



# **Pentecostal Church Doctrine and Economy of Niger Delta, Nigeria**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigated with empirical evidence, the relationship between Pentecostal church doctrine and economy of Niger Delta. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. Both primary and secondary methods of data collection were employed to obtain relevant data for analysis. The instrument for data collection employed was questionnaire. The study population comprised of fourteen (14) major Pentecostal churches operating in the Niger Delta Region. Fifty-six (56) copies of structured questionnaire were administered to the respondents. The 56 copies of questionnaire were distributed and usable for the data analysis. Pearson Product Moment Correlation technique was used to measure the level of significance of the hypothesized variables in order to determine the conjectural relationship between the predictor variable (Pentecostal church doctrine) and the criterion variable (economy), with the aid of the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version, 23.0. The result of the findings revealed that there are very strong, significant and positive relationships between Pentecostal church doctrine and economy components of the study. The study further concludes that there is a very significant and positive relationship between Pentecostal church doctrine and economy of Niger Delta thus, Pentecostal church is at the center, and concern with the privations and problems of the contemporary society. It recommends that religious organisations should be carried along in government policies to always inculcate moral principles, justice, truth, equity and honesty which is a reagent to personality change thereby reduce corruption and improve economy.

**Keywords:** Pentecostal Church, Doctrine, Economy

## **INTRODUCTION**

Religion is a system of social unity commonly understood as a group of beliefs or attitudes concerning an object, person, unseen or imaginary being, or system of thought considered to be supernatural, sacred, divine or highest truth and the moral codes, practices, values, institutions, and rituals associated with such belief or system of thought. It is a structure within which specific theological doctrines and practices are advocated and pursued; usually among a community of like-minded believers (Agha, 2003). Religion can be found in all known human societies. Looking at the record of earliest societies on record, they show strong suggestions of religious signs and observances. During the course of history, religion has continued to be a significant part of societies and human experience, shaping how individuals react to the environments in which they live (Fagbamila, David & Issa 2014).

The importance of the discussion on religion in the Niger Delta cannot be over emphasized and cannot be anytime more important than now. According to Jerome (2010), religion is, and seems likely to remain an inevitable part of human life regardless of the society. Jerome (2010) further explains that religion is a means of tackling the problems of suffering, evil and hostility in all ages. It is when religion is seen as

useful to man that it can then make meaning and applied to national development. Many scholars have given their various views of the concept of religion. Most notable of the all is Ninian Smart, a scholar of religion who propounded the seven dimensions of religion in 1969. Ninian Smart operationalized religion into seven broad dimensions namely, doctrines/philosophies, ritual, narrative/myths, experiential/emotional, ethics, social/institutional and material (Nath, 2007). Thus, this study will incline itself to the first dimension Pentecostal church doctrines.

The predominant religious practice in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria is Christianity with its place of worship known as church. Church worship is divided into two main broad types namely, orthodox and the protestant. Orthodox church comprises of the Catholic, Anglican, Baptist, Methodist and so on, while the protestant gave birth to the Pentecostal church (Gruber, 2005). In all, church-based enterprises help rebuild a community's social infrastructure and provide much needed value-based services as childcare, youth development, elder care and substance counselling. These activities tend to lead to improved schools, better public safety and an enhanced quality of life. Economic development in this sense, can be orchestrated by many factors, one of which is the doctrinal principles of the church thus this paper focuses on Pentecostal church doctrines and the economy of Niger Delta.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Church doctrines as a dimension of religion can be used for economic growth and development, because a church doctrine has direct influence on the worshipers and is able to control the quality and type of business such worshipers can undertake, which has direct bearing on the economy of a society (Nwabughio, 2016). A powerful doctrine has high impact (be it positive or negative) both on the people and the place of worship.

Prior researches on church doctrines and economic development do not provide adequate knowledge for communities in the Niger Delta context on how churches can through their doctrines affect lives and turn around the economic fortunes of the region. This is because most of such studies are foreign and conducted using other measures of economic development. For instance, Ikechi-Ekpendu, Adu & Ekpendu (2016) evaluated the role of religion in the development of Nigeria. Anozie (2013) studied Christian church as catalyst for economic development in Nigeria. Sola (2018) studied impact of religion on socio-economic and political activities of people in Oyo south senatorial district of Oyo State, Nigeria. Though, the concept of Pentecostal church doctrine has been extensively researched, little or none has been published on its nexus with economy in the Niger, Nigeria and the existing literature does not adequately answer the important questions posed by the present study. This constitutes the problem of the study. The concern for this problem is comprehensible because of the existing and continuance effect it will have on economic development in the Niger Delta region and Nigeria at large if it is not unraveled thus, it is hoped that the current study will serve as panacea to some economic challenges in Niger Delta.

### **Objective of the study**

The main thrust of this study is to theoretically and empirically investigate the relationship between Pentecostal church doctrines and economy of Niger Delta.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study will yield significant result in solving the avalanche of problems facing humans particularly in their economic environment. The study will benefit Pentecostal church policy makers or spiritual leaders to understand the causal relationship between church doctrines and economic development. The rationale of this study is to provide logical information. The empirical findings of this study will significantly improve the economy of Niger Delta. The study will be useful to those who will carry out studies in related areas in future. It will serve as a reference material to them. Finally, the findings can provide the bases for further studies.

### **Literary Perspectives**

#### **Theoretical Framework of the Study**

Several theories have been advanced to account for the links between religion and development. First, there are theories that typify the rational choice approach to religion and development. This approach considers the resilience of religion as a rational economic response to changes in the political,

ecological and economic environments in which religions operate (Charles & Okwueze, 2003). In addition, a range of other structural theories encompass family socialization, social networks and a belief in other-worldly or supernatural elements. However, regardless though of the tradition from which one approaches the study of religion, examining the interactions between religion and development poses significant challenges: first, to understand the endogenous interactions between religion and economic growth; second, to examine the techniques and methods needed to quantify these interactions; and third, to evaluate the impact of religion on development policy more widely.

### **The Concept of Pentecostal Church Doctrine**

A church is a group of people or persons called out or set apart, sanctified or redeemed from the shackles and sorrows of this evil world to serve God's purpose in any human society like ours with exemplary life worthy of the divine calling, in honest manifestation of other virtues like humility, patience, meekness, forgiveness, tolerance, unity, love, faithfulness, justice and truthfulness (Anozie, 2013).

It is both a theological travesty and also a human anachronism to see the Pentecostal church as a withdrawn community, unconcerned with the privations and problems of the contemporary society. Thus Ajayi (1965) asserted that social reform is implicit in the preaching of a new religion. Undoubtedly, certain elements within the church circles underplay the positive contributions of the church towards the economic development of nations. Such groups of people have encouraged the wrong notion that the church and the kingdom of God are synonymous with poverty, want and need, if you can excuse a conical play-on-words.

Can a kingdom succeed in poverty? If Jesus talked about the kingdom and talked about abundant life, it follows that the movement of which he was the originator must champion the crusade for economic development and social change. Whatever may be the historians' rationale with regards to the reformation; it is an incontrovertible fact that without the economic and social deprivations of the German populace, Martin Luther's appeal probably could not have stirred the German people. Of particular importance was his appeal to the German common people and the consequent peasant revolt. Germany was in need of economic change and they saw in Luther the one means of developing their economy and improving the social lot. This illustration tries to sensitize us to the particular stance of Christ that his mission was to improve the lot of men.

### **A Brief Background of the Christian Religion**

The word Christianity was first used at Antioch in Syria where the disciples of Jesus were first called Christians, meaning the followers of Christ. According to Afolabi (2015), the origin and the basic beliefs of Christianity were stated in the Apostles Creed. It affirms that Jesus Christ is the son of God and God sent Him to the world to die for the redemption of mankind. The Christian population includes Roman Catholics who constitute the largest denomination of Christians in the country. Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterians, Baptists Lutherans. There is in Nigeria a growing number of evangelical and Pentecostal Ministries, Seventh Day Adventist, Jehovah's witnesses' and a host of other white garment churches (Agha, 2003).

### **Economic Growth and Development**

Economic development is the process by which there is a long period of sustained growth in the per capital real income of a country, accompanied by fundamental changes in the structure of the economy and an overall sustained improvement in the material well-being of the people (Falodun & Nnadi, 2007). Economic development occurs if the rate of growth of real per capital income in the country or its region is higher than the rate of growth of population, over a long period of time. It means an expansion of health and educational services and more persons having access to them.

Economic development is followed by an increase in life expectancy and standard of living. Similarly, Oguji & Kene (2009) views economic development as the process of growth in total and per capita income accompanied by fundamental changes in the economy. Economic development is relevant to underdeveloped countries, because these backward countries are concerned with how to develop and

use their unknown and unused resources. It requires some sort of planning and guidance to keep the forces of expansion in a particular direction, for example, to increase life expectancy, there will be a need to consciously plan and direct resources in the area of health services etc (Inwelegbu, 2011).

Qualitative change is the heartbeat of economic development. It is only when there is an increase in the quality of life (higher than average life expectancy), food output (more protein rather than carbohydrates) and real income (increase in purchasing power of money) and so on, that we can say that economic development has taken place. In fact, economic development always produces economic growth.

### **Present Nigerian economic system**

Nigeria gained independence from Britain in 1960 and became a republic in 1963. Nigeria adopted the economic system namely mixed economy of Britain, her colonial master. Thus, Nigeria, on her own, did not choose the form of economic system that was based on the characteristics behavior of Nigerians. However, as a developing country that had been for long ruled by the colonial masters, Nigeria had no option at independence than to dance according to her master's (Afannamuefuna, 2006). The independence was purely political independence and not economic independence. Consequently, the economy was still tied to apron of the colonial masters, who continued to influence the level of growth of the various economic sectors of the economy.

There was problem of the provision of some social and economic infrastructure as well as public goods which the private sector may not be able to provide equitably because of huge financial involvement or because they are not profitable to the private sector. The pre-colonial Nigeria was characterized by highly independence economic structure of the private sector. In some regions of Nigeria, there were strong political centres with recognized political leaders, Chiefs, Obas, Emirs who were controlling economic activities (Afannamuefuna, 2006). These structures paved way for some degree of private ownership of some means of production such as land, which was being allocated to individual as demand (subsistence) arose. This practice which continues up to date makes complete takeover of means of production by government difficult, if not impossible.

The pre-colonial social structure of Nigeria though diverse had a common feature of family ties. There was the extended family system which provided a kind of social security. The ultimate aim of the system was to help the members of the family to be able to cater for themselves and to cater for those who were permanently or temporarily helpless such as the old, the sick and the unemployed. This system supported private participation in the provision of welfare services to the people. The effects of mixed economy on Nigeria economic development are slow rate of development of the private sector of the economy. Some economic development projects are exclusively provided by the government. The private sector can only provide if granted license by the government (Afannamuefuna, 2006).

### **Pentecostal Church Doctrines and Economic Development in Niger Delta**

Days are gone when the issue of economic development lies with the government and other private sectors, even individuals. The Christian church is still facing the situation of Nigeria economy where poverty, inflation, unemployment, economic instability, etc. are the order of the day and have greater role or influence on the country's rate of economic progress. Most churches employ at least one person, and many have upwards of 20 employees, especially if they operate a childcare facility or school. Since churches generally operate facilities, churches are consumers of energy to heat and cool the often-large open spaces (Afolabi, 2015).

Pentecostal church has provided both moral and economic impetus for the country's economic development. Here, the church inculcates morals. If morality will be imbibed by the citizens, it will go a long way to curtailing social vices associated with erring economy like bribery, embezzlement, corruption. There will be judicious spending organizations' money and other vices like kidnapping and tensions under which smooth economy cannot germinate will stop, or be minimized.

Gruber (2005) posits that Pentecostal church needs to concentrate on the business of creating economic institutions. The church has to find itself in a situation where it is the best, continuing as an organized

entity in the local community for the acquisition and development of land, the building of business enterprises and the employment of people.

Presently, virtually all the Pentecostal churches in Niger Delta are involved in one economic advancement or the other. It is in agreement to this kind of actions that Gruber (2005) maintains that when such developments take place in low-income areas, the increase property values attract new residents and become magnets for diverse businesses and better-paying jobs.

It is now obvious that church-based business enterprises help rebuild a community's social infrastructure and provide much needed value-based services as childcare, youth development, elder care and substance counselling. These activities tend to lead to improved schools, better public safety and an enhanced quality of life. From this, economic development occurs; every one living in the area and those in surrounding communities' benefits.

It is noteworthy that the task active industrial establishment does not only on the government, Pentecostal churches participate in industrial establishment and rapid development of industries today by establishing or setting up industries or by buying shares thereby contributing to raising required fund for the industries.

Doctors, nurses, teachers, bankers and other categories of workers who work in schools, hospitals, banks and other establishments owned by the church, are paid salaries; through this means, they earn their living. This has gone a long way to reduce the problem of unemployment, because churches create employment opportunities. Additionally, these workers pay taxes used by government to develop many sectors of the economy in a country. By doing so (paying of taxes), they are contributing their quota towards national and economic development (Anozie, 2007). Suffice to say, many individuals through word of God get visions on how to produce one commodity or the other, which are eventually brought to the market for people to buy and sale and make profit from thereby earning a living. Indeed, Christian church has been and is still contributing to every strata of the country's development.

### **Factors Limiting the role of the Pentecostal Church towards economic development**

In the efforts of the church towards economic development, there are a lot of challenges. According to the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the Nigerian economy is currently passing through growth challenges not previously anticipated by policy makers. Sanusi (2013) disclosed that the committee traced the growth challenges to the decline in the contribution of oil sector which he said became apparent in the last half of 2013. Also, he stressed the decline in the contribution of agriculture sector to growth since the third quarter of 2011, in spite of investment in agricultural transformation initiatives of the federal government.

It is clear that any developing economies have not reach mass consumption stage of growth and as such another problem or hindrances to the economic development of Nigeria is poor economic policies to control inflation and unemployment (Eboh, 2016). Also jeopardizing the country's economic development is the poor educational systems. This is practically seen in much emphasis given to theory than practical lesson that could help to cause development. For example, most Nigerian engineers have more theoretical knowledge of handling construction work and mechanics, because the system of education trains them to be job seekers and not job makers that would help to create more employment for the people so as make them acquire the basic needs of lives.

Another hindrance to economic growth in Nigeria is the poor political climate. This factor has kept the country in problem such as low production, high inflation rates, unemployment and poverty. This is because most of the government officials are corrupt and the prior existence of coups and civil wars leaves the country in poor stage of economic growth and development.

Other problems include: poverty, unemployment, poor technology/production methods used, high illiteracy rates, high population growth rates, thus increasing the dependency rates within families, damping by the developed economies which kills the initiative to develop and expand local industries, high rates of profit repatriation by foreign investors within the developing economies, dependency on the developed world, high level of deficit managing which worsen their salaries of payment position, and

poor terms of trade in the world market (Inwelegbu, 2011).

### **Empirical Evidence**

Empirical studies of church doctrines and development across countries have investigated religious movements, examining particularly sect behaviour, drawing implications on the necessity and regulation of church doctrines. This concern manifests itself in a sea of research projects on religion. In a study conducted by Barro & McCleary (2003) on the assessment of the effect of religious participation and beliefs on a country's rate of economic progress. The study used which used international survey data for 59 countries drawn from the World Values Survey and the International Social Sciences Program conducted between 1981 and 1999, found that greater economic growth attainment is associated with higher church attendance and stronger religious beliefs. For a given level of church attendance, increases in some religious beliefs, notably belief in heaven, hell and an afterlife tend to increase economic growth.

Other studies have focused more on particular religions in varied historical time periods. For example, very useful insights have been gained by focusing on Islam and on Judaism. For Islam, there have been detailed investigations into financial systems in the Middle East including *zakat* (alms for charity) and the manner in which Islamic banks have been using a financing method equivalent to the rate of interest to overcome adverse selection and information problems. There has also been more detailed investigation into Islamic law and financial activity historically with implications for poverty reduction in the Middle East (Nath, 2007). Nath (2007) studied religion and economic growth and development in Indira Gandhi. The authors have used an analysis of the determinants of religiosity to construct a set of instrumental variables to estimate the effects of religion on economic growth. The instruments are dummy variables for the existence of a state religion and for state regulation of religion, the composition of religious adherence among the main religions, and the extent of religious pluralism. The results show that, for given religious beliefs, increases in church attendance tend to reduce economic growth. In contrast, for given levels of church attendance, increases in some religious beliefs-notably belief in hell, heaven, and an afterlife-tend to increase economic growth. There is some indication that the fear of hell is more potent for economic growth than is the prospect of heaven.

The author contend that stronger religious beliefs stimulate growth because they help sustain specific individual behaviors that enhance productivity. They argue that higher levels of church attendance depress economic growth because greater attendance signifies a larger use of resources by the religion sector, and the main output of this sector (the religious beliefs) has already been held constant. The results do not mean that greater church attendance has a net negative influence on economic growth-this net effect depends on the extent to which an increase in attendance leads to stronger beliefs, which in turn encourage growth. Their results also indicate that, for given religious beliefs, the overall effect of greater church attendance is to reduce economic growth. This overall effect combines the resources used up by the religion sector, the social capital aspect of this sector, and the influence of organized religion on laws and regulations.

Anozie (2013) studied Christian church as a catalyst for economic development in Nigeria. The study found that church restored the comprehensive education in order to get quick money. This they used to train their members and build various communities. The projects and establishments carried by church in the various locations and locality add taste to the area and is a source of economic growth and development.

### **Hypothesis**

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between Pentecostal church doctrines and economic growth of Niger Delta.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between Pentecostal church doctrines and economic development of Niger Delta.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted the cross-sectional survey explanatory research design which enables the researcher to ascertain the relationship between the study variables. The population of the study was fourteen (14) of the major Pentecostal churches in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Fifty-six (56) copies of structured questionnaire were administered to the respondents. The 56 copies of questionnaire were usable for the data analysis. Pearson Product Moment Correlation technique was used to measure the level of significance of the hypothesized variables in order to determine the conjectural relationship between the predictor variable (Pentecostal church doctrines) and the criterion variable (economy) with the aid of the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version, 23.0.

**Table 1 : Result of Reliability Analysis**

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Pentecostal Church Doctrines	0 . 857
Economic Growth	0 . 880
Economic Development	0 . 896

*Source: Research data output, 2019.*

**Bivariate Analysis**

The secondary data analysis was carried out through the use of Regression Analysis tool at a 95% confidence level. Specifically, the tests cover hypotheses Ho<sub>1</sub> to Ho<sub>2</sub> which were bivariate at all stated in the null manner. We have depended on the Regression Analysis tool to carry out the analysis thus the probability criterion of 0.05 significance level was adopted for accepting the null hypotheses at ( P>0.05) or rejecting the hypotheses at ( P<0.05).

**Test of Hypotheses**

**Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between Pentecostal church doctrines and economic growth of Niger Delta.**

**Table 2: Relationship between Pentecostal Church Doctrines and Economic Growth**

		Pentecostal Church Doctrines	Economic Growth
Pentecostal Church Doctrines	Pearson Correlation	1	.942**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	56	56
Economic Growth	Pearson Correlation	.942**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	56	56

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From Table 2, it can be seen that the regression coefficient (R) = 0.942; indicating that there is a very strong and significant relationship between Pentecostal church doctrines and economic growth. Again, the coefficient of determination indicates that changes in the dependent variable (economic growth) are attributable to the independent variable (Pentecostal church doctrines), while other changes are caused by externalities. More so, probability value is 0.001 < 0.05 (level of significance); indicating that the result is significant 70 degree of freedom. Therefore, we reject the conjectural postulation that there is no

significant relationship between Pentecostal church doctrines and economic growth and accept an alternate hypothesis.

**H<sub>A1</sub>: There is a very strong significant relationship between Pentecostal church doctrines and economic growth of Niger Delta**

**H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between Pentecostal church doctrines and economic development of Niger Delta.**

**Table 3: Relationship between Pentecostal church Doctrines and Economic Development**

		Pentecostal church Doctrines	Economic Development
Pentecostal church Doctrines	Pearson Correlation	1	.855**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	56	56
Economic Development	Pearson Correlation	.855**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	56	56

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3, shows that the regression coefficient (R) = 0.855; indicating that there is a very strong and significant relationship between Pentecostal church doctrines and economic development. Again, the coefficient of determination indicates that changes in the dependent variable (economic development) are attributable to the independent variable (Pentecostal church doctrines), while other changes are caused by externalities. More so, probability value is  $0.001 < 0.05$  (level of significance); indicating that the result is significant 60 degree of freedom. Therefore, we reject the hypothetical postulation that there is no significant relationship between Pentecostal church doctrines and economic development and accept an alternate hypothesis thus there is a very strong significant relationship between Pentecostal church doctrines and economic development of Niger Delta.

### **EMPIRICAL VERIFICATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

From the findings of the tested hypotheses, it was evidential that:

A very strong significant relationship exists between Pentecostal church doctrine and economic growth. Evidence is shown on Table 2, the regression correlation = (0. 942\*\*). Again, a very strong significant relationship exists between Pentecostal church doctrine and economic development. Evidence is shown on Table 3, the regression correlation = (0. 856\*\*). These values are very strong, implying that very strong relationships exist between Pentecostal church doctrine and economy. The positive sign of the



correlation coefficient means that a positive relationship exists between them. That is to say that Pentecostal church doctrine impacts the economy of Niger Delta.

This finding is validated by Barro & McCleary (2003) on the assessment of the effect of religious participation and beliefs on a country's rate of economic progress. The study used which used international survey data for 59 countries drawn from the World Values Survey and the International Social Sciences Program conducted between 1981 and 1999, found that greater economic growth attainment is associated with higher church attendance and stronger religious beliefs. For a given level of church attendance, increases in some religious beliefs, notably belief in heaven, hell and an afterlife tend to increase economic growth.

The study also corroborates with Nath (2007) on religion and economic growth and development in India. The study used an analysis of the determinants of religiosity to construct a set of instrumental variables to estimate the effects of religion on economic growth. The instruments are dummy variables for the existence of a state religion and for state regulation of religion, the composition of religious adherence among the main religions, and the extent of religious pluralism. The results show that, for given religious beliefs, increases in church attendance tend to reduce economic growth. In contrast, for given levels of church attendance, increases in some religious beliefs-notably belief in hell, heaven, and an afterlife-tend to increase economic growth. There is some indication that the fear of hell is more potent for economic growth than is the prospect of heaven.

## **CONCLUSION**

From the findings of the study, it can be inferred that Pentecostal church doctrine has a very strong, significant and positive relationship with economic growth and development of Niger Delta thus Pentecostal church is at the center, and concern with the privations and problems of the contemporary society. The church contribution to economic growth in the Niger Delta region and indeed the Nigerian society has been invaluable, ranging from comprehensive education (both formal, informal and non-formal), of members on how to make their living. Also, the projects and establishments carried out by the Pentecostal church in the various locations and locality add taste to the area and is a source of economic growth and development. It is no doubt that churchmen and the church were not professors in economics, yet they applied practical economic system which had contributed immensely to the development of Niger Delta and the country at large.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Sequel to the theoretical and empirical findings of this study, the paper puts forward the following recommendations.

1. Religion should be carried along in government policies to always inculcate moral principles; justice, truth; equity and honesty which is a reagent to personality change thereby reduce corruption and improve economy.
2. Government should make use of the various organs like Council of Religious Groups (CRG) provided by different religions in the country to carry its message to the people. Moreover, proven and virtuous religious people should be used in the sensitive areas in political social and economic goals of national development to prevent constant failures of government well-conceived program.

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