

*Published in America, Reprinted in Asia  
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for Christian Literature*

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# Published in America, Reprinted in Asia and Distributed in Africa: Emerging Model for Christian Literature

Emmanuel Ifeduba<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

Globally, Christian publishers have been known to drive publishing innovations and development in diverse socio-economic circumstances. In Nigeria, their roles in outsourcing, subsidiary rights transactions, distribution, innovation and export have received only passing mentions notwithstanding the pivotal nature of their sustained undertakings in the book trade. Relying on interviews, document analysis, website and bookshop observation, this study, therefore, presents evidence indicating that churches and ministries create local content, install their own presses and nurture their own distribution networks whereas Christian commercial publishers prefer to acquire already successful American titles and outsource reprinting tasks to Asia. Consequently, sustainability of content creation and printing expertise is undermined due to excessive offshore outsourcing, and may stunt growth in the entire industry.

**Keywords** Christian publishing · Bookselling · Book promotion · Outsourcing · Book printing

## Introduction

In 2008, it was stated that Nigerian and other African publishers, engrossed in local book transactions, were shying away from profitable global transactions on sale of rights, and had done very little to export African contents to the rest of the world [1]. In line with this argument, a study on globalisation and how African publishers should respond to it stated that Africans were permanent content downloaders whereas their counterparts in the global West were categorised as permanent content uploaders in the digital environment. It argued that permanent uploaders would naturally become winners while permanent

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downloaders would inevitably become losers in global exchanges. The study recommended local creation of contents, inter-African distribution and adoption of digital publishing for sustainable publishing [2].

Though these observations and findings may represent the actual situation in Africa's educational and trade book sub-sectors, they appear to gloss over important developments in the Christian publishing sub-sector where manuscript acquisition, production, promotion and distribution have evolved differently in several countries [3, 4]. Studies rather suggest that some Christian publishers are gradually striving to adopt a publishing model associated with Evangelist Dwight L. Moody who, in the late-nineteenth century, helped to launch evangelical-Christian publishing, introducing unique changes in the way Christian books are distributed globally, and creating a business model different in several ways. The model was characterised by evangelicals having their own publishing companies, distributors, bookstores, professional associations, conventions, and authors [5]. To a large extent, a similar development appears to be taking place in Nigeria.

Notwithstanding, book publishing literature in Africa seems to have glossed over this important development, paying attention to other aspects: Okwilagwe [6] examined publishing from the perspective of basic institutions whereas Adesanoye and Ojeyi [7] edited a volume interrogating the technical, economic and literary progression. Lawal [8] explained the evolution of book publishing from 1900 to 2000, Ifeduba [9] explored book censorship, and the Nigerian Book Fair Trust (NBFT), organisers of the Nigerian International Book Fair, produced eight titles on general contemporary issues of publishing between 2000 and 2018 [10]. In the same vein, the role of local Christian Organisations in the development of the mass media has received ample attention [11–13]. In contrast, the role of Christian publishers in driving change and innovation in printing, distribution and global exchange has been largely under-researched, often mentioned in passing or ignored altogether. Thus, this study interrogates the role of Christian publishers, highlighting totally overlooked aspects such as subsidiary rights publishing, rise of book chains and local content creation and export.

## The Problem

Book production studies in Nigeria focus on piracy, lack of collaboration and inadequacy of infrastructure [14], glossing over the pioneering and innovative contributions made by the Christian press to global book trade. This study, therefore, investigates the role played by Christian publishers in pioneering and sustaining the buying of copyrights from across the world, establishing a distribution system and creating content for export [15]. To accomplish this objective, this study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What role did Christian publishers play in the evolution of local subsidiary rights publishing market in Nigeria?
2. What is the current pattern of distribution of Christian literature in Nigeria?

3. To what extent are Christian publishers creating content and exporting locally created content?

## Literature Review

The history of book publishing is characterized by the interplay of innovations and social change, in many cases, related to the Christian faith. Examples include printing which, in Europe, is inseparable from the Renaissance and Reformation [16]. In line with this thinking, Jerry Pillay observed that the Christian church, throughout the ages, has been involved in the life of humankind, in developing of nationhood, building of culture and ordering of society with its functions and institutions; and one of the greatest instruments used to achieve these is publishing [17]. Right from the Mediaeval times to the printing of the 36-line and the 42-line bibles by Johann Gutenberg, Christian publishers have been in the forefront of information dissemination in many countries [18]. For instance, currently, though the book market in America is worth about \$1.2 billion, and Christian publishing accounts for only 10% or less of the entire US publishing market, Christians buy more books and spend more money on books than the average reader. This explains why big publishers have bought out many of the independent presses in the Christian literature sub-sector [19]. In Nigeria, though the Christian press may not have been bought out, as the case in America there are fears that offshore outsourcing is taking its toll on sustainability.

With the rise of Pentecostalism in the last forty years, the Church in Africa has experienced tremendous growth, increasing the need for literature that can help it address the spiritual and social challenges of its members [20]. This has led to the springing up of many indigenous publishing houses looking to cater to the interests of adherents. A recent report from Oasis Publishing [21] however, indicates that these Christian bookstores in Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana and other countries stock mainly titles by Western authors like John Maxwell, Joel Osteen, and Joyce Myers, with only very few books written by indigenous authors to address the daily realities facing local believers. It cited a study of African readers indicating that readers strongly desired to read books by African Christians, even when only 9.5% of them could identify at least one favorite local author. Currently this issue of lack of locally-created and culturally-relevant titles in the face of a steady stream of well-produced Western literature is a thorny issue confronting African publishers. Yet more and more of them depend on the sales of book rights purchased from Western publishers to sustain their businesses. Explaining this phenomenon, Lawrence Darmani [3] cited a publisher who preferred it because the books from the West are already well edited and neatly formatted, thereby reducing human resource requirements, cutting down pre-press capital, authors' advance royalties, editors' remuneration, and designers' and illustrators' fees, making the books affordable and profitable.

## Copyrights Transactions

The above-stated commercial publisher's Euro-centric attitude to manuscript acquisition has led to the founding of several local presses, including the Africa Christian Press established in January 1964 to provide Christian books relevant to the African situation [22]. It is, however doubtful if their objectives are substantially achieved. Part of the reason for their inability to achieve their goal is book piracy on which much of the discourse on copyrights in Nigeria is limited to. But ideally the concept of copyright should be viewed from two perspectives—the right of the copyright owner to enjoy the fruits of his labour on the one hand and the right of the copyright user or buyer to benefit from the copyright work on the other hand. In the words of Johnson Bryant, the activities of the Copyright Society of Nigeria (COSON) and the Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC) tend to emphasise issues of copyright protection and infringement and very little is said about fair dealing and sale of rights, which the Christian publishing sub-sector has truly promoted [23]. This skewed attention in favour of rights protection could be justified by the endemic and hazardous activities of book pirates.

Another factor responsible for this phenomenon could be the concurrent effects of very rapid growth of the Indian and Chinese economies where dramatically lower cross-border transaction costs are not only attractive to foreigners but have the potentials to affect the structure of many industries. In America, for instance, one way that printers stay competitive is by offshore outsourcing. A survey found that while many printers were outsourcing, there are many fears about moving offshore, including the fear of shipping delays but concluded that the benefits of moving offshore were rated higher than the costs [24].

## Christian Publishing and Presses in Nigeria

In 1846 the Hope Waddel press was installed in Calabar by Reverend Hope Waddel of the Presbyterian Mission to print stationery, books and other publications. By 1854, another press was established in Abeokuta for the primary purpose of printing hymnals, pamphlets and other books for the missionaries and their schools. The Abeokuta press established by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) also printed Nigeria's first newspaper, the *Iwe Irohin*, which began to appear from 1859 [25]. These presses, being the first set, laid the foundation for Nigeria's multi-billion naira printing and publishing industry. In other words, the emergence and growth of the publishing industry is historically linked to the arrival of missionaries who introduced literacy, reading skills and book printing skills. And Nigeria's first set of indigenous printers, editors and publishers were trained in these presses.

Following in the footsteps of these early printer/publishers, the Life Press established by Deeper Christian Life Ministries about 1978 and CRM Press owned by the Redeemed Christian Church of God, RCCG, have set up state-of-the-art printing and publishing firms that have hundreds of titles to their credit. These they achieved at a time when educational and commercial publishers outsource their printing jobs to Asian and European printers. An industry stakeholder stated that Nigeria, in the last

couple of decades, largely depended on the production of educational books overseas and stressed that government policies were skewed in support of this because of the questionable view that the country lacked the capacity to produce the needed books locally [26].

### **Christian Missions and Book Distribution in Nigeria**

Though bookshops have existed and thrived in the global West for many centuries, the first bookshop in Nigeria was established in Lagos in 1869, by the Church Missionary Society (CMS). The primary business of the bookshop was to source and distribute devotional and religious books, stationery and educational books. For almost a century it was headed by white missionaries, and got its first Nigerian chairman, S.O Adebo, in July 1961. Bookshop branches in Onitsha and Port Harcourt were established as autonomous units to reach out to the southern hinterland. As the business of selling basically religious books grew, it became necessary to supply school books to an equally growing number of mission schools. Thus, the name of the bookshop was changed in 1969 to CSS Bookshops to reflect these realities. CSS stands for Church and School Supplies. In 1992 it was incorporated as CSS Bookshops Limited, a company limited by shares [20].

The Baptist bookshop was established in 1876 by the Baptist Church, seven years behind the CMS Bookshops. It was formerly situated at Ibadan, however, when it became a bookshop chain about 1914, it had branches at Lagos and parts of Northern Nigeria such as Kaduna, Zaria, Kano and Minna. It also established its presence in some other southern Nigeria cities such as Calabar in the Niger Delta between 1914 and 1950. By 2019, most of the Baptist Bookstores around the country had gone extinct for different reasons, often related to insolvency. The most prominent Baptist Bookshop extant must be that which is located at Oke-Bola, Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria. A look at the shelves of the bookshop indicates that it has also diversified into school books, trade books and stationery supply [27].

The Challenge Bookshop was established in 1917 by a missionary body then known as the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), a mission noted for propagation of Christianity through the provision of literature. With the passage of time, the bookshop became popular in many cities in Nigeria including Lagos, Ilorin, Ibadan, Bauchi and Enugu. The popularity of Challenge Bookshops in Lagos was such that several decades after the shop had switched to the sale of sewing machines, a bus stop close to it still bears the name Challenge Bus Stop. Its popularity in Ibadan is such that a whole area encompassing several layouts is currently known as challenge, called after the first challenge bookshop located in Ibadan. Much later, the Evangelical Church of West Africa, now Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), took over its affairs and still runs the affairs. Since then, the bookshop has played a major role in providing literature to schools and libraries. Aside from the sale of books and stationery, the shop had sold electronics in the past. Most of the books on the shelves of Challenge Bookshops are imported from other countries and the few titles by Nigerian authors are basically Christian books perhaps written by a renowned pastor of the church [28].

Generally, educational materials sold in the local bookshops were imported from Britain and other English speaking countries. This implied that the booksellers had to wait for long periods for their goods to arrive by sea. It also meant that there was no room to produce local content or incorporate local content into imported titles, a need which had become obvious in the 1840s. Attempts were, therefore, made by missionaries and churches to fill this need by installing presses, establishing their own distribution networks and creating contents [29].

As a series of government austerity programmes, including the infamous Structural Adjustment Programmes, SAP, of the 1980s reduced disposable incomes in Nigeria beginning from 1984, book purchase ceased to be a priority for most families. As such many bookshops could no longer perform these functions profitably. This gave rise to the sale of used books by booksellers. The Salvation Army Ministries played a major role in collecting the books from different nations and making them available to Nigerians who either donated or sold them to members of the public [30]. Commercial Christian presses and bookshops began to resort to the purchase of republication rights to reduce cost and make books affordable.

### **The Rise and Fall of Bookshop Chains**

By 1980, there were several bookshop chains in Nigeria. Among them were the CSS bookshop chain, the Challenge Bookshop chain, the Kingsway Supermarket which had a large book section in all its shops nation-wide and the Nigerian Baptist Bookshop chain. By the year 2010, these bookshop chains were either dead or reduced to one or two moribund shops due to the economic situation occasioned by decades of military rule. Recently, a review in the *Times Literary Series* claimed that bookshop chains were non-existent in Nigeria but pointed out that Nigerians read self-help and religious books more than any other genre [31].

Since the advent of the Internet and the World Wide Web, bookshop chains in many nations have been struggling to survive. In America, for instance, a Christian book retailer, Cokesbury Bookstores, closed all of its 38 retail stores in 2013. In 2017, another chain, Family Christian Resources shut down all 240 locations to cut losses and avoid bankruptcy, and in 2019 LifeWay Christian Resources, the largest Christian retail chain in America, announced that it would be closing all of its 170 stores [32]. In Nigeria, the story has been slightly different in the sense that recently new start-up Christian booksellers have begun to establish bookshop chains even as secular bookshops continue to disappear. The majority of Nigerians who use digital devices to access e-books actually access mainly bibles and hymn books online [33]. This indicates that digital book innovation adoption and diffusion among Christian worshippers has actually played an important role in digital distribution since there are more people willing to carry e-books to church services than there are willing to carry print bibles.

Tailoring contents to electronic devices may not be a clear solution to poor distribution, but a study of Nigerian churches indicates that some of the organisations now have websites, e-stores, e-devotionals, e-hymnals, e-manuals and other e-books. The study stated that over 70 churches had strong online presence and had adopted

several innovations to drive global evangelism [34]. A survey of members of the Christian Booksellers Association indicates that many other innovations have been adopted by the members. Among adopted innovations are books with CD-attached, audio books, bible-based computer games for children, bar code scanners for book marketing, online bookshop, online delivery of books, websites, electronic payment instruments and online ordering and fulfilment [35].

### American Devotionals and Used Books

An organisation that played a major role in publishing devotionals is Our Daily Bread Ministries, a Christian organization founded by Dr. Martin De Haan in 1938 and registered in Nigeria as RBC Ministries in 1999. Prior to 1999, RBC books were distributed through the Challenge Bookshop to parts of Nigeria and, now, to parts of Francophone West African countries. This organisation, distributed *Our Daily Bread* in Nigeria, first in quarterly editions and later in annual editions. It currently distributes over 240,000 copies of published resources annually. Almost all the devotionals published by local ministries are distributed nation-wide through the publisher, church networks and bookshops. Not only that this amounts to over a million copies annually, they create jobs for printers, booksellers and suppliers [36].

In 1963, a daily devotional, *Daily Power*, became the first English language devotional to be authored in Africa, with the help of Rev. Francis Foulkes for Scripture Union (SU) families in Africa. The writing, pre-press and press works were done by SU Nigeria while editing was done by Rev. Francis Foulkes. The primary target audience was junior students and new converts. It started with a circulation figure of 12,000 copies and by 1965, 27,000 copies were distributed. This giant stride encouraged the union to publish another devotional, *Daily Guide*, for African SU families, with senior students and adults as primary audience. As expected, the need for a press arose, and this was met in 1986 with the establishment in Ibadan of the SU Press [37].

### Theoretical Background

This study is anchored on the Diffusion of Innovations Theory propounded by Everett Rogers in 1962 and amplified in the 1995 and 2003 editions of his book, *Diffusion of Innovations*. It seeks to explain how and at what rate new ideas and technology spread, and identified innovation characteristics, communication channels, time, social-system and change agents as five elements of diffusion. The fifth element of innovation diffusion, change agents, provides a suitable framework for discussing the role of Christian publishers as innovators and change agents in publishing to the extent that they, by definition, seek to bring about some sort of change in publishing or information sharing [38, 39].

Though change agents generally encourage adoption of new ideas, they also may slow down the diffusion of an innovation. They usually work with opinion leaders to enhance the impact of their diffusion activities in a social system. Thus, Cahill [40] stated that opinion leaders in publishing need to recognise the complexities

that go with change and should muster the flexibility to alter their role to suit local circumstances.

With this rhetorical question: “How do you sell a really old book that 91 per cent of households already have?” Referring to the bible, Stephanie Simon underscored the importance of innovation in Christian publishing, especially bible publishing [41]. He observed that the first wave of innovation among Christian publishers in America came in the 1980s, when Zondervan, Thomas Nelson Inc., Tyndale House and some other houses created bibles aimed at specific groups, such as teens or newlyweds and elderly people with dimming vision. In Nigeria, the birth and growth of printing and publishing are both linked to the coming of Christianity and its spread.

## Methods

Interviews and document analysis were employed to collect data from Christian commercial publishers. A directory of Christian bookshops obtained from the Christian Booksellers Association of Nigeria (CBAN) show that there are about 312 Christian bookshops nation-wide. Thirteen of these, operating as both commercial publishers and booksellers, were purposively selected for the study. In-depth interviews were conducted (eight directly and five by telephone) using a nine-item interview guide. Quantitative data collected from lists received from them were analysed by computing the frequencies and percentages. Employing the constant comparative method, qualitative data were used to shed light on quantitative data. Details on the publishers and their statuses are presented in Table 1.

To answer research question three, seven bookshops belonging to seven ministries with not-for-profit business orientation and extensive publishing activities were purposively selected. Books and promotion documents in the bookshops provided data on their lists and innovative distribution practices. To investigate

**Table 1** Publishers and their statuses

SN	Publishing firms	Status
1	Evangel Publishers	Commercial publisher
2	Jetmove Publishers	Commercial publisher
3	Jointheirs Publishers	Commercial publisher
4	Edysil Publishers	Commercial publisher
5	Bible Society of Nigeria	Commercial publisher
6	C.S.S Bookshops	Commercial publisher
7	Mustard Seed Publishers	Commercial publisher
8	Frontline Publishers	Commercial publisher
9	Scripture Union, Nigeria	Commercial publisher
10	Elojoe & Mathew 6:33	Commercial publisher
11	Beulahland Publishers	Commercial publisher
12	Marvellous Publications	Commercial publisher
13	GCEE Bruno Concepts	Commercial publisher

the output of other authors working for themselves or for smaller ministries, 24 bookshops across ten states were observed [42].

The scope of this study is limited to books authored and published in Nigeria by the Christian press and foreign-author books published in Nigeria by subsidiary rights. Thus, imported Christian literature distributed in Nigeria is excluded.

## Data Analysis

The study attempted to answer three questions, and the first question states:

*RQ1: What role did Christian publishers play in the evolution of local subsidiary rights publishing market?*

A total of 13 indigenous Christian commercial publishers have lawfully republished over a thousand titles originally published abroad, something that is hardly experienced in the dominant textbook market and the struggling fiction market. Details obtained through bookshop observation and lists provided by some publishers are presented in Table 2.

## Published in America

Further analysis of the titles republished in Nigeria by purchase of subsidiary right indicate that over 76% of the rights were bought from American publishers, less than 17% from Europe and Asia combined and less than 5% from Africa. Details are presented in Fig. 1.

**Table 2** Christian publishers and the number of titles published by subsidiary right

SN	Publishing firms	Number of titles
1	Evangel Publishers	365
2	Jetmove Publishers	20
3	Jointheirs Publishers	190
4	Edysil Publishers	98
5	Bible Society of Nigeria	5
6	C.S.S Bookshops	102
7	Mustard Seed Publishers	3
8	Frontline Publishers	75
9	Scripture Union, Nigeria	4
10	Elojoe & Mathew 6:33	40
11	Beulahland Publishers	139
12	Marvellous Publications	116
13	GCEE Bruno Concepts	14
	Total	1151

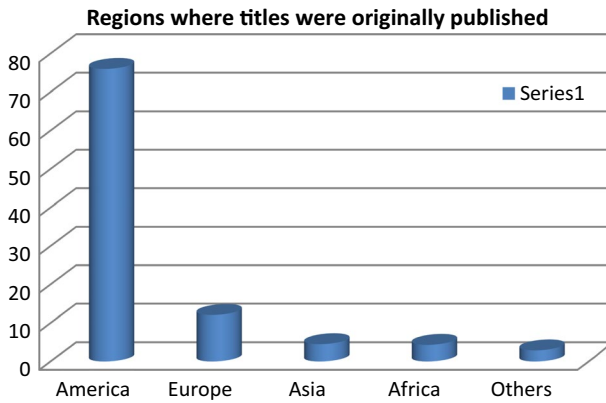


Fig. 1 Original publication regions for titles

### Re-printed in Asia

Findings indicate that after the publishers had bought republication rights, mainly from American publishers and their agents, they outsourced the printing to Asian firms where the cost of paper and printing were lower. Over 70% of the printing is done in Asia (China, India and Singapore), about 10% is printed in Europe (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus), less than 16 per cent is printed in Africa. This is consistent with the views of Steiner [43] who observed that globalization and digitalization of the book market has impacted literature in circulation beyond national and linguistic areas. Details are presented in Fig. 2:

*RQ2: What is the current pattern of distribution of Christian literature in Nigeria?*

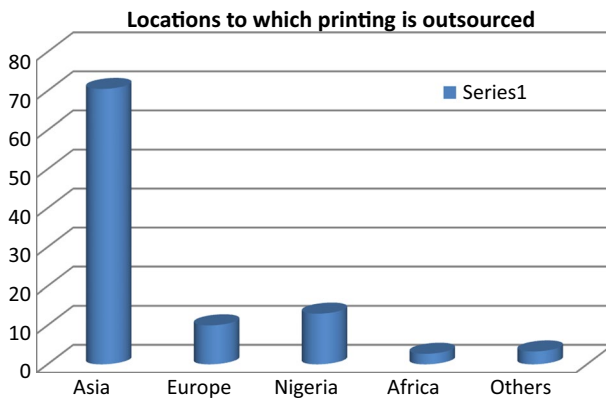


Fig. 2 Printing locations

## Distributed in Nigeria

Christian literature re-published by commercial publishers is primarily distributed through 13 young and growing commercial bookshop chains established by the publishers. Locally authored titles, on the other hand, are primarily distributed through church networks established by leading ministries as well as through online platforms. It is noteworthy that whereas secular bookshops are closing in many cities, as they lose business to schools which receive supplies directly from publishers, the Christian bookshop sub-sector has continued to grow as readership of Christian literature gets more popular by the day [31]. There are currently thirteen young and growing bookshop chains made up of eleven new generation bookshops and two survivors from the first generation—CSS Bookshop and the Nigerian Baptist Bookshop. These are in the forefront in the distribution of Christian literature. Details are presented in Table 3.

One of the factors responsible for the blossoming of Christian bookshop chains is the rise of Pentecostalism, a global evangelistic movement which is highly information driven. This is also a major factor accounting for the growth of Christian literature in America [19]. Another factor, according to an interviewee, is the presence of motivational books of American origin made attractive by the harsh economic situation which has persisted since early 1980s. A second pattern is distribution of own titles through church internal networks. This is addressed more comprehensively under research question three:

*RQ3: To what extent are Christian publishers creating content and exporting locally created content?*

**Table 3** The diffusion pattern of bookshop chains

SN	Bookshop name	Locations	Number of shops
1	Amazing Grace Books	Abuja, Kaduna, Port Harcourt,	3
2	Battle Cry Christian Ministry Book Store	Yaba, Iwaya, Agege	3
3	Bible Wonderland	Surulere, Agege, Iyana-Ipaja, Victoria Island, Lagos	9
4	CSS Bookshop Ltd	Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt, Kaduna, Akure	6
5	Divine Christian Bookshop	Lagos, Ojuelegba, Warri, Maryland	4
6	Dominion Bookshops	Otta, Efurun, Alimosho, Maryland, Ojodu	4
7	Edysil Bookshops Limited	Yaba, Apapa, Aba, Onitsha	4
8	Havilah Merchants Nigeria Ltd	Lagos, Abuja, Zaria, Ibadan, Ikeja	6
9	IPFY Music and Books	Palmgrove, Ikeja, Lekki	3
10	Manna Bookstore	Ikoyi, Victoria Island	3
11	Peculiar Peoples Ventures	Abuja, Lagos and Ajegunle	3
12	Pneuma Bookshop	Ilupeu, Ikeja and Opebi	3
13	The Nigerian Baptist Bookshop	Ibadan, Ogbomosho and Iwo	3

## Creation of Devotional Literature

A total of 14 devotional guides are currently in circulation. The Scripture Union, a leading global Christian organisation, was inaugurated in Nigeria in 1885 but was registered on 9th October 1967 as a voluntary non-profit Christian Organization published the very first local title. Besides an enviable list of books published by the S.U., it published the first locally authored and designed devotional literature in Nigeria (*Daily Guide*) in 1975 and has since increased the number of titles and translations to the following: *Daily Guide* (for adults), *Inye Aka* (Igbo version of *Daily Guide*), *Odudu Uwen* (Efik version of *Daily Guide*), *Bibeli Ajumoka* (Yoruba version of *Daily Guide*), *Daily Milk* (for Children), *Daily Power* (for Youths). Other local organisations have since followed in the footsteps of the union to publish devotionals such as *Daily Manna* by the Deeper Christian Life Ministries, *Turning Point* by Femi Emmanuel, *Open Heavens* by Pastor E. A Adeboye, *Our Daily Manna* by Chris Oyakhilome, *Rhapsody of Realities* by Chris Oyakhilome, *Spiritual Prayer Pills* by Gladys Nwankwo, *Keys* by David Oyedepo, *Responsibility for Greatness* (In English and French, by Dunamis Church, *Academic Excellence for Teenagers* by Reni Ayinde [13].

## Book Export

Christian church presses (not the mainstream Christian commercial press) are currently adopting digital publishing innovations not only to address local distribution challenges but also to service overseas missions. Thus, they export digital versions of print devotionals, generally distributed through dedicated applications. Seven examples are listed in Table 4.

Besides devotional literature, there is a thriving literature ministry by ministers who have large congregations and missionary outreaches. Whereas some of the markets could be described as captive markets, ministries like Deeper Christian Life Ministry, The Redeemed Christian Church of God, Winners Chapel and the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries and a few others have established large book distribution networks for books read across denominations. Like D. I. Moody, they have established their own publishing companies, distribution networks, bookstores,

**Table 4** Digital publication formats and distribution scope

SN	Title of publication	Format	Scope of Distribution
1	<i>E-Open Heaven</i>	Apps	Global distribution
2	<i>E-Daily Guide</i>	Apps	Global distribution
3	<i>E-Higher Everyday</i>	Apps	Global distribution
4	<i>E-Daily Manna</i>	Apps	Global distribution
5	<i>E-Our Daily Bread</i>	Apps	Global distribution
6	<i>E-Rhapsody of Realities</i>	Apps	Global distribution
7	<i>E-The Word for Today</i>	Apps	Global distribution
8	<i>TREM Daily Devotional</i>	Website	Global distribution

professional collaborations and conventions [5]. Details of titles created mainly by the founders of these ministries and distributed through their nationwide and Africa-wide church networks online and offline are presented in Table 5.

### Discussion of findings

Findings indicate that Nigeria’s Christian press has consistently played the role of change agents with regard to the evolution of local subsidiary rights publishing in Nigeria, a role that is consistent with Rogers’ postulations on change agents in the diffusion of innovations process. This finding also supports previous studies stressing that cost saving is driving outsourcing globally [44]. However, it is important to observe that the contributions of the commercial publishers differ from the contributions of churches and ministries in the sense that the commercial publishers, by relying on subsidiary rights, generally outsourced authoring, editing and printing. The implication of this for the industry is that authoring, editing and printing skills would hardly be developed, and this explains why almost all commercial publishers in the country currently look to China and India for printing. For the economy, it means that scarce foreign exchange would be spent on printing. Though the costs are lower for publishers, the economy is the weaker and more dependent on foreigners for it.

Though churches and ministries adopt the Moody model [5] of looking inwards for content creation, printing and distribution, not all their outputs, especially online, are sold. However, they are more mission-minded in distributing devotionals and other publications on a global scale through the Internet and church networks in mission fields. In other words, whereas the profit-oriented segment of the Christian press champion a publishing culture anchored on offshore outsourcing, the mission-minded ministries and churches champion an inward-looking culture which encourages professional development and balanced trade with the West. The later also promises to put control in the hands of Africans while the former unwittingly encourages cultural imperialism. Whereas this model may support the transaction costs approach to management, it fails flat when considered from the resource-based

**Table 5** Titles created by ministries and church leaders

SN	Ministry/church	Number of titles
1	Life Press (W.F.Kumuyi)	112
2	CRM Press (E.A. Adeboye)	120
3	Dominion Press (David Oyedepo)	61
4	MFM Books (D.K. Olukoya)	114
5	TREM (Short Stories by members 7, Mike Okonkwo, 15)	22
6	The Lord’s Chosen	06
7	Foursquare Press	75
8	Others	744
	Total	1179

view. This is because content creation and production strength and competencies that engender sustainability are sacrificed on the altar of profit [45].

Two major patterns of distribution of Christian literature are evident from the findings. The first is promoted and practised by commercial publishers who rely heavily on their young bookshop chains and retailers clustering in the Southern part of the country where Christianity is practiced by the majority of readers. This is similar to the case of Brazil where more than 60% of books are sold only in the Southeast region, where the cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro are located [46]. They all take advantage of what an interviewee described as “the Bale Street magic.” Bale Street is a busy street on the outskirts of Apapa that is home to Nigeria’s busiest book distribution centre. All the publisher/booksellers are represented at Bale Street where retailers from all parts of Nigeria and West Africa converge for supplies.

The second pattern is observed among the leading ministry publishers and churches which created their own distribution networks, built around church locations within and outside Nigeria. Many church branches have either bookshops or book desks. They also market online through their websites and other platforms. In the digital environment, these churches are visible and many like the RCCG distribute through Amazon, Goodreads.com and other global platforms. These are also more innovative, having introduced virtually every available format—paperback, hardcover, audio book, online contents, video content and braille, the production of which is often outsourced to Western firms as explained by an interviewee. It is however, observed that peer review is not strong in this sub-sector, a situation which impacts negatively on editorial quality as the literature suggests [3].

Not all Christian publishers are creating contents and exporting locally created contents. Whereas leading churches and ministries create content locally and target a global audience through online sites and platforms, commercial publishers avoid the creation of content, restricting themselves to already successful titles originally published in the West. As expected, the publishing agreements limit them to distribution of print versions in Nigeria only. It is obvious that they would achieve more if they should take the recommendations of Arora [47] regarding collective management of copyrights and reprographic rights through intermediary agencies to enable authors and creators to confidently protect their rights against local violations, a situation that drives some of them to publish offshore.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

This study set out to investigate the innovative contributions of Nigeria’s Christian press to subsidiary rights publishing, distribution as well as content creation and export. Findings indicate that commercial publishers have adopted offshore outsourcing of content creation and printing as a cost-saving business strategy whereas churches and ministries, like D.L. Moody, thrive by creating content locally, installing their own presses and maintaining their own innovative distribution systems. As more Christian organisations establish foreign missions, the years ahead are likely to witness not a one-way traffic in international book trade but rather a more robust and partially balanced trade in Christian literature.

Recommendations: To stem the tide of offshore outsourcing, especially of printing jobs, the commercial publishers should consider collaborative installation of a modern printing press to serve the community and save the nation's scarce resources.

Local publishers should participate more in international book fairs with the aim of selling rights to their bestselling titles on the one hand. On the other hand, they should commission reputable local authors to develop contents to match the foreign titles that draw away local readers.

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