

Security Challenges on Human Development in the Church: An Exploratory Study in Kaduna State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of security challenges on human development in the Church, with particular focus on how persistent threats such as terrorism, insurgency, banditry, and communal conflicts affect spiritual, social, and economic growth within Christian communities. Using a qualitative research design, data were sourced from books, journals, library resources, and credible internet materials to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject. The study found that insecurity undermines the Church's mission of discipleship, weakens social cohesion, and limits opportunities for education, economic empowerment, and community development. It further revealed that fear and displacement caused by security threats reduce participation in worship, hinder evangelism, and create psychological trauma among members. Despite these challenges, the Church has adopted coping strategies such as prayer networks, community solidarity, peace advocacy, and the provision of relief support to affected persons. The findings suggest that while insecurity negatively affects human development in the Church, faith-based resilience and strategic partnerships can mitigate the impact. The study concludes that addressing security challenges requires both spiritual commitment and practical interventions. It recommends that the Church strengthen peace building, collaborate with government and civil society on community security, and provide trauma counseling. In this way, the church fosters resilience, sustains growth, and contributes to holistic human development despite insecurity.

Keywords: Security Challenges, Human Development, Church, Insecurity, Religious Conflict

Introduction

This exploratory study investigates how the intensified security challenges in Kaduna State, Nigeria, impede human development within Christian church communities. Kaduna has endured a surge in banditry, kidnappings, communal violence, and targeted attacks on churches and clergy, drastically undermining spiritual resilience, communal cohesion, and socio-economic progress (Nzwili, 2025; Abdussalam et al., 2022). The Evangelical Church

Winning All (ECWA), for instance, has expended over ₦300 million on ransom payments while more than fifty of its members remain in captivity; in one attack, over twenty lives were lost and more than one hundred were abducted in Kuru Local Government Area (Nanlong, 2025). In another incident, multiple villages in Lere Local Government were attacked, resulting in deaths and further kidnappings (Nanlong, 2025).

These security threats extend beyond immediate physical harm to cripple livelihoods, disrupt agricultural activities, suspend weekly markets, and displace communities, thereby eroding the rural economy on which many church members depend (Abdussalam et al., 2022; Nigeria Risk Index, 2023). The trauma from abductions and lethal assaults renders congregants fearful of attending worship or participating in communal life, fracturing spiritual development and social bonds (Air Force Institute of Technology et al., 2025). Clergy are not immune: priests have been kidnapped or killed, and pastoral duties are frequently curtailed due to safety concerns (Wikipedia, 2025).

Despite these adversities, faith communities in Kaduna have demonstrated remarkable adaptive capacity. Women's fellowships, such as ECWA's Zumunta Mata, have evolved from spiritual gatherings into vital support networks, offering emotional, financial, and practical assistance amid crises (The Guardian, 2024). These grassroots faith-based structures have become frontline responders, fostering solidarity where formal institutions fall short. Nonetheless, the Church's coping mechanisms are stretched thin by the overwhelming financial burden and psychological impact of recurring insecurity (Nzwili, 2025; Nanlong, 2025).

Employing a qualitative approach grounded in library research, scholarly journals, books, and reputable internet sources, this study seeks to unravel how security challenges compromise human development in church settings, while also illuminating indigenous resilience strategies. By exploring the dynamic interplay between vulnerability and faith-based responses, this research aims to contribute to the broader discourse on human security, communal resilience, and the role of religious institutions in fragile contexts. It foregrounds the dual reality of the Church as both a site of heightened vulnerability and a potent catalyst for human development. Understanding this interplay is vital for crafting integrated interventions that empower church communities in Kaduna to nurture spiritual, social, and economic wellbeing, even in the face of persistent insecurity.

Conceptual Clarification

Conceptual clarification in this study revolves around three key concepts: security challenges, human development, and the role of the Church. Security challenges refer to persistent threats

such as terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery, farmer–herder conflicts, and ethno-religious violence that undermine the stability of communities and restrict freedom of worship, movement, and economic activity (Abdussalam, Olayiwola, & Akinniyi-Duyile, 2022). In the context of Kaduna State, such challenges are not abstract but real, with frequent attacks on churches, clergy, and congregants leading to loss of lives, displacement, and trauma (Nanlong, 2025). Thus, insecurity is not merely the absence of peace but the presence of pervasive threats that destabilize individual and communal life.

Human development in this study is understood as the process of enhancing people’s spiritual, social, psychological, and economic well-being within the Church. It goes beyond material prosperity to include the ability of individuals to worship freely, pursue education, engage in productive livelihoods, and live in dignity (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2023). Within church communities, human development is also tied to discipleship, moral formation, and the strengthening of social bonds that foster resilience. When insecurity disrupts these processes, human development is truncated, leaving communities vulnerable.

The Church, as a faith-based institution, is conceptualized not only as a place of worship but also as a community actor and agent of development. It provides moral guidance, social support, and in times of crisis, relief and advocacy (The Guardian, 2024). In Kaduna State, the Church embodies both vulnerability and resilience: it suffers from the weight of insecurity but also innovates responses through prayer networks, solidarity groups, and community engagement. Therefore, this study clarifies the Church as a vital space where the effects of insecurity and the possibilities of human development intersect.

The Nature and Dimensions of Security Challenges Facing the Church in Kaduna State

The Church in Kaduna State operates in one of the most volatile regions in Nigeria, where insecurity has become a defining feature of everyday life. The challenges are multidimensional, encompassing terrorism, banditry, ethno-religious violence, farmer–herder clashes, and kidnapping for ransom. These security problems undermine spiritual growth, disrupt economic livelihoods, fracture social cohesion, and diminish the Church’s capacity to fulfill its mission. Understanding the nature and dimensions of these threats is essential for evaluating their impact on human development within church communities.

A critical dimension of insecurity in Kaduna is rooted in religious violence, which has a long history in the state. Kaduna has been the site of repeated ethno-religious crises, including the Maitatsine uprisings of the 1980s, the violence that followed the 2011 presidential elections, and the introduction of Sharia law in the early 2000s (Kukah, 2019). These events deepened

the religious divide between Christians and Muslims, creating a climate where churches became frequent targets of attacks. The destruction of church buildings, killings of worshippers, and displacement of communities not only devastate physical structures but also weaken the spiritual and social bonds that hold congregations together. Religious violence leaves scars that go beyond material loss, fostering mistrust, bitterness, and polarization.

The rise of terrorism and insurgency in northern Nigeria has further complicated the security situation. Terrorist groups and criminal bandits increasingly target churches, clergy, and worshippers. The Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), for instance, reported that over ₦300 million had been spent on ransom payments for kidnapped members, while more than 50 remain in captivity (Nanlong, 2025). In one attack in Kauru Local Government Area, more than 20 lives were lost, and over 100 members were abducted (Nanlong, 2025). These violent acts cripple church activities, instill fear among congregants, and reduce attendance at worship services. They also strain church finances, diverting resources that could otherwise support developmental programs into ransom payments and emergency relief.

Kidnapping for ransom has become another pervasive security challenge. Bandits and criminal gangs frequently abduct clergy, Christian schoolchildren, and congregants, viewing them as lucrative targets (Nzwili, 2025). The trauma of abduction is long-lasting, with victims and their families often experiencing psychological distress, economic hardship, and disorientation upon return. Families and church members are compelled to raise huge sums for ransom, sometimes leading to the sale of assets or heavy indebtedness. This practice disrupts the social fabric of the Church and imposes financial burdens that weaken its developmental contributions to education, health, and welfare.

Farmer–herder conflicts, especially in southern Kaduna, add another layer to the insecurity facing churches. Many Christian communities in the region depend on agriculture for livelihood. Repeated attacks attributed to armed herders have resulted in killings, destruction of farmlands, and forced displacement (Abdussalam, Olayiwola, & Akinniyi-Duyile, 2022). Survivors often flee into internally displaced persons (IDP) camps where poverty, hunger, and dependency intensify. The loss of farmland and disruption of agricultural activity deprive families of income, affects food security, and reduces the Church’s ability to sustain rural ministries. Such conflicts weaken the rural economy, undermine long-term development, and exacerbate inter-communal tensions.

The psychological and social dimensions of insecurity are equally damaging. Constant exposure to violence generates fear, trauma, and uncertainty within Christian communities. Congregants increasingly avoid night vigils, evangelistic outreaches, and even Sunday

worship for fear of attacks (Air Force Institute of Technology et al., 2025). This reduces the communal life of the Church, hinders discipleship, and limits its evangelistic outreach. Additionally, social bonds are fractured as displacement scatters families and communities, leading to weakened solidarity. The fear of future attacks creates a culture of silence and mistrust, further hampering reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts.

Another important dimension is political. Many Christians perceive government responses to attacks as inadequate, delayed, or biased. Reports of slow security interventions or failure to prevent repeated violence create mistrust in state institutions (Kukah, 2019). This sense of neglect has forced churches to rely on self-help strategies such as community vigilance groups, prayer networks, and local solidarity movements. Women's fellowships, such as ECWA's Zumunta Mata, now function not only as spiritual fellowships but also as crisis-response units providing food, financial aid, and emotional support for victims (The Guardian, 2024). These grassroots strategies reflect resilience but also highlight the gap left by weak institutional protection.

The economic implications of insecurity on the Church cannot be overstated. Attacks on communities lead to loss of income, destruction of markets, and closure of businesses. The Church, which often depends on members' contributions to finance projects and ministries, suffers financially when members are impoverished or displaced. Resources meant for developmental projects are redirected toward relief, medical bills, and rebuilding destroyed infrastructure. This curtails the Church's capacity to contribute to education, healthcare, and poverty alleviation.

Theological Perspectives on Security and Human Flourishing in Kaduna State

Theological reflections on security and human flourishing provide a deeper lens through which the experiences of the Church in Kaduna State can be understood. While security is often approached in political or military terms, theology offers a holistic perspective that emphasizes human dignity, peace, justice, and the sanctity of life. Within the Christian tradition, security is not merely the absence of conflict but the presence of conditions that enable individuals and communities to live in freedom, worship without fear, and realize their God-given potential. In Kaduna State, where insecurity manifests through terrorism, banditry, and ethno-religious violence, theological perspectives shed light on both the struggles and the resilience of faith communities.

From a biblical standpoint, human flourishing is rooted in the concept of shalom, which signifies peace, wholeness, and well-being. The prophet Jeremiah's exhortation to "seek the peace of the city" (Jeremiah 29:7, NIV) underscores the divine mandate for believers to

pursue security and peace as conditions for prosperity. In Kaduna, insecurity has disrupted this vision by causing displacement, death, and economic hardship. Yet, the Church continues to draw on biblical hope, affirming that security is integral to God's plan for human development. Theologically, this highlights the inseparability of spiritual growth and social stability.

The Church also interprets security challenges through the lens of suffering and perseverance. The New Testament emphasizes that trials, though painful, can produce resilience and deeper faith (Romans 5:3-5). For Christians in Kaduna, enduring insecurity has reinforced communal solidarity and dependence on God. Prayer networks, fasting, and vigils have become spiritual weapons against fear and violence, reflecting a theology of resistance through faith. While such practices do not erase material insecurity, they provide psychological strength and hope that sustain human flourishing amidst crises (The Guardian, 2024).

A central theological perspective is the sanctity of human life. The persistent killings and kidnappings in Kaduna represent not only social evils but theological violations of God's image in humanity (Genesis 1:27). The Church condemns such violence as an affront to divine creation and calls for justice, reconciliation, and healing. Theologies of life argue that security is a prerequisite for protecting human dignity, and thus the Church's advocacy for peace and justice becomes an expression of its theological mandate (Nzwili, 2025). This is particularly evident in the efforts of clergy who risk abduction or death to continue ministering in unsafe communities.

Furthermore, liberation theology offers insights into the Church's role in confronting structural violence. In Kaduna, insecurity is often exacerbated by poverty, inequality, and perceived government neglect. Theological perspectives rooted in liberation emphasize the Church's responsibility to stand with the oppressed, challenge unjust systems, and advocate for reforms that foster peace and equity (Gutierrez, 1973/2020). By engaging in peacebuilding and community development, churches embody a theology that links human flourishing with social justice. This aligns with McGavran's Church Growth Theory, which stresses that the mission of the Church is not only spiritual expansion but also engagement with socio-political realities that hinder discipleship.

The theological concept of reconciliation also plays a vital role in addressing insecurity in Kaduna. Christ's ministry of reconciliation provides a model for bridging divides between communities fractured by violence. Churches in Kaduna have participated in interfaith dialogues, peace summits, and grassroots reconciliation initiatives. These efforts reflect a

theology that sees security not solely as state protection but as a communal responsibility nurtured through forgiveness, dialogue, and coexistence (Kukah, 2019). Though fragile, such initiatives create spaces for rebuilding trust and reducing cycles of retaliation.

Additionally, human flourishing from a theological perspective encompasses holistic development spiritual, social, and economic. Flourishing involves not only salvation but also education, health, and economic empowerment (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2023). Insecurity threatens these aspects by destroying schools, limiting livelihoods, and traumatizing children. Churches respond by offering informal education, trauma counseling, and vocational support to displaced persons.

Effects of Insecurity on Spiritual Growth and Discipleship in Kaduna State

Insecurity in Kaduna State has had far-reaching consequences on the Church, particularly in the areas of spiritual growth and discipleship. The persistent threats of terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, and ethno-religious violence have disrupted the regular rhythm of Christian worship and weakened the structures that sustain faith formation. Discipleship, which thrives in contexts of community, stability, and freedom, has been significantly constrained by fear, displacement, and trauma. The effects are both direct, such as reduced attendance at services, and indirect, including the weakening of evangelism, mentoring, and holistic Christian formation.

One of the most visible effects of insecurity is the decline in church attendance and participation in communal worship. Fear of attacks during services has discouraged many from attending church gatherings, particularly in rural areas that are more vulnerable to violence (Nzwili, 2025). Worship services, night vigils, and Bible studies are often sparsely attended, while some congregations have been forced to relocate or suspend services entirely. Since discipleship is nurtured through consistent exposure to Scripture, fellowship, and pastoral teaching, this disruption has weakened spiritual growth. Members who are unable to gather corporately often struggle to maintain personal spiritual disciplines in isolation, leading to diminished zeal and stagnation in faith.

Insecurity has also disrupted evangelism and outreach activities. Churches in Kaduna that previously engaged in open-air crusades, house-to-house evangelism, and mission work have been forced to scale down their efforts due to safety concerns. Missionaries in rural communities are frequent targets of banditry and kidnapping, which has discouraged deployment to volatile areas (Nanlong, 2025). Thus, these reduce the Church's ability to disciple new believers and expand its mission mandate. Theologically, discipleship is an ongoing process of forming believers into the likeness of Christ.

Furthermore, displacement caused by violence has scattered congregations and eroded community bonds that are central to discipleship. Communities attacked by terrorists or armed herders often flee to internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, where survival takes precedence over structured spiritual development. Pastors and lay leaders struggle to provide consistent teaching and pastoral care in such transient settings. The scattering of believers undermines the mentoring relationships and accountability structures that foster growth in discipleship (Air Force Institute of Technology et al., 2025). While churches attempt to minister in IDP camps, the conditions of fear and instability make long-term spiritual formation difficult.

The psychological effects of insecurity also impact discipleship. Survivors of violence and kidnapping often experience trauma, grief, and despair. Such emotional burdens can weaken faith, cause doubt, or lead to disillusionment with God's protection. Without adequate pastoral counseling, many find it difficult to reconcile their suffering with their spiritual commitments (Kukah, 2019). This creates challenges for discipleship, as leaders must simultaneously address psychological wounds and spiritual formation. The Church has attempted to respond by integrating trauma-healing workshops and pastoral counseling into its ministries, but the scale of suffering often overwhelms available resources.

At the same time, insecurity has paradoxically fostered deeper spiritual growth in some contexts. For many Christians in Kaduna, persecution and violence have reinforced their faith commitment, leading to renewed emphasis on prayer, fasting, and reliance on God (The Guardian, 2024). Believers often interpret suffering in light of biblical passages such as Romans 5:3–5, which frame trials as opportunities to build perseverance and hope. Prayer networks, house fellowships, and solidarity groups have grown stronger as a result of insecurity, sustaining discipleship even when formal church gatherings are disrupted. This resilience demonstrates the adaptability of discipleship under persecution, where adversity becomes a catalyst for deeper dependence on God.

Economically, insecurity reduces the resources available for discipleship. Churches that once funded Bible study materials, leadership training, and mission programs now divert resources to paying ransoms, rebuilding destroyed structures, or supporting displaced members (Nanlong, 2025). This financial strain limits the ability to organize discipleship seminars, youth programs, or theological training for leaders. Consequently, the pipeline of future leaders is weakened, and the process of mentoring emerging disciples suffers.

Impact of Security Challenges on Socio-Economic Development of Church Members in Kaduna State

Security challenges in Kaduna State have not only disrupted religious life but also significantly hindered the socio-economic development of church members. The prevalence of banditry, terrorism, communal clashes, and kidnapping has eroded livelihoods, displaced populations, and restricted access to education, health, and economic opportunities. Since the Church exists as both a spiritual and social institution, the well-being of its members is closely tied to their socio-economic stability. When insecurity undermines this stability, it weakens the Church's capacity to foster holistic human development.

One of the most immediate impacts of insecurity is the destruction of economic livelihoods. Many Christians in southern and central Kaduna are farmers who depend on agriculture as their primary source of income. Repeated attacks on farming communities by armed groups and herdsmen have forced people to abandon their farmlands, leading to loss of crops, reduced food production, and widespread hunger (Okoli&Lenshie, 2023). In some cases, attackers deliberately destroy crops or occupy farmlands, further entrenching poverty. This agricultural disruption has caused many families to lose their means of sustenance, making them dependent on humanitarian aid or church relief programs. As income dwindles, members struggle to pay school fees, access healthcare, or contribute financially to church development projects.

The climate of insecurity has also devastated small-scale businesses and trade. Markets in rural communities are often targeted by bandits, leading to looting, arson, and loss of goods. Many Christian entrepreneurs and traders avoid traveling to major economic hubs due to fear of kidnapping along highways such as Kaduna Abuja and Kaduna Birnin-Gwari roads (International Crisis Group, 2021). This fear restricts economic mobility, reduces profits, and discourages investment in commerce. Women, who constitute a large proportion of small-scale traders, are disproportionately affected, as they face both economic loss and heightened risk of abduction. The disruption of trade networks further perpetuates unemployment and economic stagnation among church members.

In addition to economic losses, insecurity has undermined access to education, which is a vital driver of socio-economic development. Attacks on schools, abductions of students, and the general climate of fear have discouraged parents from sending their children to school. The mass abduction of students in northern Nigeria, including Kaduna, has intensified concerns about safety in educational institutions (Amnesty International, 2022). Many Christian families, already displaced from their communities, find it difficult to enroll

children in new schools, while others lack the financial means due to destroyed livelihoods. Without quality education, younger members of the Church face long-term disadvantages, perpetuating cycles of poverty and vulnerability.

Healthcare access has also been compromised by insecurity. Frequent attacks on rural communities have led to the destruction or closure of health facilities, leaving survivors without essential medical care. Displacement further exposes church members to poor living conditions in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, where overcrowding, lack of sanitation, and limited medical services increase susceptibility to diseases. Women and children are particularly affected, with maternal and infant health outcomes deteriorating in insecure regions (Ezeani, 2020). The inability to access healthcare reduces productivity and weakens the overall human capital necessary for socio-economic advancement within church communities.

Beyond material losses, insecurity has also inflicted psychological trauma, which affects economic productivity. Many church members who have survived violence or kidnapping experience post-traumatic stress, grief, and depression, which hinder their ability to work, study, or engage in entrepreneurial activities. Trauma also affects interpersonal relationships and community cohesion, weakening social capital a vital resource for collective development. The Church has attempted to mitigate this through trauma-healing ministries and relief programs, but the scale of need often overwhelms available resources (Kukah, 2019).

Paradoxically, the security crisis has also pushed church members to develop resilience and solidarity mechanisms. Many congregations have established cooperative societies, skill acquisition programs, and microfinance initiatives to support members who lost their livelihoods. These efforts, though limited in scope, demonstrate the role of the Church as a social safety net in times of insecurity. Furthermore, the crisis has increased awareness of the need for vocational training and alternative income sources, as many young Christians are now turning to urban trades, ICT, and artisan work for survival. While these adaptations reflect resilience, they cannot fully compensate for the broader socio-economic disruptions caused by insecurity.

Church Responses and Coping Strategies in Times of Insecurity in Kaduna State

The persistence of insecurity in Kaduna State has compelled the Church to adopt various responses and coping strategies aimed at preserving the faith of believers, sustaining livelihoods, and maintaining communal resilience. These strategies are both spiritual and

practical, reflecting the Church's dual role as a religious and socio-cultural institution. In contexts of violence, banditry, terrorism, and displacement, the Church not only provides spiritual solace but also mobilizes resources to ensure survival and foster hope among its members.

One of the foremost responses has been the intensification of prayer and spiritual resilience. In times of insecurity, churches in Kaduna have emphasized fasting, intercession, and night vigils, with the belief that divine intervention can bring peace and protection (Afolayan, 2021). Prayer serves both as a source of hope and as a psychological coping mechanism, helping believers endure trauma. The church also preaches forgiveness and reconciliation, discouraging retaliation despite frequent provocations. By doing so, it upholds Christian teachings while mitigating the risk of escalating violence between communities.

Another critical coping strategy has been the establishment of relief and humanitarian support systems. Many churches, particularly through denominations like the Catholic Church, ECWA, and Anglican Communion, have created welfare committees to provide food, shelter, and clothing to displaced members (Onapajo, 2020). Some congregations run makeshift camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs), offering education for children and counseling services. These efforts not only alleviate immediate suffering but also strengthen communal solidarity, ensuring that no member is left isolated in times of crisis.

The Church has also engaged in trauma-healing and counseling initiatives. Clergy and lay leaders increasingly recognize the psychological scars of violence, such as grief, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In response, churches in Kaduna organize workshops, pastoral care sessions, and faith-based trauma-healing programs (Kukah, 2019). These efforts help restore emotional well-being, rebuild trust, and encourage forgiveness among affected communities. For many survivors, the Church becomes the first line of psychosocial support, filling gaps left by limited government interventions.

Economically, the Church has sought to empower its members through cooperative societies, vocational training, and skill acquisition programs. Recognizing the destruction of livelihoods due to insecurity, some congregations encourage entrepreneurship and small-scale businesses among youth and women. Microcredit schemes and cooperative savings groups have been introduced to help families restart businesses or invest in farming in safer areas (Adejumo, 2022). These economic initiatives serve as resilience strategies, reducing dependency on external aid and ensuring that church members can gradually rebuild their lives.

The Church has also become an advocate for peacebuilding and interfaith dialogue. Given that insecurity in Kaduna often has religious undertones, churches collaborate with Muslim

leaders to promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence. Programs such as interfaith prayer meetings, peace rallies, and dialogue sessions are organized to counter mistrust between Christians and Muslims (Adamu, 2021). These initiatives demonstrate the Church's recognition that sustainable peace requires addressing the religious dimension of conflict, fostering mutual respect, and countering extremist narratives.

In addition to grassroots efforts, the Church engages in advocacy by speaking against government negligence and calling for stronger security measures. Prominent clergy and Christian associations, such as the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), frequently issue statements condemning attacks and urging authorities to protect vulnerable communities (International Crisis Group, 2021). Through this advocacy, the Church not only amplifies the voices of marginalized groups but also pressures the state to fulfill its constitutional responsibility of safeguarding lives and property.

Towards Sustainable Peace and Human Development in the Church Community in Kaduna State

The search for sustainable peace and human development in the church community of Kaduna State requires a multidimensional approach that integrates spiritual, social, economic, and political efforts. Given the region's recurring insecurity, which has been shaped by ethno-religious violence, terrorism, banditry, and communal clashes, the Church must continue to play a proactive role in building peace and fostering development. Sustainable peace is not merely the absence of conflict but the presence of justice, equity, reconciliation, and opportunities that allow individuals and communities to flourish holistically. For the Church in Kaduna State, this means aligning biblical teachings on peace and human dignity with practical strategies that address the realities of insecurity and underdevelopment.

At the heart of sustainable peace is the promotion of justice and reconciliation. Churches must remain central agents in advocating for fairness and equity in governance, resource distribution, and human rights protection (Ikechukwu, 2020). Many of the conflicts in Kaduna are fueled by perceived marginalization and unequal access to resources. By preaching messages of reconciliation, forgiveness, and mutual respect, while also holding political leaders accountable, the Church helps create an environment in which peace is rooted in justice. This aligns with Christian teachings that emphasize reconciliation through Christ as a model for human relationships.

Furthermore, sustainable peace requires intentional investment in education and capacity building. Insecurity often thrives where ignorance, poverty, and unemployment prevail. By establishing schools, vocational centers, and theological training institutes, churches in

Kaduna can equip young people with skills that enhance employability and foster critical thinking. Education not only breaks cycles of poverty but also reduces susceptibility to manipulation by extremist groups (Omotola, 2021). For sustainable human development, the Church must therefore strengthen its role as a provider of education that combines moral instruction with skills training.

Economic empowerment is another essential aspect of peace and development. The Church community in Kaduna has already initiated small-scale cooperative societies and microfinance programs, but for long-term sustainability, these initiatives need to be scaled up and supported with strong institutional frameworks (Adejumo, 2022). By empowering women and youth economically, the Church reduces the desperation that often drives individuals into criminality or violent conflict. Promoting entrepreneurship, agribusiness, and social enterprises not only alleviates poverty but also strengthens resilience against insecurity by ensuring livelihoods remain viable even in volatile conditions.

Interfaith dialogue also stands out as a cornerstone for lasting peace in Kaduna. Since insecurity in the state is often framed along religious lines, dialogue between Christian and Muslim leaders remains crucial. Churches must continue to collaborate with mosques, community leaders, and civil society organizations to build bridges of understanding and dismantle stereotypes that fuel hostility (Adamu, 2021). Programs such as joint peace workshops, youth exchange initiatives, and interfaith community projects can foster a sense of shared humanity, creating spaces where peace is built through cooperation rather than confrontation.

Another critical dimension is trauma healing and psychosocial support. Sustainable peace cannot be achieved if communities remain burdened by unhealed wounds from violence. Churches can institutionalize counseling centers, healing ministries, and faith-based psychosocial interventions for victims of violence, including widows, orphans, and internally displaced persons (Kukah, 2019). Healing broken spirits restores hope and helps individuals reintegrate into society productively, thereby contributing to both peace and human development.

The role of advocacy cannot be overlooked. The Church must continually engage with government institutions to demand stronger security frameworks, better governance, and accountability in handling crises. By collaborating with non-governmental organizations and international partners, the Church can amplify its voice in shaping policies that prioritize human security and development (International Crisis Group, 2021). In this way, sustainable

peace becomes both a local and structural reality, addressing root causes rather than only symptoms of insecurity.

Finally, spiritual formation remains indispensable. Sustainable peace is deeply connected to transformed values, attitudes, and behaviors. By emphasizing discipleship, ethical leadership, and a theology of peace rooted in love and justice, the Church can nurture individuals who serve as agents of peace in their families, communities, and workplaces. This theological grounding ensures that peacebuilding efforts are not superficial but anchored in deep spiritual convictions that sustain long-term human development.

Recommendations

- i. Churches in Kaduna should integrate teachings on peacebuilding, reconciliation, justice, and resilience into discipleship and leadership training programs. This will equip believers to respond to insecurity with biblical wisdom and practical strategies that foster sustainable peace.
- ii. The church should expand its involvement in vocational training, cooperative societies, and entrepreneurship development programs. By addressing unemployment and poverty, it reduces the vulnerability of members to insecurity and creates pathways for human development.
- iii. Establishing structured faith-based psychosocial support systems, including counseling centers and support groups, will provide healing for victims of violence, displaced persons, and traumatized families, thereby restoring dignity and hope.
- iv. The church should continue to build bridges with Muslim communities, traditional leaders, and civil society organizations to reduce suspicion and foster coexistence. Practical interfaith initiatives such as peace workshops, joint community projects, and youth dialogues can dismantle stereotypes and promote mutual trust.
- v. The church must leverage its moral authority to hold political leaders accountable in addressing the root causes of insecurity. Through partnerships with NGOs and international organizations, it can advocate for policies that prioritize human security, justice, and equitable resource distribution.

Conclusion

The impact of security challenges on human development in the church community in Kaduna State is both profound and multifaceted. Insecurity in the form of banditry, terrorism, ethno-religious violence, and communal clashes has disrupted the spiritual, socio-economic, and psychological well-being of church members. The church, which is meant to be a sanctuary of peace and growth, has increasingly been drawn into contexts of fear,

displacement, and trauma. These challenges undermine discipleship, limit access to education and economic opportunities, and weaken communal trust, thereby hindering the holistic flourishing of Christians in the state.

Despite these obstacles, the church remains a vital agent of resilience and transformation. Through theological grounding, peace advocacy, interfaith dialogue, trauma healing, and economic empowerment initiatives, the church has demonstrated a capacity to both survive and lead in rebuilding communities affected by violence. However, sustainable peace and human development require not only the spiritual interventions of the church but also the collaborative efforts of government, civil society, and interfaith actors. By integrating faith-based approaches with social, economic, and political strategies, the church community in Kaduna can move beyond survival toward sustainable flourishing.

Ultimately, insecurity should not define the identity or future of the church. Instead, it presents an opportunity for the Christian community to reimagine discipleship, deepen resilience, and embody the message of Christ as the Prince of Peace. A peace-oriented, justice-driven, and development-conscious church will not only sustain its members but also contribute to the healing and transformation of Kaduna State as a whole.

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