

Faith and Farming: A Historical Study of Anglican Missionaries and Food Security in Ekitiland (1894-2024)

Olaoba, Olaitan Oyedele, PhD.

*Department of Religious Studies, Faculty of Humanities,
Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo*

Email: oo.olaoba@acu.edu.ng, 08033966560

Abstract

This paper investigates the role of Anglican missionaries in fostering food sustainability in Ekitiland from 1894 to 2024. It traces the historical evolution of missionary engagement in agriculture and rural development, highlighting their influence on indigenous farming practices, education, and social structures. The study employs historical and qualitative methods, drawing on archival materials, oral interviews, and existing literature. Framed within the sustainable livelihoods' framework, the research reveals that Anglican missionaries played a pivotal role in introducing modern agricultural techniques, establishing farm settlements, promoting cooperative societies, and instilling ethical values that contributed to enhanced food security. The study concludes that the church's historical and continuing influence in promoting sustainable agriculture in Ekitiland underscores the need to integrate faith-based models into contemporary rural development strategies.

Keywords: *Anglican Church, Missionaries, Food Sustainability, Ekitiland.*

Introduction

The Anglican Church, through its missionary efforts, has historically been associated with religious conversion, education, and healthcare delivery in Nigeria. However, its contributions to food security and agricultural development, particularly in Ekitiland, remain understudied (Adeyeye and Samuel, 2019). From the inception of missionary activities in the region in 1894, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and its successors established missions that not only evangelised but also promoted sustainable agricultural practices. Ekitiland, with its fertile land and agrarian culture, provided a suitable landscape for such interventions. The convergence of religious values, community organisation, and agricultural innovation offers a unique case study of how missions impacted food sustainability across different epochs.

Despite substantial scholarly engagement with the missionary enterprise in Nigeria, particularly its roles in evangelism, Western education, and healthcare delivery, limited attention has been given to the intersection of religion and agricultural development. Existing works have predominantly focused on the theological, socio-political, and educational dimensions of Anglican missions, often sidelining the Church's economic and agrarian initiatives. For instance, Ogunjobi (2018) offers a historical study of the Anglican Church in

Ado-Ekiti but restricts discussion of agricultural interventions to incidental mentions, without a sustained analysis of their scope or impact. Similarly, other regional studies highlight the Church's contributions to literacy and social organisation while overlooking how it shaped rural food systems or promoted sustainable farming practices. As a result, the specific contributions of Anglican missionaries to food sustainability in Ekitiland over the last 130 years remain insufficiently documented and critically analysed. There is a clear knowledge gap regarding how religious institutions have influenced agricultural education, land use ethics, and rural community resilience, issues that are particularly vital in the context of climate change, food insecurity, and contemporary development discourse in Nigeria.

This work aims to examine the role of Anglican missionaries in promoting food sustainability in Ekitiland between 1894 and 2024, with the objectives of tracing the historical evolution of Anglican missionary engagement in agriculture in Ekitiland, identifying the strategies employed by missionaries to enhance food production and sustainability, assessing the long-term impact of missionary agricultural initiatives on Ekiti local communities, and exploring contemporary implications for faith-based approaches to rural development and food security.

Methodology

This paper adopts a qualitative, historical research methodology. Primary sources include archival documents from missionary societies, local church records, and oral interviews with clergy, elders, and agricultural workers in Ekitiland. Secondary sources include books, journal articles, and theses on missionary activities and agricultural development in Nigeria. The data were analysed to trace patterns and evaluate the influence of the church's agricultural policies and practices over time.

The paper is grounded in the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF), which considers how people utilise a combination of assets (natural, human, social, physical, and financial) to sustain their living. Anglican missionaries, by introducing education, values, and technical skills, enhanced these livelihood assets among Ekitiland communities. The SLF enables a nuanced understanding of the Church's contribution to food sustainability, not merely as a development actor, but as a socio-religious institution that shapes long-term resilience.

Literature Review

The intersection of religion and development has attracted increasing scholarly interest, especially within African contexts. Several studies have documented the contributions of

missionary enterprises to social transformation, although the agricultural dimension often remains underexplored. Historical studies on missionary activities in Nigeria generally emphasise the roles of missions in evangelisation, education, and healthcare. Pioneering works by Ajayi (1965) and Ayandele (1966) provide comprehensive narratives of the Christian mission in Nigeria, particularly in the 19th and early 20th centuries. They highlighted the efforts of the CMS and other Protestant missions in penetrating Yorubaland, including Ekitiland, through the establishment of mission schools and churches. However, while these studies provide invaluable insights into the religious and cultural impacts of missions, they offer limited analysis of agricultural or food-related missionary interventions.

Fadipe (1970) and Peel (2000) further enrich the historiography of missions by discussing the complex interplay between Christian missions and indigenous structures. Peel, in particular, emphasises how missionary engagement reshaped Yoruba cosmology, ethics, and labour patterns. These shifts often included new attitudes towards land use and agriculture, albeit indirectly. Recent literature has moved toward examining religion as a driver of development. Ter Haar (2011) argues that religion, far from being an obstacle to development, can be a resource for social transformation, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Similarly, Gifford (2015) asserts that Christian organisations often fill governance gaps by providing education, health services, and moral frameworks for civic engagement. These perspectives open space for considering how religious institutions may also influence food systems, though the link is not always made explicit.

Marshall and Keough (2004) also support the view that religious groups possess latent institutional capital that can be harnessed for development purposes. They note that churches enjoy deep trust within communities and possess extensive networks that can be mobilised for socio-economic projects, including agricultural initiatives. Emerging studies have begun to examine the specific role of religious institutions in addressing food insecurity. Binns and Lynch (1998) explore how churches in Africa have historically mediated knowledge and served as centres of innovation and social change. Their work indicates that faith-based institutions often act as conduits for agricultural knowledge dissemination, particularly in rural areas. In the Nigerian context, Adedibu (2020) highlights the role of Pentecostal and mainline churches in community development projects, agricultural cooperatives and food banks.

However, extant studies remain broad and neglect the historical specificity and regional dynamics that shape faith-based agricultural engagements. For example, Ekitiland's unique

agrarian history and the early presence of the Anglican Church make it a fertile ground for studying sustained church-community agricultural interactions. The relationship between missionary-introduced agriculture and indigenous farming methods is another relevant scholarly theme. Vaughan (1991) and Falola (1998) argue that missionaries often introduced Western agricultural practices that complemented or, at times, conflicted with indigenous knowledge systems. These encounters led to hybrid farming practices and new land-use ethics, some of which contributed to environmental sustainability.

Additionally, the role of mission schools in agricultural education has been explored by Osokoya (1987), who asserts that curriculum content in colonial-era mission schools often included practical agricultural training. This aspect is significant in understanding how Anglican missionaries embedded food sustainability principles into the formal education system. Scholars such as Adebayo (1993) and Ogunremi (1997) examine the economic and agricultural evolution of Yoruba subgroups, including the Ekiti people. These scholars highlight the predominance of subsistence and cash crop farming in Ekiti history, as well as the influence of colonial and postcolonial policies. However, they make only cursory references to religious influence, thereby necessitating more focused studies on the religious drivers of agricultural change.

The reviewed literature makes it clear that while the role of religion in development is gaining scholarly attention, there remains a significant gap in historical analyses of missionary contributions to food sustainability in specific Nigerian regions, such as Ekitiland. Moreover, most studies that address religion and agriculture focus on contemporary or policy-oriented terms, often neglecting the long historical arc of missionary influence. The current study addresses this gap by providing a longitudinal and context-specific investigation of Anglican missionary involvement in Ekitiland's food systems from 1894 to 2024.

Early Missionary Agricultural Interventions (1894 - 1930s)

The introduction of Christianity in Ekitiland also marked the beginning of mechanised agricultural exploration in Ekitiland. The main task of the pioneer Anglican Church evangelists in Ekitiland is to make Jesus Christ known, loved and obeyed both in homes and farms of all towns and villages in Ekitiland. As it was the practice of Jesus Christ, Christians should meet the people wherever they are (in the farms and villages). This was the practice of the Anglican evangelists when they returned home from slavery. They therefore permeated every

community in Ekitiland with evangelism and agriculture- the Bible in one hand and a plough in the other.

Before the advent of the Anglican Church, many farmers in Ekitiland concentrated on the cultivation of food crops, like cassava, yams, cocoyam, melon, and so on. On the arrival of Anglican missionaries, they introduced and encouraged the farmers to plant crops such as citrus, cashew, cocoa, oil palm, kolanut and others, which take a longer time to mature but bring bigger financial returns. They also gave the farmers in Ekitiland more useful information on livestock husbandry than what was obtainable to them before. Many Ekiti people keep their livestock, especially poultry, on free range and expect them to perform magic (Adesina, 2021). Information on housing, feed and feeding, disease prevention through hygiene and vaccinations, early diagnosis and treatment of diseases is essential to obtain growth from their livestock.

The Church also encouraged the Ekiti farmers to practice mixed farming, which is the production of crops and animals on the same piece of land. The farmers, therefore, need adequate information as to where they can obtain farm technological facilities. A trained person only passes the information accurately, either as an agricultural evangelist or a minister of their parish, especially in the villages. These were what many Anglican Church heroes and heroines have been doing for the farmers in Ekitiland to have their souls won for Christ (Omole, 2004).

Upon arrival in Ekitiland, CMS missionaries quickly observed the subsistence farming methods of the Ekiti people. Indigenous agriculture was largely reliant on traditional techniques such as slash-and-burn (swidden) cultivation, which, though sustainable in the short term, faced challenges under increasing population pressure and colonial economic demands (Adebayo, 1993). Missionaries, influenced by their European agrarian backgrounds, introduced systematic and more intensive farming techniques, including row planting, crop rotation, and the use of compost and manure as fertiliser. These methods aimed at improving yields and soil conservation (Peel, 2000). Mission compounds became centres for agricultural experimentation and demonstration. CMS stations such as those in Ado-Ekiti, Ilawe, and Iyin established mission farms where both staple and cash crops were cultivated. These farms provided food for the mission stations and served as models for indigenous farmers. The missionaries promoted crops such as cassava, yam, and maize for subsistence and encouraged the planting of cocoa and kola nuts for commercial purposes. Cocoa, in particular, became a

significant cash crop in Ekitiland by the 1920s, largely due to missionary and colonial promotion (Ogunremi, 1997).

In addition to introducing new farming techniques, missionaries imparted a religiously motivated agrarian ethics. Farming was portrayed not just as an economic activity but also as a divine vocation. The Christian message of diligence, stewardship, and providence was closely linked to agricultural labour. This spiritual framing encouraged a reorientation of work ethics, contrasting with some pre-Christian cosmologies that associated manual labour with social inferiority (Ajayi, 1965).

Another key innovation was the integration of agriculture into the missionary school curriculum. As early as the 1910s, mission schools in Ekitiland began to include practical agricultural training as part of their broader educational mandate. Following CMS policy directives and in cooperation with colonial administrators, school gardens and farms were established where students were taught how to cultivate crops, manage soil fertility, and engage in animal husbandry (Osokoya, 1987).

This pedagogical model served several purposes. It reinforced classroom learning through practical experience, contributed food and revenue to the schools, and prepared students for life in agrarian communities. In addition, it subtly challenged the dichotomy between mental and manual labour, thereby promoting a vision of education that valued the dignity of farming as much as intellectual achievement. Many mission school graduates became local agricultural extension officers, village teachers, and community leaders who propagate the values and techniques learned in these mission-based agricultural settings (Adedibu, 2020).

Mid-20th Century Expansion (1940s–1970s)

The period between the 1940s and 1970s marked a significant phase of expansion, institutional consolidation, and diversification of the agricultural contributions made by the Anglican Church in Ekitiland. During this time, the Anglican Church responded to post-war reconstruction efforts, growing population demands, and nationalist aspirations by intensifying its agricultural programmes and community development initiatives. The period is also noteworthy for the formalisation of church-state partnerships in education and rural development.

The aftermath of World War II witnessed increasing food insecurity and economic hardship in many parts of colonial Nigeria, including Ekitiland. The colonial administration responded by

encouraging agricultural intensification through community development programmes, farm settlements, and technical training (Watts, 1983). The Anglican Church, particularly through its Diocesan Agricultural Offices and missionary agents, became a key stakeholder in this endeavour. Church-led agricultural initiatives during this period expanded from the simple mission farms into more elaborate community-based programs. New varieties of crops such as improved cassava, hybrid maize, and early-maturing yams were introduced with assistance from missionary extension workers and agricultural officers trained in British and Nigerian institutions (Ogunremi, 1997). Anglican agricultural missions worked closely with colonial departments of agriculture, thereby facilitating the dissemination of technical knowledge through churches, schools, and local councils.

Furthermore, the Church established agricultural demonstration centres in towns such as Ikere-Ekiti, Ido-Ekiti, and Aramoko-Ekiti, where they taught soil management, composting, pest control, and crop spacing. These centres also hosted periodic agricultural exhibitions and farmer-training sessions, blending religious instruction with agronomic innovation (Ajayi, 1965). The message was clear: agriculture was not merely an economic activity but a divine calling with communal and moral responsibilities.

A key development during this period was the expansion of agricultural education at both the primary and secondary levels. Mission schools integrated agriculture more formally into their curricula, in line with both ecclesiastical vision and colonial educational policy. The Education Ordinance of 1952, for instance, required mission schools to include practical subjects such as agriculture, home economics, and manual labour (Osokoya, 1987). Anglican schools in Ekitiland quickly established school farms where students practised tilling, planting, and harvesting. By the 1960s, the Church was also involved in post-primary vocational training, often in partnership with government agencies. Schools such as Emmanuel School, Ado-Ekiti and Christ's School, Ado-Ekiti, offered specialised programmes in agricultural science. These institutions produced a cadre of Christian agricultural officers, extension agents, and teachers who later served in government and private sectors (Adedibu, 2020). Their training emphasised not only technical competence but also Christian ethics of stewardship, accountability, and service.

The Anglican Youth Fellowship (AYF) and Women's Guilds also contributed to vocational agricultural training. These church groups organised agricultural camps, seminars, and competitions that encouraged rural youth and women to see agriculture as a path to self-reliance

and spiritual fulfilment. Notably, women's groups took the lead in food processing, preservation, and cooperative marketing of farm produce, especially in the face of increasing rural-urban migration during the 1960s and 1970s (Ter Haar, 2011).

Another significant development in this period was the growing influence of indigenous Anglican clergy and lay leaders in agricultural mission work. By the 1950s, the missionary field had undergone a process of "Africanisation," with indigenous bishops, priests, and evangelists taking leadership roles in diocesan development programs (Ayandele, 1966). Many of these leaders had rural backgrounds and were deeply invested in community welfare and agrarian development.

These clergy emphasised community mobilisation, moral reform, and agricultural improvement. Sermons increasingly addressed themes such as land stewardship, environmental care, and the sin of laziness, all within the framework of Christian doctrine. Churches became venues for farmer education, seed distribution, and cooperative formation. Clergy like Ven. J. A. Adebayo of Ado-Ekiti and Rev. Akinrinade of Iye-Ekiti were known for promoting agricultural self-sufficiency alongside spiritual growth, often starting communal farms or leading food security initiatives during lean seasons.

Rural Cooperative Societies and Food Security Programmes

In line with broader socio-economic trends, the Anglican Church was involved in the promotion of rural cooperative societies. These cooperatives were aimed at improving access to credit, agricultural inputs, and markets for smallholder farmers. The Church encouraged its members to form cooperative societies, which were often affiliated with parish or diocesan structures. This innovation helped to reduce post-harvest losses, enhance food availability, and foster community solidarity. In particular, the Church organised bulk purchases of improved seeds and fertilisers through these cooperatives, making them more affordable for rural farmers. Women's groups organised bulk food storage systems and rotating loan schemes that increased household food security. These church-supported cooperatives also negotiated for better farm produce prices, which enhanced rural incomes and reduced poverty (Falola, 1998).

During the periods of food scarcity or price hikes, especially in the late 1960s during the Nigerian Civil War, the Anglican Church provided relief such as food distributions, communal harvests, and the creation of emergency food banks operated through parish councils (Gifford, 2015). These efforts underscored the Church's evolving role as both a spiritual and socio-economic institution within rural society.

The Anglican Church's agricultural mission in Ekitiland also intersected with national development policies after independence in 1960. The First (1962-1968) and Second (1970-1974) Nigerian National Development Plans emphasised rural development, agricultural modernisation, and community participation. Anglican missions aligned their agricultural programmes with these plans, receiving support from government agencies such as the Ministry of Agriculture and the Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs). The Church often served as a local implementing partner for these initiatives. Anglican schools hosted extension workshops, and clergy acted as informal agents during rural mobilisation. In some cases, parishes received grants or technical aid to develop mechanised farming, poultry units, and small-scale irrigation schemes. These programmes contributed to food sustainability by improving productivity, stabilising food supply chains, and enhancing farmers' access to technology.

Late 20th Century to Present (1980s–2024)

The period between the 1980s and 2024 represents a complex era of transformation in the relationship between the Anglican Church and food sustainability in Ekitiland. It is characterised by structural adjustment, political instability, climate variability, and globalisation, all of which have had significant impacts on agricultural productivity and food systems. In response, the Anglican Church has recalibrated its mission to remain relevant in promoting food sustainability through strategic advocacy, community empowerment, institutional innovation, and environmental stewardship. This era reflects a shift from mission-dominated approaches to indigenous, locally driven initiatives grounded in theology, social justice, and sustainable development principles.

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed profound economic and social crises in Nigeria due to the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), devaluation of the naira, subsidy removals, and reduced government investment in agriculture (Ojo, 2010). These challenges led to widespread rural poverty, food insecurity, and the collapse of several state-supported agricultural extension services. In Ekitiland, formerly vibrant farming communities experienced youth migration to urban centres, and the ageing farming population faced limited access to credit, fertilisers, and improved seeds.

In the face of this crisis, the Anglican Church in Ekitiland responded by reviving its commitment to grassroots agricultural development and food justice. The dioceses began to integrate rural development ministries into their ecclesiastical structures. For example, the

Diocese of Ekiti and later, all newly carved dioceses such as Ekiti West, Ekiti Oke, and Ekiti Kwara initiated agricultural units that coordinated faith-based responses to food insecurity (Adebayo, 2015). These units provided basic training in sustainable farming techniques, crop diversification, and low-cost irrigation, thereby promoting a theology of stewardship and environmental care.

By the early 2000s, Anglican dioceses in Ekitiland began implementing structured agricultural projects either as diocesan ventures or through parishes. One notable example is the Diocesan Agro-Mission Initiative (DAMI) launched by the Diocese of Ekiti West in 2008. DAMI established cassava and maize plantations, poultry farms, and palm oil processing facilities to train unemployed youths and generate funds for mission work. The initiative also promoted “Farm Sunday” events, where parishioners brought farm produce to church for dedication and communal sharing.

Similarly, Anglican secondary schools and theological colleges in the region, such as Archbishop Vining College of Theology, Akure (which serves Ekitiland), reintroduced practical agriculture into their curricula (Adesina & Olaniyan, 2021). This approach combined agronomic skill development with theological training, cultivating leaders capable of contributing to both food sustainability and spiritual nourishment.

Moreover, some dioceses acquired plots of land for diocesan farms that produced food not only for sale but also for use in church-run orphanages, hospitals, and schools. These efforts reduced dependence on market-sourced food and served as resilience strategies during inflationary periods and supply chain disruptions, such as those experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic (Aina & Aluko, 2021).

Women and Youth Involvement in Food Initiatives

Anglican women’s organisations, such as the Mothers’ Union and Women’s Guild, were involved in agricultural activities; they ran backyard gardening projects, and engaged in food processing enterprises such as gari-making, palm oil production, and yam flour packaging. These ventures were often tied to savings-and-loans schemes and supported women’s economic empowerment and household food security (Oladejo, 2018).

Youths, on the other hand, were targeted through vocational training and empowerment programmes such as the “Youth Empowered to Farm” initiative launched in parts of Ekiti between 2015 and 2022. These programmes emphasised Agri-entrepreneurship, greenhouse

farming, and climate-smart agriculture, often implemented in partnership with NGOs and government extension programs. Churches provided land, mentorship, and startup support, encouraging Christian youths to see farming as both a ministry and a profitable venture.

Challenges and Limitations

While the Anglican Church has played a significant and laudable role in enhancing food sustainability in Ekitiland, several challenges and limitations have hindered the full realisation of its agricultural and developmental objectives. These obstacles spanned across historical, institutional, socio-economic, theological, and environmental dimensions, each presenting a complex interplay that continues to shape the Church's mission in rural food security.

A major limitation to the Anglican Church's agricultural and developmental efforts in Ekitiland has been the persistent challenge of land tenure insecurity, rooted in colonial-era land policies and indigenous customary systems. Despite receiving land allocations from local chiefs during the Church's early missionary expansion in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, these grants were often informal and lacked legal backing or Certificates of Occupancy (Akinyemi, 2011). As population pressures mounted and urbanisation spread, church-held lands increasingly became targets of encroachment, disputes, and unauthorised appropriation. Without secure land tenure, the Church found it difficult to commit to long-term investments in agricultural infrastructure, diocesan farms, or food security initiatives. This land insecurity has not only disrupted sustainability plans but also eroded trust and cooperation in some communities where the Church was once a pivotal development actor.

One of the limitations has been the historical legacy of colonial land policies and the complex nature of customary land tenure systems in Ekitiland. Although Anglican missionaries were granted lands by local chiefs for evangelism and community development in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Church often lacked clear legal documentation or Certificates of Occupancy for these lands (Akinyemi, 2011). As the pressure for land increased with population growth and urbanisation, church lands were frequently encroached upon, disputed, or appropriated without compensation. This insecurity constrained the establishment of long-term agricultural projects or diocesan farms that required secure land tenure.

Financial and Institutional Limitations

Most Anglican dioceses in Ekitiland operate with constrained financial resources, heavily dependent on tithes, offerings, and limited grants. This financial limitation severely restricts

investment in modern agricultural infrastructure such as tractors, irrigation systems, greenhouses, or post-harvest storage facilities. Without these, the scalability and productivity of diocesan farms remain low (Adepoju & Afolabi, 2017).

Additionally, there is often a lack of dedicated agricultural experts within diocesan structures. While some dioceses have set up agricultural committees or rural development departments, these are frequently understaffed and lack professional agronomists, extension officers, or development economists. This institutional gap has made it difficult to design evidence-based food security programmes to attract donor partnerships for sustainable agriculture.

Youth Disinterest and Rural-Urban Migration

Despite targeted interventions such as agricultural youth empowerment programmes, many young people in Ekitiland continue to perceive agriculture as unattractive due to its physical demands, low profitability, and lack of technological appeal. The rural-urban migration trend, intensified since the 1980s, has drained farming communities of able-bodied youth, leaving an ageing population to continue subsistence farming practices.

The Church has struggled to make agriculture appealing through technological innovation or vocational branding. Many dioceses lack the digital platforms, market linkages, or agri-business networks necessary to convert traditional farming into profitable ventures that could attract the younger generation (Aina & Aluko, 2021). As a result, church-initiated farms often suffer from labour shortages, poor mechanisation, and limited entrepreneurial development.

Climate Change and Environmental Degradation

In recent decades, climate change has emerged as a formidable limitation to food security in Ekitiland. Erratic rainfall patterns, prolonged dry spells, soil erosion, and pest infestations have adversely affected crop yields. Anglican farms and gardens, mostly rain-fed and without adaptive infrastructure, are particularly vulnerable to these climate disruptions (Okonkwo, 2020). Moreover, many churches have not fully embraced climate-smart agriculture or ecological theology. Tree planting campaigns, organic farming, and water conservation practices are not yet mainstreamed across parishes. This environmental unpreparedness undermines the Church's ability to act as a proactive catalyst for long-term food sustainability.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Knowledge Gaps

Finally, many church-led food initiatives in Ekitiland suffer from a lack of proper monitoring, evaluation, and documentation. Without clear metrics or periodic assessments, it is difficult to measure the impact of Anglican agricultural interventions on food security, income generation, or environmental conservation. Moreover, success stories and best practices from local parishes or diocesan farms are rarely disseminated in academic journals, church newsletters, or national conferences. This knowledge gap prevents scaling and replication, and reduces the visibility of the Church as a stakeholder in national food discourse.

Conclusion

This paper affirms that Anglican missionaries were not only spiritual leaders but also socio-economic agents who laid the groundwork for sustainable food practices in Ekitiland. Their legacy persists through church farms, educational curricula, and community mobilisation. The enduring presence of church-based agricultural projects demonstrates the potential of religious institutions to address food insecurity when aligned with community values and modern innovations.

Recommendations

In light of the findings and challenges identified in the historical and contemporary roles of Anglican missionaries in promoting food sustainability in Ekitiland, several strategic recommendations are proposed to strengthen the Church's impact. First, there is a need for diocesan authorities to formalise land ownership by securing legal titles and clear documentation for church-acquired lands. This would protect church farms from encroachment and enable long-term agricultural planning. Secondly, the Church should invest in building institutional capacity by employing professional agricultural officers, forming partnerships with agricultural research institutes, and training clergy and laity in sustainable farming practices. Integrating agricultural education into theological seminaries would also help future church leaders understand and promote food security as a theological and pastoral mandate. Furthermore, diocesan programmes should engage the youth more intentionally through agri-tech initiatives, digital platforms, and entrepreneurial schemes that make agriculture appealing, innovative, and profitable. Anglican youth fellowships could serve as incubators for such empowerment programmes. To mitigate environmental threats, the Church should mainstream climate-smart agricultural practices, such as organic farming, agroforestry, and water harvesting, into its community farms and parish teachings. In addition, diocesan development

departments should actively seek collaboration with government agencies, NGOs, and international donors for technical assistance, equipment support, and policy advocacy. Finally, there is a need for robust systems of monitoring, evaluation, and documentation of church-based agricultural interventions. This will enhance transparency, promote learning across dioceses, and elevate the Church's contributions within national discourses on food security and rural development. Through these multi-pronged recommendations, the Anglican Church in Ekitiland can reaffirm its historical commitment to holistic mission, combining spiritual nourishment with practical sustenance for the flourishing of its communities.

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