

**ECONOMY SIGNIFICANCE OF NEO-PENTECOSTAL RELIGIOUS  
MOVEMENTS IN NIGERIA**

**BY**

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**DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY**

**ABRAKA**

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in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of Master of Arts (MA)  
Degree in Religious Studies (Sociology of Religion)**

**JUNE, 2017**

## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this work is an original research carried out by me in the Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, Delta State University, Abraka.

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**BAMIDELE, Ifedapo Abayomi**

Date

## CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this work was carried out by **BAMIDELE, Ifedapo Abayomi**  
in the Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy, Delta State University, Abraka.

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**Dr. Peter O.O. Ottuh**  
(Supervisor)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Dr. M. O. Ikeke**  
(Ag. Head of Department)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **DEDICATION**

This Work is dedicated to God Almighty and to the entire membership of First Baptist Church Koko.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First, I am grateful to God for the central role he played in bringing this work to a successful completion. I am deeply indebted to Dr. P.O. Ottuh my supervisor for his intellectual advice and encouragement as he read over this work and made valuable suggestions and corrections. Also, special thanks go to the Acting Head of Department, Rev Fr. Dr. M.O. Ikeke, Dr. D.T. Ejenobo and other lecturers in the Department i.e. Prof. Enuwosa, Dr. Ijakpo, for their wonderful cooperation and unflinching support during my study.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The impact of religion on human society has resulted in the under development or development of economy growth, and this has been accelerated by rapid religious multiplicity in the form of New Religious Movements (NRMs). They arise in answer to a search for spiritual meaning and spiritual power as well as human well-being generally. The pressure of economy crises and reform that gripped most African societies has been accompanied by the proliferation of New Religious Movements. Amid the concerns about political impact of religious revivalism, little attention has been given to their economy implications. Focusing on the afore mentioned problem, this dissertation assessed the economy significance of the Neo-Pentecostal Religious Movements (NRMs) and how their existence has contributed either positively or negatively to the economy growth in Nigeria. This study is a theoretical research and it employed the explorative and evaluative methods to accomplish its task. The findings of this study have shown among other things, that in Nigeria the New Religious Movements have impacted significantly on the national economy either positively or negatively. Given the massive size and rapid growth of these movements, the study concluded that intellectuals and government should be conscious and concerned about their social and economy impact.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Religion is an evidently important social phenomenon, perhaps, essentially ubiquitous across human societies. It is thus natural to speculate that it may affect important economy outcomes, such as economy growth – as many have done dating at the very least to Marx Weber's (1905) celebrated work (1930; 1992 cf. Loy, 1997). While this possibility is certainly appealing, assessing its prevalence and importance is a rather complicated task, both conceptually and empirically, not the least because religions are multifaceted phenomena whose different aspects could most likely have different effects.

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa with a population of over 160 million (NPC, 2006). Islam and Christianity formed about ninety percent of this population. African traditional religion (ATR) which was widely practiced before the advent of Islam and Christianity has been relegated to the marginal existence practice mostly in rural areas. The dominant of Islam and Christianity in the country, coupled with their aggressive evangelism and wide spread spatial practices create the impression that no alternative religions are practice in the country. However, there are thousands of Nigerians who confess varieties of unconventional religions which scholars of sociology of religion called New Religious Movements (NRMs).

The growth of NRMs in a highly globalized world, which is characterized by competitive economy systems, has led Rodney Stark, William Bainbridge, and Roger Finke to propose the concept of religious economy (in Finke and Stark, 2003). This

theory posits religion as a market commodity carefully packaged and delivered to religious consumers. Producers of religious goods and services try as much as possible to meet the need of consumers, and they employ most of the techniques of modern marketing in order to succeed in the highly pluralistic and competitive religious market. Based on the concept of rational choice, religious consumers also select among a plethora of religious commodities what suits their need, and buy into it by becoming members. In the present world of complex religious pluralism, this theory fits the situation of NRMs that are rising and growing day by day particularly in Nigeria.

In this respect, the entrepreneurship theory of Stark and Bainbridge (in Finke and Stark, 2003) considers NRMs founders to be entrepreneurs who produce, market, and sell compensators in exchange for other rewards. A compensator is an unverifiable promise of a future reward that is in low supply or unavailable at present. According to the Stark-Bainbridge theory, in a situation where some rewards are in low supply or not available at all, people are willing to accept compensators in lieu of the actual rewards (Levy and Razin, 2012). Against this background, this study is presented to the best of human knowledge, the first causal estimate of an effect of religious practices on economy growth in Nigeria. This study did so by focusing on the positive and negative impact of the NRMs practices on the national economy of Nigeria. The current study also provided an ideal context for dealing with the causal identification issues that confound the links between religion and economy outcomes.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Notably, the pressure of economy crises and reform that gripped the most African societies has been accompanied by the proliferation New Religious Movements. Amid the concerns about political impact of religious revivalism, little attention has been given to their economy implications. It has been observed in some certain quarters that the pressures of economy crisis and reform that have gripped the Nigerian society have been accompanied by the rise and proliferation of new religious movements (NRMs). Amid concerns about the political impact of religious revivalism, little attention has been devoted to their economy implications. Against the background of the historical role of religion in the development of market institutions (Economy) across the country, it traces the dynamics of religious revivalism and its impact on economy regulation in Nigeria. Rather than representing a return to occultist or patrimonial impulses, new religious movements (NRMs) in the country reveal distinctly Weberian tendencies (see Stolz, 2006).

It is also, however, observed that modernizing tendencies fostered within the national economy by popular religious revivalism are being stunted by the relentless pressures of liberalization, globalization and pseudo-democratization (Lang, 2005). Progressive religious tendencies among the poor are being instrumented by religious entrepreneurs and political elites, undermining fragile processes of entrepreneurial class formation taking place within the national economy. These issues raised and other more problematic issues were addressed in the current study.

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The overall objective of this dissertation is to critically analyze the impact of the New Religious Movements (NRMs) on the Nigerian economy. Other aims of the study are to:

- i. examine the economy significance of the activities of the New Religious Movements (NRMs) in Nigeria;
- ii. identify key areas where NRMs have contributed positively to Nigeria economy growth; and
- iii. identify the activities of the NRMs that have negatively affected the Nigeria economy.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This study is highly significant in its interdisciplinary methodology. Hence, it has succeeded in touching upon the subject areas of religion, sociology, and economy. Consequently, the study possesses immense theoretical and empirical relevance. Hence, without necessarily setting out to do so it has contributed to the concepts of religious economy and economy of religion altogether, with their inherent supply and demand sides, and their obviously integral imperfections marked by inequality and sundry difficulties with massive challenges.

#### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

The study is basically focused on the New Religious Movements (NRMs) within the Christianity religion and their impact on national economy, with emphasis on the positive and negative effect of Neo-Pentecostal churches situated within the empirical context of the Nigerian socio-economy system. Invariably, the study entails a

religious sociological analysis of the linkages between the religious economy and economic of religion concepts. Hence, a prognosis is occasioned by the analysis.

## **1.6 Research Methods**

This study which is a theoretical research employed the explorative and evaluative methods to accomplish its task. The explorative method explored the historical rise and proliferation of New Religious Movements (NRMs) in Nigeria. At the evaluative level, the activities of the NRMs were analyzed to show how they have impacted positively or negatively on the economy of the Nigerian nation. To achieve all these, information was gathered from both primary and secondary sources including oral interactions, the library and the internet.

## **1.7 Definition of Terms**

I. Economy Significance: the positive and negative importance and effects of the trade industry and development of wealth of a country, an area, or society.

II. New Religious Movements: is known as a new religion or alternative spirituality, is a religious or spiritual groups that has modern origins and which occupies a peripheral place within its society's dominant culture and distinct from pre-existing denominations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Weberian Theory of Religion in Relation to Economy

Max Weber published four major texts on religion in a context of economy sociology and his rationalization thesis: *The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism* (1915), *The Religion of India: The Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism* (1915), and *Ancient Judaism* (1920). In his sociology, Weber uses the German term “*Verstehen*” to describe his method of interpretation of the intention and context of human action. Weber is not a positivist; he does not believe we can find out facts in sociology that can be causally linked. Although he believes some generalized statements about social life can be made, he is not interested in hard positivist claims, but instead in linkages and sequences, in historical narratives and particular cases.

Weber argues for making sense of religious action on its own terms. A religious group or individual is influenced by all kinds of things, he says, but if they claim to be acting in the name of religion, we should attempt to understand their perspective on religious grounds first. Weber gives religion credit for shaping a person’s image of the world, and this image of the world can affect their view of their interests, and ultimately how they decide to take action. For Weber, religion is best understood as it responds to the human need for theodicy and soteriology. Human beings are troubled, he says, with the question of theodicy - the question of how the extraordinary power of a divine god may be reconciled with the imperfection of the world that he has created and rules over.



People need to know, for example, why there is undeserved good fortune and suffering in the world. Religion offers people soteriological answers, or answers that provide opportunities for salvation – relief from suffering, and reassuring meaning. The pursuit of salvation, like the pursuit of wealth, becomes a part of human motivation.

Because religion helps to define motivation, Weber believed that religion actually helped to give rise to modern capitalism, as he asserted in his most famous and controversial work, *The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*. In *The Protestant Ethic*, Weber argues that capitalism arose in Europe in part because of how the belief in predestination was interpreted by everyday English Puritans. Puritan theology was based on the Calvinist notion that not everyone would be saved; there was only a specific number of the elect who would avoid damnation, and this was based on God's predetermined will and not on any action you could perform in this life. Official doctrine held that one could not ever really know whether one was among the elect. Practically, Weber noted, this was difficult psychologically: people were (understandably) anxious to know whether they would be eternally damned or not. Thus Puritan leaders began assuring members that if they began doing well financially in their businesses, this would be one unofficial sign they had God's approval and were among the saved – but only if they used the fruits of their labour well. This along with the rationalism implied by monotheism led to the development of rational bookkeeping and the calculated pursuit of financial success beyond what one needed simply to live – and this is the “spirit of capitalism” (McKinnon, 2010). Over time, the habits associated with the spirit of capitalism lost their religious significance, and rational pursuit of profit became its own aim. *The Protestant Ethic* thesis has been much critiqued,

refined, and disputed, but is still a lively source of theoretical debate in sociology of religion. Weber also did considerable work in world religions, including Hinduism and Buddhism. In his *magnum opus Economy and Society* Weber distinguished between three ideal types of religious attitudes (Zaleski, 2010): world-flying mysticism, world-rejecting asceticism, and inner-worldly asceticism.

Many scholars have criticized Weber's thesis, typified in the writings of Davie (2003) and Gorski (2005). Davie was concerned with reverse causality: how religion affected development, and in turn how economy and social changes themselves acted on religious beliefs. In his words, "The capitalist spirit" is as old as history, and was not, as has sometimes been said, the offspring of Puritanism' (1926, p. 225). Davie argued that Puritanism both helped mould the social order and in turn was molded by it. Gorski (2005) focuses more on whether Weber's thesis stands up to closer historical scrutiny, highlighting other aspects of the Reformation that contributed to economy development such as Protestant migration, reforms to landholding, fewer religious holidays, and insurgencies, all of which influenced labour supply and the actions of government in Protestant countries.

## **2.2 The Concept of Economy of Religion**

The economy concern with religion and development is not new, nor is it restricted to scholars of the 21st century. The writings of Thomas Aquinas, notably the *De Regno (De Regimine Principum) ad Regem Cypri*, written in 1267, dealt extensively with religion and public finance. Indeed, some scholars have considered the ideas in this work, as in Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* (1265–72), strikingly relevant for poverty reduction today; their themes of the 'universal common good' and 'global civil

society' have implications for current debates about globalization and human development (Leiden, 2006). The links between religion and development also feature in Joseph Schumpeter's *History of Economy Analysis* (1954). Jacques Le Goff authored *La Naissance du Purgatoire* (1981), which argued that purgatory was a necessary religious innovation for medieval capitalist development.

Against this backdrop, recent academic interest linking religion and development has centered on the economy of religion. Studies in the economy of religion and economy development religion have focused on applying the tools of modern economy analysis to the analysis of religious institutions, faith-based welfare programmes and the economy regulation of the church (Oslington, 2001; 2003). Three principal themes emerge: first, identifying what determines religion and religiosity; second, examining how religion and religiosity may be described as social capital; and third, understanding the micro and macro consequences of religiosity. Adam Smith (1776) made reference to the church in the *Wealth of Nations*; and recent works by economists such as Becker and Iannaccone have been very important for the development of this field. The broadly socio-economy view of religion, which expounds the rational choice approach, is set out in the work of Azzi and Ehrenberg (1975), Iannaccone (1998), Stark, Iannaccone and Finke (1996), and Stark and Finke (2000). The focus here has been both on the supply side (the structures of religious organizations) and on the demand side (the preferences of consumers in religious economies). The micro view explains religious activity as the outcome of rational choice, with utility derived both in the individual's lifetime and in the afterlife. For example, if we think of religion as a club good, then many practices are used by

religions to screen potential free riders and to ensure better monitoring of the existing faithful (Iannaccone, 1992). Religion also influences individual welfare through the externalities occasioned by social behaviour (Becker and Murphy, 2000). Religious forces are important as they change the environment in which individuals operate, directly affecting individuals' choices and behaviour by changing the utilities of goods. Moreover, greater trust fostered by the religious environment can encourage repeated interactions, leading to more cooperative behaviour within networks.

The macro and micro consequences of religiosity have been examined. For example, there are a number of channels through which religious capital might affect economy growth. Religious capital affects output by changing the manner in which technology and human capital are used. Religious capital exerts a positive impact on human capital by increasing education. For example, particularly in many less developed countries, religious networks are important not only for the religious services they provide but also for their non-religious services, specifically with respect to health and education. Moreover, as religious institutions provide this insurance function, these networks determine the extent to which education is taken up (Borooah and Iyer, 2005). In developed countries, too, this would have implications for religious market structure and the growth of residential neighbourhoods that may be based upon faith-based activities (Hill, 2001). So understanding the economy consequences of religion is of central concern.

### **2.3 The Concept of Religious Economy**

According to Wortham (2004), religious economy refers to religious persons and organizations interacting within a market framework of competing groups and ideologies. An economy makes it possible for religious suppliers to meet the demands of different religious consumers (Wortham, 2004). By offering an array of religions and religious products, a competitive religious economy stimulates such activity in a market-type setting. The field applies rational choice theory to the theory of religion such that supply and demand are used to model the development and success of organized religion. The idea of religious economy frames religion as a product and as those who practice or identify with any particular religion as a consumer. But when the idea of belief is brought into the equation, this definition expands, and ideology affects the “product” and who “consumes” it. When examining depictions of religious identity in a global world, it is easy to see how ideology affects religious economy.

Bruce, Steve (1999).refers to religions and religious groups as “...competing firms [that vie for] customers who make rational choices among available products...” (p.311). Using a liberal economy framework for analysis, he is claiming that religions and religious groups’ popularity is dependent on the laws of supply and demand. As a marketplace, religious consumers are subject to things such as marketing, availability of product, resources, brand recognition, etc. But unlike some actual commodity such as a computer, these commodities speak to an individual’s beliefs. He poses the idea that belief deals with ideology and extends beyond what one would typically define as a market good by stating “...belief is produced and resides in communicated thoughts,

(and) the consumers of goods of faith can only become consumers by becoming producers, by participating in interactions of belief..." (p.322).

Prior to the emergence of the theory of religious economy some scholars of religion, such as Steve Bruce (1999), believed that modernization would lead inevitably to the erosion of religiosity. These sociologists have predicted the disappearance of religion from Earth, based on the decline in religious belief and observance in Western Europe (Young, 1997). According to the theory of religious economy, societies that restrict supply of religion, either through an imposed state religious monopoly or through state-sponsored secularization, are the main causes of drops in religiosity. Correspondingly, the more religions a society has, the more likely the population is to be religious. This is refuted in the orthodox view by stating that if a liberal religious community is tolerant of a wide array of belief, then they are less likely to hold certain beliefs in common, so nothing can be shared and reified in a community context. If nothing is shared, then nothing is shunned, and there is thus a loss in observance of modern liberal traditions.

#### **2.4 Religious Pluralism and the Religious Market**

According to the theory, religious pluralism gives the population a wide variety of choices in religion and leads to a religious economy in which different religious organizations compete for followers, much the way businesses compete for consumers in a commercial economy. According to Lawrence Young (1997) the theory of religious economy takes into account a wide spectrum of issues (e.g., the differences between competitive religious markets and religious monopolies), making this theory one of the most significant developments in the social scientific study of religion during

the past thirty years. The theory focuses attention on religious suppliers and whether religious firms have the ability to increase the demand for religion.

According to Laurence R. Iannaccone (1994), in a free market, or pluralistic religious market, many religious organizations exist and seek to appeal to certain segments of the market. Organizations in a free market cannot rely on the state for resources so they must compete for participation of the religious consumer. Contest among religious firms results in the specialization of products so that consumers are able to distinguish different organization from others. Pluralistic religions operate on a personal scale, marketing more to individual demands as opposed to public. As the majority of the consumer market, organizations market more to women than men. Pluralism is only possible through lack of favoritism by the state. For Young (1997), a competitive and pluralistic religious economy has a positive effect on levels of participation.

A.M McKinnon (2013) has opined that in economy, the market situation can be described with concepts about monopoly, prohibition, and pluralism. Monopolies in religion are only made possible through state enforcement and often function on a public scale. When the government establishes a set religion and all other competition is drowned out then believers are culturally connected but not necessarily spiritually to the religion enforced by the state. Since participation in a religious monopoly is not as important because the church does not have to rely on members for resources they are not forced to provide adequate or marketable religious products, due to lack of competition. The ability of a religious organization to monopolize a religious economy

is entirely dependent on the extent to which the state governs the religious economy. A monopolized religious economy tends to have lower levels of participation.

Some theorists such as Michael Taylor (2006) have argued that, much as a grocery store sells food, religious groups attempt to sell beliefs and ideas. They attempt to influence the religious 'consumer' to choose their product. Two important ways to influence believers are morals and fear. Morals are the concepts of right and wrong. Moral communities are groups within the religious communities in which there is a very high agreement on norms and strong bonds of attachment among members. Moral behaviors of individuals are influenced by their religious commitments only in societies where the dominant organizations give clear and consistent expression to divine moral imperatives. Religious markets are similar to other markets in that they are social creations. The exchanges that take place in a religious market are regulated by social factors. Elements of social interactions such as norms and morals influence the individual choices and preferences of the religious consumer. Therefore, elements of social interactions influence the types of religious goods offered to consumers in the marketplace and the changes in consumer demands over a span of time. According to W. Robertson Smith (2002), the fear of the gods was a motive to enforce the laws of society which were also the laws of morality. People are taught that those who believe will gain rewards or avoid punishment in the afterlife, and non-believers will miss out on the rewards or receive punishment.

## **2.5 Influences of Theology on Economy According to Viner**

A consensus verdict on Viner's work (1972) on religion is yet to emerge. Reviews of the posthumously published material in theology history and economy



journals were mixed. His discussion of the Church Fathers was criticized for narrow coverage, and seeming to equate Scholasticism with Aquinas. These criticisms are not quite fair in terms of Viner's aims and the discussion would have to remain one of the best by an economist, notwithstanding the work of Barry Gordon (1989 etc.).

Subsequent specialist treatments such as by Justo Gonzales (1990) on the Church Fathers or Odd Langholm (1992) on Scholastic economy have now surpassed Viner's chapters. The literature on the social and economy character of the early church and its social teachings has moved so quickly (Esler, 2000 is a good survey) that it is by no means just Viner's writing of the 1960s that looks decidedly inadequate. Particularly awkward is the assumption of the early church's anarchic/communistic character (the writings of Edwin Judge 1960 and others have undermined the older view) although Viner (1978) wrote in a more guarded and skeptical way than many of his contemporaries.

Viner was sometimes undone by lack of specialist knowledge of theology. For example Viner was confused by a reference. Wilhem Ropke (1958) had given him to a condemnation by Augustine of the evils of trading based on Psalm 71:15, not realizing that the Psalm numbering scheme differed in the version Augustine used and the modern English version Viner was using. Further clouding the issue was a mistranslation of the Hebrew word meaning something like "knowing" into "trading" in the Greek Septuagint and then Latin versions of the text. Viner's conclusions can now be read at page 35 of his 1978 book

It was unfortunate that Viner lacked the time and energy to complete his ambitious program of tracing the relations between religion and economy. His impossibly high standards meant a work of such scope could probably never be finished - Melitz and Winch's introduction to Viner (1978) notes that Viner put aside the great book religion in about 1964, diverting his remaining energy to other projects. Even the bibliographic aspects of the chapters he completed seemed too much. If a scholar with Viner's vast knowledge and almost obsessive work habits could not complete such a book we must ask whether we will ever see a work of the scope he envisaged. Max Weber had a breakdown after completing some of his early studies on religion and economy (including Weber, 1992), and when he died in 1920 had long given up a great work on the topic. Ernst Troeltsch (1911) fared better, but his work remained a part-installment of the hoped-for general history of relations between religion and economy.

## **2.6 Concept of Economy Development**

According to Falodun and Nnadi (2007), Economy 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. They maintained that economy development occurs if the rate of growth of real per capital income in the country 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. Economy development is followed by an increase in life expectancy and standard of living.

Similarly Oguji and Kene (2009) asserted that “economy development is the process of growth in total and per capita income accompanied by fundamental changes in the economy” (p.321). Economy 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 economy development. It is only when there is an increase in the quality of life (e.g. a higher than average life expectancy), food output (e.g. more protein rather than carbohydrates) and real income (increase in purchasing power of money) and so on, that we can say that economy development has taken place. In fact, economy development always produces economy growth.

## **2.7 Summary of Literature Reviewed**

All the authors reviewed above have written abundantly on the economy values of religion without particular references to the New Religious Movements (NRMs). The current study was able to address this lacuna by focusing on the impact of New Religious Movements (NRMs) on the Nigerian economy.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS AND THEIR NEGATIVE ECONOMY IMPACT**

### **3.1 An Overview of the Nigerian State**

According to the *Wikipedia* (2016), the history of Nigeria can be traced to prehistoric settlers living in the area as early as 11,000 BC. Numerous ancient African civilizations settled in the region that is today Nigeria. An example of one of the civilizations that settled in Nigeria is the Nri Kingdom. According to the *Wikipedia* (2016), the Songhai Empire also occupied part of the region. Lagos was captured by the British forces in 1851 and formally annexed in 1861. Nigeria became a British protectorate in 1901. Colonization lasted until 1960, when an independence movement succeeded in gaining Nigeria its independence

The Nigerian state obtained political independence from Great Britain in October 1960. However, by January 1966, the ruling (civilian) government was brutally ousted by the nation's Military. Central to the arguments of the soldiers, for toppling the government in power was the question of corruption, in which the adherents of each of the two major religious persuasions in the country were self-evident participants. In addition to leadership sleaze, there was inter-tribal hatred in the national polity. Hence, the first military coup d'état of January 1966 in the country and the counter coup in July of the same year, featured on massive scales, alleged and proven cases of tribally induced murder of the nation's leaders. Profoundly found in the country at this time were deep-seated ethnic antagonisms, not religious bigotry.

A civil war ensued (popularly called, the Nigeria-Biafra war) fought between July 1967 and January 1970 (St. Jorre, 1972). At the end of the warfare, the Military remained in power, with intermittent pretenses of handing over the affairs of the state to civilians, whom they would subsequently bring down. Scholars have argued that

despite the heterogeneous nature of the Nigerian state and its concomitant defects, the nation at independence, was seen as a beacon of hope to many other nation-states in the African continent. That is to say that no matter the circumstances, Nigeria held the prospects of a strong developmental state that would be a rallying point to other states. The *raison d'être* for this huge confidence was that Nigeria was perceived as a regional economy hub and political force and an African regional super-power. The military mishap in the politics of the country however unfortunately accelerated the pace of bringing the emergent state to its developmental nadir.

The Military in the country continued to stage counter coups against subsisting military governments in the Nigerian state. Hence, in Nigeria, from October 1960 to May 1999, it was believed that the men of the Armed Forces seemed to have finally surrendered power to civilian politicians. But this was a miscalculated conclusion by Nigerians. However, in all of the foregoing, another enduring feature of national affairs in the country is what seems to border on elite determination to guarantee that the Nigerian nation fails to survive as a nationally prosperous entity, for the good of all her citizens. Consequently, either in military fatigues or civilian garbs, the power elite in Nigeria possesses a seemingly irrepressible tendency to gravitate towards the thieving of national resources.

Ojukwu (1989), contend that the country's picture and identity is that replete with confused, factionalized and extremely corrupt elites, with a limited sense of nation. These elites they argue, lacking strong and viable base in production, turns the state as its primary instrument of primitive accumulation and in the end, the state is mangled and rendered impotent, in the quest for nationhood, growth and development,

much less democracy. Hence, according to Soniyi (in Nwokeoma, 2012 cf. Ademola-Olateju, 2013), it was estimated as at 2012 that over \$400 billion of Nigeria's oil revenue had been stolen or misspent since the country's independence in 1960. The estimation was attributed to a Nigerian-born former World Bank Vice-President for Africa, Dr. Oby Ezekwesili. In that same year (2012), almost 100 million Nigerians were living on less than \$1 (£0.63) a day (Ademola-Olateju, 2013).

*World Population Review* (cited in Ibrahim, 2013), highlighted that Nigeria's current population is in the region of 194 million people out of which almost 100 million were living on less than \$1 (equivalent of £0.63) a day. It is however held that elite grandstanding had fully tainted such policies of government, thereby making them largely ineffectual. In the face of these apparent distresses, Ademola-Olateju (2013) then ponders: Why are Nigerians content at setting new unbecoming standards every day? Bad roads? Take it to The Lord in prayer! Comatose Healthcare System? Bad diseases will not be our portion in Jesus name! Collapsed Educational System? What will be will be, our children are overcomers! Epileptic Power Supply? May the good Lord bind all the principalities, demonic spirits and the powers of darkness preventing Nigeria from enjoying stable electricity supply! In consequence, Nigerians sit on their hands, praying for celestial edicts to be beamed down to them from God's majestic throne (Ademola-Olateju, 2013). It then begins to appear as if the citizens have conceptualized the constitutional notion of secularism in the country to cover a dichotomous interpretation of the relationship between religion and politics by the people of our case-study country. Nigeria's contemporary narrative therefore borders on hopes betrayed and new expectations solely hoisted on the benefaction of the

Almighty by the citizenry. It is also a history of evident elite-arrest of a national system - what many have similarly depicted as elite constructivism.



**Map of Nigeria showing the 36 States**

Source: *Wikipedia*(2016).

### **3.2 Definition and Conceptualization of New Religious Movements (NRMs)**

A proper definition and conceptualization of NRMs is a daunting challenge, scholars, media and other stakeholders have failed to reach consensus on precise definition. The difficulties that usually arise in defining New Religious Movements

(NRMs) have been beautifully illustrated by John A. Saliba (1997). He started with the word “New” he noted that many of the NRMs are not really new; many parts of their syncretistic teachings go back to Gnostics teachings of ancient Greeks or philosophy of ancient India, and some of them such as Eckankar and Grail Message have tried to trace their origin right to the beginning of creation. Secondly, the term “religious” also has some problems because many NRMs do not want to associate themselves with religion. They view religion as something that has to do with superstition and dogmatism.

According to the teaching of Raelian religion and New Age Movements what they practice is not a religion but pure science, Grail Message members contend that they observe higher law of nature. It is argued that structural definition of religion could not qualify some NRMs into religious milieu only functional definition has the capacity to do that. Finally, many NRMs are too personal, transient and decentralized to fall into the concept of “movement” which suggests dynamism and social agitation. Despite all the limitations of the term NRMs, it has been asserted that it is still better than the other language such as “alternative religions”, “minor religions”, “intense religions” or “cult”. In pluralistic society any religion can be alternative, and all religions were minors in their formative period and they can be intensely devotional in some time or another. Furthermore the word “cult” is value laden and indicate negative connotation in recent times. So, for the purpose of this paper the term new religious movements (NRMs) will be adopted.

Starting from the middle of the twentieth century onward, the world has experienced very conspicuous presence of new religious movements (NRMs). For example, Centre for Studies on New Religions (CESNUR) listed 164 NRMs in its



archive (Ibrahim, 2013), while University of Virginia Home Page for the study of new religions gives the profile of 259 NRMs (Gates and Steane, 2009). The above statistics covered only the profile of religions treated by these institutions; therefore it does not represent the entire NRMs in the world. According to *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2009), by the end of the 1990s, there were about 225 Hare Krishna centres in 60 countries, including 50 centres in the United States with a membership figure of about 1 million (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2009). While the number of formally initiated members is only a few thousand, several hundred thousand regularly worship at the Hare Krishna temples. The Encyclopedia continues that by the late 1990s there were 367 ECK centres in more than 100 countries; Eckankar does not publish membership figures but estimate placed total membership from 50,000 to 500,000. Nowadays new NRMs are springing up continuously and are being diffused to different parts of the world through various outlets. The presence of NRMs cannot be without alarm to the orthodox religions, various anti-cult movements sprang up in North America, Europe and other part of the world. Even in Africa orthodox religions are watching NRMs with uneasy look.

### **3.3 The Rise of New Religious Movements (NRMs) in Nigeria**

From the 1970s onward many foreign NRMs began to appear in Nigeria especially in southern part of the country. Many of them have engaged in vigorous mission activities and tried to compete with the established religions for membership among Nigerians. Some of the foreign NRMs that marked their presence in Nigeria are: Aetherious Society, Hare Krishna Movement (ISKCON), Raelian Religion, Inner Light,

Grail Message, Baha'ism, Christian Science, Sa'i Baba Mission, Brahma Kumaris, Eckankar, AMORC, Scientology, GuruMaharaji, Lucis Trust, Higher Consciousness Society, The Way of Truth, etc. However, some of these movements have short life span and some have very insignificant membership. Some of the above mention NRMs have become very influential and possess large number of followers in Nigeria. And some of them have been subscribing air time on television and radio for preaching their teachings, and sometimes they engage in outdoor preaching in public places or organize seminars and workshops. AMORC has about 76 centres with large and influential membership in Nigeria. Grail Message has more than 28 Grail Centres throughout the nation. Aetherius Society has two centres one in Abia State another one in Lagos with overall 12 Blessing Groups in several cities. For example, Lucis Trust has four strong centres plus esoteric library in Abeokuta. Hare Krishna and Eckankar are some of the most important and renowned NRMs in Nigeria. Eckankar has about 114 centres in 26 states of the Federation, while Hare Krishna has 9 temples in the country (Levy and Razin, 2012). Various factors may account for this state of affairs.

Several reasons accounted for the rise of NRMs in Nigeria. This includes international; national; and individual factors. Internationally, there is no doubt that globalization has created favourable conditions for the proliferation of NRMs throughout the world. Neither globalization nor NRMs are really new phenomena, but in the middle of the twentieth century both assumed strong power and far reaching influence. The forces of globalization, such as efficient transportation, immigration, instant global communication, cultural linkages and ideological forces behind globalization (such as economy and cultural liberalism, human rights, democracy,

secularization, individualism, freedom of religion, freedom of expression and emerging pluralistic societies), have created a fertile ground for growth of NRMs throughout the world and in Nigeria in particular. Social liberalism, which minimized conservatism, has given people more freedom to join the religion of their choice. Liberalism renders legitimacy to cultural pluralism, which gives rise to a multitude of worldviews in human society (Cooper, 2007). Moreover, liberalism allows the fermentation of a new religious ideology or group to develop and proliferate in the new global world, without unbearable pressure to conform to conventional social norms.

Immigration and easy and faster transportation in the age of globalization also make it possible for new religions to spread throughout the world. Immigrants from Asia and Africa introduced many NRMs to the West, and from there they spread to other part of the world. Strong concern for human rights in this globalized world gives shelter and recognition for different types of NRMs. The growth of NRMs in a highly globalized world, which is characterized by competitive economy systems, has led Rodney Stark, William Bainbridge, and Roger Finke (2003) to propose the concept of religious economy. The efforts of NRMs missionaries have reached Nigeria since 1970. The ease of traveling in this time of globalization has led many individual NRM missionaries to come to Nigeria and spread their religious messages, and some Nigerians have encountered NRMs while traveling abroad. See the list of NRMs in Nigeria below:

**A Table showing the List of New Religious Movements**

Name	Founder	Year founded	Type
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**A Table showing the List of New Religious Movements**

Name	Founder	Year founded	Type
<u>3HO</u>	Harbhajan Singh Yogi	1969	<u>Sikhism</u>
<u>Adidam</u> , previously Free Daist Avabhasan Communion, Free Daist Communion, Crazy Wisdom Fellowship, Johannine Daist Community, Laughing Man Institute, Dawn Horse Communion, Free Primitive Church of Divine Communion, Free Communion Church, Dawn Horse Fellowship	<u>Adi Da</u>	1972	<u>Hindu-inspired</u>
<u>Adonai-Shomo</u>	Frederick T. Howland	1861	<u>Adventist Communal</u>
<u>Adonism</u>	Franz Sättler	1925	<u>Neopagan</u>
<u>Adventures in Enlightenment, A Foundation</u>	<u>Terry Cole-Whittaker</u>	1985	<u>Religious Science</u>
<u>Aetherius Society</u>	<u>George King</u>	1954	<u>UFO-Christian</u>
<u>African Church Incorporated</u>	Jacob Kehinde Coker	1901	<u>Anglican Communion</u>
<u>African Independent Churches</u> , also known as <u>African Initiated Churches</u>	Multiple		Christianity; Indigenous
<u>African Theological Archministry</u> , previously <u>Order of Damballah Hwedo Ancestor Priests</u> , <u>Shango Temple</u> , and <u>Yoruba Temple</u>	<u>Walter Eugene King</u>	1973	<u>Voodoo</u>
<u>Agasha Temple of Wisdom</u>	<u>Richard Zenor</u>	1943	<u>Spiritualism</u>
<u>Agni Yoga Society</u>	<u>Nicholas Roerich</u>	mid-1920s	<u>Theosophical</u>

**A Table showing the List of New Religious Movements**

Name	Founder	Year founded	Type
<u>Ahmadiyya Movement</u>	<u>Mirza Ghulam Ahmad</u>	1889	<u>Islam</u>
<u>Aladura</u>	Josiah Ositelu	1930	<u>Pentecostal</u>
<u>Alamo Christian Foundation</u> , also known as <u>Alamo Christian Church</u> , <u>Consecrated Alamo Christian Ministries</u> , and <u>Music Square Church</u>	<u>Tony Alamo</u> ; Susan Alamo	1969	<u>Fundamentalist</u> ; <u>Communal</u>
<u>Altruria</u>	Edward Biron Payne	1894	<u>Christian Socialist Communal</u>
<u>American Buddhist Movement</u>		1980	Western <u>Buddhism</u>
<u>American Buddhist Society and Fellowship, Inc.</u>	<u>Robert Ernest Dickhoff</u>	1945	Tibetan <u>Buddhism</u>
<u>American World Patriarchs</u>	Uladyslau Rzyz-Ryski	1972	Eastern <u>Liturgy</u>
<u>Amica Temple of Radiance</u> [8]:38	Ivah Berg Whitten	1932	<u>Theosophical</u>
<u>Ananda Marga</u>	<u>Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar</u>	1955	<u>Hinduism</u>
<u>Ancient British Church in North America</u>	Jonathan V. Zotique		<u>Homosexually Oriented</u>
<u>Ancient Mystical Order Rosae Crucis</u>	H. Spencer Lewis	1915	<u>Rosicrucianism</u>
<u>Ancient Teachings of the Masters</u> , also known as ATO	<u>Darwin Gross</u>	1983	<u>Sant Mat</u>
<u>Anglo-Saxon Federation of America</u>	Howard B. Rand	1928	<u>British Israelism</u>
<u>Ansaaru Allah Community</u>	<u>As Siddid Al Imaan Al Haahi</u>	late 1960s	<u>Black Islam</u>

**A Table showing the List of New Religious Movements**

Name	Founder	Year founded	Type
	<u>Al Mahdi</u>		
<u>Anthroposophy</u>	<u>Rudolf Steiner</u>	1912	Western <u>Occultist</u>
<u>Antiochian Catholic Church in America</u>	Gordon Mar Peter	1980s	<u>Independent Catholic, Monophysite</u>
<u>Antoinism</u>	Louis-Joseph Antoine	1910	<u>Healing, Christian</u>
<u>Apostolic Christian Church (Nazarean)</u>	<u>Samuel Heinrich Froehlich</u>	1906	European <u>Free-Church</u>
<u>Apostolic Christian Church of America</u>	<u>Samuel Heinrich Froehlich</u>	1830	European <u>Free-Church</u>
<u>Apostolic Church</u>	Daniel Powell Williams	1916	<u>Pentecostal</u>
<u>Apostolic Church of Christ (Pentecostal)</u>	Johnnie Draft; Wallace Snow	1969	<u>Apostolic Pentecostal</u>
<u>Apostolic Overcoming Holy Church of God</u>	William Thomas Phillips+	1920	<u>Apostolic Pentecostal</u>
<u>Arcane School</u>	<u>Alice and Foster Bailey</u>	1937	Alice Bailey Groups
<u>Arica School</u>	<u>Oscar Ichazo</u>	1968	<u>Sufism</u>
Living faith church worldwide	Bishop David Oyedepo	1983	Pentecostal
Word of Life Bible Church	Papa Ayo Oritsejafor	1987	Pentecostal
<u>Art of Living Foundation</u> , also known as <u>Association for Inner Growth</u> and <u>Ved Vignan Maha</u>	<u>Sri Sri Ravi Shankar</u>	1981	<u>Hinduism</u>

**A Table showing the List of New Religious Movements**

Name	Founder	Year founded	Type
<u>Vidya Preeth</u>			
<u>Arya Samaj</u>	<u>Mul Shankara</u>	1875	<u>Hinduism</u>
<u>Aryan Nations, also known as Church of Jesus Christ Christian, Aryan Nations</u>	<u>Wesley Swift</u>	late 1940s	<u>British Israelism</u>
<u>Ásatrú</u>	<u>Stephen McNallen</u>	1970s	<u>Neo-pagan</u>
<u>Assemblies of God</u>	Merger	1914	<u>Pentecostalism</u>
<u>Assemblies of the Lord Jesus Christ</u>	Merger	1952	<u>Apostolic Pentecostal</u>
<u>Assembly of Christian Soldiers</u>	Jessie L. Thrift	1971	Unclassified, <u>Ku Klux Klan</u> -based
<u>Association for Research and Enlightenment</u>	<u>Edgar Cayce</u>	1931	<u>Occultist</u>
<u>Association of Vineyard Churches</u>	<u>John Wimber</u>	1982	White <u>Trinitarian Pentecostals</u>
<u>Aum Shinrikyo, also known as Aleph</u>	<u>Shoko Asahara</u>	1987	Japanese <u>Buddhism</u>
<u>Ausar Auset Society</u>	<u>R.A. Straughn</u>	mid-1970s	<u>Rosicrucianism</u>
<u>Bábism</u> [18]	<u>Báb</u>	1844	<u>Islam</u>
<u>Bahá'í Faith</u>	<u>Mírzá Husayn-'Alí Nuri</u>	1863	Middle Eastern, <u>Baha'i</u>
<u>Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Fellowship</u>	<u>Bawa Muhaiyaddeen</u>	1971	<u>Sufism</u>
<u>Bethel Ministerial Association</u>	Albert Franklin Varnell	1934	<u>Apostolic Pentecostal</u>

**A Table showing the List of New Religious Movements**

Name	Founder	Year founded	Type
<u>Bible Presbyterian Church</u>	<u>Carl McIntire</u>	1938	Reformed <u>Presbyterian</u>
<u>Bible Way Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ</u>	Schism	1957	<u>Apostolic Pentecostal</u>
The <u>Blackburn Cult</u> , also known as the Divine Order of the Royal Arms of the Great Eleven	May Otis Blackburn	1922	<u>Neopaganism</u> and <u>New Thought</u>
<u>Brahma Kumaris</u>	<u>Dada Lekhraj</u>	1936	<u>Hinduism</u>
<u>Branch Davidians</u>	<u>Victor T. Houteff</u>	1930	<u>Seventh Day Adventist</u>
<u>Branhamism</u>	<u>William M. Branham</u>	1951	Oneness Pentecostal
<u>Breatharians</u> also known as <u>Inedia</u>	Wiley Brooks	1970s	<u>Hinduism</u> -influenced
The <u>Brethren (Jim Roberts group)</u> , also known as <u>The Body of Christ</u> and <u>The Garbage Eaters</u>	<u>Jimmie T. Roberts</u>	c. 1970	Unclassified <u>Christian Churches</u>
<u>Bruderhof</u> , also known as the <u>Hutterian Brethren</u> and <u>Hutterian Society of Brothers</u>	<u>Eberhard Arnold</u>	c. 1920	<u>Communal</u>
<u>Builders of the Adytum</u>	<u>Paul Foster Case</u>	1922	<u>Ritual magic</u>
<u>Candomblé</u>		19th century	<u>Syncretistic</u> ; Neo-African; <u>Divination</u>
<u>Cao Dai</u> , also known as <u>Dai Dao Tam Ky Pho Do</u>	<u>Ngô Văn Chiêu</u> ; <u>Lê Văn Trung</u>	1919	<u>Syncretistic</u> ; Vietnamese <u>Millenarian</u>
<u>Cargo cults</u>			<u>Syncretistic</u> ; <u>Nativist</u>
<u>CAUSA International</u>	<u>Sun Myung</u>	1970	<u>Unification Church</u>



**A Table showing the List of New Religious Movements**

Name	Founder	Year founded	Type
	<u>Moon</u>		
<u>Celestial Church of Christ</u>	<u>Samuel Oshoffa</u>	1947	<u>Nativist Christian Pentecostal</u>
<u>Cherubim and Seraphim</u> , also known as <u>Sacred Cherubim and Seraphim Society</u> and <u>Eternal Sacred Order of Cherubim and Seraphim</u>	Moses Orimolade Tunolase	c. 1925	African <u>Pentecostal</u>
<u>Christ Apostolic Church</u>	T. O. Obadare	1941	<u>Pentecostal</u>
<u>Christadelphians</u> , also called <u>Thomasites</u>	<u>John Thomas</u>	1844	<u>Baptist</u> family
<u>The Christian Community</u> , also known as the <u>Christian Community Church</u> and <u>Christengemeinschaft</u>	<u>Rudolf Steiner</u> <u>Friedrich Rittelmeyer</u>	1922	<u>Anthroposophy</u>
<u>Christian Identity</u>		1982	<u>British Israelism</u>
<u>Christian Reformed Church in North America</u>	<u>Gijsbert Haan</u>	1857	Reformed <u>Presbyterian</u>
<u>Christian Science</u>	<u>Mary Baker Eddy</u>	1876	<u>Christian Science</u> -Metaphysical; <u>New Thought</u>
<u>Christian World Liberation Front</u> , also known as the <u>Spiritual Counterfeits Project</u>	Jack Sparks; Fred Dyson; Pat Matrisciana	1969	<u>Christian Fundamentalist-Millenarian</u>
<u>Church of All Worlds</u>	<u>Tim Zell</u> ; Lance Christie	1962	<u>Witchcraft</u> and <u>Neo-Paganism</u>
<u>Church of Aphrodite</u>	<u>Gleb Botkin</u>	1939	<u>Witchcraft</u> and <u>Neo-Paganism</u>
<u>Church of Bible Understanding</u>	Stewart Traill	1971	<u>Adventist</u> ; <u>Fundamental</u>

**A Table showing the List of New Religious Movements**

Name	Founder	Year founded	Type
			<u>ist</u>
<u>Church of Daniel's Band</u>		1893	Non- <u>Episcopal Methodism</u>
<u>Church of God in Christ</u>	<u>Charles H. Mason</u>	1908	<u>Pentecostal</u>
<u>The Church of God (Jerusalem Acres)</u>	Grady R. Kent	1957	White <u>Trinitarian Holiness Pentecostal</u>
<u>Church of God Mountain Assembly</u>	J.H. Parks, Steve N. Bryant, Tom Moses, William O. Douglas	1906	White <u>Trinitarian Holiness Pentecostal</u>
<u>Church of God of Prophecy</u>	<u>Ambrose Tomlinson</u>	1903	White <u>Trinitarian Holiness Pentecostal</u>
<u>Church of God with Signs Following</u>	<u>George Went Hensley</u>	1920s	<u>Holiness Pentecostal</u> [9]: 489
<u>Church of Israel</u>	<u>Dan Gayman</u>	1974	<u>British Israelism</u>
<u>The Church of Light</u>	<u>C.C. Zain</u>	1932	<u>Hermetism</u>
<u>Church of Satan</u>	<u>Anton LaVey</u>	1966	<u>Satanism</u>
<u>Church of the Creator</u>	Rev. Dr. Grace Marama URI	1969	Liberal family
<u>Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster</u> or Pastafarianism	Bobby Henderson	2005	
<u>Church of the Living Word</u> , also known as The Walk	<u>John Robert Stevens</u>	1954	<u>Fundamentalist; Occultist</u>
<u>Church of the Lord (Aladura)</u>	Josiah Ositelu	1930	<u>Pentecostal</u> Family
<u>Church of World Messianity</u>	<u>Mokichi Okada</u>	1934	<u>Shintoism</u>

**A Table showing the List of New Religious Movements**

Name	Founder	Year founded	Type
<u>Church Universal and Triumphant</u>	<u>Mark Prophet; Elizabeth Clare (Wolf) Prophet</u>	1958	<u>Theosophical; Occultist</u>
<u>Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles</u> , also known as CARP	<u>Sun Myung Moon</u>	1955	<u>Unification Church</u>
<u>Commandment Keepers: Holy Church of the Living God</u>	<u>Arnold Josiah Ford</u>	1924	<u>Black Judaism</u>
<u>Community Chapel and Bible Training Center</u>	<u>Donald Lee Barnett</u>	1967	<u>Latter Rain Pentecostal</u>
<u>Conservative Judaism</u>	<u>Sabato Morais, Marcus Jastrow, H. Pereira Mendes</u>	1887	<u>Mainline Judaism</u>
<u>A Course in Miracles</u>	<u>Helen Schucman William Thetford</u>	1975	<u>New Thought</u>
<u>Covenant of the Goddess</u>	Merger	1975	<u>Witchcraft and Neo-Paganism</u>
<u>Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans</u>	<u>Margot Adler</u>	1987	<u>Witchcraft and Neo-Paganism</u>
<u>Jehovah's Witnesses</u>	<u>Charles Taze Russell</u>	1870	<u>Adventist; Bible Student Groups</u>
<u>Jesus Army</u> (also known as "Jesus Fellowship Church" and "Bugbrooke Jesus Fellowship")	Noel Stanton (split from Baptist Union)	1977	<u>Fundamentalist, Communal</u>
<u>Rosicrucian Fellowship</u>	<u>Carl Louis von Grasshof</u>	1909	<u>Rosicrucianism</u>
<u>The Salvation Army</u>	<u>William Booth</u>	1865	Nineteenth

**A Table showing the List of New Religious Movements**

Name	Founder	Year founded	Type
			Century <u>Holiness</u>
<u>Scientology</u>	<u>L. Ron Hubbard</u>	1955	Other <u>Psychic, New Age</u> Groups
<u>Seventh-day Adventist Church</u>	<u>Ellen G. White</u>	1860	<u>Seventh Day Adventists</u>

**Source:** Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (2016).

Apart from globalization there are many national factors that facilitate the growth of NRMs in Nigeria. These factors include secularism, urbanization, and the spread of modern education, as well as the similarity of NRMs with African Traditional Religions (ATR). There is no doubt that urban centers create a favorable atmosphere for the growth of NRMs in Nigeria. Factor such as employment, education, and social amenities attract diverse groups of people into urban centres. Mingling of different groups, with different worldviews, often reduces conservatism as found in the rural areas, so people are freer to subscribe to a set of values different from that of their parents or communities. Mass literacy in Nigeria is among the factors that facilitate the growth of NRMs. The majority of NRMs converts are individual spiritual seekers who actively investigate various spiritual paths until they find the ones that satisfy their spiritual needs. African Traditional Religion (ATR) is the religion of African people before the arrival of Islam and Christianity. Similarities between ATR and NRMs include the concept of the Supreme Being, pantheon of gods, reincarnation, the spiritual world and immediate divine retribution. Apart from socio-political factors that smooth the ground for proliferation of NRMs there are many factors that can only be explain on

the of individual level. These factors are categorized on the following themes: existential crises, religious experience, quest for riches, social influence.

Other factors also accounted for the emergence and proliferation of the New Religious Movements on the global and national scale. These factors include:

- i. the rise of scientific and humanistic rationalism, which questioned the 'superstitious interference' of religions;
- ii. the spread of liberalism across the world, with propagated the ideas of individualism and free thought;
- iii. the rise of Protestantism and the decline of religious orthodoxy;
- iv. the de-socialization of civic affairs by way of secularism and secularization of civic relations;
- v. the emergence of globalization with its enduring impact of spiritual pluralism; and
- vi. the spread of corporate capitalism with its inherent consumerist, commercialist and 'mercantilist' tendencies (Wilson, 1988; York, 1995; York, 2011; King, 2001).

### **3.4 Present Situation of Nigerian Economy System**

Nigeria gained independence from Britain in 1960 and became a republic in 1963. Nigeria adopted the economy system namely mixed economy of Britain, her colonial master. Thus, Nigeria, on her own, did not choose the form of economy system that was based on the characteristics behaviour 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 masters. The independence was purely

political independence and not economy independence. Consequently, the economy was still tied to apron of the colonial masters, who continued to influence the level of growth of the various economy sectors of the economy. Hence, the adoption of mixed economy as the economy system of Nigeria was influenced by the following factors according to Ibrahim (2013):

- i. Mixed economy system was the system of Britain, the country that colonized and influenced the economy policies of Nigeria for decades.
- ii. The private sector had to take up the responsibility of providing both the social and economy infrastructure necessary for the development of the country's economy.
- iii. There was the felt need to encourage private participation in the production of goods and services which are purely private goods.
- iv. There was problem of the provision of some social and economy 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.
- v. The pre-colonial Nigeria was characterized by highly independence economy 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 economy activities. 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.

- vi. 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. As a developing country, the best option for Nigeria was to combine the good aspect of capitalism with the good aspects of socialism to facilitate rapid economy growth and development. This encourages some degree of planning and accommodates market forces.

The effects of mixed economy on Nigeria economy development are:

- a. Slow rate of development of the private sector of the economy. Some economy development projects are exclusively provided by the government. The private sector can only provide if granted license by the government. These areas exclude electricity.
- b. Provision of social and economy infrastructure was faster and at lower prices e.g. water, electricity, education, health. They would cost higher for consumers if they were provided by the private sector.
- c. Government monopoly in provision of some amenities breeds corruption and inefficiency – Most of the government parastatals and corporations

were very inefficient. Taps are dry, electricity is epileptic, health centres lack drugs, and schools are not equipped.

- d. Greater independence on government by people for provision of amenities. The citizens rely very heavily on the government for provision of all welfare facilities. Hence there is very few self-help development projects embarked upon by the people.
- e. Creation of better environment for private sector takes off. The government sets in motion the machinery that facilitated take off of the private sector though the provision of social and economy infrastructure without which meaningful economy activities cannot be carried out. The capital involved would make it difficult for the private sector to provide these facilities.

### **3.5 Negative Impact of NRMs on Nigerian Economy**

The conception of NRMs in this study is context specific. It refers to a global religious cum spiritual mode and current called New Age movement. As observed by King (2011):

By the second half of the twentieth-century, religion has entered the market place of human choice and experimentation, resulting of course in the development of that eclectic and



amorphous phenomenon known today as the NRMs or 'New Age' (p.91).

One abiding attribute of the NRMs which has influenced the national economy negatively is spiritual materialism or the commodification of the sacred. According to York (2001), as an aggregation or congeries of client services and competing audience cults, NRMs is part of what is described as the 'religions consumer supermarket'- one which thrives on competition and the offering of various spiritual commodities. Rather than a rejection of free market principles, NRMs endorse a spiritualized counterpart of capitalism - one which seeks ever extended markets, new sources of marketable goods, and expanding profits.

The NRMs spirituality is materialistic and capitalistic in the sense that it involves the subordination and exploitation of religious themes and motifs, to promote an individualistic or corporate-oriented pursuit of profit for their own sake (King, 2001). The NRMs represent what could be described as the 'individualization' or 'privatization' of religion/spirituality (King, 2001). The movements have been reinforced by the trend of marketization of the Nigerian society, which has been an abiding characteristic of global capitalism in the contemporary era (Okoli, 2014). It is within this operational context that the problematic of spiritual materialism in Nigeria is herewith conceived and understood.

The infestation of spiritual materialism in Nigeria has taken the form of materialization of religion and commercialization of spiritual providence. It is a tendency that has manifested in all religions in the country, even though it has appeared

to be most manifest in Christianity. The trend has, over the years, found expression in a variety of curious religious practices, some of which are highlighted in the sub-sections follow:

### **Proliferation of Religious-Based Organizations**

There has been an unprecedented rise and preponderant spread of Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) in Nigeria over the years. This ranges from New Independent Churches (NICs), religious ‘ministries’ to Non-governmental bodies with declared ‘spiritual/sacred mandate’. These organizations are founded and led by self-called ‘apostles of faith’ who utilize such platforms to advance their self-regarding interests. In some cases, such organizations have been used to perpetrate organized crimes, such as advanced fee fraud (popularly known as 419), child trafficking (baby buying/selling), and money laundering (Okoli, 2014; Okoli and Okpaleke, 2014). This is in addition to the routine manipulation and exploitation of unsuspected faithful who identify with and patronize the organizations.

### **Religious Prebendalism**

This refers to materialization of religion and commercialization of its spiritual providence. Nowadays in Nigeria, religion is a serious business, a big-time employer of labour, and a super income generator. The sacred endowments and spiritual providence of religion are highly commercialized and consumerized. Hence, sacramental, spiritual books and CDs are no longer necessarily produced to edify and uplift the ‘souls of the faithful’; rather, they are designed expressly for material profiteering. Worse still,

prayers, healing, miracles and anointing are dispensed apparently according to the principle of 'earn as you pay'.

In the same vein, one may need to even pay a 'consultancy fee' in order to enable him/her see the 'man of God' for consultation. Incidentally, spiritual providence has curiously become a matter of material auctioneering. Religious prebendalism in Nigeria has produced a curious pattern of spirituality characterized as "Fellowship and Business with religion sprinkled to add flavor" (Kukah, 2007 p.38).

### **Faith Monetization**

The trend of spiritual materialism in Nigeria has also led to the arcane phenomenon of monetization of faith and grace. Faithful are often encouraged to make financial commitments to the 'man of God' or his 'Ministry' as a mark of their spiritual dedication. In this connection, it is held that the level of your financial commitment determines the proportion of 'divine favour' you would elicit in return. In other words, financial given is advocated as a precondition for God's Grace. This thinking has been supported by the pro-Calvinistic prosperity-centric teachings of some of the New Religious Movements (NRMs) in Nigeria (Enang, 2012). In this regard, it is taught that the financial giving is a key to prosperity. This form of materialist spirituality has produced a crop of faithful who could cheat or steal in order to raise money for the purpose of sowing a 'seed of faith'.

### **Organized Merchandising**

This refers to the use of aggressive advertising, publicity and market promotions to woo public patronage. The billboard and media advertorials are innovative crafted in market-sensitive slogans and catchwords, such as: grab your miracle now!; Harvest of

success!; Miracle extravaganza!; Anointing bazaar!; Encounter your breakthrough here!; Prosperity guaranteed!, etc. The use of the mass media to frame impressive but unfounded corporate image is crucial to the purpose of spiritual materialism. There is a conscious attempt, by way of televangelism, to rule the airwaves in a tacit effort to make a window display of various spiritual products: healings, miracles, breakthroughs, deliverance, curse-breaking, etc. This stratagem is strategic to swaying popular patronage and following.

### **Materialistic Show of Religiosity**

Another subtle dimension of spiritual materialism among Nigerians is the issue of ostentatious but affected religiosity. The leaders often wallow in unfounded opulence while the faithful are encouraged to put up conspicuous lifestyle, prosperity mentality, and outward manifestation of 'divine grace'. This is to affirm their total wellbeing, even when there is no material evidence to that effect. The propagation of 'false consciousness and fake living in this fashion has interplayed with other factors to reinforce the prevalence of spiritual materialism in Nigeria. Other indicators of spiritual materialism in Nigeria can be identified as:

- i. concentration of religious activities in the centres of mega cities in prospect for material profiteering;
- ii. exploitation of the faithful through incessant levies and financial contributions;
- iii. personalization and selfish appropriation of the religious common wealth;
- iv. propagation of parasitism through faith-giving, and the like; and
- v. the use of religious or faith-based platforms as a conduit for money laundering, human trafficking, and other dimensions of primitive accumulation.

### **3.6 Economy Reconsideration of NRMs in Contemporary Nigeria**

The present Nigerian economy ordeals seem to have started in the 1980's in contrast to the 1970's known as the Nigerian prosperous years and this period coincided with the period of rapid evangelization of Nigeria by various new religious groups. The period brought with it unemployment, soaring prices of goods and services, fraught infrastructure, wage freezes and inflation that followed the drop in international oil prices in 1981 and the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of 1986 brought more austerity and hardship to all groups of people in Nigeria (Ruth, 1993; 1990). The period also brought with it severe hardship and break down of relations at all levels as there was capital flight and the only group that have access to what could be called the good things of life were the few politicians. The overall effects are that the youth and the middle class citizens lost hope of the future as corruption occupied the center stage of the socio-political and economy scene of the country.

Therefore, on the individual level, more especially among the young people in Nigeria, it became in vogue to turn to the NRMs, specially the Born-Again Community type, since the historic church seem to be an accomplice with the socio-political system that has defrauded the people. Thus turning to the new wave of NRMs offers courage and provides strength to face the odious storm of economy hardship. It provides for the individual a coherent and ordered moral universe which makes sense of the chaotic and seeming arbitrary nature of quotidian struggle and emphasizes the possibility of overcoming them. The new religious connection also offers the individual an entrance into a new community of caring brothers and sisters/comrades, which had already been broken down in the secular/civil community. This new community transcends the

ordinary ethnical/biological relationship, to an eternal relationship whose head is God Himself. The community therefore having been defined beyond the geo-political and socio-economy interest offers both moral and practical support to the members in times of needs (Okoro and Osunwoke, 2014).

Actually, the criticism is not unfounded. Often financial interest is the operative factor moving men of God and religious founders to beginning groups and often to secede from the older ones. They claim that they were called by God and moved to plant new religions. Meanwhile, before the civil war and during the period of oil boom in 1970s in Nigeria, hardly did any young man opt to become a pastor of any church or leader of religion except those called genuinely by God to serve him. Parents even objected to their children going to be trained to become pastors. They equated religious work with poverty (Agha, 2013). Unemployment with its attended evils has affected the socio- economy, socio-political and socio-moral spectrum of the Nigerian society. It has contributed to too many people becoming perpetual armed robbers and kidnappers.

The emphasis on prosperity has brought about the increasing and unprecedented commercialization of religion. It has become an avenue for some so called clergy and religious impostors to make fast money. Arch Bishop Olubummi Okojie (*Sunday Concord*, June 22, 1986) lamented that:

some commercially minded people have been hiding under Christian garment to play on people's superstition and human sorrow by establishing run-away proliferation of churches all

over the country, particularly in the thickly populated areas (pp.3-5).

Agha (2013) therefore enunciated further that it has been claimed that some of these religious founders do so as compensation for their failure to attain political and economy recognition in the area of government patronage and appointments. They believe that by founding a religious group, they in turn have attained self-fulfillment, more so, as they subsequently enjoy government recognition and respect as successful religious leaders.

The feeling of being restricted in one's activities by a church or religious council has enhanced this tendency and caused separation. For example, some independent churches in Nigeria have been formed because of church discipline in the established church. When some people are disciplined, they gather others in similar circumstances to form an independent group (Peter, 1997). The reasons for the proliferation of NRMs in modern Nigeria can hardly be exhaustive as long as unemployment, hardship, embezzlement of public-funds, poverty etc. are still on the increase. So far, one can ascertain that socio-political and economy challenges have aided the rise and spread of NRMs in Nigeria.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS OF NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS ON NIGERIA ECONOMY**

#### **4.1 Religion and Economy Growth in Nigeria**

The level of development of a country is affected by many factors. Economists tend to emphasize the impact of economy variables (Alesina and Rodrick, 1994) however; political and social factors can also be important determinants of growth (Barro, 1996). Religion is a source not only of intolerance, human rights violations, and extremist violence, but also of non-violent conflict transformation, the defense of human rights, integrity in government, and reconciliation and stability in divided societies (Appleby, 1996). Analyses of the implications of diversity in Nigeria and



other countries suggest diversity is a necessary but not sufficient condition for conflict. In other words, the very fact that a country has different ethnic, communal, religious, and racial groups does not make division and conflicts inevitable (Smith, 1996).

In cross-country studies, economists have revisited Weber's hypothesis. Barro and McCleary (2003) assess the effect of religious participation and beliefs on a country's rate of economy progress. Using international survey data for 59 countries drawn from the World Values Survey and the International Social Sciences Program conducted between 1981 and 1999, these authors found that greater diversity of religion 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 – tends to increase economy growth (Dillon, 2003b). This is evident in the activities of churches in Nigeria where they assist some of their devoted members not only influencing their view of success and the need to acquire wealth but also help to secure job for them; thereby helping to improve their living standard and the country at large.

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. This is also practical in Nigeria. The routine giving of arms to the needy during Christmas celebration or Ramadan is a way

religion help to reduce poverty by encouraging 'the haves to give to have not' in order to be given by God.

The introduction of Islamic Banking by Central Bank of Nigeria no doubt, will improve the economy power of the borrowers. A bank that shares profit and loss with the borrower will invariably reduce the risk of doing business than the conventional banks that 'wins' in any business they enter with their clients. This will make fund available for those that have idea of a profitable business to create wealth, employment and also add value to the economy by paying taxes to the government. Religion could also foster development through encouragement of members to acquire formal education. If formal education is significant to high standard of living, then religion may explain why there are many poor people in northern Nigeria than other regions especially South-West and South-Eastern Nigeria. This is because the practice of women in Purdah in Northern Nigeria could account for the low enrolment of women in former education institution. The apparent linkage between religion and development attracts criticism.

According to (Durkheim, 1976) and (Nisbet, 1976), there is either no logical reason to link religion to economy development or insufficient empirical evidence of any actual linkage. P. Beyer (2003) expressed high skepticism of seeing capitalist development as guided by religion. He argued that any complex system of ideas can be manipulated to serve any particular social or political objective. Any connection between religion and economy is likely the one in which the latter is cause and the former effect.

It is also discovered that NRMs beliefs are compatible with increased education and knowledge. Religion is attractive to people with higher levels of educational attainment because religious beliefs can be neither proved nor disproved. Educated people engage in speculative reasoning and are better able to think abstractly. Therefore, religion can offer something to them. Religious beliefs matter for economy outcomes. They reinforce character traits such as hard work, honesty, thrift, and the value of time. Otherworldly compensators - such as belief in heaven, hell, the afterlife - can raise productivity by motivating people to work harder in this life. The Calvinist view of salvation through grace posits that since you cannot know whether or not you are saved, you work conscientiously your whole life (a life of good works). Religious rewards - such as absolution of sin, earning salvific merit by giving to charity - also motivate people to work hard and cultivate virtuous behaviour

#### **4.2 The NRMs and Economy Development in Nigeria**

Gone are the days when the issue of economy development lies with the government and other private sectors, even individuals alone. Religious adherents are still facing the situation of Nigeria economy where poverty, inflation, unemployment, economy instability, etc. are the order of the day and have greater role or influence on the country's rate of economy progress. Most religious bodies employ at least one person, and many have upwards of 20 employees, especially if they operate childcare facilities or schools. Since NRMs generally operate facilities, they are consumers of energy to heat and cool the often large open spaces. The NRMs have provided both moral and economy impetus for the country's economy development. Here, the NRMs inculcate 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), on the role of the NRMs and economy development posits that the religion needs to concentrate on the business of creating economy institutions. The NRMs have to find themselves in a situation where it is the best, continuing as organized entities in the local communities for the acquisition and development of land, the building of business enterprises and the employment of people. Presently, virtually all the NRMs in Nigeria are involved in several economy advancements. The NRMs, to mention but a few have projects that include building of affordable homes, guest houses, recreational facilities, clinics and hospitals and other commercial complexes. These developmental strides could transform the people of the locality and society at large. 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 obvious that NRMs-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 counseling. These activities tend to lead to improved schools, better public safety and an enhanced quality of life. From this, economy development occurs; every one living in the area and those in surrounding communities' benefits.

The significant role of the NRMs in the development of agriculture could never be over emphasized. Thus, speaking on the role of agriculture to the economy development, Onuora (2012), asserts that agriculture has gone a long way to produce food for man and animals in Nigeria. And the NRMs have given their supports for the benefit of their members and the country at large. Consequently it is the source of raw materials for the domestic industries and for export. Above all, agriculture has paved way for entrepreneurs to come invoke. Owing to this fact, it is important for the NRMs to always teach “all hands on the plough” for economy development. It is noteworthy that NRMs participate in industrial establishment. For more rapid development of industries, not only does government participate actively in industrial establishment, today also, NRMs do, by establishing or setting up industries or by buying shares thereby contributing to raising required fund for the industries.

In the area of banking, the NRMs are contributing immensely towards economy development. Many churches today establish a Community Bank within their locality in order to encourage saving of funds which would be invested in business ventures, to provide the needed capital for development, to promote trading activities, and providing short and long term loans to individuals and firms. Doctors, nurses, teachers, bankers and other categories of workers who work in schools, hospitals, banks and other establishments owned by the NRMs, 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

economy development. 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 sell and make profit from thereby earning a living. Indeed NRMs have been and are still contributing to every strata of the national development.

### **4.3 The Virtuous Circle**

To turn once again to the question it is posed at the outset: Is religion detrimental to economy growth? Perhaps John Wesley's (in Jessop, 2012) conclusion that economy growth will decrease religiosity need not be absolutely the case. If people spend too much time on productive activities relative to religious activities, then they will become less religious. If children are not taught religious values and beliefs, then they themselves will not be religious, and, perhaps, not productive. Furthermore, if societal expectations accompanying educational attainment are not met, people will resort to nonproductive activities, such as crime and terrorism. With nonproductive time on their hands and grievance against society, people will engage in destructive behavior. However, a virtuous cycle occurs when people believe relative to belonging. That is, people hold religious beliefs but do not spend enormous amounts of resources (time, income, talents) on their religion.

Finally, religious beliefs that promote hard work, thrift, and honesty can be found across the world's major religions. The key question is: How does a society promote these values and in what circumstances does it, intentionally or unintentionally, discard them?

#### **4.4 Economy and Well-being in the Context of NRMs in Nigeria**

Since religion is indisputably a social phenomenon, it affects the social structure of which the economy is a part. Religion is one of many factors influencing Nigerian economy patterns. The economy roles that organized religion (NRMs) plays in Nigeria includes; employer of labour, provider of services, especially in health and education, investor in real estate and manager of properties etc. NRMs have affected economy attitudes and behaviour through personal and business virtues as honesty, fair play and honouring one's commitments. Religion in the context of NRMs is successful in inculcating such virtues in adherents; it has an impact on the economy.

NRMs have also contributed towards the economy development of Nigeria through its impact on well-being of Nigerians. Many scholars have noted that organized religions such as that of the NRMs have striven to alleviate some of Nigeria's socio-economy problems, though that is not their primary responsibility. These religious bodies have provided educational facilities, medical services, boreholes, entertainment halls and recreational facilities. These organizations provide employment for great number of Nigerians - both skilled and unskilled as earlier mentioned. Furthermore, NRMs are continuously involved in raising funds for the needy. Religious bodies in Nigeria play important role in the absence of a social security system to cater for the aged, infirm and disabled.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Summary**

The impact of religion on human society has resulted in the under development or development of economy growth and this has been accelerated by rapid religious multiplicity in the form of New Religious Movements (NRMs). Religion is an evidently important social phenomenon, perhaps, essentially ubiquitous across human societies. Religious pluralism gives the population a wide variety of choice in religious and leads to religious economy in which different religious organizations compete for followers, much the way businesses compete for consumers in a commercial economy.



There has been an unprecedented rise and preponderant spread of Faith- Based Organizations (FBOs) in Nigeria over the years. This ranges from New Independent Churches (NICs), religious ministries to non- governmental bodies with declared ‘spiritual/sacred mandate’. These organizations are founded and led by self – called ‘apostles of faith’ who utilize such platforms to advance their self-regarding interests, and of course this has both positive and negative effects on the Nigerian economy. These effects ranges from proliferations of religious –based organizations, religious prebendalism, faith monetization, organized merchandising, materialistic show of religiosity to economy growth in Nigeria, economy development in Nigeria, and economy well-being in the context of NRMs in Nigeria.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The concepts of the religious economy and economy of religion have been one of the most useful contributions of rational choice theories to the sociology of religion. However, this study argues that religious beliefs in the context of the New Religious Movements (NRMs) present taxonomy of benefits to the economy of a nation. Given the demand for a particular belief, potential NRMs consumers choose to involve themselves with those who are collectively producing it through interactions of faith. The involvement turns potential religious consumers into actual consumers by enabling them to participate in networks that establish beliefs including economy benefits.

In the foregoing attempt had been made to examine the contribution of New Religious Movements (NRMs) towards the economy development of Nigeria. The

NRMs had been at the centre and concern with the privations and problems of the contemporary society. For instance, 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 economy development and social change.

The study has been able to answer the question on how religion and religiosity influence economy performance of a nation. The study discovered that, for a given level of religious participation, increases in core religious beliefs (e.g. notably belief in hell, heaven, and an afterlife) tend to increase national economy growth. In this sense, the study's interpretation, reminiscent of Max Weber's famous thesis in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, is that religious beliefs raise productivity by fostering individual traits such as honesty, work ethic, and thrift.

In contrast, for given religious beliefs, increases in religious attendance tend to reduce economy growth. One may think that this negative effect reflects the time and resources used by the religion sector as well as adverse effects from organized religion on economy regulation, for example, restrictions on markets for credit and insurance. To put it another way, the main growth effect that one finds is a positive response to an increase in believing relative to belonging (attending). A certain amount of participation in religious activities is positive, in that people acquire certain religious beliefs. But, if people spend too much time in religious activities, there is a negative effect on economy growth.

However, religious traditions are complex and most were not designed primarily to foster economy uplift. Thus, we should expect both positive and negative influences

on the economy. If one only look at one mechanism for example, education, one would not understand the total impact that religious tradition has. Still, existing evidence suggests that NRMs has a number of important economy consequences, both at the individual and communal levels, and that most of these consequences are positive particularly among poor people in developing societies. Therefore, given the massive size and rapid growth of these movements, intellectuals and government should be concerned about their social and economy impact as they concern national economy growth.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made as a way of having viable economy development in Nigeria through the activities of the NRMs:

- i. Government has a role to play in the economy policy making of the country to ensure that no policy will be to the detriment of the country at large, for example, setting up a committee that will see to the implementation of any economy policy with the participation of the NRMs. This will go a long way to ensure that there will be no abandon economy project in the country.
- ii. Since religion is a key factor in economy development, the NRMs should be promoted by government to enhance students' knowledge in economy development of the country, and how they will contribute their quota to the development of the country at large.
- iii. Youth development and empowerment programme should be strongly encouraged by the NRMs, because the youths are the future hope of the

country. Youth programme will enhance deep influence on the youth, for them to be economically balanced.

- iv. Entrepreneurship education should be encouraged by the NRMs and made a compulsory general course in the higher institutions owned by the various NRMs in Nigeria.
- v. The Nigerian government should give loan to NRMs that have set up institutions like schools, hospitals, etc. in order to enhance successful running of such institutions for national economy development.

#### **5.4 Contribution to Knowledge**

The study has contributed the following to knowledge:

- i. This work established that Neo- Pentecostalism churches has contributed to human dignity and public empowerment of people in Nigeria.
- ii. The study revealed the functional relevance of the New Religious Movements in human affairs.

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