



THE RISE OF PENTECOSTALISM AND LAND USE IN NIGERIA (1980–2026)

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Abstract

This study examines the rise of Pentecostalism in Nigeria and its implications for land use, urban expansion, and environmental transformation between 1980 and 2026. Since the late twentieth century, Pentecostal Christianity has emerged as one of the fastest-growing religious movements in Nigeria, profoundly reshaping the social, economic, and physical landscapes of both urban and rural communities. The rapid proliferation of church planting, mega-church auditoriums, prayer camps, retreat centres, educational institutions, and commercial religious infrastructures have generated significant changes in patterns of land acquisition and utilization across the country. Using a historical and analytic approach, the study draws from religious history, urban studies, environmental sociology, and political economy to analyze the relationship between Pentecostal growth and land use. The research employs qualitative and documentary methods, including archival materials, government land policies, church records, scholarly publications, media reports, and case studies of major Pentecostal organizations in Nigeria. Particular attention is given to the spatial expansion of Pentecostal ministries in cities such as Lagos, Port Harcourt, Abuja, and Ibadan, where extensive religious constructions have altered ecological systems, transportation patterns, and settlement structures. The research therefore recommends that government agencies strengthen urban planning and environmental regulations relating to religious infrastructures; that churches conduct environmental impact assessments before embarking on major construction projects; and that religious institutions adopt sustainable building practices and ecological conservation strategies.

Keywords: Pentecostalism, land use, church planting, environmental transformation, Nigeria, religion and environment.

Introduction

Pentecostalism has emerged as one of the most influential religious movements in contemporary Nigeria. Since the 1980s, the movement has experienced unprecedented growth, extending its influence into politics, economics, education, media, and urban development. The expansion of Pentecostal Christianity has not only transformed the religious identity of millions of Nigerians but has also reshaped the physical and environmental landscape of the country. Across Nigerian cities and rural communities, Pentecostal churches have established worship centres, prayer camps, universities, event arenas, and large-scale religious infrastructures that significantly affect patterns of land ownership and environmental management.

The rapid proliferation of Pentecostal churches has generated scholarly interest because of its profound implications for urban planning and environmental sustainability. Scholars such

as Ojo (2006), Marshall (2009), and Gifford (2014) argue that Pentecostalism in Africa represents not merely a spiritual revival but a socio-cultural revolution capable of influencing political and economic structures. In Nigeria, the growth of mega-churches and religious camps has become particularly visible in Lagos, Ogun State, Port Harcourt, Abuja, and other rapidly urbanizing centres. The construction of massive auditoriums, housing estates, schools, and business complexes by Pentecostal ministries has led to significant land transformation and ecological changes.

The phenomenon of church planting has become one of the defining characteristics of Nigerian Pentecostalism. Many Pentecostal denominations emphasize aggressive evangelism and territorial expansion as signs of spiritual growth and divine mandate. Consequently, churches seek strategic locations along highways, urban centres, residential neighbourhoods, and rural outskirts. This expansion often results in the conversion of agricultural lands, wetlands, and forest areas into religious spaces. In some cases, the absence of effective environmental regulation has contributed to traffic congestion, indiscriminate waste disposal, flooding, and land-use conflicts.

Despite these challenges, Pentecostal institutions have also contributed positively to national development. Many churches have invested heavily in infrastructure, social welfare, healthcare, education, and employment generation. Pentecostal universities, hospitals, and social intervention programs have improved the quality of life for many Nigerians. Thus, the rise of Pentecostalism presents a complex relationship between religion, development, and environmental transformation.

This paper examines the relationship between Pentecostalism and land use in Nigeria between 1980 and 2026. It investigates how Pentecostal land use has altered urban and rural environments and evaluates both the positive and negative consequences of these transformations. The study also explores the implications of Pentecostal land acquisition for sustainable development and environmental governance in Nigeria.

Literature Review

The rise of Pentecostalism in Africa has attracted extensive scholarly attention over the past four decades. Scholars have explored Pentecostalism from theological, sociological, political, economic, and anthropological perspectives. However, limited attention has been given to the relationship between Pentecostalism and land use, particularly within the Nigerian context.

Anderson (2013) argues that Pentecostalism has become one of the most dynamic forms of Christianity globally because of its adaptability to local cultures, emphasis on spiritual empowerment, and engagement with social realities. In Africa, Pentecostalism is often associated with modernization, urban migration, entrepreneurship, and social mobility.

Kalu (2008) observes that African Pentecostalism emerged as a response to social instability, economic crises, and the search for existential meaning in postcolonial societies. Nigerian Pentecostal churches, according to Kalu, gained popularity by addressing practical concerns such as poverty, unemployment, sickness, and insecurity.

Marshall (2009) explains that Pentecostalism in Nigeria operates not merely as a religious movement but as a political and economic force that shapes public life. The movement has influenced education, governance, commerce, media, and urban development.

Ukah (2008) specifically examines the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) and demonstrates how Pentecostal institutions have transformed urban spaces through the establishment of prayer camps and mega auditoriums. Ukah argues that Pentecostalism has created alternative urban spaces that function simultaneously as spiritual, economic, and residential environments.

Scholars of urbanization such as Mabogunje (2007) emphasize that rapid urban growth in Nigeria has intensified pressure on land resources and environmental infrastructure. Religious institutions, including Pentecostal churches, have become important actors within the urbanization process.

Environmental scholars have also highlighted the ecological implications of religious expansion. Yusuf and Salawu (2022) argue that indiscriminate religious construction contributes to environmental degradation, flooding, waste generation, and traffic congestion in Nigerian cities. They note that weak environmental regulation and poor urban planning worsen these challenges.

Despite increasing scholarship on Pentecostalism, significant gaps remain regarding the environmental consequences of Pentecostal land use in Nigeria between 1980 and 2026. This study contributes to existing literature by integrating religious studies, urban studies, and environmental analysis.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the theory of spatial production developed by Henri Lefebvre. Henri Lefebvre's theory of spatial production argues that social institutions actively produce and transform physical spaces according to their ideological, economic, and cultural interests (Lefebvre, 1974). Space is therefore not neutral but socially constructed. It was pioneered in his 1974 book, *La Production de l'espace*. This book was translated into English by Donald Nicholson-Smith in the year 1991.

Applying this theory to Pentecostalism and land use in Nigeria, Pentecostal churches can be understood as institutions that reshape urban and rural spaces through land acquisition, infrastructure development, and territorial expansion. Mega churches, prayer camps, and Christian universities represent socially produced religious spaces that redefine patterns of habitation, commerce, and environmental interaction.

Pentecostal churches do not merely acquire land to occupy space; they transform the land they have acquired into religious, economic, and social environments. Prayer camps become urban settlements, worship auditoriums, economic centres, and religious highways emerge as new geographical identities.

Research Method

This study adopts a qualitative and historical research methodology. Qualitative research involves collecting and analysing non-numerical data to understand opinions, concepts, or experiences. It can be used to gather in-depth insights into a problem or generate new ideas for research (Bhandari, 2025). On the other hand, historical research methodology is a systematic process used to collect, evaluate and interpret past events. I analysed existing secondary sources to get accurate account of how Pentecostals transformed lands that were originally used for agriculture, and sacred traditional religious practices into religious spaces. I also used the information I gathered from different sources to critically examine and identify



patterns of Pentecostal expansion and their implications for land use and environmental transformation in Nigeria.

Sources of Data

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data include observations, church publications, conference materials, and reports from religious organizations. Secondary data include books, journal articles, newspapers, government documents, environmental reports, and online academic resources. However, this study relied mostly on secondary data which have stood the test of time, and have been verified to be accurate. The data was evaluated and scrutinised with a critical eye in order to arrive at valid conclusions.

Scope of the Study

The scope of a study can be understood as the boundaries, parameters, and specific limits of a research project, detailing what the research covers, such as the target population, geographical area, and timeframe. The study focuses on Nigeria between 1980 and 2026. This period is significant because it witnessed the rapid growth of Pentecostal Christianity and the emergence of mega churches, prayer camps, and extensive religious infrastructures in Nigeria. This research focused more in the period (1980 – 2026) in order to present realistic information and prevent it from becoming very hard to finish or conclude. Furthermore, emphasis is placed on Pentecostalism because it is currently the largest religious movement in Nigeria. It is easier to relate with facts and confirm opinions stated because Pentecostal churches are visible in virtually every street around us.

Conceptual Clarifications

Pentecostalism

Pentecostalism refers to a Christian movement that emphasizes the experience of the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts, healing, miracles, speaking in tongues, and evangelism. The movement is characterized by vibrant worship, emphasis on prosperity, speaking in tongues, personal transformation, and aggressive missionary activities. Nigerian Pentecostalism includes classical Pentecostal denominations, neo-Pentecostal churches, charismatic ministries, and independent prophetic movements (Anderson, 2013). It began when a new wave of religious revival occurred in campus fellowship in Nigerian universities in the early 1980s. The student revivals led to local breakaways into massive global megachurches that we have in every street around us today. Religious leaders like Archbishop Benson Idahosa of Edo State, and Pa Josiah Akindayomi who founded the Redeemed Christian Church of God, laid the structural groundwork or foundation of Pentecostalism in Nigeria. Archbishop Idahosa is widely regarded as the father of Pentecostal movement in Nigeria.

Land Use

Land use refers to the manner in which land resources are utilized for residential, commercial, agricultural, industrial, religious, or recreational purposes (Mabogunje, 2007). In this study, land use specifically concerns the acquisition, development, and transformation of land for religious activities and institutions. Religious land use deals with how churches and other faith groups acquire, allocate and treat physical land for worship, burials, and other

relevant religious activities, in accordance with the Land Use Act of 1978. The Act requires churches to apply for statutory or customary rights of occupancy from the state government or local authorities to legally build places of worship.

Historical Development of Pentecostalism in Nigeria

Historically, the emergence of Pentecostalism in Nigeria dates to the early twentieth century. Its roots are commonly linked to the activities of an Anglican deacon who initiated an indigenous prophetic movement in the early 1910s, a movement that eventually developed into the Christ Army Church (Pew Research Center, 2006). Although the movement initially encountered opposition from established Christian denominations, it gradually expanded, particularly among marginalized communities searching for spiritual renewal, hope, and empowerment (Nel, 2018). Over time, Pentecostalism evolved into one of the most influential expressions of Christianity in Nigeria, extending its presence into both urban and rural communities and significantly shaping the religious beliefs, worship patterns, and cultural outlook of millions of Nigerians. Its rapid expansion has largely been driven by its ability to respond to people's desire for social, economic, and spiritual transformation.

As part of the wider global Pentecostal movement, which places strong emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit and the exercise of charismatic gifts, Nigerian Pentecostalism has developed distinctive features of its own. It is widely recognized for energetic worship, passionate preaching, and a strong emphasis on personal conversion and life transformation (Babalola, 2016). Many Pentecostal believers claim to experience the gifts of the Holy Spirit, including speaking in tongues, prophecy, divine healing, and miracles. These practices have attracted large numbers of Nigerians who seek solutions to personal, financial, health, and spiritual challenges. During the past decade, Pentecostal churches have continued to multiply across the country, drawing followers from diverse social and economic backgrounds with messages centered on healing, prosperity, deliverance, and spiritual renewal. The movement's remarkable growth reflects the continuing search among many Nigerians for practical and spiritual responses to life's challenges.

From a historical perspective, Pentecostalism began gaining wider recognition in Nigeria during the early twentieth century through the activities of charismatic missionaries and evangelists who introduced a renewed evangelical emphasis and revivalist spirituality (African Pentecostalism, 2023; Pew Research Center, 2006). Their mission combined gospel proclamation with practical social engagement, laying a foundation for the growth of Pentecostal Christianity. In contemporary Nigeria, this emphasis on evangelism accompanied by social action has continued to encourage many individuals to identify with Pentecostal congregations. Consequently, the development of Pentecostalism in Nigeria represents an important chapter in the nation's religious history, reflecting the interaction between revival movements, changing social conditions, and evolving cultural realities.

A significant milestone in this historical development occurred around 1918, when members of the Anglican Church formed the Precious Stone Society. The group's primary objective was to provide prayer and healing for victims of the influenza epidemic. In the early 1920s, the society separated from the Anglican Church and established a relationship with the Faith Tabernacle movement headquartered in Philadelphia (Okai, 2016). This development contributed to the rise of the Aladura ("praying people") movement, which emerged during the 1920s and is widely regarded as one of the earliest indigenous expressions of Pentecostal

Christianity in Nigeria. Among the pioneering Aladura churches were the Eternal Sacred Order of the Cherubim and Seraphim Society, founded in 1925, and the Church of the Lord, established in 1930 (Agha, 2013:42).

The acceptance and growth of Pentecostalism in Nigeria were also influenced by the country's indigenous religious environment. Traditional African religious beliefs, which place considerable emphasis on spiritual power, healing, divine intervention, and supernatural experiences, created conditions that made Pentecostal teachings both understandable and appealing to many Nigerians. Consequently, the early Pentecostal movement emphasized prayer, miraculous healing, and direct encounters with divine power.

Another major turning point came during the 1930s through the revival ministry of Joseph Babalola, a leading figure within the Faith Tabernacle movement. His evangelistic campaigns reportedly led to the conversion of thousands of people and contributed significantly to the spread of Pentecostal Christianity throughout southwestern Nigeria. Following disagreements with colonial authorities, the movement established links with the Pentecostal Apostolic Church of Great Britain. However, this partnership eventually ended because of differing views regarding the acceptance of modern medical treatment (Pew Research Center 2006). In 1941, Babalola established the independent Christ Apostolic Church, which by 1990 was estimated to have grown to more than one million members (Pew Research Center 2006).

The expansion of Pentecostal Christianity in Nigeria was further strengthened by the arrival of foreign Pentecostal denominations. The Welsh Apostolic Church began missionary work around 1931, followed by the Assemblies of God in approximately 1939 and the Foursquare Gospel Church around 1954 (Okai, 2016). From the 1980s onward, a new generation of charismatic ministries emerged, including Living Faith Outreach Worldwide, the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Deeper Life Bible Church, and Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries. These churches developed into some of the country's largest and most influential Pentecostal organizations, attracting millions of adherents through their emphasis on faith, prosperity, deliverance, healing, and evangelism (Kalu, 2008). Their continued expansion has reinforced Pentecostalism's position as one of the most dynamic and influential religious movements in contemporary Nigeria.

The rise of televangelism, Christian media, and prosperity preaching further accelerated Pentecostal growth. Pentecostal leaders became influential public figures whose ministries attracted large followings and financial resources. As membership increased, churches began acquiring large portions of land for auditoriums, prayer camps, educational institutions, and residential estates. One of the most significant developments was the emergence of religious camps along the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway. The RCCG Redemption Camp, Faith Tabernacle of Living Faith Church, and other large prayer camps transformed previously undeveloped areas into densely populated religious and commercial zones. These developments altered the socio-economic and environmental structure of the region.

Pentecostalism and Land Use

The rise of Pentecostalism and land use in Nigeria has both positive and negative implications. On the positive side, a close observation of the activities of Pentecostal denominations and their leaders have revealed that they acquire land in line with the Land Use Act of 1978 and use those lands to build religious infrastructures. These religious

infrastructures, for example, churches, are seen as part and parcel of their mandate to evangelize the universe. The practice of building a church “within five minutes’ walking distance” has become popular among some Pentecostal denominations, particularly the RCCG and Winners Chapel, and has contributed to the rapid multiplication of worship centres in many places.

Urban centres such as Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt, Benin City, and Ibadan have witnessed significant expansion of Pentecostal infrastructures. Furthermore, churches occupy residential buildings, converted warehouses, shopping complexes, and purpose-built auditoriums. Scholars argue that Pentecostal urban expansion reflects the broader interaction between religion and neoliberal capitalism in Africa (Marshall, 2009). Churches increasingly function not only as worship centres but also as economic institutions that influence real estate development, transportation systems, and commercial activities.

Pentecostal universities such as Covenant University and Landmark University, owned by Living Faith Church, Redeemer’s University, owned by RCCG, Joseph Ayo Babalola University, owned by Christ Apostolic Church, Anchor University, owned by Deeper Life Bible Church, and Bowen University, owned by the Baptist Church, have also transformed land-use patterns by converting rural areas into educational and residential environments.

Agriculture is another area where Pentecostal churches make valuable use of land. The primary economic activity of most communities, including the owners of the lands acquired by Pentecostals, is agriculture. Agriculture is an activity carried out by males and females. Farming was basically subsistence, as the family depended on the farm produce for food, and the leftover was sold to make some financial gains. Little wonder Ake (1981) agreed that the most fundamental need of man is the economic need. Man must eat before he can do anything else. He needs to survive before he can worship, pursue culture, or achieve whatever he can. In the field of agriculture, Pentecostal churches are introducing new farming techniques and crops. This is carried out first by teaching members who are also part of the community the need for hard work and the principles of growing a variety of cash crops: palm trees, oranges, and pineapples, as well as guava, mangos, etc., which is helping to foster development. In some of the churches, garden plots are planted within the premises.

On a negative note, the rise of Pentecostalism and subsequent land use has had significant environmental consequences in Nigeria. Religious infrastructures require extensive physical development, including road construction, electricity installation, drainage systems, and land clearing. These activities often alter ecosystems and natural landscapes. Many Pentecostal camps and auditoriums are built on areas that were previously forests used as farmland. For example, Ori Oke Iyanu in Epe, Lagos State; Ori Oke Baba Oosa in Ogun State, and Ori Oke Aanu in Ogun State were known forests. However, they have been converted to prominent prayer mountains frequently used for spiritual retreats. Large-scale land clearing gives room for deforestation, habitat destruction, biodiversity loss and their effects to occur. In the western part of Nigeria, rapid developments stirred by Pentecostalism and land use along major roads and highways have reduced vegetation, and made direct rainfall to erode natural resources on land. Beyond that, local production of food is affected and some persons in the villages are forced out of their homes because the value of land rises in areas where religious centres are expanding.

Noise pollution is another negative issue surrounding Pentecostalism and land use in Nigeria. Night vigils, outdoor crusades, and amplified worship services usually generate too

much noise in residential areas. According to a report by The Guardian, (2025) Lagos State Government said that 63 per cent of the 1,616 noise pollution petitions in 2025 from residents were against religious organisations. A breakdown of the petitions revealed that there were 1,018 complaints against religious organisations, followed by 434 against entertainment houses and residential homes was 308. Factories and generating sets accounted for the others. This resulted to occasional clashes between churches and environmental agencies and local governments over compliance with noise control regulations (The Guardian, 2025).

In another report by Ogun State Environmental Protection Agency (OGEPA), three worship centres – Christ Apostolic Church, Fountain of Faith District Headquarters, Gbogunmi, Itedo Alafia Community; Ambassador of Truth Assembly International, Olorunseye Avenue, Ijeun Titu; and Salvation Ministries, Kuforiji Olubi Drive Adigbe GRA, all in Abeokuta, were sealed by Ogun State Government over contravention of laws on noise pollution (OGEPA, 2024).

Contributions of Pentecostal Land Use

Despite environmental concerns, Pentecostal churches have made significant contributions to Nigeria's socio-economic development. Many churches operate educational institutions, healthcare facilities, skill acquisition centres, and poverty alleviation programs.

One of the major contributions of Pentecostal land use is that it generates employment. Church construction projects, universities, media houses, and event centres create employment opportunities for architects, engineers, artisans, security personnel, and service providers. Religious tourism associated with conventions and crusades also stimulates local economies. Another contribution is educational development. Pentecostal churches have invested heavily in education through the establishment of primary schools, secondary schools, and universities. Institutions such as Covenant University, Babcock University and Bowen University have become important contributors to higher education in Nigeria, and impacted greatly on the literacy level of people.

Infrastructure development is also a key contribution of Pentecostal land use. Some churches construct roads, provide electricity, improve drainage systems, and support community development initiatives. In areas where government presence is limited, religious institutions often provide essential social services to the people who own the area they occupy. Social welfare cannot be left unmentioned as a contribution of Pentecostal land use. Pentecostal organizations frequently engage in humanitarian activities such as food distribution, healthcare outreach, scholarships, and disaster relief. These initiatives contribute to social stability and poverty reduction.

Pentecostalism, Politics, and Land Governance

The influence of Pentecostalism extends into political and governmental spheres. Pentecostal leaders often maintain close relationships with political elites and policymakers. In fact, Pentecostal politicians have held the presidency (Goodluck Jonathan), governorships, ministerial positions, and legislative seats across Nigeria. This has influenced land allocation, urban planning decisions, and environmental regulations.

Critics argue that political patronage sometimes enables churches to bypass environmental laws and planning regulations. In some cases, unauthorized religious structures emerge in residential areas without proper permits or environmental assessments. At the same



time, churches also advocate moral reform, anti-corruption campaigns, and community development. The relationship between Pentecostalism and governance therefore remains complex and multifaceted.

Environmental governance in Nigeria faces numerous challenges, including weak institutional enforcement, corruption, inadequate urban planning, and rapid population growth. The expansion of religious infrastructures further complicates these challenges.

Pentecostalism and Sustainable Development

Sustainable development requires balancing economic growth, social welfare, and environmental protection. Pentecostal churches have the potential to contribute significantly to sustainable development through environmental education, ecological stewardship, and responsible land management.

Some churches have begun incorporating environmental awareness into their teachings and community programs. Tree planting campaigns, waste recycling initiatives, and clean-up exercises demonstrate increasing recognition of environmental responsibility.

However, much remains to be done. Religious organizations must collaborate with urban planners, environmental agencies, and local communities to ensure sustainable land use practices. Environmental impact assessments should become mandatory for large-scale religious developments.

Church leaders can also use their moral influence to promote ecological ethics and environmental conservation among their members. Since Pentecostalism commands enormous social influence in Nigeria, it possesses significant capacity to shape public attitudes toward environmental sustainability.

Challenges Associated with Pentecostal Land Use

Several challenges arise from the relationship between Pentecostalism and land use in Nigeria. The first challenge to be considered is weak urban planning. Rapid church expansion often exceeds the capacity of urban planning institutions. Unapproved construction and inadequate zoning contribute to environmental disorder. Disputes over land ownership sometimes occur between churches and local communities or community members. For example, on April 15, 2026, Punch Newspaper reported a land dispute between Harvesters Church and one Mr Olusola Shadrach. The Lagos State Government arraigned him before the State High Court sitting in Ikeja over the alleged forceful takeover and damage of a landed property belonging to the church along the Gbagada-Oworonshoki Expressway (Dania, 2026). The defendant was arraigned before Justice Hakeem Oshodi on a three-count charge bordering on forceful takeover, wilful damage, and breach of peace, preferred against him by the state. Such land disputes may be caused by rising land values around religious centres, and can intensify competition for land resources.

Commercialization of religion is another major challenge associated with Pentecostal land use. Commercialization of religion refers to the practice of exploiting religious beliefs and practices for financial gain. This phenomenon can manifest in various forms, including the sale of religious artifacts, the marketing of spiritual experiences, and the monetization of religious teachings. In contemporary times, commercialization of religion can be seen in the proliferation of prosperity gospel teachings, where financial success is often equated with spiritual favour (Bible Hub, 2026). This approach can lead to the exploitation of believers who



are encouraged to give money with the promise of receiving divine blessings in return. The Apostle Paul warns against such practices in 1 Timothy 6:5, where he speaks of those who are "deprived of the truth, who think that godliness is a means of gain." Some critics argue that excessive emphasis on church expansion reflects commercialization rather than genuine spiritual development. The pursuit of prestigious infrastructures may divert attention from social and environmental responsibilities.

Inadequate waste management, excessive noise, and ecological disruption are other major concerns associated with some Pentecostal developments. As stated earlier, a report by The Guardian reveals that Lagos State Government said 63 per cent of the 1,616 noise pollution petitions in 2025 from residents were against churches, leading to occasional clashes between churches and environmental agencies, and local governments over compliance with noise control regulations.

Recommendations

To address the challenges associated with Pentecostalism and land use in Nigeria, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Government agencies should strengthen urban planning and environmental regulations relating to religious infrastructures.
2. Churches should conduct environmental impact assessments before embarking on major construction projects.
3. Religious institutions should adopt sustainable building practices and ecological conservation strategies.
4. Collaboration between churches, environmental agencies, and local communities should be encouraged.
5. Public awareness campaigns on environmental stewardship should be integrated into church teachings and programs.
6. Waste management, drainage systems, and traffic control measures should be improved around major religious centres.
7. The government should enforce zoning regulations to prevent indiscriminate conversion of residential areas into worship centres.

Conclusion

The rise of Pentecostalism in Nigeria can be traced to the early 1910s, and it developed gradually up to the early 1980s, when it proliferated throughout the whole country. The period under study, from 1980 to 2026, is sacrosanct because it marked a rapid transformation of the nation's religious, social, and environmental landscape. Recently, Pentecostal churches have emerged as powerful institutions whose influence extends beyond spirituality into urbanization, economics, education, and land development.

The Pentecostal strategy of church planting and infrastructural development has reshaped patterns of land use across Nigeria, as they have so far acquired acres of land and built mega-churches, prayer camps, universities, religious estates, secondary schools, business centres. This has stimulated economic growth via employment, and infrastructural development while simultaneously contributing to ecological challenges such as deforestation, noise pollution, flooding, and urban congestion.



This study pinpoints that Pentecostalism is both a religious and spatial phenomenon with far-reaching implications for sustainable development. While Pentecostal institutions contribute significantly to social welfare and economic progress, there is an urgent need for responsible environmental governance and sustainable land management. Furthermore, there is need for proper waste management, drainage systems, and traffic control measures should be improved around major religious centres to reduce the negative effects of Pentecostal land use in Nigeria.

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