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RELIGION AND ECONOMY: A STUDY OF PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES AND SMALL- AND MEDIUM-SCALE ENTERPRISES (SMES) IN PORT HARCOURT, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Much literature on the church and national development focus on the place of the church on Nigerian politics and the roles of different Christian denominations towards the development of education in Nigeria. Not much light is shed on the roles of the church in the development of myriad sectors of Nigeria's economy. This paper directs our attention to the roles the church towards the development of Small- and Medium-Scale Enterprises (SMEs) in Port Harcourt City and its environs. A number of SMEs examined include the textile, paper, music, electronics, manufacturing, transport and automobile, timber mill and building industries. The paper observes that the church through it inter-face with the above industries contributes immensely the Gross Domestic Product of Nigeria. It the recommends that greater attention be given to show how religious ideologies could contribute to the making of Nigeria an industrialised country.

Keywords: Religion and Economy, Pentecostal Churches, SMEs, Port Harcourt, Industry

Introduction

Small and Medium-Scale Enterprises (SMEs) play significant role not only on improving a country's Gross Domestic Product, but on also improving the people's living conditions. The SMEs are major employers of labour in Nigeria. Some sociologists of religion has questioned the place of religion on the GDP of a state such as Nigeria, The much that scholars have written to explain the relevance of Christianity on the economic development of Nigeria highlighted the role or mainline churches. Those who attempted a study of other streams of Christianity, such as Pentecostal churches, and the economic development of a nation, laid emphasis of the negative impacts of the latter's theology of

prosperity on the economy. It is the concern of this study to examine the positive role of Pentecostal churches on the economic development of a society by focusing on the interface between Pentecostal churches and SMEs in Port Harcourt City and its environs.

The Nature of Small- and Medium-Scale Enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria.

Small- and Medium-Scale Enterprises (SMEs) has a long history in Nigeria; it was the means of survival for the people since ages. There is no straight-line definition of Small and Medium-Scale Enterprises. The Central Bank of Nigeria agrees with the Small and Medium Industries and Equity Investment Scheme (SMIEIS) in their definition of a SME as any enterprise with a maximum asset base less than N200 million (equivalent of about $1.43 million) excluding land and working capital, and with the number of staff employed not less than 10 (otherwise will be a cottage or micro-enterprise) and not more than 300 (Babatope & Akintunde, 2010).

The Central Bank of Nigeria, in its Monetary Policy Circular No. 22 of 1988, defined small-scale enterprises as having an annual turnover not exceeding 500,000 naira. In the 1990 budget, the federal government of Nigeria defined small-scale enterprises for purposes of commercial bank loans as those with an annual turnover not exceeding 500,000 naira, and for Merchant Bank Loans, those enterprises with capital investments not exceeding 2 million naira (excluding cost of land) or a maximum of 5 million naira. The National Economic Reconstruction Fund (NERFUND) put the ceiling for small-scale industries at 10 million naira. Section 37b(2) of the Companies and Allied Matters Decree of 1990 defines a small company as one with an annual turnover of not more than 2 million naira and net asset value of not more than 1 million naira (Ekpenyong & Nyong, 1992). Taking into consideration the reality of Nigeria situation Onukwuli, Akam, Onwuka (2014) is of the view that Small- and Medium-Scale Enterprises include all business venture which are set up to provide one satisfaction (utility) or the other for a defined market target and with capital and asset base as low as N5,000 and as high as N1,000,000.

According to Ngwuonugu (2005) a major characteristic of Nigeria's SMEs relates to ownership structure or base, which largely revolves around a key man or family. Hence, a preponderance of the SMEs is either sole proprietorships or partnerships. Even where the registration status is thus that of a limited liability company, the true ownership structure is that of a one-man, family or partnership business. Few of the SME owners had tertiary education while the majority had primary and secondary education. Most of these business operators do not have prior experience before establishing their enterprises. Those who had experience acquired such experiences through apprenticeship which sometimes take three to seven years.

Common features of Nigeria's SMEs include the following among others labour–intensive production processes, concentration of management on the key man poor

inter and intra-sectoral linkages - hence they hardly enjoy economies of scale benefits, poor product quality output, absence of research and development, little or no training and development for their staff, lack of adequate financial record keeping, use of rather outdated and inefficient technology especially as it relates to processing, preservation and storage, and lack of succession plan. Some of the challenges of SMEs in Port Harcourt include lack of planning, inimical government rules and regulations, poor marketing strategy, lack of technical know-how, and higher interest rates (Aftab and Rahim, 1989). Other challenges and problems, which frustrate SMEs in Nigeria and make some of them to either die within their first two years of existence or perform below standard even after surviving in their early years abound. The key ones include inadequate infrastructural facilities (road water electricity etc), insecurity of lives and property, inconsistent monetary, fiscal and industrial policies, limited access to markets, multiple taxation and levies, lack of modern technology for processing and preserving products, policy reversals, capacity limitations, data inadequacies, harsh operating environment, fragile ownership base, fragile capital base.

Sanni (2009) avers that Small- and Medium-Scale Enterprises have shown their importance in the society, policy makers recognize them as an important reservoir for growth. The African Development Bank regards them as representing over 90% of business, providing employment in Africa and representing GDP of approximately 50% in Africa. Small- and Medium-Scale Enterprises sector has been recognized as an integral component of economic development and a crucial element in the effort to lift countries out of poverty. The total aggregate of Small and Medium-Scale Enterprises has the potential for accelerating the pace of economic development of the country. They successfully play positive role in the economic life of Nigerian in rural and urban areas. SMEs not only contribute significantly to improving living standards, they also bring about local capital formation and achieve high levels of production. For these reasons, the presence and development of SMEs are desirable at the various tiers of governments.

The Nature of Pentecostalism in Nigeria

When we talk of *Pentecostals,* we are referring specifically to Classical Pentecostals. Classical Pentecostals are those that trace their roots to the turn of the century, and the Azusa Street revival. Essentially, Pentecostals believe that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the 120 at Pentecost as is recorded in Acts 2 should be normative for all Christians. Further, the key sign associated with this Spirit-baptism is *glossolalia,* as it was in Acts. "Classical" was added in about 1970 to distinguish Classical Pentecostals from *Charismatics* (Noel 2007:15).

It has been argued by some scholars like Wonsuk, M., V. Karkkainen and J. K. Asamoah-Gyadu (2014:1) that Pentecostalism is not a monolithic movement. Thus any

attempt to define Pentecostalism at the global level faces insurmountable challenges. Reasons for the multiplicity and diversity of movements and traditions that can be grouped under the inclusive category or Pentecostalism are many and varied. First, unlike established Christian traditions such as Roman Catholicism, Pentecostalism cannot build on ecclesiastical tradition for the simple reason that it came to existence only a century ago. Second, until recent years, Pentecostalism has not produced much theological literature; its contribution to Christian faith has been in the form of occasional pastoral and missional writings, testimonies, dreams, prophecies and the likes that do not easily translate into an analytic, discursive theology. Third, because Pentecostalism was birthed out of dynamic experience rather than a theological discovery, it has liberally incorporated elements from a number of theological traditions and sources such as Methodist-Holiness Movements (Clerk, 1997), the Protestant Reformation, mystical-charismatic movements in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church, as well as 'Black' or African American spirituality.

Scholars now recognize the Pentecostal tradition's multiple points of origin (Bruner, 1970). This movement has become a global force in Christianity with significant representations on every continent (Stephenson, 2009:1), Global Pentecostalism was introduced in the early dawn of the twentieth century by Holiness evangelist Charles Fox Parham (1873-1929) who advocated that xenolalic tongues are the proof of Spirit baptism. This doctrine gave birth to the Azusa revival (1906) through his student William Joseph Seymour (1870-1922) and further to the organization of the American Assemblies of God (1914). Korean classical Pentecostalism is related to this lineage. According to the view of Walter J. Hollenweger, there are five historical roots for the Pentecostal movement: black oral tradition; Roman Catholicism; evangelicalism; critical theology; and ecumenism (Kim, 2013:47).

Although the foundations for Pentecostalism in Nigeria were laid as far back as the early 20th century, the phenomenal growth and development of Pentecostal churches in the country is generally associated with the country's social, economic and political dynamics from the late 1980s up to the present day (Synan, 175; Ojo, 1988; Ishaya 2011). The rise of Pentecostalism thus coincides with a period of severe economic crisis and political upheavals in Nigeria, accompanied by social tensions resulting from the adoption of "structural adjustment policies, massive corruption and unemployment. Pentecostal churches through their messages of material prosperity, career success, healing, good health and freedom from oppression, provided a platform for people to deal with their misery, encouraging their aspirations toward self-actualization. (Ishaya, 2011:2). Pentecostal churches have impacted certain aspects of the domestic domain. They provide inner power to survive the anxieties, unease, destabilization, and crises of modern Africa, replacing the loss of efficacy of other religious options. They aid the satisfaction of new needs and developing an existential theology that engenders upward mobility in life

activities because prosperity is predicated on the quality of inner life (Kalu, 2009: 76-79).

Indeed, Pentecostalism's tremendous growth can be attributed in no small part to its common touch. The Pentecostal message has been taken to the most common folk of society, and has spoken a word of truth sorely needed among the outcast and oppressed. The many histories of Pentecostalism testify to the fact that from its beginnings, the Pentecostal movement has thrived where other representations of Christianity have struggled, simply by meeting the everyday spiritual needs of the world's most ordinary people (Noel, 2007:14). Pentecostalism is a spiritual movement of the people.

Kalu (1998) identified a number of Pentecostal movements that are peculiar to Africa: Inter-denominational fellowships (e.g., Full Gospel Business Men s Fellowship International and Women s Aglow); Evangelistic Ministries (e.g. Deeper Life Bible Church); Deliverance Ministries (specializing in exorcism); Prosperity or Faith Ministries (tending toward Positive thinking); Intercessors – part of Intercessors Africa; Bible Distribution Agencies (e.g. Gideons Bible International, accepting only born-again members); and Classical Pentecostals (e.g., Four Square Gospel Church and Assemblies of God Church). In another vein Kalu (2008) submits a seven strand typology of Charismatic Movements in Africa:

i. A diviner or religious leader from the traditional religion who suddenly accepts the power of Christianity and urges the community to yield to it;
ii. A strand of prophets, who would emerge from the ranks of a Christian praying band, sometimes the tendency was to pose like an Old Testament prophet sporting a luxurious beard, a staff, and a flowing gown. The prophet would call for a holiness ethic and manifest the gift of healing like William Wade Harris, whose ministry started in 1910;
iii. A wave of African Indigenous Churches arose all over Africa at different times before the First World War and especially during the influenza epidemic of 1918. Some were messianic and others revivalistic.
iv. Sometimes a puritan and charismatic expression of Christianity would occur within the boundaries of mainline denominations.
v. External input. A range of external agents featured white Holiness and Classical Pentecostal groups that did mission in various parts of Africa. People received Holy Spirit baptism before inviting outsiders.
vi. African charismatic agency, Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) agents in Southern Africa, The role of migrant workers must not be ignored.
vii. The period since 1970. The face of Pentecostalism in Africa was catalysed by charismatic movements led by young people from mainline churches from the late 1960s in some parts of the continent, but more especially in the 1970s.

Basic features, beliefs and identified reasons for the growth of African Pentecostalism include: beliefs in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as a sign of born again, new birth, repentance, or faith in Jesus Christ; the gift of the Holy Spirit as an important requirement for appointment in the church; the gift of Holy Spirit manifests in glossolalia (speaking in tongues) as an evidence of sanctified life, or holiness; the second coming of Jesus Christ to redeem believers; the great commission as exemplified in Mathew 28;the Priesthood of all believers as taught in 2 Peter; the inner worldliness and the power or Christians to overcome all forces of evil; power encounter, the belief that the power in the blood of Jesus of Christ will annihilate all demonic evil manipulating; emotional worship exhibited in yelling, shouting and clapping and dancing; faith healing and casting out of demons; slaying in the spirit- a sign that one is filled with the Holy spirit as members fall prostrate on the floor; human problems are believed to be caused by the devil and evil forces; claims of dreams, visions and revelations common, especially in response to untoward happenings; fasting, prayer, night vigils, and open crusades are regularly observed; use of media in worship and liturgy, prosperity gospel-salvation in not only spiritual but materials; holy living; emphasis in tithing and sowing of seeds; preponderance of youths and women; rejection of orthodox medicines; and an apocalyptic vision of the world and most of them do not take part in politics, they are apolitical (Grudem, 1996; Martin, 2002; Obiora 2004; Ishaya 2011).

The main *modus operandi* of Pentecostal mission has been straightforward evangelism and church planting from its inception. It takes almost every conceivable method, demonstrable of its creativity and zealousness. It also accompanies claims of the demonstration of supernatural power. The most common of them is divine healing, and it provides an outstanding inroad for the gospel (Ma, 2014:87). The character of African Pentecostalism is, according to Kalu (2007), diverse and amoebic, creating a movement that is complex and full of ironies, solving old problems while creating new ones. African Pentecostalism has Africanised Christian liturgy in a free and spontaneous way that does not betray its essential Christian character, and liberates it from the foreignness of European forms. African Pentecostals are among the most committed churchgoers in the townships. They have experienced the living Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit; and their lives have been radically changed as a result. This conversion, or 'born again' experience as the *bazalwane* call it, has so transformed their lives that they do not have time for traditional practices. Unlike any other church group they have almost unanimously rejected the ancestor cult and traditional divination; and they also spurn the use of beer and tobacco. This indicates the radical break from their past that their conversion represents. They are aggressive evangelists, adding members to their churches at a rapid rate, often at the expense of other churches, especially the mission churches (Anderson 1992:119-120).

Methodology

The area of study, Port-Harcourt, the capital city of Rivers State, is located in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria with more than five ethnic groups or nationalities. What is literally known as Port-Harcourt today include Obio/Akpor – a sister local government area. The city serves as the commercial nerve centre of the state and has over the years witnessed an influx of migrants from the rural communities in Rivers State and other parts of the country in search of greener pasture resulting in decrepit urban slums with massive numbers of unemployed. The city is highly congested. From an area of 15.54km2 in 1914, it grew uncontrolled to an area of 360km^2 in the 1980s (www.wikipedia.org). The population of the city based on the 2006 Census figure is 1,005,904 (Nna and Pabon, 2012:1). Port Harcourt City is a metropolitan society with a proportionately larger population of Christians.

This qualitative study is analytical. To achieve the objectives of this study, an in-depth discussions were held with about twenty-five (30) people, most of whom pleaded anonymity. 25 of these are males and the remaining 5 were females. This gender disparity in the male-female ratio of interviewees is because most of the industries examined are male-dominated. Ten of the males interviewed are executive members of their trade unions, 5 are direct owners of business enterprises, five are Pentecostal clergymen, while the remaining five males are craftsmen such as carpenters, masons, and contractors. Two of the five females interviewed were General Overseers (GOs) of Pentecostal churches and the other three own shops. Those who demanded anonymity often insisted that the discussion be not recorded. While these discussions were not tape-recorded, hand-written notes were taken during such events and fuller reconstructions made immediately after. Another group of respondents who provided information is made of individuals selected through purposive random sampling techniques. These were so selected to obtain neutral information on the issues discussed. The information so obtained is used as a check to ascertain the objectivity of those in the first class of respondents, and to obtain the general opinion of the masses on the effects of Pentecostal churches on small-scale business enterprises in Port Harcourt. Finally, discussions were held with some colleagues and post graduate students. Information from these discussions was used in much the same way as information from other interview sessions. The discussions served to provide insights into the various descriptions of the activities and involvement of Pentecostal churches in the development of small-scale industries in Port Harcourt and its environs. The age bracket of those interviewed is 35 to 60 years.

Pentecostal Churches and the Development of SMEs in Port Harcourt

Several volumes have been written on Pentecostal churches. A good number of the literature on Pentecostalism focuses on the adverse effects of the proliferation of

Pentecostal churches and their prosperity gospels. Little attention is given to the contributions of Pentecostal churches on the development of the industrial sector of the economy of a state or country. In this section of this paper, we shall bring to limelight the roles of Pentecostal churches to the development of some industries in Port Harcourt, and its environs.

We shall first turn to the inter-play between Pentecostal churches and the electronic market in Port Harcourt. By the electronics market here, we mean the sales of musical instruments and other electronic gadgets and public address systems used in the church. The biggest electronics market in Port Harcourt is situated on Ilabuchi Street and its adjoining streets stretching from parts of Mile III through Mile II to Mile I. The total number of shops dealing on public address systems and musical instruments in the Ilabuchi street market is over three thousand shops. The total market value of the goods and services there is worth billions of Naira. It is the electronics sector of the economy of the city that the relevance of Pentecostal churches towards the industrial development of a society is most glaring.

It has been observed by scholars that Pentecostal churches and Charismatic churches are reshaping the religious landscape of Nigeria (xzy). These genres of Christianity are springing up at a geometric ratio at every nook and cranny of the country, especially in the southern part of the country. An average street in Port Harcourt could play host to at least five Pentecostal and Charismatic churches each employing sophiscated electronic gadgets and musical instruments such as loud speakers, jazz bands, pianos and organs, guitars, amplifiers, speakers, horn speakers and so on. A survey of a number of smaller mushroom Pentecostal churches in Port Harcourt reveals that the least electronic gadget a church could acquire are microphones, amplifiers and speakers, which at costs a minimum sum of One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Naira (N150,000.00). In a bid to produce higher sound quality and perhaps to outwit a neighbouring Pentecostal church, most Pentecostal churches go on fund drives to buy electronics of higher quality. Some pianos cost a whooping sum of Four Hundred to Five Hundred thousand Naira.

Beside the emergence of new and newer names of the scene, most Pentecotal churches see it as a point of duty to have branches all over the town. Denominations that quickly come to mind here, with respect to Port Harcourt are Salvation Ministries, Omega Power Ministries, (OPM), The Winners Chapel, Redeemed Christian Church of God, Gate Way International Church, deeper Life Bible Church, Assemblies of God Church, to mention but a few. Each of these branches is usually fully equipped with sophiscated electronic gadgets, sometimes totalling over a million Naira. We have noted that there is the emergence of new and newer forms of Pentecostal Churches springing up on daily bases. These churches equally compete with the Mega Pentecostal churches in the purchase and use of sophiscated electronic gadgets in worship.

The point being raised here is that Pentecostal churches provide a ready and viable market for tor importers of electronic gadgets and spare parts in Nigeria, Most of the electronic gadgets, with particular reference ot public address systems imported form the United States, Japan and China, are consumed by Pentecostal churches. In a survey carried out at Alabuchi Street on the Mile II axis of Diobu, Port Harcourt, reveals that most of the traders there are patronised by churches, especially Pentecostal churches. As noted above, the bulk of these products are Pentecostal churches. Quite a minimal of it is bought by DJs and politicians for political rallies. Thus far we have been able to highlight the effects of the proliferation of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches on the electronics industry in Port Harcourt.

Recently, is has been observed that Pentecostal churches rank high in the purchase and use of podcasts. Podcasts are used to give a video coverage of the service and to enable the worshippers who might not have a direct view of the preacher to see her from any part of the auditorium. The podcast are not used by mega Pentecostal churches alone. They are equally used by smaller Pentecostal churches which could afford it. Some use it because of space challenges. A small hall implies that a good number of worshippers will sit in adjoined halls. so with the help of the podcast those in the adjoined hall could equally participate fully in the worship. There are, however, some Pentecostal churches which buy and make use of podcasts so because of space challenges but for the sole purpose of recording the service sections. Given the number of Pentecostal churches in Port Harcourt and the ever increase rate at which they spring up and open new branches, Pentecostal churches provide veritable markets for dealers of podcasts in Port Harcourt City and its environs. Most sales agents call on the door posts of Pentecostal churches for the sales of their products

We shall now turn to the positive impact of the proliferation of pentecoal churches on the building industry. With proliferation of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in Port Harcourt comes the composite demand for accommodations for the places of worship and parsonage. The demand for accommodation for places of worships creates the need for erection of more buildings. Most Pentecostal Churches, especially the mushroom ones usually go on renting of one or two rooms which they break the partition to create more spaces for the congregants. Some rent town halls. Others rent hotels halls. There are those which lease land, sometimes a piece of land measuring 50ft by 50ft, for the sole purpose of erecting temporary structures. There are equally those which buy large expanse of land to erect magnificent edifies and camp grounds.

Whatever the nature of the structure erected, there is a comparative effect of these churches on the building industry in Port Harcourt. Firstlt, the erection of any structure implies the purchase of building materials such as nails, woods, roofing sheets of various sheds, and the like. What actually does it cost to erect a small batcher in Port Harcourt? An

interview conducted across a group of carpenters reveals that the construction of small sizeable batcher would involve the nails of different sizes, woods of different lengths and widths, some bundles od roofing sheets, some lengths of tapoline, a number of blocks for covering the lower parts of the structure to prevent rain water from flowing into the church hall. The minimum amount required to purchase the above materials and the cost workmanship (labour) is put at two hundred thousand Naira (N200,000.00). Giving that there are myriads of Pentecostal churches cropping up daily in geometric ratio in Port Harcourt city and its environs, we could see the real cost implication of the proliferation of these smaller Pentecostal churches on the building industry in the city.

The cost of constructing more solid structures by these churches for a place of worship has higher implications for the building industry. The construction of such structures would require the services of block moulders, masons, carpenters, electricians, aluminium craftsmen, iron wielders, painters et cetera.The services of block moulders are required because most of these churches prefer to use direct labour for constructing the structures to contracting same out to civil engineers. So, the services of block moulders are required to mould the quanitity of blocks needed for the building. The wielders construct burglary proofs for the windows of the building and iron doors which serve the dual purpose of a door and a burglary proof. In other to ascertain the actual cost of constructing a given size of a hall, survey of quotation from ten contractors for erecting a hall of 50ft by 50ft leaves one with a minimum price range of five million Naira upwards. A most far reaching implication of Pentecostal churches on the building industry is glarinf in the constructing of magnificent edifices such as those of Winners Chapel at Kaduna Street Port Harcourt, Dominion City, NTA Road, close to NTA station in Port Harourt, or that of the Carpenters Church on Ada George Road. The construction of such edifices is not mere simple tasks and as such are usually contracted out to high profile construction companies such as Julius Berger and Michelin. The construction of such buildings require machines and earth moving equipment and as such, such structures are multi-million dollar projects. There a good number of such multi-million dollar church auditoriums littered all of the Port Harcourt city and its environs.

Another covert but equally important effects of Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches on the Building industry is on the area of renting of halls, either town halls and those in hotels. An increase in the demand on halls for rent implies a need to match such demands with supplies. As noted above, a good number of churches in Port Harcourt make use of rented halls This has led to the construction of more town halls, especially in the suburbs of Port Harcourt City. Those which could not afford the rents for halls, go for simple rooms. some opt for single rooms, while others make rent two or more rooms which they eventually merge into halls. The quest for more single rooms by these churches for the aforementioned purpose in Port Harcourt and its Environs has led to the scarcity of single

rooms in the city and its suburbs. This scarcity of single rooms in not without some economic consequences: it has led to the hike in the price of rents for single rooms. Another effect, an adverse one, is that most landlords and landladies issue quit notices to tenants in other to receive more rents for their single rooms. Tenants mostly hit by this are those who have rented single rooms close to the front view of the house.

It pertinent to explain at this point that church buildings, whether small or a multi-million dollar edifice require that they be filled up with chairs for the worshippers to seat on. A common feature of chairs found in most of the churches are plastic chairs. The preponderance of worshippers in Pentecostal churches are within the range of ten adults to fifty thousand adults, with and mid-range put at one hundred adults. To each of thses estimates, we would record a ratio of 1 adult to 5 teens to 10 children. All these sit on plastic chairs of different shades of colour and sizes. The average cost of a plastic chair in Port Harcourt City is one thousand five hundred Naira (N1,500.00). With these figures in mind, one could easily see the overarching impact of Pentecostal churches on the Manufacuring industries, especially, the plastic industry. A trader explains that most of her customers are churches

One more industry to be considered is the printing industry. Most printing presses in Port Harcourt City cluster within the Mile Diobu axis of the city. Starting from Education Bus Stop area down towards Ojoto Street, span over more than ten streets. Some of these presses are small scale businesses with total number of employees ranging from a minimum of three to ten. Others are quite big enough to have over employees working there. An interview with a number of operators of printing press in Mile 1 reveal that their clients are usually schools, especially private schools, political parties, individual and churches. School owners print their office documents, customized exercise books and so on there. Politicians patronizes these small scale printing presses mainly during election periods. So their patronage is periodical. Individual patronise them for the printing of almanacs, wedding invitation cards and programmes, burial programmes and other personal printable items. Those interviewed categorically stated that more than 50% of their printing jobs come from churches. Some of the items printed for the churches are adverts (usually weekly), handbills, posters, bulletins, order of service booklets, magazines, books written by the clergy, evenlops for tithes and harvests, tracts, an so on. Most of the above items are printed in large quantities and on a regular basis. The economic relevance of this is that patronage of Pentecostal churches to these small scale printing presses entails the consumption of large quantities of papers, printing inks and other printing materials. There is also the provision of jobs for the staffing of the enterprises. So, the Pentecostal churches are key players in the promotion of the printing industry in Port Harcourt.

Pentecostal churches in Port Harcourt are in close contact with the business

community. The church leaders associate with bankers and bank executives, marketing agents, manufacturers, importers and exporters, most of are the members. Some leaders in Pentecostal churches in Port Harcourt are businessmen and women themselves and they bring in their enterprises to the church. Due to the support that Pentecostal churches in Port Harcourt give to business, business in return supports the churches' programmes with large sums of money. Some banks open special loan facilities for Pentecostal churches in Port Harcourt (some bank executives are members of Pentecostal churches). Pentecostal churches' conventions and crusade grounds are for big and small enterprises good places to do brisk business. Many businesses take advantage of such gatherings to sell their products. The organizers of crusades and conventions charge fees for stalls and shops in the grounds. In that way commerce is encouraged and income is raised for small scale businessmen and women. In addition to paying rent for spaces and shops, businesses have to register and contribute a fee to be allowed into the grounds. It should also be stated that small stalls and sheds are usually erected on the convention/ camp grounds. This provides employment and income to carpenters and wood dealers.

Conclusion

So far, we have examined some sectors of the industry that Pentecostal churches are catalysts of progress. These concomitant effects of this on the economy of Port Harcourt City and and eventually the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Nigeria were highlighted. Much of the literature on Pentecostal churches in Nigeria are silent on these issues discussed above. Looking at the relevance of Pentecostal churches to the economic growth of the society as evidenced in this study, it would be inappropriate to condemn the proliferation of Pentecostal churches and the multiplicity of their branches. Governments and policy makers, at all level, should look for more inclusive approach to the challenges of the proliferation of These churches. Scholars to examine other roles Pentecostal churches have effected society positively such as their involvement in social justices.

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