



ICT, catechesis and marriage and the family in the church in Nigeria: A qualitative study

Justine John Dyikuk^{1*} 

¹Department of Mass Communication, University of Jos, Nigeria. justinejohndyikuk@gmail.com

*Corresponding author: justinejohndyikuk@gmail.com



Abstract: Despite various criticisms about Information and Communications Technologies (ICT), one cannot dismiss in a hurry that life is much easier today thanks to ICT. Indeed, advances in technology have improved gathering and sharing of information, ways of doing business and medical care. What is more, religious perspectives are also changing courtesy of new technologies. To this end, this qualitative study titled “ICT, Catechesis and Marriage and the Family in the Church in Nigeria: A Qualitative Study” employed the grounded theory to ascertain the role of ICT in aiding all-round catechesis within marriage and the family in the country. As regards objective/purpose, the study sought to investigate the place of ICT in entrenching Catechesis in Marriage and the family in the Church in Nigeria. It found lack of embracing e-catechesis and edutainment as well as initiating a multidimensional approach to catechesis as reasons for the impasse. It recommended initiating e-catechesis, infotainment and a multidimensional approach to catechesis as ways out. The study concluded that marriage and the family would be spiritually enriched if the Church’s hierarchy in Nigeria direct the way in employing ICT for teaching all-round catechesis.

Keywords: Catechesis, Catholic church in Nigeria, Family catechesis, ICT, Marriage and the family

1. Introduction/Conceptual clarification

Scholarship is strategic to obtaining informed perspectives on various issues. This is because single narratives are often considered dangerous since they do not make allowance for divergent views. The upsurge of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) tools and how they affect almost every facet of life calls for serious attention and consideration. From commerce to industry, politics to culture, communication to socialization and health to wealth, the cutting-edge impact of new technologies is felt. The world and people have moved from erstwhile analogue perspectives to digital platforms which make life easier. To informed minds, what is now in vogue is not so much about using digital formats but how to put them under control. According to experts, today: “ICT is leveraged for economic, societal and interpersonal transactions and interactions. ICT has drastically changed how people work, communicate, learn and live. Moreover, ICT continues to revolutionize all parts of the human experience as first computers and now robots do many of the tasks once handled by humans” (Ferguson & Pratt, 2014). Another scholar concurs that: “it has affected our cultures, economies, and political activities, religious (sic) and general wellbeing” (Okoye, 2018).

Also, today’s emerging solution-driven platforms and contents seem to counter the seeming narratives about all-things technological. From narrow narratives about technology, people are gradually seeing the

Research Article: This article is published by *JFP Publishers* in the *Journal of Emerging Technologies (JET)*. This article is distributed under a Creative Common [Attribution \(CC BY-SA 4.0\) International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/). **Conflict of Interest:** The author/s declared no conflict of interest.



positive aspect of technology. Without doubt, like the two sides of a coin, advances in technology have their downwards. However, this study would not preoccupy itself with the pitfalls of ICT. On the contrary, it aspires to demonstrate that how the Church's hierarchy in Nigeria can employ the rudiments of ICT for catechesis within the context of marriage and the family. This is because, Internet bandwidth intensity and teledensity has increased in Nigeria (Bolu, 2012). As such, besides pastoral agents, the family which is the basic cell of society described by the Church as the *Domestic Church* (*Lumen Gentium*, 1964, No. 11 & O'Boyle, 2011) where "by word and example... [are] the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1997, No. 1656) can leverage on internet penetration to catechise their children. This places a great burden on both pastoral agents and parents to ensure robust catechesis within and outside the Church.

Suffice it to note that while the world is moving in terms of changes in technology, the Church has hitherto relied on old models of catechesis such as the *baptism model*. The model which uses question-and-answer and memorization presumes that once the lay faithful are done with committing the penny catechism to memory, they have graduated. There is no follow up in terms of ensuring all-round catechesis which takes ICT compliant tools into consideration. What is more, there is lack of accompaniment and discipling. As a result, it is not unlikely to discover that all that most mature Catholics know about the faith is what they learnt as children during catechism class.

Pope John Paul II emphasized that: "All believers have a right to catechesis; all pastors have the duty to provide" (*Catechesi Tradendae*, No. 64). This is because Priests and religious are indispensable agents of catechesis (Hoyos, 1998). However, it is unfortunate that many Priests and Religious, to whom the Word was entrusted at Ordination and Religious Professions, are indifferent (McConville, 1965) to fulfilling their mandate. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* states that: "a means of evangelisation that must not be neglected is that of catechetical instruction" (EV No.44). This discloses the value of catechesis in the mission of the Church in a world that is bedeviled by various global trends. Although there is an apparent good in globalization, secularism and modernism (Falk, 2001), these phenomena are clogs in the wheels of progress as far as effective and efficient catechesis (Colpe, 1977) in the Nigerian Church is concerned.

This is why the study aims at:

1. Reviewing the Church's teaching on the use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT);
2. Evaluating extant catechetical methods in Nigeria;
3. Investigating reasons for inability to utilize components of ICT for Catechesis in the light of marriage and the family in the country;
4. Situating the *Domestic Church* as a citadel of catechesis in marriage and the family;
5. Proposing alternative models of catechesis and how they can be laced with ICT tools for a robust faith across the country.

ICT

Though authors are not agreed about its single definition, this stands for Information and Communications Technology or Technologies (ICT). It has to do with infrastructure or other components which facilitate modern computing. ICT encompasses all devices, applications and systems, and networking components that allow people (individuals) and organisations to interact with one another in the social (digital) world. It also covers other components like internet-based spheres and mobiles assisted by wireless networks (Ferguson & Pratt, 2014).

Catechesis

Catechesis is the awakening, nourishing, renewing, deepening, strengthening and education of the faith which is received after initial conversion through evangelisation and conversion (Dim, 2018). It entails a biblical and doctrinal deepening of the faith of those who are already baptized Christians and require a faith-

response thus establishing relationship between the catechist and the catechised. Catechesis is an integral aspect of the ministry of the Word of God which begins with evangelisation, initial proclamation of the gospel and continues with a sustained interest in the teachings of the faith.

Marriage

From the Christian perspective, holy matrimony is the coming together of one baptised man and woman which is occasioned by mutual consent from each of them. Built on Christ's love, marriage is a sacrament that is open to procreation and the fulfilment of the obligation of parents to their children and vice versa (Dyikuk, 2016). Covenanted on the sacramental life of the Church, Christian marriage aims at establishing a Christian home. Marriage entails respect for each other's feelings, care for each other and sharing of views in peace and unity. The sacred bond of marriage "does not depend on human choice, but rather on the Author of Marriage, who ordained it to be endowed with its own goods and ends" (The International Commission for English in the Liturgy, ICEL, 2016, p. 1). Built on the biblical teaching of "what God has joined together, men must not divide" (Mark 10:9), the two essential properties of marriage are unity and indissolubility (Cf. CIC, can. 1056; CCEO, can. 776 §3). As such, not even adultery or fornication can dissolve a Christian marriage that is validly contracted. The two ends of marriage involves procreation, and education of children as well as the spouses union.

Family

In Africa when we talk about, the family, what readily comes to mind includes parents, children, grandparents, brothers and sisters, close and distant relatives as well as the bonds that are forged between two families through marriage (Synod of Bishops, 2014, No. 4). *Familiaris Consortio* (1981, no. 2) conceives the Christian family as the first community that is called to announce the Gospel to humanity through progressive education and catechesis towards Christian maturity. This is why the Church is guided by a profound understanding of the boundless mystery of marriage and the family (*Familiaris Consortio* cited in *Amoris Laetitia*, 2016, No.31).

It has been established that at their best, families are to "actively communicate by their witness the beauty and the richness of the relationship between man and woman, and between parents and children" (Pope Francis' 49th World Communications Day Message, 2015). It was Pope Saint John Paul II who outlined the fourfold functions of the family as: Forming a community of persons, serving life, participation in the development of society and sharing in the life and mission of the Church (*Familiaris Consortio*, 1981, No.17). In this study, the term family shall be used in a generic sense to mean a community of persons in the parish, diocese or Universal Church.

Church

By Church here we mean the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church established by Christ on the apostles (Matthew 16:18 & 18:18). Born on the day of Pentecost, the Church is the mystical body of Christ and His bride. The Church is simply viewed as the Assembly of God's holy people which has priests, religious and laity who together with the bishop form the people of God under the visible leadership of the Supreme Pontiff (Dyikuk, 2019). "Church" refers to the Catholic Church in Nigeria, the context of the study.

2. Literature review: A critical review of the church's understanding of the use of ICT

Way back in 1990, during his World Communication Day message, Pope John Paul II's encouraged the Church to accept the benefits and opportunities in using computers, and telecommunication technology in fulfilling mission. The Pope maintained that the new 'computer culture' affords the Church an opportunity to communicate its beliefs to the world while explaining why it holds certain views on issues. The Pontiff emphasized that the modern world could help the Church hear public opinion and understand them, and

enter into continuous dialogue with others and work towards the common search for solutions to pressing problems devilling humanity (John Paul 11, 1990). This provided some sort of framework for Catholics as regards the use of social networks and tools of ICT. From *Vigilanti Cura*, through *Miranda Prorsus*, *Inter Mirifica*, *Communio et Progressio* and *Aetatis Novae*, the Church has always upheld the use of technologies for its evangelizing mission (Egere, 2012). Various pontiffs have not shied away from this position.

For instance, Pope John Paul II's submission that, "We are called to use science and technology in a full and constructive way, while recognizing that the findings of science always have to be evaluated in the light of centrality of the human person, of the common good and of the inner purpose of creation" (John Paul II, 2002) gives credence to the importance which the Church attaches to ICT. It has been emphasized that people who do not have ICT capabilities miss out on multiple opportunities including socio-economic benefits (Ferguson & Pratt, 2014). From Sturgill (2004) to Andrade (2007), several studies have upheld the invaluable place of information and communication technologies for mission and Church growth (Bolu, 2012).

Interestingly, "The last two decades has seen the adoption of information and communication technology (ICT) in contemporary church communications for growth. Contemporary church communications for growth is taking phenomenally great strides" (Bolu, 2012). In a study conducted recently, two things were discovered as regards the place of ICT infrastructure for growth in the Church: First, that churches were ignorant bulk of bandwidth was available and where they were aware, it was below 512 kbps, and second, some churches started using website, video viewing centres and bulk SMS system, cybercafé but was unable to adopt learning management system (LMS), podcast, web streaming, webinar, distance learning infrastructure, church internet domains, or television broadcast (Bolu, 2012). In a recent survey, some ways were identified as areas where the Catholic Church in Nigeria utilizes ICT. We shall highlight these areas briefly:

- a. **Church branding:** Just as branding increases the chances of customers to associate with a specific product, Churches have evolved brands in a most scintillating manner through technology especially the Internet to reach their members. This comprises of Social Media like Facebook, Google plus, Skype, Emailing, Satellite/Local Television Ministries (through Youtube) and Podcasts (Okoye, 2018).
- b. **Church Mass:** Today, modern technology enhances the celebration of Holy Mass or Service. This is because media telecasts equipments are used in Churches like St. Kizito Catholic Church, Iju, Lagos et al to broadcast the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Incidentally too, Projectors and Digital Sound Recording systems are used to televise Masses live. In most Churches in Nigeria, LCD Digital Podiums/Pulpits, High Definition Cameras, giant Liquid Crystal Display (LCD) screens, Digital Sound Recording equipment's, and top-notch musical instruments also employed to enhance the pastoral life of the Church (Okoye, 2018). This is in addition to the use of electrifying lighting systems to lift up the sorrowful soul.
- c. **Church security systems:** To ensure the security of lives and property, digital equipment such as Hackett Mental Detectors, Closed Circuit Television (CCTV), electrical barb-wire fencing, mobile security communication gadgets, and trained security experts (Okoye, 2018) are used in churches to compliments the efforts of the Men of Order and Discipline Movement. This is to provide a peaceful and serene environment proper for the worship of God.
- d. **Church data storage:** Most Churches today make use of technology such as Hewlett Packard (HP), Samsung Storage Technology, Pillar Data Systems, and Oracle Incorporated to store the data of their members (Okoye, 2018). Because of the prevalence of other secured Cloud Data Storage Facilities, religious institutions compile the information of their members electronically. Within seconds, Churches usually send customized anniversaries / birthdays wishes, job opportunities, upcoming events, and prayers to their members and others. In that way, members who need various kinds of help are easily identified through their data (Okoye, 2018).

Notwithstanding the unintended side effects of the use of technology has which could de-personalize or dehumanize a person, Stetzer (2014) concentrated on three benefits of technology for the Church mission namely, enabling communication, community and discipleship. The author's views can be surmised thus:

- a. ***Technology enables communication:*** Various social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter or a Church blog could assist Pastors to effectively communicate with the faithful throughout the day and week. The technology creates a great sense of ownership and community involvement which does not require proximity. As such, a man of God can communicate, engage and pastor his church throughout the days and week via social media or digital technology. Since technology facilitates ongoing communication and helps the church mission, pastors who are not on Twitter may need to embrace the technology (Stetzer, 2014).
- b. ***Technology enables community:*** Technology could create warmth in a community as doing so does not require proximity. Through Facebook, people are able to meet, know and pray for one another. As the new market place, Social media is where younger folks interact the most. Through it, those who are attending Church for the first time are able to connect with other members of the Church before the Sunday gathering. Although having a true community may involve feet and faces, employing electrons and avatars have the capacity of bringing people into closer communities for the sake of Christ and his Church (Stetzer, 2014).
- c. ***Technology enables discipleship:*** Today, some Churches manage Apps which assist the faithful to easily access sermons through their phones or iPads. Therefore, technology helps to boast the discipleship experience of the faithful. The congregation is able to tweet questions on the faith to which answers are provided. The goal here is not technology but the Church's whole aim of making disciples from various groups of people (Stetzer, 2014).

Christians are charged to employ technology in the Church to facilitate communication, community engagement and discipleship (Stetzer, 2014). This argument is sustained by another author thus: "Unless missionaries develop and catch up with the use of ICT, they may not meet the need of the people of today. Therefore Christian mission has to be done along with all new technologies" (Kagarko, 2009, p.7). Since the chapter used the grounded theory, it was able to discover a missing line in the arguments presented above - That is, it has no perspective on the use of ICT for catechesis. Before the author attempts to fill in the gap, it is crucial to critically consider the available catechetical methods in Nigeria.

3. Methodology

The study uses the grounded theory which involves generating an abstract analytical schema of a process, action or interaction. It also generates data from the views of other authors. Here, the inquirer makes an explanation of the process and communication based on the views of the authors so consulted. Through the constant comparative method, the researcher would take information from data collected and compare it to emerging categories. This will be followed by open and axial coding of the data for its major categories of information. The types of categories identified around the core phenomenon namely the factors caused the core phenomenon (causal conditions), actions undertaken as a response to the core phenomenon (contextual), broad and specific factors which influenced the strategies (intervening and contextual conditions) and outcomes (consequences). Finally, through selective coding, the researcher would develop propositions which interrelate with the categories in the model. This would lead to a narrative statement (Creswell, 2007).

4. Extant catechetical methods in Nigeria: A critical assessment

A review of the extant catechetical methods in Nigeria reveals that most Christians first received the faith courtesy of their parents and guardians who took them to Church to be baptized. As the official time for transmitting and strengthening the faith of children and converts, this culminates in their reception of the Sacraments of Initiation - Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist (Dim, 2018). Accordingly, after baptism,

most parents or guardians come for child-dedication. After that, they enroll their children for catechism in preparation for the reception of the other Sacraments of Christian Initiation namely, Holy Communion and Confirmation. Here, the children are left in the hands of the catechist, catechism teachers or moral instructors. Hardly do priests and religious partake in teaching catechism. At best, members of the Legion of Mary or seminarians assist in teaching catechism especially during holiday.

Another clog in the wheel of progress is the content and strategy employed. Most archdioceses, dioceses and vicariates employ the baptismal method. In the baptismal model, there is no much progress after baptism as the discipleship is hasty and incomplete. Those who indicate interest in becoming Christians are simply taught and baptized. Baptism is seen as the end of the discipleship process. Once they become Christians, some converts no longer demonstrate the same degree of personal attention they showed before baptism. There is an assumption that weekly sermons during Holy Mass and prayer meetings will take care of what is left out (Longs, 2019). Sadly, experience has shown that sharing the Christian message at Sunday Mass or during mid-week prayer meetings does not effectively address the deep issues some converts or newly baptized Catholics have to deal with.

The current model merely transfers *information from the head of the teacher to the notebook of the student "without passing through the minds of either"* (Sheen, 2005, p.54). This has contributed to the exodus of some youths from the Church. This is because the faith is not rooted in the soul of the believer. What is more, many dioceses do not invest in lay pastoral agents who are directly involved in catechism and preparing couples for the sacrament of marriage. This means that most of those teaching catechesis are shallow in terms of knowing the rudiments of the faith. Perhaps the Church has not realized that the quality of the Christian life is dependent on the quality of the catechesis that is taught.

Importantly, Protestants appear to have given Catholics a run for their money in terms of implementing the discipleship model of catechesis. Under the *discipleship model*, baptism is an early part of a long, tedious and continuing process (Longs, 2019). The *discipleship model* mentors and guides the Christian through life. It takes into cognizance that God "wants to make use of us to draw closer to his beloved people" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 268). This kind of discipleship "entails repentance, faith, and growth in holiness" (Hollon, 2019). Where this is lacking, a lacuna is created between baptism and adulthood leading to crisis of faith which prosperity gospelars take advantage of for sheep-stealing. This is because the current catechetical methods are unable to throw light on all the data, problems and situations of personal and family life, social and professional milieus (Dim, 2018).

We shall now highlight memorization and both inductive and deductive methods of catechesis with a view to presenting catechesis as a veritable tool through which the Christian community can be transformed by Christ in the Church in Nigeria (Dim, 2018):

- a. **Memorization method:** At the beginning of Christianity, memorization was an integral aspect of transmitting the faith. It entailed the oral transmission of the faith before the advent of the written word or bible. Various aspects of the faith were committed to memory. It would be recalled that major texts of the scriptures, teachings of the Church, liturgical aspects and common prayers of the Christian Tradition such as the creed, Our Father, Hail Mary were taught by memorizing the catechism. This method is still being used in the Nigerian Church today for children liturgy. Here, they are encouraged to cram and recite bible chapters in a phenomenon called memory-verse. The unfortunate aspect of this method is that most often than not, it is not backed by explanation (Dim, 2018). Besides, it fails to include ICT-complaint tools like PowerPoint, video games and other digital child-friendly devices that could enhance teaching of the faith. As things stand, memorization is still a major means of preparing people for the sacraments in Nigeria. This is why there is an urgent need for review of extant catechetical methods in the Church across the country.
- b. **Inductive and deductive methods:** On the one hand, inductive method of catechesis deals with teaching from particular to general or effect to cause. It requires the use of concrete facts such as biblical events,

the liturgy, the life of the Church and faith experiences so as to reach divine revelation. It is from these life and faith experiences that we are able to understand the truths of divine revelation. The method insists that it is from what is visible in terms of knowledge that we are able to access invisible realities. It surmises that practical faith experience actually positions us to understand God's revelation (Dim, 2018). On the other hand, the deductive method of catechesis begins from universal and ends with particular truths; that is, from cause to effect. It positions the faithful to first understand the content of divine revelation, biblical texts and liturgy to mention a few before they can relate them with their particular or individual situations in life. What is paramount is that both inductive and deductive methods of catechesis complement one another and so should be used (Dim, 2018). This shows that "There is nothing more effective than catechetical instruction to spread the glory of God and to secure the salvation of souls" (Constitution, *Etsi minime*, 13 cited in Pius X, No 17). Therefore, catechesis has a primal place in the life of the Church. We will now consider why despite the lofty place of catechesis it has not been fully implemented within the context of marriage and the family.

5. Reasons for inability to employ ICT for catechesis in marriage and the family in Nigeria

Here, we would consider the possible reasons for the inability of the Church in Nigeria to fully employ ICT for catechesis within the context of marriage and the family:

5.1. Lack of embracing e-catechesis and sustaining an online church

All dioceses have not been able to use bulk messages for information-sharing especially at parish and local stations. As yet, there is no concrete use of the internet to create group messages for children, young people or catechumens. The Church has not been able to use technology (social media platforms) to get lapse Christians who have suddenly stopped coming to Church or are have become incommunicado. Also, the Church has not taken advantage of the numerical strength of young people who are using Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp to create an online Church. Online church is a forum where the gospel messages are transmitted in different language such as either in vernacular, French and English, using short messaging systems (SMS) (Dyikuk, 2017a). The author further believe that online church assist in rich Christian photo-enhanced messages, Sunday and weekday reflections, hymns, caller tunes, videos and songs (audio) on YouTube and many others. Since virtual space appeals to many people, the boundless effects of the gospel message are likely to be felt by many through creating an "Online Church" (Dyikuk, 2017a).

5.2. Lack of using billboards and flyers

Both priests and members of the laity in Nigeria have not realized that ICI-compliant tools, billboards and flyers could be efficient means of catechesis for both married people and their families. Most governments, business firms, Civil Society Organisations and other corporate organisations are daily paying for billboards as well as producing flyers which carry their vision, mission and strategies for endorsement. Unfortunately, the Church has not seen that as a huge potential for propagating the faith. Rich lay Catholics have not been shown the need to sponsor the production of these billboards and flyers.

5.3. Lack of employing edutainment and infotainment

In education, edutainment and infotainment are indispensable modern methods for teaching. They educate and inform the students while entertaining them. The Church at the national level is yet to see the need for employing these modern methods for teaching catechesis. Unfortunately, this is the terrain of the young who are often enticed by other churches through these means.

5.4. Lack of a multidimensional approach to catechesis

Regarding failure to come up with a multidimensional approach to catechesis in Nigeria, there are factors namely, overreliance on the baptismal model of catechesis, lack of spousal, lack of family catechesis and lack of neighborhood catechesis in formalized Small Christian Communities (SCCs) across Archdioceses, dioceses and vicariates. The Church is yet to come up with a multidimensional approach to catechesis that has shifted from the *baptismal model* of catechesis. While it is true that what may work in one local church might not be tenable in another, a cursory review of the model of catechesis that is in vogue across the length and breadth of the country reveals an overdose of the *baptismal model* as opposed to the discipleship model of catechesis (Longs, 2019).

5.5. Lack of investing in church ICT infrastructure and human resources

The Church in Nigeria has not invested in ICT infrastructure such as: "VSAT, TV station or TV production, computers, central storage or repository, database server, SMS server, web portal, email server, Internet bandwidth, local area network (within church buildings), wireless network infrastructure, optical fiber cabling, call centre or help desk, church internet domain, ICT resource centre, CD/DVD production studio, and printing press or publishing house" (Bolu, 2012) for its growth. Most churches lack a standing ICT committee as well as paid ICT personnel except technicians in charge of both audio system and television. While many churches confess that they need these personnel, they admitted that they need them (Bolu, 2012).

6. Marriage and the family: The domestic church as citadel of catechesis

6.1. Spousal catechesis

The Church has always taught the importance of catechesis for couples and families (*Familiaris Consortio*, 1981, No. 2) towards growing to full human and Christian maturity. In a previous study, Dyikuk argued in favour of spousal catechesis when he noted that the Church in Nigeria ought to seek ways of engaging married couples in post-marriage courses and catechesis to cope with various crises in the life of married couples (Dyikuk, 2017b).

6.2. Family catechesis

Family catechesis has been described as the formal and informal ongoing faith formation and development which takes place within the family (Onwukaobi, 2017). As first teachers on the home front, parents are expected to buy the small catechism book, a little bible and the Holy Rosary for their kids to prepare them to receive the sacraments. "Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They have to bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule" (CCC no. 2223). This is because "the Christian family is the first place for education in prayer" (CCC no. 2685). They ought to also show their children good example (CCC No. 2223). It is important to reiterate that a domestic (local) church starts with the sacrament of matrimony where a man and woman become husband and wife in that order (O'Boyle, 2011) and pass unto children their faith. Family catechesis takes the form of storytelling, critical thinking, arts and environment, services and witness of life (Onwukaobi, 2017). This is in addition to procuring modern devices like iPods for their children for the purpose of catechesis.

6.3. Neighborhood catechesis (SCCs)

Small Christian Communities (SCCs) are essential avenues for communicating the word of word (Dyikuk, 2018) and doctrinal teachings. Pastoral agents could use times of meeting at the SCCs or neighborhood Church to prepare the faithful for the reception of the sacraments and further clarify moral and doctrinal issues. This

is because the nature of Catholic liturgy does not make room for question and answer. To compliment that, neighborhood catechesis affords the community the chance to brainstorm about controversial issues so as to get right answers. This gives them a sense of having their say, sharing their stories and fellow-feeling.

7. Recommendations: In search for alternative models of catechesis in Nigeria

In a society where some people including many Christians are circumspect of using social networks and other components of ICT, it is crucial for the Church in Nigeria to direct the way for their teaming members who engage with these technologies. To this end, there is need for a structural shift and new communication strategy in the Church (Bolu, 2012). In the light of providing workable alternative models of catechesis in the country, the paper highlights the following recommendations:

7.1. Embracing e-catechesis/sustaining an online church

In a world where children or the youth constitute a greater percentage of what Marc Prensky designates as “digital natives” as opposed to older folks whom he regards as “digital emigrants” (Cultural Reader, 2013), the Church can cash in on the situation to encourage e-catechesis on the one hand and sustaining an Online-Church on the other. No doubt, digital natives are fast in accessing and processing information hands-on by their mastery of graphics and social networking (Cultural Reader, 2013). Therefore, archdioceses, dioceses and vicariates can use e-catechesis as a way of meeting young people in a terrain they are familiar with. Dyikuk argues that Parishes and Outstations can use bulk messages to share information and open group messages for kids, youths or catechumens as a way of enhancing interaction and faith-sharing. He contends that through both interpersonal communication like visits as well as the Online-Church, lapse Christians who use social media platforms could be reached (Dyikuk, 2017a).

7.2. Using billboards and flyers

In line with the demands of current times, it is important that billboards and flyers are used in furtherance of the faith. Although both Protestants and Pentecostals have given Catholics a run for their money in this respect, it is not too late to use these ICT-complaint tools for propagating the faith. During major events like Papal or Episcopal visits, Diocesan or Parish and centenaries or anniversaries, billboards describing the event could be made to inform and invite the general public about these important events. This will go a long way in not only advertising the church but also showcasing what she stands for. In like manner, although Catholics apparently do not have a penchant for producing flyers, Chaplains should encourage young people especially students who are members of Young Missionary Movement (YOMM) Young Catholic Students (YCS), Catholic Cadet, Catholic Scout, Catholic Youth Organisation of Nigeria, Nigeria Federation of Catholic Students (NFCS) and Nigeria Catholic Corpers Association (NACC) to do so.

7.3. Employing edutainment and infotainment

As multimedia approaches, edutainment and infotainment can be used for both inductive and deductive catechesis. This entails storytelling, critical thinking, arts and environment and services (Onwukaobi, 2017). The memorization methods can be replaced with the use of audio-visual tools such as PowerPoint as instructional material. Since the Church prescribes that catechetical methods should consider the age, culture and attitude of the people involved (EV, No.44), it is essential for pastoral agents to consider carefully methods that fits their audience. What is important is that using edutainment and infotainment elements like audio and visual materials is likely to appeal to children and youth while PowerPoint may appeal to adults. The Pastoral Affairs Department at the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN) can apply for the funds to develop bible and catechism content and applications which can be used hands-on.

7.4. Utilizing a multidimensional approach to catechesis

The Church in Nigeria should be able to come up with a multidimensional approach to catechesis which embraces the *discipleship model* of catechesis as well as spousal, family and neighborhood catechesis in formalized Small Christian Communities (SCCs). Programmes like Know-Your-Faith could remind the faithful about what they learn during catechism classes. In the spirit of collaborative ministry, pastoral agents can identify gifted lay to catechize the faithful (*Catechesi Tradendae*, No. 14). Through this, lay catechists are able to make Christ known (Guide for Catechists, No. 3 & Shawuya, 2018). To compliment the provisions of *Ad Gentes* 14 the Church can come up some modules of catechesis which includes the Apostles' Creed, Sacraments, Ten Commandments, Lord's Prayer and other Precepts of the Church (Pius X, 1905, No 24). Pictorial illustrations can be employed for moral instruction of children. Weekly programmes on the faith in universities, colleges and secondary schools (Pius X, 1905, Nos. 19, 20, 21, 22 & 23) should also be organised. Through continuous formation in SCCs, the whole community is able to be trained, motivated and empowered for the work of evangelisation (EA, 53).

7.5. Investing in church ICT infrastructure and human resources

The leadership of the Church ought to invest in ICT infrastructure. As Bolu (2012) opines, although these ICT infrastructure are expensive, it is instructive that the hierarchy of the Church provides "VSAT, TV station or TV production, computers, central storage or repository, database server, SMS server, web portal, email server, Internet bandwidth, local area network (within church buildings), wireless network infrastructure, optical fiber cabling, call centre or help desk, church internet domain, ICT resource centre, CD/DVD production studio, and printing press or publishing house" for growth.

8. Conclusion

We saw that lack of embracing e-catechesis and sustaining an Online- Church, using billboards and flyers, employing edutainment and infotainment and initiating a multidimensional approach to catechesis constitute why catechesis has not really found its footing within marriage and family in the Church in Nigeria. We also noted that some Christians are circumspect of using social networks and other components of ICT. To this end, it is the opinion of this paper that the Church in Nigeria urgently needs to demonstrate to its teeming faithful that digital technologies could be used in furtherance of the gospel. This is why the study favoured alternative models of catechesis in the country like embracing the *discipleship model* which emphasizes mentoring as well as all-round catechesis through e-catechesis and sustaining an Online-Church, billboards and flyers, employing edutainment and infotainment and initiating a multidimensional approach to catechesis.

In conclusion, the Church in Nigeria has the responsibility of nurturing and hatching agents of catechesis who are desirous of fulfilling the obligation of the Teaching Office of the Church through introducing uniformity everywhere especially in weighty matters (Pius X, No 18). Because "This new era is frequently termed the Digital Age," (Ferguson & Pratt, 2014), it behoves on the Church at the national level to come up with a modern National Catechetical Policy which has components that are digitally-friendly. This is because children and youth today are media savvy and would be thrilled to befriend digital devices which have both the bible and catechism. By way of a narrative statement based on the grounded theory used, (Creswell, 2007) it is safe to conclude that these critical perspectives have succeeded in demonstrating the relationship between catechesis and ICT and how the two are key in influencing marriage and the family in the Church in Nigeria.

9. Funding

There was no internal or external funding for this research.

10. Acknowledgments

All materials/works used in this study were duly cited and acknowledged.

ORCID

Justine John Dyikuk  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8366-4328>

References

1. Bolu, C.A. (2012). The church in the contemporary world: Information and communication technology in church communication for growth: A case study. *Journal of Media and Communication Studies* Vol. 4(4) [80-94]. DOI: 10.5897/JMCS11.087.
2. Catechism of the Catholic Church, (1997). Revised in Accordance with the Official Latin Text Promulgated by Pope John Paul II. 2nd ed. [Vatican City]: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
3. Catholic Church. (1965). *Ad Gentes: Degree on the Mission Activity of the Church*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Retrived from www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_ad_gentes_en.html
4. Catholic Church. (1976). Apostolic exhortation: *Evangelii Nuntiandi* of His Holiness Pope Paul VI to the episcopate, to the clergy and to all the faithful of the entire world on evangelization in modern world. London: Catholic Truth Society.
5. Catholic Church. (1979). *Catechesi Tradendae: Apostolic exhortation of His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, on catechesis in our time*. Pasay, Metro Manila: Saint Paul Publications.
6. Catholic Church. (1993). *Guide for Catechists: Document of vocational, formative and promotional orientation of catechists in the territories dependent on the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples*. United States Catholic Conference: Office of Publishing and Promotion Services.
7. Colpe, C. (1977). Syncretism and secularization: Complementary and antithetical trends in new religious movements? *History of Religions*, Vol. 12, no. 2, [158-176].
8. Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publications, Inc.
9. Cultural Reader, (2013). Marc Prensky - "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants" – part 1 – Summary and review. Retrived from www.culturalstudiesnow.blogspot.com.ng/2012/06/marc-prensky-digital-natives-digital.html?m=1
10. Dim, L. (2018). *Nurturing a Responsible Christian Faith in the Modern World: An Address to Priests, Religious and the Laity of Bauchi Diocese During the 2nd General Assembly at the Fatima Pastoral and Social and Guest Inn, Bauchi on February 28, 2018*. Usca prints: Jos.
11. Dyikuk J. J. (2017a). Christianity and the Digital Age: Sustaining the Online Church. *International Journal of Journalism and Mass Communication*. 3(1): 043-049.
12. Dyikuk J. J. (2018). An appraisal of liturgy as communication. *Igwebuike: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities* Vol. 4 No 5. [62-85].
13. Dyikuk, J. J. (2017b): *Couples' clinic: A practical guide on conflict in marriage and the family in the light of effective communication*. USCA Prints: Jos.
14. Dyikuk, J. J. (2019). The pros and cons of social communication in the mission of the church in Nigeria. *Igwebuike: an African Journal of Arts and Humanities* Vol. 5 No. 1. [98-121]. A Publication of Tansian University, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies.
15. Egere, I. K. (2012). *Strategic communications: A story telling matrix*. England: Amherst Publishing Limited.

16. Falk, R. (2001). *Secularism in an era of globalization*. In Religion and Human Global Governance. Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
17. Ferguson, K., & Pratt, M. K. (2014). ICT (information and communications technology, or technologies). Retrieved from www.searchcio.techtarget.com/definition/ICT-information-and-communications-technology-or-technologies
18. Hollon, B. (2019). Catechesis and Christian discipleship. Retrieved from www.cslewisinstitute.org/Catechesis_and_Christian_Discipleship
19. Hoyos, D. C. (1998). The role of priests in catechesis. Retrieved from www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccclergy/documents/rc_con_ccclergy_doc_15111998_rolep_en.html
20. John Paul II (1990). "The Christian message in a computer culture" *Message of the Holy Father John Paul II for the 24th World Communications Day*. Retrieved from www.w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/communications/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_24011990_world-communications-day.html
21. Kagarko, G. (2009). Christian Education: Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Bridging the Gap in Education in Nigeria. *Academic Discourse: An International Journal*. [1-11].
22. Longs, H. (2019). Challenges of Mission in Bauchi Diocese in the Light of *Maximus Illud*. Paper Presented during the Diocesan Extraordinary Year of Mission Celebration. Bauchi: St. John the Evangelist's Cathedral.
23. Longs, H. (2019). Challenges of Mission in Bauchi Diocese in the Light of *Maximus Illud*. Paper presented at the Diocesan Extraordinary Year of Mission Celebration Bauchi: St. John the Evangelist's Cathedral.
24. McConville, P. (1965). Modern Catechesis. *The Furrow*. 16(1), [37-40]. JSTOR.
25. O'Boyle, D.MC. (2011). What Catholics need to know about making their homes a domestic church. Retrieved from www.osv.com/OSVNewsweekly/Story/TabId/2672/ArtMID/13567/ArticleID/10312/What-Catholics-need-to-know-about-making-their-homes-a-domestic-church.aspx.html
26. Okoye, F.C. (2018). The advantages, challenges and prospects of (ICT) in the Catholic Church in Nigeria. Retrieved from www.hubpages.com/education/THE-ADVANTAGES-CHALLENGES-AND-PROSPECTS-OF-ICT-IN-THE-CATHOLIC-CHURCH-IN-NIGERIA
27. Onwukaobi, J. (2017). Family catechesis in the light of new evangelization. Retrieved from www.hismasterservantministries.com.ng/2017/08/31/family-catechesis-in-the-light-of-new-evangelization/
28. Paul VI. (1964). *Lumen Gentium – Dogmatic constitution on the church*. In Austin Flannery (1988) (ed.) *Vatican Council II: The conciliar and post conciliar documents* vol. 1. Dublin: Dominican Publications.
29. Peel, J. (1968). Syncretism and religious change: Comparative studies in society and history, 10(2), [121-141]. Doi:10.1017/S0010417500004771.
30. Pius X (1905). *Acerbo Nimis - Encyclical on teaching Christian doctrine to the Patriarchs, Primate, Archbishops, Bishops, and other ordinaries in Peace and Communion with the Apostolic See*. Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Retrieved from www.w2.vatican.va/content/pius.x/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_en_15041905_acerbo-nimis.html
31. Pope John Paul II. *Common Declaration, Pope John Paul II and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*. Venice, 2002. Retrieved from www.faithandsafety.org/technology-and-the-church#_ftnref1
32. Shawuya, A. B. (2018). A profile in courage: A brief biography of Rtd. Catechist Matthias M Shawuya. Virtual Insignia: Kaduna, Nigeria.
33. Sheen, F. J. (2005). "Teaching and lecturing" In, *Treasure in clay: The Autobiography of Fulton J. Sheen*. ATC Publications: Bangalore, India.
34. Stetzer, E. (2014). 3 ways technology enables the mission of the church. Retrieved from www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2014/october/3-ways-technology-enables-mission-of-church.html