

# The Impact of Generosity on Church Growth and Development: Insights from World Revival Faith Ministry, Lagos, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *This study explores the role of generosity in driving the growth and development of World Revival Faith Ministry (WRFM) in Lagos, Nigeria, between 2010 and 2025. Adopting a qualitative methodology that combines documentary analysis with the authors' firsthand experiences, the research investigates how generosity, manifested through financial giving, resource sharing, and service has catalyzed WRFM's spiritual, organizational, and community advancements. Findings highlight that substantial contributions from key donors, especially the General Overseer, have enabled initiatives such as evangelism, missionary outreach, educational scholarships, business empowerment, and community development projects. These efforts have expanded membership, strengthened leadership, and increased the church's social impact. The study also identifies challenges, including reliance on a limited donor base, sustainability concerns, and the need for enhanced financial transparency and broader member participation. Opportunities for growth include diversifying funding sources, fostering leadership development, and engaging in strategic partnerships. The research underscores the transformative power of generosity in faith-based organizations, emphasizing its significance in achieving sustainable growth and meaningful community engagement. Providing actionable recommendations such as cultivating a culture of holistic generosity, promoting financial accountability, and integrating community-focused initiatives, the study offers valuable insights for church leaders and policymakers. This work contributes to the limited empirical research on the intersection of generosity and church development in African contexts, presenting WRFM as a case study for leveraging stewardship and philanthropy to achieve spiritual and societal relevance.*

**Keywords:** *Generosity, Church Growth, Community Development, Stewardship, Faith-Based Initiatives*

## I. Introduction

Generosity is a foundational virtue in Christian teaching, deeply ingrained in the fabric of church life and community. Across history, the willingness of believers to give, whether through financial resources, time, or talents, has served as a catalyst for both spiritual and institutional growth within the church (Institute for Faith and Learning, 2015; First Baptist Church at The Villages, 2020; Abodunrin & Olatunbosun, 2022). In urban centers like Lagos, Nigeria, the impact of generosity on church growth and development is particularly profound, reflecting its central role in fostering spiritual engagement and community cohesion. Scriptural references, such as Matthew 25:31-46 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-7, emphasize the importance of giving and sharing resources as expressions of faith. Generosity in the church context transcends financial contributions; it represents a commitment to the well-being of others and the transformative power of the gospel (Mayo, 2025). This ethos sustains church operations, supports missions, and fosters environments where spiritual and communal bonds are

strengthened (Church of England, n.d.). Churches that cultivate a culture of generosity often experience higher attendance, increased financial stability, and stronger community ties (Akanle & Olorunlana, 2014; Love, 2022; Grace Community Church, 2025).

In Nigeria, where the church plays a pivotal role in social and spiritual life, the attitude toward giving significantly shapes the trajectory of church growth. A positive, sacrificial approach to giving, rooted in worship and concern for others, has been shown to empower churches to fund essential programs, including community outreach, evangelism, and discipleship (Oyedepo, 2000). Conversely, reluctance toward generosity can limit the church's capacity to fulfill its mission, hindering development. Despite the acknowledged importance of generosity, empirical research into its specific mechanisms and practical dimensions within church contexts remains limited. This gap underscores the need for further exploration, particularly regarding how generosity drives growth and supports broader community development initiatives.

This article investigates the role of generosity in church growth and development, focusing on insights from World Revival Faith Ministry (WRFM) in Lagos, Nigeria. Through an analysis of scriptural foundations and practical outcomes, it demonstrates how a culture of giving meets immediate needs while building a resilient, thriving church community equipped to serve and transform society (Davids, n.d.). The study provides a comprehensive examination of WRFM's historical background and growth trajectory, explores the role of generosity in driving both church and community development initiatives, assesses its impact on community development, and identifies challenges and opportunities in promoting generosity within the ministry. The findings contribute to the broader literature on church growth and offer practical recommendations for church leaders and policymakers to foster effective stewardship and generosity.

### **1.1 The Evolution of WRFM: From Grassroots Outreach to Urban Influence**

World Revival Faith Ministry (WRFM) was established on November 11, 2010, by Pastor (Dr.) Oladega Adebogun and a group of committed individuals who envisioned a mission centered on spreading the gospel and transforming lives through faith (WRFM Annual Reports, n.d.). From its inception, the ministry has embodied the potential of faith-based initiatives to inspire social change and foster deep community engagement, particularly in Nigeria's vibrant and complex urban and peri-urban landscapes.

The ministry's journey began in Likosi, Ogun State, with an emphasis on evangelical outreach aimed at spreading the Christian faith and encouraging personal and communal transformation. This formative period was deeply rooted in grassroots engagement, reflecting the ethos of historical Christian revivals that prioritized individual commitment and collective renewal. Under Pastor Adebogun's leadership, these initial efforts created a strong foundation for the ministry's subsequent expansion and influence.

Recognizing the need to extend its reach and broaden its impact, WRFM relocated to Lagos State, a strategic shift that opened new avenues for growth. The ministry's early activities in Lagos were marked by a fervent commitment to evangelistic outreach and discipleship. These initiatives not only facilitated rapid growth in membership but also fostered a culture of spiritual vitality and community service that became hallmarks of the ministry. Through sustained engagement with its congregants and the larger community, WRFM established itself as a dynamic force for both spiritual enrichment and social progress.

A pivotal moment in the history of WRFM came in 2016 with the establishment of the Faith Theological Seminary. This institution was founded to train and equip pastors, ministers, and church workers, thereby strengthening the theological and organizational foundation of the ministry. The seminary has since become a vital component of WRFM's mission, enhancing the capacity of its leadership and extending its influence through the development of skilled, service-oriented church personnel (WRFM Education Report, 2020).

From its modest beginnings in Ogun State to its current prominence in Lagos, WRFM's history exemplifies a steadfast commitment to evangelism, discipleship, and community development, underscoring the transformative power of faith in fostering both spiritual and social growth. Through dedicated leadership and a culture of generosity, the ministry has inspired meaningful change in individuals and communities. Its journey has been marked by remarkable growth, driven by impactful evangelistic and discipleship activities alongside a diverse array of community service initiatives. These efforts reflect WRFM's unwavering mission to spread the gospel and transform lives, while also highlighting the critical role of faith-based organizations in addressing pressing social issues within communities (WRFM Annual Reports, n.d.; Dudley & Eerik, 2016).

## II. Review of Literatures

### 2.1 Conceptual Framework

World Revival Faith Ministry (WRFM), founded by Dr. Oladega Adebogun, reflects a revivalist tradition influenced by key historical movements within Pentecostalism, including the Azusa Street Revival of 1906. While WRFM's founder was trained under Pastor W.F. Kumuyi at Deeper Life Bible Church, an institution rooted in the Pentecostal heritage linked to the Azusa Revival, the ministry has developed its distinct identity. WRFM integrates principles of evangelistic fervor, spiritual empowerment, and community engagement, emphasizing spiritual growth, dynamic outreach, and social responsibility. These foundational elements have significantly shaped its mission and contributed to its expanding influence in Lagos and beyond, aligning with the broader Pentecostal ethos while addressing local community needs. The framework for analyzing WRFM's growth integrates church growth theories with theological and practical dimensions of generosity, underscoring the dynamic interplay between faith, leadership, stewardship, and contextual mission in fostering a thriving church community (See Figure 1).

### 2.2 Church Growth Models and Dynamics

WRFM's growth aligns with sociological and mathematical models of church expansion, such as Hayward's general model, which highlights the role of "enthusiasts" in recruitment and community reproduction (Hayward, 2005). The ministry's grassroots outreach in Likosi, Ogun State, represents a foundational phase where committed members actively engaged in evangelism and discipleship, expanding the church's influence (See Figure 2). The relocation to Lagos marked a transition into rapid growth, consistent with revival growth models, where reproduction potential exceeds attrition (Hayward, 2005). This phase reflects both numerical expansion and qualitative improvement. It aligns with the Natural Church Development (NCD) paradigm, which emphasizes continuous improvement in key areas such as empowering leadership, gift-oriented ministry, passionate spirituality, and loving relationships (Anglican Diocese of Edmonton, 2011). The establishment of Faith Theological Seminary further underscores WRFM's investment in leadership development and theological training, enhancing its capacity for sustainable growth and community engagement.

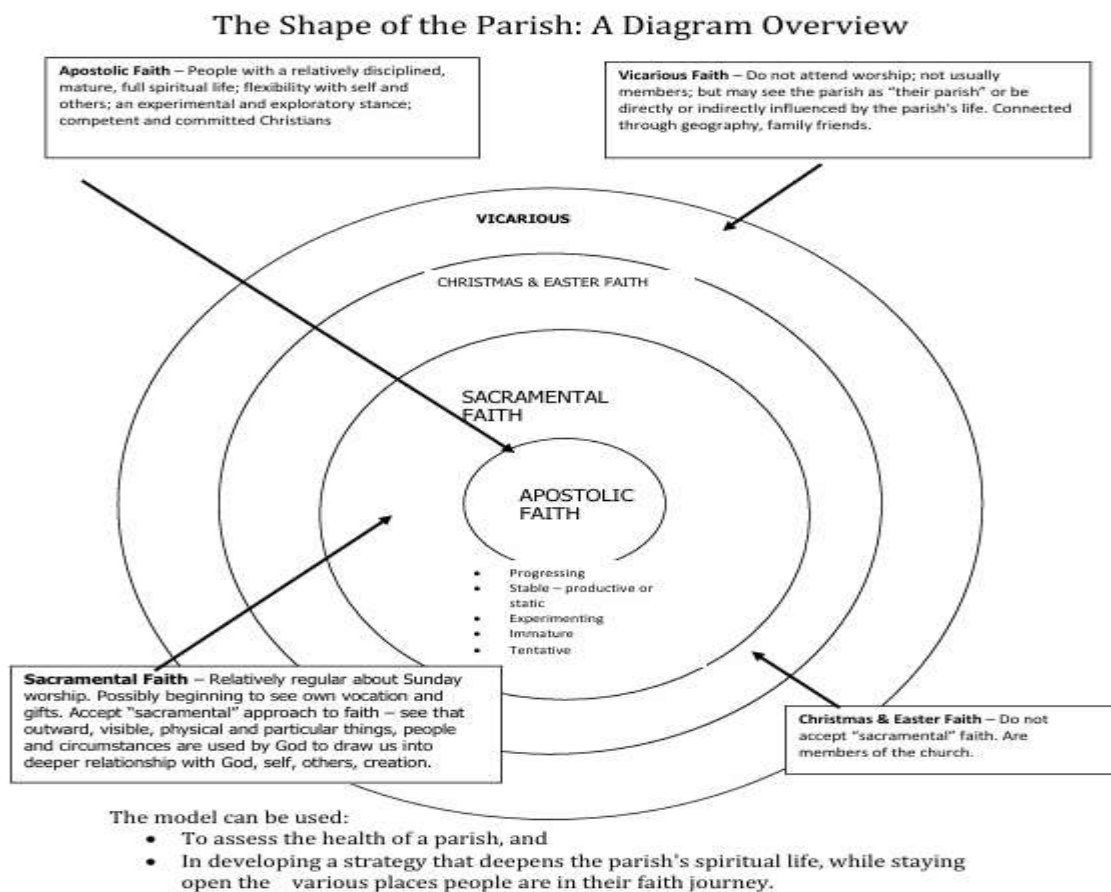
### 2.3 Generosity as a Theological and Practical Catalyst

Generosity serves as both a theological principle and a practical catalyst in WRFM's framework. Rooted in scriptural mandates such as Matthew 25:31-46 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-7, WRFM emphasizes giving as an expression of faith and commitment to community well-being (Cruz, n.d.). This generosity encompasses financial contributions, time, talents, and sacrificial service, fostering spiritual vitality and institutional stability. Generosity drives key programs, including evangelism, discipleship, community outreach, and leadership training.

These initiatives align with the Renewal–Apostolate Cycle framework, which views renewed baptismal identity as motivating active participation in Christ’s mission through stewardship and service (Gallagher, 1985; Abodunrin & Olatunbosun, 2022). By cultivating a culture of generosity, WRFM removes barriers to growth and fosters organic church expansion, consistent with the “all by itself” principle of natural church development.

## 2.4 Missional and Contextual Engagement

WRFM’s transition from rural outreach to an urban ministry illustrates a missional approach that contextualizes the gospel within Lagos’s socio-cultural environment (Cheyney et al., n.d.). The ministry employs geo-demographic and affinity-based strategies to engage diverse urban populations while maintaining a strong focus on evangelism and discipleship. Generosity underpins this missional engagement, providing resources and fostering relational networks essential for effective ministry in a multicultural urban setting. This conceptual framework situates WRFM’s growth within established church growth theories and emphasizes generosity as a critical driver of spiritual and institutional development.



Copyright “Shape of the Parish” Diagram -- Robert A. Gallagher/Mary Anne Mann, 1983; Revised RAG 1999, 2003 For more on the model see Robert Gallagher’s *Fill All Things: The Dynamics of Spirituality in the Parish Church*, Ascension Press, 2008

**Figure 1:** Conceptual framework, reflecting the health of a Parish

### III. Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design, utilizing a descriptive and exploratory approach to investigate the impact of generosity on church growth and development within World Revival Faith Ministry (WRFM), Lagos, Nigeria. The research aims to provide an in-depth understanding of how generosity functions as a catalyst for both spiritual and institutional growth, drawing from historical data and lived experiences.

##### a. Data Collection Methods

The primary sources of data for this study are documentation and personal experience as participants in the ministry. These methods were selected to capture both objective records and subjective insights, providing a comprehensive perspective on WRFM's evolution and the role of generosity.

**Documentation:** The study reviews official WRFM records, including annual reports, education reports, newsletters, and archival materials that chronicle the ministry's founding, growth trajectory, and key initiatives such as the establishment of the Faith Theological Seminary. Relevant published literature on church growth, generosity, and Nigerian Christian contexts supplements the analysis.

**Personal Experiences:** As active participants in WRFM, the authors contribute firsthand observations and reflections on the ministry's culture of generosity, evangelistic efforts, and community engagement. This insider perspective enriches the study by offering nuanced understanding of internal dynamics, challenges, and successes that may not be fully captured through documentation alone.

##### b. Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed thematically, focusing on patterns and narratives related to generosity's influence on church growth and development. Documentation was systematically reviewed to extract relevant information on historical milestones, financial stewardship, outreach programs, and leadership training. Personal experiences were critically reflected upon and integrated with documentary evidence to validate findings and provide contextual depth.

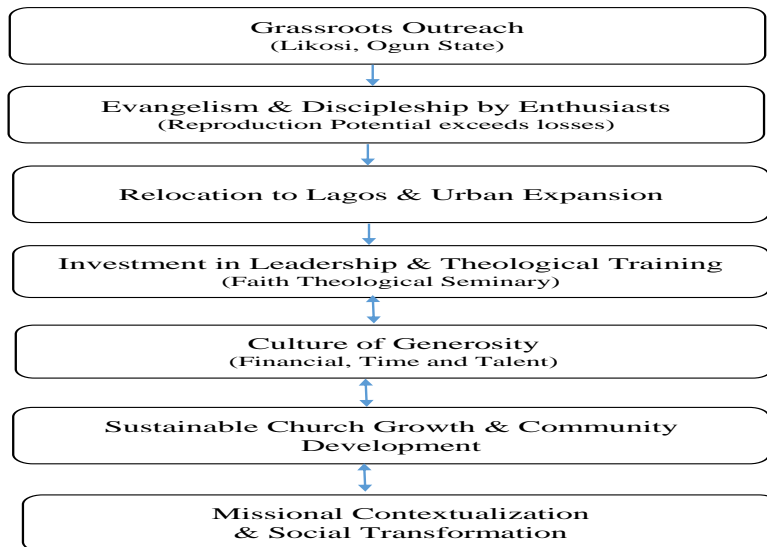
##### c. Ethical Considerations

Given the authors' dual role as researchers and participants, care was taken to maintain objectivity and transparency throughout the study. Confidentiality of sensitive information was ensured, and all data used were either publicly available or shared with consent within the ministry context. The study respects the integrity of WRFM's mission and seeks to contribute constructively to its ongoing development.

### IV. Result and Discussion

The findings reveal that generosity is central to the growth and development of World Revival Faith Ministry (WRFM). The ministry's progress is notably driven by the financial support of its General Overseer, who is also the founder of Caleb University and Caleb Group of Schools, and contributions from church members and stakeholders (Caleb Group of Schools, 2020). This robust financial foundation has facilitated various programs that promote spiritual growth, community outreach, and social responsibility, aligning with broader perspectives on resource mobilization in faith-based organizations (Seel, 2021). The ministry's outreach programs, funded by significant donors, have been instrumental in expanding WRFM's membership and strengthening its community presence. These initiatives align with literature emphasizing resource mobilization as a driver of church growth (WRFM Annual

Reports, n.d.; McDonnell, 2018). Generous financial contributions have supported missionary efforts across Nigeria, enabling the dissemination of the gospel and the attraction of a diverse congregation. This finding resonates with studies on the role of missionary work in church expansion (Regnerus & Smith, 2005; World Revival Missions Report, 2019).



**Figure 2:** Infographic on WRFM Trajectory

**Sources:** Soneye, Abodunrin, Yerokun, Olorunlana, 2025

Consequently, consistent financial stability has allowed WRFM to establish new branches and maintain existing ones. This reflects research linking financial health to sustainable growth (Barna, 2012). WRFM has leveraged its resources to empower members through business support and personal development programs, contributing to their economic stability. This empowerment reinforces the church’s role as a catalyst for socioeconomic upliftment (Ginsburg, 2020). Moreover, generosity has played a key role in shaping WRFM’s community development agenda, allowing the ministry to integrate social responsibility into its mission. This is supported by other scholars who agreed that programs such as housing assistance and scholarships provide tangible benefits to the community (Community Impact Report, 2020; Horsley, 2019).

Similarly, generosity has enabled educational scholarships for members attending Caleb University, supporting leadership and academic advancement. These initiatives underscore the importance of investing in education as a tool for spiritual and institutional growth (WRFM Scholarship Report, 2020). Also, the establishment of the Faith seminary reflects WRFM’s commitment to leadership development and theological training, enhancing the ministry’s capacity for service (WRFM Education Report, 2020).

Furthermore, free transportation services for members have increased accessibility to church events, promoting greater participation and engagement (WRFM Transportation Services Report, 2020). Housing assistance exemplifies WRFM’s holistic approach to addressing members’ social and economic needs, consistent with theological imperatives of supporting the marginalized (Dudley & Erik, 2016). Economic empowerment programs do assist the financial independence among members promoting resilience and long-term stability within the congregation (Seel, 2021).

However, we equally observed certain challenges like undue dependence on the major donors; lack of motivations among certain leaders; operational constraints, limited understanding about giving. Document and other literature affirmed the risk tendencies to financial sustainability and reduction in the broader membership’s sense of responsibility if

ministry has heavy reliance on a few significant contributors (Fowler, 2020; WRFM Annual Reports, 2010–2020). Other scholars writing about motivation, affirmed that such dependency can undermine intrinsic motivations, and also affect long-term member's engagement (Wuthnow, 1991).

On operational constraints, limited human resources may restrict the ministry's ability to fully harness and deploy generosity for growth (Barna, 2012; WRFM Human Resource Report, 2018). While the challenge about financial transparency, may also be question because of the dependence on a single donor, the ministry document raises concerns about transparency and governance, and proposed the need for robust accountability mechanisms (WRFM Transparency Report, 2020). We observed some members has the misunderstandings about giving, these persistent misconceptions were about tithing, offerings and sowing seeds, the ministry often emphasize the need for continued education to enhance member understanding and participation (WRFM Teaching Series, 2017).

Despite the observed challenges, there are numerous opportunities that should be harnessed. Which include diversification of fund, community engagement, strategic partnerships, educational efforts and leadership development among others. For sources diversification of funding sources, Ginsburg, (2020), noted that expanding funding streams can enhance financial resilience and support ambitious initiatives. While on community engagement, WRFM strengthening ties with the community can enhances influence and attract new members, this support the assertion of Dudley & Eerik, (2016).

More so, strategic partnerships can enhance collaborations with external organizations, this may offer opportunities to broaden resources and extend the ministry's reach (WRFM Partnership Report, 2020). On educational efforts, there is an ongoing teaching on giving principles that can address misconceptions and create a culture of sustained generosity (WRFM Teaching Series, 2017). On leadership development however, investing in training programs for church leaders can create a culture of accountability and strategic stewardship (WRFM Leadership Development Report, 2018).

This study has thoroughly examined the complex interplay of challenges and opportunities arising from generosity within the context of World Revival Faith Ministry. The findings indicate that while generosity constitutes a vital component of the ministry's core values, it also introduces challenges relating to financial commitment, motivation, human resource capabilities, and sustainability. On the other hand, numerous opportunities present themselves, including enhanced engagement, financial transparency, diversified funding, leadership development, expanded outreach, community commitment, and strategic partnerships that can catalyze further ministry growth.

#### **4.1 Study Limitations and Strengths** **a. Limitations**

One of the primary limitations of this study is its reliance on ministry documentation and the authors' personal experiences as active participants in WRFM. While these sources offer valuable insider perspectives, they introduce a level of subjectivity that may limit the diversity of viewpoints represented. The absence of external or independent data collection, such as interviews with non-leadership members, external stakeholders, or quantitative surveys, restricts the generalizability of the findings to other church contexts. The dual role of the authors as researchers and participants raises the potential for confirmation bias, where selective reporting and interpretation may unintentionally overlook dissenting opinions or negative experiences within the ministry. The study's financial analysis acknowledges the contributions of major donors, particularly the General Overseer, but lacks a detailed, independent financial audit or comprehensive exploration of long-term financial sustainability. The findings are also shaped by the unique context of WRFM, its leadership structure, donor

base, and urban Nigerian setting, making them less applicable to churches operating in different cultural or socioeconomic environments. The absence of longitudinal data limits the ability to observe long-term trends or causal relationships between generosity, church growth, and community impact.

#### **b. Strengths**

Despite these limitations, the study offers rich, contextualized insights into the dynamics of WRFM, leveraging documentation and personal experience to provide an in-depth understanding of its culture of generosity and operational strategies. This approach captures lived realities that quantitative methods alone might not fully reveal. The study benefits from privileged access to internal records, such as program documentation and firsthand accounts, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of WRFM's initiatives, challenges, and successes. These insights offer practical relevance, presenting actionable recommendations for church leaders, policymakers, and practitioners seeking to leverage generosity for organizational growth and community impact.

Focusing on an urban Nigerian church, the study contributes to the limited empirical research on the mechanisms of generosity in church growth within Africa, offering a valuable case study for comparative analysis. Moreover, its holistic perspective integrates spiritual, social, and economic dimensions, illustrating the interplay between faith-based values and practical outcomes in fostering church development.

### **IV. Conclusion**

This study explored the pivotal role of generosity in the growth and development of World Revival Faith Ministry (WRFM), Lagos, Nigeria, offering both empirical insights and practical implications for church leadership and faith-based organizations. The findings demonstrate that generosity has been instrumental in driving WRFM's spiritual vitality, institutional expansion, and community impact. The ministry's capacity to launch and sustain diverse programs, such as outreach initiatives, missionary support, empowerment schemes, and community services, is largely attributed to the culture of generosity by both leadership and members. Notably, the substantial financial support from key donors, particularly the General Overseer, has enabled WRFM to overcome operational challenges and seize opportunities for further growth and influence. These outcomes align with broader research on the positive correlation between generosity and church development, highlighting the transformative potential of stewardship in faith communities.

However, the study also noted critical challenges, including the risks of financial dependency on a few major donors, the need for greater member engagement, and the importance of robust governance and financial transparency. Addressing these challenges is essential for ensuring the sustainability and integrity of the ministry's mission. The opportunities identified offer practical pathways for WRFM and similar ministries to strengthen their foundations and broaden their impact. We conclude that generosity is not merely a financial transaction but a foundational virtue that shapes the spiritual, social, and organizational fabric of the church. Cultivating a holistic culture of generosity, WRFM exemplifies how faith-based organizations can achieve sustainable growth, through community transformation, and fulfilling their calling to serve both God and humanity. The lessons drawn from this case study therefore, provide valuable guidance for church leaders, policymakers, and scholars seeking to understand and harness the power of generosity in advancing the mission and relevance of the church in contemporary society.

#### **Recommendations**

1. To minimize dependency on a few major donors and enhance financial sustainability, WRFM should encourage all members to contribute. This can be achieved through

- regular education on stewardship, transparent and engaging fundraising campaigns, and the establishment of endowment funds to secure long-term financial stability.
2. To improve financial transparency and accountability, WRFM should provide clear and regular reports on fund usage to the congregation. Independent financial audits and open forums for financial discussions can foster trust among members, dispel doubts, and motivate increased giving.
  3. Investing in leadership development, capacity building and continuous training for clergy and lay leaders is crucial. Workshops, seminars, and mentorship programs on resource management, effective governance, and stewardship principles will strengthen the operational capacity of the ministry.
  4. Encourage a holistic culture of generosity, by broaden the concept of generosity beyond monetary contributions to include time, skills, and acts of service. Teaching biblical stewardship principles, sharing testimonials of impact, and recognizing diverse forms of giving will inspire greater participation and create a sense of shared responsibility.
  5. Expanding community development and outreach programs. WRFM should enhance its commitment to social responsibility by scaling up projects like educational scholarships, business empowerment initiatives, housing support, and free transportation services. These efforts will not only address community needs but also enhance the church's visibility and appeal.
  6. Developing targeted programs to clarify misunderstandings about tithing, offerings, and the theology of generosity. Consistent teaching can align member contributions with the ministry's vision and reduce resistance or confusion about giving practices.
  7. Strategic partnerships, collaboration with other churches, faith-based organizations, and community groups to pool resources, exchange ideas, and amplify impact. These partnerships can extend WRFM's reach and effectiveness in both spiritual and social endeavors.
  8. By strengthen communication and manage expectations, through establishing robust communication channels to clearly articulate how resources are allocated and ministry goals are set. Such feedback mechanisms like member surveys and participatory discussions will help resolve conflicts, align priorities, and build consensus.

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