

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MOUNTAIN OF FIRE AND MIRACLES MINISTRIES TO EDUCATIONAL SECTOR IN LAGOS AND OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Religion does not only serve spiritual purposes; it is also a social institution for the benefit of mankind. Previous studies on education and the agents designing and implementing them in Nigeria have been from the angles of governmental social works, women studies, psychological, and managerial, perspectives with little attention paid to the contributions of faith-based organisations on the one hand. Works on MFM, has largely been from the historical, beliefs and doctrinal, growth missiological, musicological perspectives with less attention paid to the contributions of MFM to educational sector and advancement in Nigeria. Using a Christian religious perspective, this study examines the intervention of MFM in educational sector methods, outcomes and challenges with a view to appropriating their sociological relevance. Emile Durkheim's functional theory of religion was adopted. Using a descriptive design, three places in Lagos and Ogun State were purposively selected for this study because the MFM educational sector are strongly reflected there- Iwaya-Yaba, Akoka and Prayer City. In-depth interviews were conducted with 30 purposely selected respondents in the selected geographical locations. Data were content analysed. The educational sector of MFM is situated in the three selected locations: Mountain Top Schools (Nursery, Primary and Secondary), Mountain Top University, D.K.O. Scholarship and Sponsorship, MFM and Christian Education, and MFM Academic Awards constituted the educational sector of MFM. Provision of Skill Acquisition, augmentation of Teacher's salaries in Selected Schools, renovation and building of schools, provision of Awards, provision of scholarships and sponsorship for indigent Students, and spiritual Reawakening were the six strategies adopted by the educational sector. Interviews conducted from the research reveals that the Provision of Skill Acquisition led to entrepreneurial development among students in tertiary institution (MTU), augmentation of Teacher's salaries in Selected Schools has led to increased motivation, and better performance of the teachers, renovation and building of schools has resulted in enhancing conducive working and learning environment for the teacher-student performance. Provision of Awards, provision of scholarships and sponsorship for indigent Students has led to the retainment of students in school for 92 beneficiaries (2018-2021), which has resulted in a reduction in the number of students dropping out of school. Spiritual Reawakening has resulted in the inculcation of moral inclination in the students. Some challenges facing the educational sector of MFM include nonchalant attitudes of some students and time constraints. The educational sector of Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries has led to educational advancement in the society, employment creation for job seekers, increased church membership, laundering of the church's image and as a veritable tool for evangelism.

Keywords: Educational sector, Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries, scholarships and sponsorships, skill acquisition

Introduction

Religion does not only serve spiritual purposes; it is also a social institution for the benefit of mankind (Familusi, 2019, P.371). It has been observed that Christianity has proved to be the most influential, all-pervading, co-extensive of all the Semitic religions and has dominated a large population of the world. There is no gainsaying the fact that the coming of Christianity to African countries brought about

improvement in their educational systems. Before the arrival of white men to African countries, the education system was informal, and such is characterised by teaching through oral traditions. Young men were taught the society's culture through stories, proverbs, songs, music, dance, folktales, etc. These were not characterised by writing and reading as the people were completely illiterate. Christian missionaries brought Western education which involves writing and reading. During this period, many schools were established for the benefit of African society. The development of Western education since then was indispensable to the growth and development of mankind. The founders and leaders of many religious organisations have often been well-educated or sought further education; some have some notable educational activities without losing their spiritual dynamics. In this light, this study focuses on Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries (MFM) and the Church's contribution to Nigeria's education sector, focusing on Lagos and Ogun State.

Previous studies on education and the agents designing and implementing them in Nigeria have been from the angles of governmental (Babalola 2002, Pp 177-192), social works (Adebusuyi 2018, 11892-11907), women studies (Ufegbune, 2016, para.1) psychological (Olaleye, 2013, pp. 106-112), and managerial, perspectives with little attention paid to the contributions of faith-based organisations one the one hand and works on MFM, has largely been from the historical (Ajayi, 1996, pp. 1-30), beliefs (Ayegboyin, '.....But deliver us from evil...' The Reposte of the MFM and its implications on reverse in mission, 2005) (Oluwole, 2021, pp. 88-101) and doctrinal, (Ayegboyin, Epe (Oath of cursing), Egun (generational curse), Ati (and) Itusile (deliverance) Ni Oruko Re (in His name) , 2014) (Adogame, 2012, pp. 79-91) growth (Ajayi A. A., 2014, p. 327), missiological (Fabunmi, 2019, pp. 121-131) musicological perspectives (Oti & Olubanji, 2019, pp. 537-544) with less attention paid to the contributions of MFM to educational sector and advancement in Nigeria, this is the gap this research intends to fill. The primary aim of this study is the examination of the contributions of Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries (MFM) to the educational sector in Nigeria. In doing so, this research aimed at highlighting the educational sector in which MFM has contributed, the methods of operation, the impacts of their contributions, and the challenges encountered in their involvement with a view to appropriating the sociological implications of their contributions.

This research is premised on two locations: Lagos and Ogun State, respectively. These two locations were chosen because MFM first started in Lagos state before it extended to Ogun state, which shares the same boundary with Lagos state. More so, Lagos and Ogun State are known for their heterogeneous nature, with more educational sectors established within these two states to which MFM have contributed significantly. This study is unique in that it probes into the nature of MFM's contributions and the impacts of her involvement in the educational sector. This study gives detailed statistics of the contributions of MFM to socio-economic and educational development. This study's objectives aim at bringing out the contributions of faith-based organizations in the actualisation of part of the agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) born at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 2012 (Gbenle, 2018, P.296). More so, notable contributions from this research will be recommended for other religious denominations and also for governmental strategic planning, amendments of old policies, or the formulation of new governmental policies that will be beneficial to individuals, governmental and non-governmental bodies, as well as religious bodies that are saddled with the responsibility for leading and developing human societies.

Brief History and Background Information of Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries

The Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries began in an unusual way. MFM started as a small group in 1989. Less than ten people started the ministry at Number 3, Edmond Crescent, Yaba, in the National Institute of Medical Research, where the General overseer works and resides (Ajayi A. O., 1996). It was also like a prayer group; members were about six at that time but later increased to Twenty-four interdenominational Christians who randomly began a Wednesday prayer meeting in a not-too-large living room of one of them (Olukoya D. K., 2011). The number of attendees grew to 2,000 by the first quarter of 1994. Their missionary zeal and combative spirit yielded more to prayer and study of the

word, nothing more. Their prayers were effective. Miracles and wonders were attendant to their prayers. The group later started a congregation which was named C.A.C Model Assembly (Olukoya, 2011, p. 441). The location of their routine meeting neither promised nor betrayed the possibility of a vibrant church emerging from the sheer commitment of the twenty-four like-minded Christians (Egoma & Oluwabusayomi, 2019). Back in 1989, at Number 60, Old Yaba Road, the cradle and host of the meeting, the general environment was a fast-diminishing glory of a part of Lagos that once played host to white men whose administrative strategies and contribution to community development left many streets in the area named after them. That was exactly the posture of the community until the ministry echoed the gospel in a manner that propelled many to dub them as strange characters (Egoma & Oluwabusayomi, 2019)

The first Wednesday meeting was like an accident, but later on, the voice of providence kept calling for subsequent meetings and history was set to be made as the voices of the few Christians were to later amplify and multiply into a roar of thunderous prayers across the world. Soon after the informal inauguration of the prayer meeting, the power of God was brought down through prevailing prayers to work verifiable miracles in the lives of men. The ordinary environment progressively distilled into an arena of extraordinary power, and a sense of awe pervaded the atmosphere. Neighbours started responding to the appeal of power display during the meeting, and the supernatural manifestation among these Christians became hot news, spreading like the harmattan fire (Egoma & Oluwabusayomi, 2019, pp. 12-14). Naturally, the power of God evangelised the environment, pulled the crowd and kept the group growing, going and strengthened for the challenges ahead. The location became too small to accommodate seekers and beneficiaries of God's miracles. What started in a living room became an exercise that obstructed traffic flow in the environment as the teeming crowd grew in amazing proportions. The prayer meeting was not only a menace to the powers of darkness whose palpable hold upon the lives of men met and surrendered to the superior onslaught of divine power, but the Local Government authority in the area was jolted to the looming awareness and impact of the Wednesday prayer meetings (Egoma & Oluwabusayomi, 2019, p. 14).

The report about traffic congestion in the area got to the Lagos Mainland Local Government, and the search for a more conducive environment began. The fire of persecution and human needs reduced into embers in the face of the fiery zeal of these Christians whose spirits inflamed increasingly into a size too large and a degree too hot for the opposition to douse. That there would be stiff opposition from around the neighbourhood was an issue for debate. As the frantic search for an alternative place for their meetings continued, with so many besetting hindrances such as a lack of resources to acquire available options, respite seemed to come of their way when a slum was offered for their use. The slum was a fairly large piece of land with irregular dimensions. Sprawling around the second gate of the University of Lagos, it was abandoned for its notorious records. The slum was a hide-out of criminals and the last home of reptiles whose natural habitat in the environment had been demolished by construction firms.

The criminals were poised to defend their illegal territory, and the reptiles were prepared to give their last killing bite to anyone who ventured into their midst. As the snakes were ready to inject the last drop of their venom into any foot, the scorpions were equipped with killing threats and dangerous weapons. Sellers of the piece of land took a business risk, but two things were on their minds: a feeling of relief that some people would change the face of the environment and the fear that the buyers would soon surrender the area to the combined team of criminals and dangerous animals. The conquering spirits of the twenty-four Christians, whose impact had drawn quite a crowd, would not surrender to any threat or recoil from any danger. They relished the power of their prayer and took over the land, dislodging men, demons and animals (Egoma & Oluwabusayomi, 2019).

The young man whose living room hosted the Wednesday meetings was Dr. Daniel Kolawole Olukoya, and the slum the group purchased at that time has now transformed into the international headquarters

of the Church of the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries (MFM). The name of the Church was revealed to Dr. Olukoya during the group's unusual prayer sessions on a mountain somewhere. Though it was never in his mind to start a Church, he later became the Church's General Overseer (G.O), which had its first service on April 24, 1994. The crowd kept coming to the prayer meeting at the new location, and their population kept increasing, leaving the twenty-four original members with the challenge of crowd management (Egoma & Oluwabusayomi, 2019, p. 14).

MFM and Educational Sector

MFM is dedicated to promoting academic excellence among children, youths and adults in society, especially with reference to Lagos and Ogun State, respectively. The General Overseer of the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries has an unquenchable passion for the Youth, and this has inspired him to float many programmes to steer the youths away from the paths where the devil always feeds on their innocence. Programmes such as encouraging the establishment of youth churches, Dr D.K Olukoya Bible quiz, Dr D.K Olukoya Bible Football Club, GEN 218 and so on, have been floated just to help the youth to attain their divine purpose. A lot of youths have also relied on the generosity of the General Overseer to finance their education. Below are the detailed activities of the Church on education.

Mountain Top Schools (Primary and Secondary Education)

The Mountain Top School is a private Christian institution, owned by Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries, with a mandate to raise an end-time army for the Lord through academic and spiritual prowess, preparing God's heritage as a battle axe in the present cosmic war. It was divinely revealed and received by the General Overseer of Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries (MFM) worldwide, Dr. Daniel Kolawole Olukoya and his wife Pastor (Mrs) Shade Olukoya. On receiving the vision, machinery was immediately deployed for its actualisation. On February 4, 2004, the vision was translated into a tangible reality with the establishment of the first Mountain Top Nursery and Primary School at No. 44, Montgomery Street, Yaba, Lagos. The school took off with a staff strength of seven, made up of the head teacher, five classroom teachers and one cleaner. The pupil population at inception was six (four in Nursery 1, one in Nursery 2 and one in Primary 1).

The success and accelerated growth rate of the school within the short period of its existence motivated the subsequent establishment of the Mountain Top Secondary School on September 15, 2007, at the same address. Five (5) teachers and thirty (30) students kick-started the Mountain Top Secondary school. In 2008, Mountain Top secondary school relocated to the Church premises at No. 2, Olanrewaju Adeniyi close, Off Iwaya Road, Onike by MFM International headquarters. The nursery and primary school also relocated to 97/99 Saint Finbarrs Road, Akoka, as its permanent site on January 17, 2010.

Lagos State Ministry of Education accorded recognition and approval to the Mountain Top Nursery and Primary School in 2005 and the secondary school in 2010, respectively. Mountain Top School is to offer high and qualitative educational standards aimed at bringing out of our children the best to enable them to enjoy Mountain Top life through sound, qualitative and systematically structured and organised teachings, mentoring and learning with inbuilt virtues of godliness, excellence and hard work which is the motto of the school. Today, there are Mountain Top Nursery and Primary and Secondary Schools spread across the length and breadth of the nation-Nigeria (Mountain Top Educational Services Board (MTESB)). The Secondary School is also accredited by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and the National Examination Council (NECO) for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (Olukoya D. K., 2019, p. 662)

Presently, Mountain has one (1) Nursery and Primary School in Lagos, located at 97/99 Finbarr College Road, Akoka, Lagos, and one Secondary School in No. 2, Olanrewaju Adeniyi close, Off Iwaya Road,

Onike by MFM International Headquarters, in Lagos and only one (1) Nursery and Primary school in Ogun State, located inside Prayer City, off Lagos-Ibadan Expressway.

Mountain Top University

The Mountain Top University is the tertiary institution established by Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries, as a Christian Faith-based institution committed to breeding men and women of excellence with a combination of high moral standard and spiritual fervency to become positive agents in the history of this generation and thereafter (MTU, 2015). The divine mandate and vision which inspired Dr. Daniel Kolawole to establish the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries in July 1989 carried with it a training emphasis which propelled the establishment of the MFM spiritual war college in 1995 and, subsequently, the school of deliverance. Through the instrumentality of these two schools, the visioner was able to train and equip saints for higher service in the Lord's vineyard, but there was still a burning passion in him to bring to the larger public the opportunity of acquiring qualitative tertiary education with high moral spiritual content. This passion, which birthed the Mountain Top Schools at the primary and secondary levels, led eventually to the establishment of Mountain Top University (MTU, 2015, p. 6).

To ardent educationists like D.K. Olukoya, the promulgation of the education (National Minimum Standards and Establishment of Institution) Decree No. 9 of 1993 to replace Decree No. 19 of 1984 was a welcome development as the new statute stipulated new guidelines for the establishment of private universities and thus opened the window of opportunities for private sector participation in providing access to tertiary education in Nigeria.

The establishment of the Mountain Top University is aimed at complementing and improving upon the present efforts in the public and private sectors aimed at providing access to qualitative and functional education as well as contributing to raising the educational and manpower level in the nation with emphasis on combining wholesome knowledge with integrity and the fear of God (MTU, 2015, pp. 6-7).

MTU subscribes to the national aims and objectives of education, as inscribed in the national policy on education adopted in 1977. The achievement of these laudable objectives has remained elusive because the means to do so were removed with the takeover of private schools, particularly the mission schools, and the replacement of moral and religious studies with civics shortly after the adoption of the policy. Rather than improve, therefore, educational institutions at all levels has been witnessing decadence, violence, cultism, overcrowding, acts of gross indiscipline, various forms of examination malpractice, corruption, immorality, prolonged closures and irregular academic calendars (MTU, 2015, pp. 7-8).

Mountain Top University is set to bring new orientation into the Nigerian education sector by providing a disciplined, peaceful and dedicated study environment as a tool for raising and breeding men and women of excellence with a perfect blend of high moral standards and spiritual fervency that will not only set them apart from the rest but also make them instruments of positive change in their generation and beyond (MTU, 2015, p. 8).

The academic disciplines of study in MTU are represented by two (2) colleges- The College of Humanities, Management and Social Sciences (CHMS) and the College of Basic and Applied Sciences (CBAS). The CHMS consist of disciplines, which includes Accounting, Business Administration, Economics, English, Finance, Fine and Applied Art, Mass Communication, Music, Religious Studies, Industrial Relations and Personnel Management, Public Administration, and Securities and Investment. In CBAS, the courses available are Biology, Biochemistry, Chemistry, Biotechnology, Computer Science, Cyber Securities, Food Science and Technology, and Geology. Geophysics, Mathematics, Microbiology, Physics, Physics with Electronics, Software Engineering and Industrial Chemistry.

Academic Programmes

An academic year or session consists of two semesters. The first semester begins in early October and ends in February the following year, while the second semester starts in March and ends in July except otherwise stated due to exigencies. A semester consists of 17-18 weeks; this is made up of 1 week of registration, 15 weeks of teaching and 1-2 weeks of examinations (MTU, 2015, p. 70).

D.K. Olukoya Scholarship Schemes

A lot of youths have relied on the generosity of the General Overseer to finance their education. Fortunately, the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries now has a university of its own where the dreams of youths in the church can find expression and where expectedly the responsibility of the General Overseer to these youths will increase. To assist the General Overseer in carrying out this gargantuan responsibility, an institution known as D.K. Olukoya Foundation was created. The Foundation is conceived as an organ that will actualise the vision of the General Overseer to bring the University within the reach of an average Nigerian and, by extension, an average member of the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries, anywhere he or she may be found in the world. Before the approval of MTU, it is a known fact that the General Overseer of MFM committed a huge sum to the payment of school fees and other incidental charges for church members. Now that the Church has a university of its expectations are high, and demands on the General Overseer to permit members to enroll into the university on zero budget are likely to increase. This has to be properly managed for two reasons. First, people, especially MFM members, already know Dr Olukoya to be a generous and burden-bearing man; he cannot afford to do anything that will be contrary to this now. Two, his compassionate nature cannot be allowed to impede the progress of the university and especially the move to make it a world-class university whose proper funding must as a matter of necessity come from the fees payable by the students and which the less privileged members of the MFM family may not afford (Dr. D.K.Olukoya Mountain Top University (MTU) Foundation, p. 2). The foundation provides leverage by setting up standards that must be followed to enable the underprivileged members of the church to benefit from the “church’s” university. And this is very significant in order to avert the kind of disenchantment that some members of churches that had established a faith-based university now hold against the leadership of their church as a result of their inability to afford the fees of the university established by their churches (Dr. D.K.Olukoya Mountain Top University (MTU) Foundation, pp. 2-3).

The following are the eligibility conditions for benefiting from the scholarship: first, a beneficiary must have been issued an MTU admission letter; second, a beneficiary must have spent a minimum of 2 years as a member of MFM; third, a beneficiary shall provide two references from senior persons in MFM, fourthly, a beneficiary shall sit for MTU Foundation selection Test, and shall not only pass the MTU foundation test but shall also meet the cut-off point. And lastly, a beneficiary shall be entitled to fifty percent of MTU tuition from year one to year four provided the beneficiary’s academic performance is consistently in good standing (Dr. D.K.Olukoya Mountain Top University (MTU) Foundation, p. 4).

MFM and Christian Education

The Mountain of Fire and Miracles, as a full gospel Christian Ministry, is committed to the incisive teaching of the word of God in order to infuse a Christ-like character, godliness, and fruits of the Spirit as well as inculcate in its members a thorough and deep knowledge of the Bible, through its Christian education programme (Olukoya., 2019). Christian education is the systematic, Bible-based and Holy Spirit-empowered teaching and learning process which seeks to guide believers at every level of their spiritual growth to fully understand the word of God at the beginning and ending of truth and as the foundation and authority on which all human ideas, concepts and facts are authenticated. In one word, Christian education is to develop in believers a biblical worldview, which Paul underscored in Romans 12:2. The overall objective of Christian education, as it applies to MFM, is specifically to enable the students of the MFM ministerial schools to have the mind of Jesus, to walk in a manner worthy of their callings in a world that is full of evil, tribulations, temptations and challenges, to be effective participants

in the great commission which is the instrument of the resurrected Jesus Christ to His disciples (Matthew 28:16-20)

The very first ministerial school established by DKO was the school of prayer, which predated the establishment of Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries. In less than six years after its inauguration, MFM Ministries began to experience a geometrical increase in the ministerial workforce. This brought to the fore the necessity to urgently get well-trained ministers who would help to shepherd the new converts to be well-informed and guided on their new faith. Moreover, with the conviction of the GO that if a church wants to remain globally relevant and divinely endorsed, the training of its ministers must be sacrosanct, Dr. DK. Olukoya established the Spiritual War College in 1995. This was followed by the takeoff of the school of ministry in 1998, aimed at training MFM pastors and ministers (Olukoya D. K., 2019, p. 647).

Soon after the Spiritual War College took off, other schools sprang up. Prior to this, the G.O. had solely handled the training of pastors and ministers in biblical studies, deliverance and prayer. It was from the gap that needed to be filled that the schools of prayer and deliverance later established with the courses handed by the Senior pastors who were some of those who benefitted from the maiden training by the G.O. Much later was the establishment of the schools of prophets and counselling as well as the school of ministry which was instituted to respond to the training needed for all those who desire to be full-time pastors in MFM. The G.O. delivered the inaugural lecture and official opening of the schools of Power and Healing, Spiritual Red Cross, as well as Languages and Culture on February 25, 2002. The schools of Evangelism and Church planting, Mission and Discipleship came on board later. The school of Children's Education was started in 2004, while the schools of Spiritual Gifts, Discovery and Development joined the league of MFM schools in 2010 (Olukoya D. K., 2019, p. 647).

The Mountain Top International Bible College is the degree-awarding theological institution of the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries. It was established in 2007. Its main campus is in Lagos, and its satellite campus is temporarily in Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. It is currently affiliated to the Mountain Top University. It not only awards first degrees, but it also offers successful candidates the opportunity for higher degrees in their chosen course of study. The current Rector is Pastor Innocent Ubong. The programmes run in the college are Bachelor of Theology (B.Th.). Duration is three to four years; Diploma in Theology, duration is one to two years; and certificate in Christina Ministry (CCM), the duration is one year (Olukoya D. K., 2019, pp. 656-657).

MFM Academic Awards

Dr D.K Olukoya's academic award of excellence is given to the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Campus Fellowship members who graduated with a First Class Honours degree from reputable universities by the General Overseer, MFM, Worldwide. The award is part of the youth repositioning agenda and is in line with the divine vision received by the G.O to rebrand the MFM campus fellowship (Olukoya D. K., 2019, p. 683)

MFM and Christian Social Responsibilities on Education

MFM is a socially responsible church with a clear-cut policy on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Its guiding philosophy is that CSR embodies an ardent commitment to enduring partnerships for sustainable development whilst adding immense value to the communities in which it operates. MFM's positive stance on CSR derives from biblical commandments that depict giving and helping others (especially those who are weak and poor) as a way of demonstrating God's love and making others experience His goodness. CSR is a broad term used to describe an organisation's efforts to improve society in some way. It is something organisations do to improve their local and global communities. As a responsible corporate citizen, MFM positively implements and fulfils its CSR agenda in various ways,

such as in education, community development, promoting entrepreneurship, and notable contributions to the health sector.

Strategies adopted by Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries in enhancing the Educational Sector in Lagos and Ogun State

The Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries has strategically positioned herself to enhance career growth and human development, especially with the mandate of the G.O.'s 70 points agenda to reposition the youth for destiny fulfilment. Below are some of the strategies deployed by MFM in advancing education and the educational sector as a whole.

1. Provision of Skill Acquisition

Skill is the ability to do something well. A skill that can be acquired to earn a living includes knowledge of computer operations, hairdressing, tailoring, automobile repairs, pottery, bread making, photography, plumbing etc. Skill acquisition is the art of learning to do something in order to earn a living and or to survive (Skill Acquisition, 2022). At Mountain Top University, it is mandatory for all students to learn and master at least one skill before graduation. Available skills are catering, fish farming and agriculture, fashion design/tailoring, arts and crafts, painting/virtual art, shoe making/perfumes, event planning, natural hair/babbling, hand knitting, tie and die, soap making, Nylon production, software and app development, photography and video making, leather making and printing and publications (Akan, 2022).

Also, the 'Every Student a Musician' ((ESM) programme is mandatory for all students in MTU from 100Level to 400Level. It is an academic programme that is compulsory for all students. The students learn how to play different musical instruments of their choice- guitar, piano, saxophone, trumpet, flute, clarinet, violin.

More so, 'Success Dynamics' (SDN) is another course that teaches and inculcates in the students' Christian moral principles that will enable them to succeed in life. These moral principles are taught from 100L to 400L. The SDN is a course that is certified by the university's Chancellor, and it is compulsory for every student to register and pass the course before graduating.

2. Augmentation of Teacher's Salaries in Selected Schools

As part of MFM CSR, the G.O., invests and spends largely in ensuring that the teeming population of young ones and adults in the communities where MFM churches are domiciled have access to qualitative education by embarking on various projects. These include the augmentation of staff salary in Aje Comprehensive High School, at Sabo-Yaba, Lagos (Olukoya, 2019) and in Mountain Top University, Prayer City, Ogun State.

3. Renovation of some school buildings and construction of new classrooms

Donation of laboratories (construction and equipping) to secondary and tertiary institutions. One such is the donation worth 250 million naira to the University of Lagos, the G. O's alma mater. There is also the construction of libraries and donation of books and the provision of accommodation for thousands of indigent students (Olukoya, 2019, p. 502).

4. Provision of Awards

The G.O. of MFM, in his generosity, sees the need to reward the efforts of students who have done excellently well in their studies and have graduated from the universities or other higher institutions of learning with a first-class honour degree across all MFM campus fellowships in Nigeria and diaspora. Hence, the D.K.O. Award of Excellence started in 2010 with nineteen (19) beneficiaries who were given brand new cars each and laptops, in 2011 there were fifteen (15) beneficiaries with cash awards, in

2013 there were seventy-seven (77) beneficiaries with cash awards, in 2015 there were one hundred and six (106) beneficiaries with cash awards and in 2019 there were over 300 beneficiaries.

5. Provision of Scholarships and sponsorship for indigent Students

Since the inception of D.K.O scholarship foundation in 2015, over 250 indigent students had benefited from the programme. The scholarship is usually in different categories, firstly there is the full and part scholarship, which is subject to the student's performance score after the conduction of a test that is administered by the scholarship board members. Except in very rare occasions that a student is awarded scholarship without going through the usual protocol of observing the test. In occasion like student loss of a parent, sponsor, or cases in which the scholarship committee feels that they need to render any due assistance to the student in order to aid their completion of study.

6. Training and Seminar workshop

In MFM, Christian education is given the utmost attention. There are over 50 spiritual schools that are meant for membership growth and development. These various schools are under the tutelage of seasoned pastors of the Church, and certificates are awarded to every participant of the school. The training is held two times a year. The first set of training in each year starts in February and ends in May, while the second set starts in July and ends in November. There are opportunities for full-time and part-time studies in most of the schools except for the higher and the advanced schools, which are conducted once a year respectively.

Results of the Strategies deployed by Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries to the Educational sector in Lagos and Ogun State

The methods of operation implemented by MFM educational programmes have resulted in the outcomes below:

1. Entrepreneurial Development

According to an interview respondent, she said she wants to go into business after school instead of waiting or looking for a job, instead she prefers to be an employer of labour (Akan, 2022). Some students develop their careers from learning musical instruments. It is revealed that about 70% of the students presently in the university are earning from the skills they have acquired such as hairdressing, barbing, tie and die (Adire), photography and event and decorations. Boluwatife, who is a final year student of the MTU, attested to the fact that the skill she has learnt from the entrepreneurship programme of the school has made her develop her brand as a specialist in making tie and die (*àdìrẹ*) fabrics of different shades and patterns.

2. Reduction in Student Drop-out

Through the scholarship programme, many students have been rescued from dropping out of the university due to their inability to pay for their school fees. In 2020/2021, 23 beneficiaries of the DKO scholarship graduated from the university. In 2019/2020, 27 beneficiaries of the DKO scholarship graduated from the university. In 2018/2019, 42 beneficiaries of the DKO scholarship graduated from the university. In an interview with one of the beneficiaries 2019/2020 set, he revealed that he would have been a street boy if he had not been given the scholarship because he would not have been able to further his university education (Titus, 2021).

3. Fosters Better Student Academic Performance

Through the awards of scholarships and merit awards to first class students, it has contributed to enhancing student academic performances. Many of the students attested that they are motivated to do well in their academics because of the financial assistance given to them. For instance, in the university, in the 2020/2021 graduating set of the scholarship beneficiaries, 12 students have a first class, five students have a second-class upper division, and six students have a second-class lower division. In the 2019/2020 graduating set, out of the 27 students on scholarship at the undergraduate level, six students had first class, 17 had second class upper division, and 4 had a second-class lower

division. In the 2018/2019 graduating set, out of the 42 students that benefitted from the scholarship, 13 had first class, 16 had second class upper division, and 13 had second class lower divisions, respectively.

4. Provision of Vocational materials

Vocational materials are given to the best students in the various skills acquisition class after graduation. This aims to instill in the students their passion to do more even after leaving school.

5. Spiritual Reawakening

The availability of the Christian education training schools has availed many of the opportunity to learn basic biblical principles aside from the usual sermons preached in church. As a prerequisite to functioning in any Department of the church and in whatever capacity, MFM Christian education school is made mandatory for members who wish to work for God in the ministry either as a full-time or part-time workforce. The schools in MFM have contributed in developing students both spiritually and intellectually.

Sociological Impacts of the Contributions of Mountain of Fire to the Educational Sector

The contributions of MFM to educational advancement in Nigeria have enhanced the following contributions to Nigerian educational systems as well as to the nation at large.

1. Educational Advancement

As a part of the sustainable development goals (SDGs), MFM has been able to play a crucial role in advancing the educational sector in Nigeria, through the establishment of primary, secondary and tertiary private institutions. These educational advancements also include nurturing morally sound and upright graduates who will become better citizens and responsible for promoting peace and progress in our society.

2. Employment Creation

Most of the students, after graduation from Mountain Top University become self-reliant. Self-reliance is the social and economic ability of an individual, a household or a community to meet essential needs (including protection, food, water, shelter, personal safety, health and education) sustainably and with dignity. This is made possible due to the various entrepreneurial skills they have acquired as students.

3. Laundering of Church's Image

MFM is widely known for deliverance warfare and prayers. The involvement of the Church in the education sector has given the church a new identity and has helped to promote the Church's view and perspective to members and non-members alike. There are over a thousand students in MTU who are from various locality within and outside the shores of Nigeria. There are over 500 student enrollees in the primary sector, and in the secondary sector, there are over 400 students.

4. Increased Church Membership

It is obvious that some of the beneficiaries are not members of MFM. However, from the data gathered during this study in 2021, many of the students, beneficiaries and their parents have become MFM converts because of the benefits they stand to gain as members of the church.

5. Veritable Tool for Evangelism

MFM involvement in the educational system in Lagos and Ogun State has been a good platform in promoting the gospel and evangelisation of Christianity to the Students and also to the communities at large. Some of the interviewed respondents, who are students of MTU, claim that they got born again in the university during one of the numerous ministrations of Dr D.K. Olukoya. The students at the Primary, secondary and university of MFM are made to conform strictly to the Christian tenets of faith, rules and regulations of the schools with regards to the student's code of conduct and also to the beliefs and doctrines of the church irrespective of the religious denomination in which they belong.

Problems Encountered in the implementation of the strategies

The following are some of the challenges facing the implementation of the strategies adopted in the MFM educational sector.

1. Nonchalant attitudes of some of the students

Some students see some programmes as challenging and, hence do not take them seriously. Also, some few students are too lazy to work. The nonchalant attitudes of some students towards academic and extra-curricular activities of the school have resulted in their expulsion and termination of their studentship.

2. Time constraints

This is another major factor that affects the time and timing of activities in the educational sector of the church. During the course of this study, many a student complained of the timing of some of the school activities, especially in the university. For instance, in an interview with some of the students, they complained that the time allotted for the entrepreneurship and 'Every Student a Musician' course is insufficient for them to gain the needed knowledge they need to acquire in their various chosen skills.

Conclusion

This research has been able to explore the relationship and contributions of Christian faith-based organisation to the educational sector in Nigeria. It shows that religion is not only a spiritual affair but a social institution for the benefit of mankind. Based on the findings from this study, this research recommends the following:

- 1 Discipleship should be used as a means of conforming the students to obey the rules and regulations. As a faith-based institution, rather than expulsion as punishment, more stringent measures should be put in place to help better and redeem the lives of students found wanting in any illicit acts
- 2 There should be provision of rehabilitation centres where students who are found wanting in any criminal acts can be counselled and attended to.
- 3 The educational sector of the Church may need to work hand-in-hand with some NGOs and governmental bodies who are specialised in these areas of education and child training.

In addition, it is worthy of note that the Church has been involved in Christian social responsibility, and this has tremendous value in the accomplishment of the sustainable development goals for the growth and development of the nation Nigeria, hence, more faith-based organisations should also take it as a responsibility upon themselves to see to the development of the country in every way they can.

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