this finding, the majority of Christians have conformed to worldly patterns and increasingly engaged in activities that do not imitate sound Christian doctrines. Another justification for listening to secular music, as revealed in the study is the embracing of cultural values and perceptions. The inclination towards cultural values reveals that most people prefer to retain their cultural values or integrate them with Christianity. Most cultures have beliefs that lack conformity with Christian values. For instance, some cultural music, mainly conforming to secularism, seeks to promote the societal traditions that, in most cases, contradict Christian values. Christian values do not support such engagement, causing them to deviate from the sound biblical gospel leading to increased secularism. Most work environments are also characterized by secular music that is mainly used for entertainment. Such music affects believers and discourages them from pursuing the godly ways that have been preached over the years. Christian denominations also have different doctrines about music. For instance, Catholic churches permit their members to listen to certain secular music while protestants forbid the same. A mixture of such belief systems within the social setting points to the rise of secularism that the study shows has affected the church and its elements within the social setting. Schools also expose children to such music through co-curricular activities involving public performances of secular music as a depiction of the social culture.

Social media has also exposed people to a myriad of materials that could be described as negatively influencing their lives, in terms of what they see and hear. Most of the content

¹⁹⁵. Rom. 12:1.

is erotic and easily available on their smartphones and computer devices. On accessing the erotic contents while alone, half of the respondents in the study affirmed watching pornographic contents, while another section expressed uncertainty. Only a small portion expressed not engaging in such practices. It can be deduced that most believers within the social scene enjoy watching the erotic contents. As indicated in the literature review, technology has led to the creation of the internet and the media that provides access to different types of content at a click of a button. Millions of websites freely provide access to erotic contents, which occupy a significant amount of time for different people. Believers accessing such contents tend to become preoccupied with obsessions to view more of the related content. The Bible warns Christians to guard their hearts with utmost diligence for out of it proceeds issues of life.¹⁹⁶ This scripture insinuates that lack of care for the heart and mind makes it culpable to corruption and misleading. The majority of the respondents expressed an increased urge to view the contents time after time, causing addiction. Increased access to electronic devices such as smartphones and computers has increased cases of pornographic materials access by believers. Continuous engagement in such behaviors causes them to become slaves of sin while at the same time actively professing belief in Christ. Regarding the frequency of the habits, the majority of the respondents cited experiencing regular urges to watch pornographic materials. The willful sinning and repenting afterward lead to the formation of a habit that afterward becomes not easily detachable.¹⁹⁷ The pattern of accessing such content daily reflects a social setting that has been corrupted by online erotic content. Thus, the study shows that most of the people, including Christians, have developed obsession and addiction to such contents leading to the formation of habits that control their minds and behaviors.

¹⁹⁶ Prov. 4:23.

¹⁹⁷. Robison, "The Abuse of Power," 399.

The social media influence has also affected church attendance, where the majority of believers expressed the desire to view sermons through the internet rather than attending church sessions in person. The quantitative response revealed that a large portion of believers preferred to watch sermons over various media rather than attending church services due to several factors that were described in the qualitative outcome. Some of the reasons stated in the responses included time-saving, as many considered going to church as time-consuming and affecting their commitments to other activities. Relatively, most respondents expressed a preference for watching sermons over the media than visiting church services. The respondents noted that it potentially keeps people from deceitful teachings, which in this case, stem from the ability to flip between channels to select the most appropriate. An analysis of the responses indicates that the notion that church attendance is time-consuming depicts that believers do not consider Christianity as a valuable element in their lives. Valuable activities tend to have time and lack of proper allocations, show that believers do not strongly hold the godly values. The preference to watch sermons over media describes a gradual migration from the Christian values and slowly accepting to conform to the standards set by technology. The element of convenience signifies the gradual transition from belief in God as a supreme being into the understanding of various scientific theories about technology and other scholarly perspectives.¹⁹⁸ The study indicates that Christian believers have a firm preference for staying at home instead of attending church. As indoctrination proliferates the church setting, it is evident that the majority of believers are increasingly considering the church not as a holy place but as full of deceit and not sufficiently providing the desired direction. The responses, therefore, depict the erosion of Christian values and preference and people accepting other values brought about by the Christian cultures.

¹⁹⁸. Goodwin, "Moral Character in Person," 39.

As articulated in the literature review, Bible study constitutes a pertinent element in Christianity. The Bible provides direction to Christians and enables them to make decisions on significant issues within the social scene. In the Bible, the Psalmist David stated, "Your word have I hidden in my heart that I may not sin against you."¹⁹⁹ This scripture shows that the word of God provides a sense of direction to believers, and gives them wisdom and insight on the right path to righteousness.²⁰⁰ The study revealed that less than half of the respondents admitted to reading the Bible daily. The deficiency of God's word in the Christians' lives predisposes them to a lack of direction, and further causes them to pave the way for other social evils that negatively affect them. The lack of Bible study makes believers vulnerable to peer influence, which emerged in the study results. The believers noted that they have peers in the workplace and other social scenes with whom they interact and share various issues. The ability of the peers to influence their social group has been on the rise due to the secularism effect.²⁰¹ The peers tend to engage in certain common behaviors, which in most cases do not conform to the Christian values and standards. The lack of biblical precepts in the lives of Christians causes them to become easily influenced by the behaviors of their peers.

Aside from the peer influence, only a small portion of the respondents in the study agreed that they regularly teach their friends about Christ in an attempt to convert them to believers and Christ-followers. Teaching others about Christ is a biblical calling and commission, which was described in chapter 16 of the gospel, according to Mark. Christ advised his followers to go into the entire world and make disciples of him; nonetheless, only a small portion of the believers agreed to spread the gospel to other people. As modernity and technology take over a large section of society, various secular vices proliferate into the social

¹⁹⁹. Psalm 119:10.

¹⁷⁰. Hughes, "Why Young People," 4.

²⁰¹. Kleiven, "Sexual Misconduct," 281.

sphere leading to the depletion of Christian values. The presence of such evils has been seen to lead to the rise in Christian misconduct as they lack the knowledge about the required value system.²⁰² The low response towards preaching of the gospel to people exhibits a lack of strong Christian culture to convert other people into the religion. Besides, the respondents in the study noted that while they desire to preach to others within the social scene, the problem of stereotyping has become common among various groups. The social system has a set of values associated with Christianity, and deviation from such values often draws ridicules that culminate in fear of negative public opinions among the believers.

Christian character has been seen as a significant component in determining the strength of faith of other believers. Proper Role modeling in Christianity entails copying the sound Christian values and pursuing them with diligence. The responses in the study revealed that only a small portion of the believers was certain that their behaviors inspired others into becoming Christians. As aforementioned, society has behavioral expatiations from Christians and failure to adhere to such results in ridicule.²⁰³ Based on such perception, most respondents noted that they prefer to remain silent about their Christianity to avoid judgment and behavioral expectations from other members of society. Based on the responses, it can be deduced that most Christians fear to express themselves openly as believers due to the fear of judgment. The duty of drawing others to Christianity has been left to the priests and clergy, while most believers prefer to conceal their religious affiliations to limit the possibility of judgment from other people.

The respondents also perceived certain sins as easily ensnaring and common within distinct societal environments. Studies have indicated that certain sins, such as stealing, lying,

²⁰². Jackson, "Constructing Futures," 58

²⁰³. Kraft and Kraft, "Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross Cultural Perspective," 31.

coveting, fornication, and drinking or alcoholism, have become common among believers.²⁰⁴ The impacts of such sins, in most cases, go unnoticed due to their hidden nature. People can easily commit such sins and go unnoticed; thus, they thrive in committing them and not having anyone rebuke or stereotype them in any way. Sins such as fornication not only encompass the physical actions, but a mere lustful look entraps one into the sin. As only a few cases of such sins become evident in the public eye, most Christians find themselves constantly falling victims, which in the end leads to decreased faith. Most Christians also tend to care about other people's perceptions of them. Caring about such thoughts tend to affect their lifestyle choices and behavior within the social scenes. The outcomes, in this case, reveal that most Christians do not care about what people think regarding their characters. Such perceptions lead to them not caring attitude, which, in the end, causes believers to freely engage in sins, not taking into account the impact on other people. Scientific beliefs and values have increasingly flourished in the current social paradigm, causing people to lose the belief in God's existence gradually. Most people have become learned and engaged in scientific processes that seem controversial or contradict certain biblical stories. For instance, the findings of cloning have gone against the Christian values of God being the sole creator and stirred the belief that men can also modify the genetic structure of other creations.²⁰⁵ While the scientific creations such human cloning have improved knowledge and limits about the human wisdom and capability, they set bars upon which man compete God; most people, especially academic scholars that have thrived in similar researches tend to lose belief on whether God truly exists.²⁰⁶ Given the increased presence of such scientific and academic inventions in the present social setting, the respondents noted that indeed the scientific findings beat the biblical logic

²⁰⁴ 1 Cor. 6:9.

²⁰⁵. Barbara MacKinnon, ed., *Human Cloning: Science, Ethics, and Public Policy*, (University of Illinois Press, 2001): 23.

²⁰⁶. Jackson, "Constructing Futures," 59.

of God being the creator, and justifying the other scientific myths about human evolution. The divine existence of God has been challenged by many scholars, due to lack of tangible facts to prove His existence. Christians base their belief in God to faith, despite not having ever seen God. Compared to the material evidence provided in scientific research, most people lacked belief in God since they have neither experienced his presence nor seen him. This tends to cast doubt on many Christians that at times do not believe in God's existence. Besides, as articulated in the literature review, Christianity forms the epitome of human origin; the recent scientific findings of human cloning seems to challenge the role of Christianity, leading to the establishment of other belief systems that lack Christian values.²⁰⁷

The fear of sin equally emerged as an issue among the study respondents. While sin defines our relationship with God, its presence seems to have a significant impact on the life of a Christian.²⁰⁸ The responses in the study regarding the fear of sin showed that most believers do not fear sin, rather, they fear being judged by other people as sinners. This implies that the greatest distress stems from being considered evil or pretenders in the sight of men. Despite not fearing sin, most people believed that going to church significantly improved their relationship with God. This is consistent with the findings that most people at least attend 75 percent of the church services. While the question on church attendance and belief on the impacts of church evidenced in the results, the respondents were queried on whether the people around them were Christians. The response in the study revealed that most believers interact with unbelievers in the workplace. As the saying goes, bad company ruins good morals; the existence of unbelievers among Christians tends to have a key influence on their characters. The study aimed at identifying the prevalence of willful sinning among Christian believers; the findings demonstrate that willful sinning causes Christians to deviate from the

²⁰⁷. Denney, "Child Sexual Abuse," 27.

²⁰⁸. Jackson, "Constructing Futures," 60.

will of God, and engage in ungodly activities. It causes them to set the ideal standards of behavior that are expected of them. The presence of unbelievers leads to the commonality in behavior where they engage in similar acts that eventually becomes a habit.²⁰⁹ Overall, the findings of the survey strongly support the literature review outcome that linked increased willful sinning among Christians to various factors that have adversely affected the set values.

²⁰⁹. Dagmang, "Ecological Way of Understanding," 292.

Conclusion

The literature review pointed at factors such as modernity, science, and technology as key in precipitating secularism in the current social scene. According to the outcome, the secular influence has strongly dominated the social scene as many individuals depart from Christian values and conform to the new social norms propagated by the multicultural nature of the new societies. One factor that has strongly emerged in the study is the notion of deterioration of social values from within the contemporary communal setting.²¹⁰ As articulated in the modernity theory, the element of Christianity that initially formed the greater part of the social setting is gradually wearing out as secular ideas, habits, beliefs, music, and teachings permeate the societies.²¹¹ Christians have become entrapped in the social, economic, and technological quagmire, which makes them vulnerable to sin.²¹² The overall social atmosphere created by current events encourage people to constantly engage in iniquities.

The increased innovations in science and technology tend to elevate the multicultural nature of societies into higher levels. Most governments and leadership systems are learning from others and quickly adopting the issue of human rights, where individuals can engage in activities that were once considered taboo in the social space.²¹³ For instance, issues such as homosexuality or same-sex marriage are gaining acceptance in most social settings leading to the disintegration of biblical values that abhor such behaviors. Besides, the socio-economic pressures have caused the church leadership to engage in materialism rather than following divine teachings increasingly. The rise of such activities negatively influence Christian beliefs, causing them to weaken in faith and derail from the values that have been preached over the years.

²¹⁰. James S. Bielo, "The 'Emerging Church' in America," *Religion* 39, no. 3 (2009): 219-232.

²¹¹ Berger, "Modernity and Pluralism," 19.

²¹². Burdett, "Assessing the Field," 751.

²¹³. *Ibid.*, 753.

The primary objective of the study aimed at investigating the prevalence of willful sinning among Christian believers. As demonstrated in the literature review, the majority of Christians pose as faithful followers but engage in willful sinning. The findings of the study affirmed the claims made consistently in the literature, which indicate that factors such as secularism, technology, and modernity have significantly influenced Christian behavior and caused them to engage constantly in sin.²¹⁴ While Christianity is teaching a lifestyle of godliness and virtue, habitual sinning contradicts the requirements of the Christian faith.²¹⁵ The findings of this study prove that such habitual sinning stems from changes within the social scene resulting in improper influence. Mitigating the above trend would require Christian believers to engage increasingly in Bible study and prayer fellowships to develop a sound knowledge of the Biblical virtues. Besides, Christian believers should meet to meet frequently to encourage and exhort one another. Besides, Christian values have emerged as significant in mitigating the existing challenges. Churches should focus on instilling positive values and belief systems among its members; such values enable them to overcome the evils emanating from various social settings. Furthermore, believers should be taught about technology, modernity, and secularism, alongside the effects and mitigation approaches.²¹⁶ This makes them aware of the dangers involving its excess use and the relative impact. The application of the above measures could help in lowering the extent of influence that the social system has on the believers. It will further culminate in people who are less ignorant of the impacts of the surroundings on their faith.

²¹⁴ Burdett. "Assessing The Field of Science and Religion," 135

²¹⁵ Bielo. "The Emerging Church," 220.

²¹⁶ Eliot. *Christianity and Culture*: 34

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