



ISSN: 0975-833X

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### AN ASSESSMENT OF CHRISTIAN DEVOTIONAL PRACTICES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT; A SURVEY OF SELECTED CHURCHES IN KAPSABET DIVISION, NANDI COUNTY, KENYA

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#### ARTICLE INFO

##### Article History:

Received 24<sup>th</sup> August, 2014

Received in revised form

22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2014

Accepted 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2014

Published online 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2014

##### Key words:

Christian Devotional Practices,  
Economic development

#### ABSTRACT

The study focused on assessment of Christian devotional practices and economic development in Kapsabet Division, Nandi County. The objectives were to investigate the effect of the Christian Devotional practices, examine the contribution of Christian Devotional practices and establish the level of awareness of economic values that the Christians have on the members of different denominations on economic development in Kapsabet Division, Nandi County. The study employed descriptive survey design. It targeted 300 participants and the sampling size was 30% of the targeted population which makes it 90 participants. The main research instruments were the questionnaires and interview schedule. The research findings was analysed and presented in form of tables. From the findings: Christian devotional practices have improved economic development. It has led to nurturing of talents leading to acquisition of goods and services, selling of recorded Christian music have facilitated distribution and consumption of goods and services. It has also led to moulding of leaders who become supervisors in economic activities and led to acting in Christian Movies hence earning income. The level of awareness of the economic values that the Christians have on the members of different denominations in Kapsabet Division is: Christian teachings enable members to engage in business activities despite denominational barriers. Through conferences and crusades held anywhere and door to door evangelism, co-existence amongst citizens is enhanced which is beneficial for economic growth. Bible study leads to the bible study materials printed and sold. Many bibles are also sold, leading to economic development

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## INTRODUCTION

### Background to the study

According to Sabine, Maureen, Crashaw and Abjection (2006), Jews at the time of Jesus Christ had a history of devotion that was at least 1500 years old. Their history was filled with interaction with God who called them as His people and gave specific instructions as to how and when to give offerings, sacrifices and cycles of devotions. The Bible is clear that God revealed to Israel how to perform the devotions, and it was patterned after things in heaven. (Exodus 12 & 13, 25-31; Isaiah 6 and Daniel 7) These specific forms or liturgies of devotions were first seen in the Tabernacle of the early Israelites, and were consummated in the temple in Jerusalem. The devotion to God in this temple was the first and most prominent focus of Jewish devotions, which included the form and frequency of prayer and sacrifice. For Judaism there had always been a constant cycle of prayers, blessings and meals: daily, weekly, monthly and annually. These constituted the second focus for the Jews.

In its most regular form it included practices in the daily hours of prayers and the annual High Feast Days. The High Feast Days included the sacrificial offerings of the Temple and contained Jewish messianic expectation. These meals included the "breaking of bread" and the "blessing of the cup", and contained parallels with both the Temple sacrifice and the messianic feast. Besides the structure or order of devotions that came from Judaism into Christianity, one can also find the cycles of liturgy- the daily, weekly and yearly cycles of liturgy-coming from the Old Testament as well. Acts 2:46 says that "day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart". On a daily basis the Apostles continued their Jewish devotional practices in the Temple and on a daily basis broke the bread of communion. This regularity of time is further confirmed in Acts 3:1 where Peter and John were going to the temple because it was the hour of prayer. Not only did they continue in the Jewish devotional practice, but also kept the liturgical cycle of daily prayer at set hours (this tradition is preserved in the tradition of *liturgical hours*) as well as the major feast days (Sabine *et al.*, 2006). Starkman, Miriam (2002), the New Testament church was a minority movement within a hostile religious environment. The earliest followers of Jesus could not conduct public Christian devotions of the type we are accustomed to in

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the Western world. For this reason, the New Testament does not provide detailed instruction for the order of devotions. However, from its pages we are able to glimpse some details of what devotions looked like in the early church. Elsewhere the New Testament suggests that Christian devotions incorporated singing of hymns and psalms (Eph. 5:19), prayer (I Cor. 11:4-5), vocal thanksgiving (Eph. 5:20; Heb 13:15), and instruction (I Cor. 14:26; Col. 3:16). The Gospel of Luke and Revelation preserve hymns that may have been used in the devotions in the early church (Luke 1:48-55; 2:14 & 29-32; Rev. 4:8 & 11; 15:3-5). The New Testament does not specify who is to lead the devotions or administer the Lord's Supper, although prophets clearly had a role in corporate devotions (I Cor. 14:23-33). Paul's words indicate that unbelievers occasionally attended the prophetic assembly (I Cor. 14:22-25), although it would not have been appropriate for them to take part in the Eucharist. In fact, although "The world had a right to hear the Gospel, those who have not yet "put on Christ" by baptism and thus as "sons" received his Holy Spirit by confirmation *cannot* join in offering that prevailing prayer. All who had not entered the order of the laity were therefore without exception turned out (dismissed) of the assembly after the sermon. (Starkman *et al.*, 2002).

Christians all over the world practice devotion as a means to communicate with God, to strengthen their faith and fellowship among themselves. In religion and economic growth (NBER) Working paper no. (9682) of (1980), the author, Robert Barro and Rachael McNealy analyze the influence of Religion participation and beliefs on countries rate of economic progress. They wanted to measure religiosity, church attendance and religious beliefs in relation to economic growth in the world; He used six international surveys conducted between 1981-1999 in 59 countries to measure religiosity. They however did not deal with the critical aspects of Christian devotional in relation to economic development. They found out that their measures of religiosity are positively related to education, negatively related to urbanization and positively related to the presence of children. In the conclusion they stated that religiously tends to decline with the economic development. Nothing has been done on the aspect of Christian devotional and economic development (Starkman *et al.*, 2002).

### **Biblical and theological foundations**

Scripture is the essential source for understanding distinctively Christian elements in education. Therefore, it is crucial that the Christian educator's thoughts and practices be guided by God's revealed truths as he or she seeks to be obedient to Christ in the task of education. Christians are subject to a confusing plurality of educational theories in contemporary society. In such a situation, the exploration of biblical foundations provides an essential standard for judging education. The examination of these foundations does not result in a sterile or rigid theory and practice, devoid of diversity and creativity. Rather, Christian education patterned on biblical foundations provides for a dynamic and diverse educational experience. Several foundations can be identified in both the Old and the New Testaments. These biblical sources provide models or approaches even at the basic level of a commonsense reading of the text. All educators have

models or approaches that guide their thought and practice. In most cases, these models remain unexamined. The challenge for Christians is to examine their models for education, to make them explicit, and to undergird them with biblical foundations. The models suggested by various biblical foundations provide guides with which to consider past, present, and future educational efforts. What follows is a sampling of foundations that must be elaborated by educators in various settings, making use of more extensive critical, canonical, and contextual studies, (Erdmans, 1987). The biblical and theological foundations of this study are founded in the scripture because Christian assembly usually met in private homes for devotions and instructions (Acts 2:46; 16:40; 18:7; Phil. 1:2). It appears that, in commemoration of the resurrection, the congregation assembled on the "Lord's Day," the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:2). Writing to the church in Corinth, Paul describes two types of Christian gathering. One is the Lord's Supper (I Cor. 10:16-17; 11:20-29) or ceremonial community meal, over which Jesus had presided on the night of his arrest and which he asked his followers to continue. Paul goes on to describe a second type of gathering, the prophetic assembly, which includes both singing and thanksgiving in unknown languages, with interpretation, and prophecy (Starkman *et al.*, 2002).

### **Key Questions which guided the study were**

- How does devotional practices influence economic development?
- What are the contributions of Christian devotional practices on economic development?
- What is the level of awareness of the economic values that the Christians have on the members of different denominations in Nandi County?

### **Significance of findings**

The research findings was beneficial to the youths as it led to nurturing of talents that enabled individuals in acquisition of goods and services, it led to the selling of recorded Christian music facilitating distribution of goods and services, it also led to the selling of recorded Christian music facilitating consumption of goods and services and also moulding of leaders who become supervisors in economic activities and acting in Christian Movies hence they earn an income. From the research findings, the Christian teachings enabled members to engage in business activities despite denominational barriers thus leading to economic development. Christian conferences are held anywhere despite the denomination thus leading to economic development and through crusades organized by Christians they were able to invite people from any denomination thus leading to economic development, door to door evangelism organized by Christians has led to mutual co-existence in economic development and Bible study organized by Christians has led to selling of many bibles thus leading to economic development.

### **Theoretical framework**

The part of the literature that gives an affirmative answer to the assessment of Christian devotional practices and economic development adheres to the Religious Market Theory. It has

mainly been influenced by Iannaccone's (1991) article in which he tries to carry basic microeconomic market theory over to the market for religion. Iannaccone (1991) argues that a monopolistic church, as any other monopolistic firm, earns positive profits while the output is smaller than under full competition. In countries the employees of the church are paid by the government, if their salary is fixed they can only raise profits by reducing effort. Hence, the quality of the produced religious good will decline which entices consumers to demand for more religion goods. It therefore follows that religiosity should be lower in countries where there is a monopolistic church or if one religion is highly favored by the government and protected through legislation or subsidies.

In urban areas religious diversity is higher because in a city coming into contact with different religious denominations is more likely. They find that religious adherence is higher in cities compared to rural areas and argue that religious diversity explains the higher levels of religiosity in urban areas. Gruber (2005) also finds that religious participation increases with market density. Christians are more dedicated to their faith and spent a lot of their time in church activities in cosmopolitan religious background than in monopolistic religious background. In a study on church attendance rates in ten Western economies from the 1920's to the 1990's Franck and Iannaccone (2009) compare the market model of religion to the Secularization Hypothesis. They find that income, education, or urbanization do not affect the level of religiosity. Instead, they show that the development of welfare states reduces church participation rates. People do not have to rely on churches any longer because today social benefits are granted by the government. In countries with a monopolistic church this effect is much stronger because in more religiously diverse countries the churches compete with each other.

They offer social benefits of higher quality which can compete with government welfare services and attract more people to the churches. The Religious Market Theory is built on three pillars. First, a monopolistic church has less incentive to exert effort to produce high quality religious goods than churches in a fully competitive market. Second, a monopolistic church can satisfy only a smaller fraction of beliefs than many competing churches. Hence, higher religious diversity should lead to higher levels of religiosity. Third, market forces have crowded out religion. The development of welfare states reduces the church's importance. Many competing churches can supply better social services which attracts more people to each religion. Barro and McCleary (2003) investigate the correlation between religion and economic development in both directions of causation. In their comprehensive study they find, amongst other things, that religious pluralism has a positive effect on religious inputs, such as church attendance, and religious outcomes, such as belief in heaven and hell which supports the Religious Market Theory. McCleary and Barro (2003) in their research shows that GDP has a negative effect on religiosity. The authors state that "this finding supports the secularization view although the proponents of secularization have been in retreat over the last couple of decades." The Secularization Hypothesis has been put forward by social scientists but has also entered the economic discussion. The main argument is that during the process of

economic development the importance of and also the interest in religion decreases. As people become richer they tend to focus on worldly matters. In early times life on earth was meant to be led religiously in order to appease the gods and to make sure that an afterlife in heaven will be allowed. Since the enlightenment humans seem to favor earthly pleasures of higher income and wealth. Today we also see that religion plays a more prominent role in less developed countries than in the industrialized world. Whether the causation runs from religiosity to economic development or from higher income to lower religiosity is not definitively resolved. present causality tests which show that in the long run causality goes from income to religiosity. The implication over a shorter period is less clear, but the fact that higher levels of economic development correlate with lower levels of religiosity seems unquestionable. Barro and McCleary, (2003) uses survival models to show that a higher supply of religious goods tends to decrease the ties to one's own religion. Barro and McCleary, (2003) also finds that the rising doubt in the own religion might entice people to reduce their overall religiosity. But he also offers another explanation in favor of Secularization arguing that the reduction in religiosity could also be explained by behavioral motives. In order to signal conformity it can be socially optimal for a religious person to reduce one's own revealed religious involvement further than it would be optimal on the individual level if the surrounding society reveals low religiosity.

### **Critical Review of Theories and Gaps in Theories**

Barro and McCleary, (2003), drew a distinction between participation in organized religion and actual religious beliefs by differentiating between monthly service attendance and stated belief in heaven and hell, they found that there is actually a positive correlation between religious beliefs and economic growth. Participating in regular religious activities however can have a negative impact on economic growth if this participation does not increase the religious beliefs of adherents. In other words, countries where high numbers of the population believe in hell but with relatively low rates of attendance of religious ceremonies will perform better economically than countries with the same levels of belief in hell but higher rates of religious attendance. Belief in hell was found to be a slightly stronger predictor of economic performance than belief in heaven.

The two-country model based on the analysis of institutional governance provided by (Noland, 2005) shows how the religious attitude of each country's representative individual may be associated to more cooperative behaviour and lower cultural barriers towards goods and services produced in a foreign country. The approach emphasizes the role of religious openness that is an open and tolerant attitude towards religion and other religions rather than sharing or the attitude of a specific confession. One of the fundamental claims of the Christian church is that God is present in all spheres of life. God is not with us at only certain times and places. Rather, all aspects of our life our work, our church involvements, our family relationships are subject to God's judgment and to God's grace. On the one hand, this means that we cannot escape the question, "What is God's will in this situation?" in

any of our activities. God's concern and God's judgment are ever-present. On the other hand, this means that the transforming presence of the Holy Spirit is with us in all our activities, and that there is no situation in which we cannot call upon and expect God's help, (Noland, 2005). Of course, such claims do not exclude the economic sphere of life. As we shall see in the next chapter, the God we offer devotions is as deeply concerned with the economy of his people as with their spiritual well-being. The economic activities in which we engage are a vitally important part of our lives. As such, they reflect our faith (or our lack of faith) as much as do our Sunday morning devotional activities. What are some of these economic activities? (Noland, 2005). Though there are some literatures that link religion and economy, there are no specific theories linking how Christian devotional activities influences economic development. Many studies have found that religious beliefs contribute to positive economic behaviour, particularly with regards to Christian religions, but at the same time studies have established that religious people are more racist which in theory reduces trust, an important component of economic growth, and are less tolerant of working women, which affects the potential size of the economically productive workforce (Guiso *et al.*, 2003).

In a study conducted by Barro *et al.* (2003) on Religious Faith and Economic Growth: What Matters Most-Belief or Belonging? In their study one important line of research posits that religion (or measures of religiosity) is dependent upon developments in the economic and political aspects of contemporary life. This research suggests that events in an economy levels and standard of living or governmental market interference influence such things as church attendance or religious beliefs. The second theoretical approach looked at the connection between religion and economic and social life from the other direction. Religion is thought of as being the independent variable, influencing something about outcome on the economic, political, and social side. For example, Max Weber's famous theory about capitalism is in that line: Religiosity influences economic performance. The findings of the study were; economic development as a single kind of indicator like per capita gross domestic product or real income per person you definitely find a strong pattern whereby more economic development and higher per capita income are associated with lower religiosity. They also made an argument that causation runs from economic development to religiosity. That is, getting richer means you practice less religion, rather than the reverse. A greater diversity of religions represented in the country is associated with more religiosity, more participation, and firmer beliefs. Abundant evidence affirms that religious belief affects a wide range of behavioral outcomes (Iannaccone 1999), and religious activity can affect

economic performance at the level of the individual, group, or nation through at least two channels. In *Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith argued that participation in religious sects could potentially convey two economic advantages to adherents (Anderson, 1988). The first could be as a reputational signal: while the poor might look alike to potential employers, lenders, and customers, membership in a "good" sect could convey a reduction in risk associated with the particular individual and ultimately improve the efficient allocation of resources. Second, sects could also provide for extra-legal means of establishing trust and sanctioning miscreants in intra-group transactions, again reducing uncertainty and improving efficiency, especially where civil remedies for failure to uphold contracts were weak. This interpretation is essentially content less with respect to the actual nature of religious belief. Indeed, there is nothing necessarily unique about religious sects in this regard the argument could apply to a wide range of voluntary associations or clubs.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study used survey method. The researcher chose this research design since inferences about relations among variables are made, without direct intervention from concomitant variation of independent and dependent variables (Paton, 2000). The main units of this study were the church. The population in this study thus comprised of church members who helped the study in showing the importance of Christian practices to economic development and church management or leadership who gave details in the importance of the church leadership on devotional practices like singing and praying and how it helped in the development of the economy. The target population was 300, 200 from church members and 100 from church management. The research instruments used was the self administered questionnaires 60 for church members and 30 for interview guides.

### Data analysis and discussion of findings

The data collected was summarized and analyzed using SPSS version 20 software package and outputs interpreted accordingly to explain possible reasons behind the findings, significance and applications. The three parts that follow attempted to answer the research questions of the study.

### The effects of the Christian devotional practices on economic development

The study sought to find out the effects of Christian devotional practices on economic development as shown in table 1 below whereby 1-Strongly agree, 2-Agree, 3- Neutral, 4-Disagree and 5-Strongly Disagree.

**Table 1. The effects of the Christian devotional practices on economic development**

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
A lot of time spent in the church devotion leads to less time in economic development	6 (6.7%)	12 (13.3%)	6 (6.7%)	36 (40%)	30 (33.3%)
I am always attending church more than engaging in economic development activities	3 (3.3%)	15 (16.7%)	6 (6.7%)	33 (36.7%)	33 (36.7%)
Those fully engaged in Christian devotion practices end up doing business within the church	9 (10%)	18 (20%)	6 (6.7%)	30 (33.3%)	36 (40%)
Church officials fully participating in Christian devotion practices are paid wages to sustain their life	9 (10%)	9 (10%)	21 (23.3%)	24 (26.7%)	27 (30%)
Devotion practices leads to physical and spiritual healing	48 (53.3%)	30 (33.3%)	9 (10%)	3(3.3%)	

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It was found that 40% disagreed that a lot of time spent in the church devotion leads to less time in economic development, 36.7% disagreed that they always attend church more than engaging in economic development activities, 40% disagreed that those fully engaged in Christian devotion practices end up doing business within the church while 30% disagreed that Church officials fully participating in Christian devotion practices are paid wages to sustain their life and 53.3% agreed that devotion practices leads to physical and spiritual healing.

### The contribution of Christian devotional practices on economic development

The study sought to find out the contribution of Christian devotional practices on economic development as shown in table 2 below whereby 1-Strongly agree, 2-Agree, 3- Neutral, 4-Disagree and SD-Strongly Disagree.

**Table 2. The contribution of Christian devotional practices on economic development**

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Participating in Christian devotion practices leads to nurturing of talents that enable individuals in acquisition of goods and services	30(33.3%)	42(46.7%)		6(6.7%)	12(13.3%)
Participating in Christian devotional practices leads to selling of recorded Christian music facilitating distribution of goods and services	12(13.3%)	51(56.7%)	12(13.3%)	9(10.0%)	6(6.7%)
Participating in Christian devotional practices leads to selling of recorded Christian music facilitating consumption of goods and services	6(6.7%)	45(50%)	15(16.7%)	12(13.3%)	12(13.3%)
Participating in Christian devotional practices leads to molding of leaders who become supervisors in economic activities	36(40.0%)	30(33.3%)	9 (10.0%)	12(13.3%)	3(3.3%)
Participating in Christian devotional practices leads to acting in Christian Movies hence they earn an income	6 (6.7%)	42(46.7%)	6 (6.7%)	12(13.3%)	24(26.7%)

**Table 3. The level of awareness of the economic values that the Christians have on the members of different denominations in Nandi County**

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Christian teachings enables members to engage in business activities despite denominational barriers thus leading to economic development	27(30%)	48(53.3%)	3 (3.3%)	9(10%)	3 (3.3%)
Christian conferences are held anywhere despite the denomination thus leading to economic development	18(20.0%)	42(46.7%)	18(20.0%)	9(10.0%)	3(3.3%)
Through crusades organized by Christians they are able to invite people from any denomination thus leading to economic development	12(13.3%)	45(50%)	18(20%)	6(6.7%)	9(10.0%)
Bible study organized by Christians leads to selling of many bibles thus leading to economic development	15 (16.7%)	27(30%)	18(20%)	6(6.7%)	24(26.7%)
Through door to door evangelism organized by Christians it leads to mutual co-existence necessary in economic development	18(20%)	39(43.3%)	9(10%)	9(10%)	15(16.7%)

### Discussion of findings

It was established that 46.7% agreed that participating in Christian devotion practices leads to nurturing of talents that enable individuals in acquisition of goods and services, 56.7% agreed that participating in Christian devotional practices leads to selling of recorded Christian music facilitating distribution of goods and services, 50% agreed that participating in Christian devotional practices leads to selling of recorded Christian music facilitating consumption of goods and services while 40% strongly agreed that participating in Christian devotional practices leads to molding of leaders who become supervisors in economic activities and 46.7% agreed that participating in Christian devotional practices leads to acting in Christian Movies hence they earn an income.

### The level of awareness of the economic values that the Christians have on the members of different denominations in Nandi County

The study sought to find out the level of awareness of the economic values that the Christians have on the members of different denominations in Nandi County as shown in table 3 below whereby 1-Strongly agree, 2-Agree, 3- Neutral, 4-Disagree and SD-Strongly Disagree. It was established that 53.3% agreed that Christian teachings enables members to engage in business activities despite denominational barriers thus leading to economic development, 46.7% agreed that Christian conferences are held anywhere despite the denomination thus leading to economic development, 50% agreed that through crusades organized by Christians enabled them to invite people from any denomination thus leading to economic development while 30% agreed that Bible study organized by Christians leads to selling of many bibles thus leading to economic development and 43.3% agreed that through door to door evangelism organized by Christians enables mutual co-existence necessary in economic development.

### Recommendations, summary, conclusions and areas for further research

#### Recommendations

The study and relevant literature review called for key recommendations: First, There is nothing like time wasting in the church. A lot of time should be spend in the church because devotional practices have been seen to be influencing peoples moral behavior and individual moral reputation has capital values. In so doing investor confident is attracted. This is because from the findings majority of the participants disagreed that a lot of time spent in Church devotion leads to less time in economic development, secondly, the researcher recommends to all Christians to always attend church more often as they will get teachings making them spiritually strong

and this enables them to face day to day challenges of economic nature without fear, thirdly the researcher also recommends that Christian should avoid any business within the church premises and that churches should be a sacred place where devotion to God are held. However running business anywhere and even in crusades are welcome and the researcher recommends to the church leaders to start lessons on how Christians start and maintain businesses, they should not only dwell on salvation messages in all devotional caterings.

### Summary and conclusions

The effects of the Christian devotional practices on economic development are that Christian devotional practices improves the economic development. The contribution of Christian devotional practices on economic development are: it leads to nurturing of talents that enable individuals in acquisition of goods and services, leads to selling of recorded Christian music facilitating distribution of goods and services, leads to selling of recorded Christian music facilitating consumption of goods and services, leads to molding of leaders who become supervisors in economic activities and also leads to acting in Christian Movies hence they earn an income. The level of awareness of the economic values that the Christians have on the members of different denominations in Nandi County are: the Christian teachings enables members to engage in business activities despite denominational barriers thus leading to economic development, Christian conferences are held anywhere despite the denomination thus leading to economic development, through crusades organized by Christians they are able to bring together people from different denominations thus leading to economic development, door to door evangelism organized by Christians leads to mutual co-existence necessary in economic development and Bible study organized by Christians leads to selling of many bibles leading to economic development.

### Areas for further research

Based on the study undertaken, the following suggestion is made for further study: Further research should be conducted on the influence of the economy to the Church activities. This will make the researchers to dwell on how the economy influences the church both positively and negatively. Further research should also be conducted on the contributions of the church to the Economy. There should be a research on relationship between tithing in the church and gaining wealth.

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