

USING GENESIS 26:12-14 AS A BIBLICAL PRACTICE FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY THROUGH AGRO-BUSINESS IN NIGERIA¹

Obedben Mmesomachukwu Lumanze,
LIFE College of Theology, Aba
Nigeria
obedbb@gmail.com +234 806 6269 954

Abstract

The agricultural sector is an important sector that often contributes to the growth of the overall economy of many nations. In the past, the sector has contributed much to the Nigerian economy. However, because of the oil glut that emerged, various administrations shifted their attentions to the oil sector, thus neglecting or paying lip service to the agricultural sector. This paper is an attempt to use the Old Testament text, Genesis 26:12-14 to demonstrate that even God encouraged agriculture when He advised Isaac to sow in the land despite the raging famine. The methods used for the study are the descriptive and exegetical methods of research. The text under study was lexically analysed and the findings showed that obedience to the voice of God, hard-work and diligence are necessary for economic recovery of a nation, such as Nigeria. Again, it was established along the line that one does not need to run away from the country to be successful in Nigeria that is so blessed and that if one invests in it, with God's blessing and favour, bountiful harvests will be reaped. The study ended with some recommendations that the government should seek for practical ways to diversify the economy of the nation in agricultural line, and that religious and traditional institutions should encourage hard-work and diligence among young people.

Keywords: Nigeria, Economy, Economic Recovery, Isaac, Agricultural Sector, God

Introduction

By agriculture, this study means the cultivation of crops and rearing of animals (livestock and fish) for domestic consumption and export purposes. The agricultural sector is usually an important sector in the economic development and job creation drive of many countries in the world. By and large, a country's economy can hardly thrive and or boom without the agricultural sector. In many Asian countries: China, Thailand, Malaysia, India, Indonesia, and many other countries in South American

countries like Brazil, Peru, and Mexico, the agricultural sector is often the main thrust of their national survival, for job creation, food production, and foreign exchange earnings.²

In the Nigerian experience, agriculture used to be an important sector of the economy. During the colonial era and after independence, the major source of Nigeria's foreign exchange was agriculture, but unfortunately since the nation's independence in 1960, the agric sector has continued to decline as a result of the emergent oil glut. Ben Aigbokhan's indices explain the matter clearer. According to him, the agric sector's contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1960-1964 was 63% and 54% in 1965-1969. However, from 1970 downwards, the sector has continued to decline. By 1974, it declined to 33% and by 1993, it has rapidly declined to 8%.³ Boaz Yakubu affirms that before the 1970s, the Nigerian agricultural sector used to be the mainstay of the economy. According to him, the sector generated or supplied over 50 percent (%) of the GDP.⁴

The above indices show that from the 1970s and 80s, Nigeria's economy, employment drive and foreign exchange earnings shifted to the oil sector. From then on, Nigeria has continued to depend heavily on the oil sector for her revenue generation. The agricultural sector has been neglected by subsequent administrations, and when it is talked about, it is often with lip service. Even though many administrations in the past have, on the face of it, tried in various ways to revitalize this sector, no meaningful results have been achieved.

The purpose of this study is to use the Old Testament text, Genesis 26:12-14 to establish the fact that the agric sector is an important sector that should not be neglected if Nigeria's economy would be revitalized. The methods used for the study are the descriptive and exegetical methods of research. The text under study is lexically analyzed in order to discover some principles that can be applied in the Nigerian context.

Agriculture and Job Creation: The Nigerian Experience

Since Nigeria started relying majorly on oil and gas to the detriment of other resources, including agricultural resources, a lot of things have been going wrong with the economy and the unemployment indices indicate that the country cannot continue to neglect the other sectors of the economy, especially the agricultural sector. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), unemployment is one of the biggest threats to both social and economic stability in many countries of the world, including Nigeria. This puts the global unemployment rate at

12.6%.⁵ It is pathetic that despite the enormous human and natural resources with which Nigeria is endowed, she is still among the countries with high unemployment rate. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), in recent times, the country's unemployment rate was 13.3% in the second quarter of 2016 up from 12.1% in three months to March, reaching the highest since 2009. The NBS further states that "The number of unemployed persons rose by 12.2%, meaning 10,644 million persons, while employment barely rose by 0.06%, meaning 69.04 million and labor force increased by 1.78% from 21.5%. [Hence], unemployment rate in Nigeria averaged 9.28% from 2006 until 2016.⁶ Another Labour Force Survey shows that Nigeria's unemployment rate was 27% in the 2nd quarter of 2020 which is 4% higher than that of 3rd quarter of 2018.⁷

Examining the above data reveals that the situation is really pathetic, considering that the country is blessed with magnitude of potentials, human and material resources that can be harnessed for economic progress. For one thing of all others, the climatic conditions favour agricultural production. Regrettably, many able-bodied young persons are not gainfully employed, which is a big minus to the country. Today, Nigeria is experiencing a lot of economic crisis and the nation is nose-diving into economic wretchedness, such that since the 2nd quarter of 2016 the Nigerian economy is said to be in recession for the first time in 25 years, under the presidency of Muhammadu Buhari who succeeded the former president Goodluck Ebele Jonathan in 2015.⁸ Commenting on the reasons for the economic recession, Omonisa Oghene explains that what caused the recession was the dual effect of low oil price in the international market and low production output due to militant activities in the Niger Delta region of the country.⁹ Also, the recent activities of the *Boko Haram* terrorist group and Fulani herdsmen who are ravaging crops and killing farmers nationwide have brought untold hardship to the entire nation as prices of food keep rising. The incidents have led the nation's income to drop and thereby affecting the country's revenue profile negatively, simply because the other important sectors, especially the agricultural sector is largely neglected. Even though President Buhari, has "slowly" tried his best to revive the country's economy since 2016, his efforts have not really yielded much meaningful result. For example, his government initiated a program called the "Economic Growth and Recovery Plan" (EGRP) in April 2017, which is yet to yield any significant impact on the economy.

Agricultural Programs and Development of Nigeria

The history of the development of agriculture in Nigeria has been reviewed by many development economists and researchers alike, and need not to be repeated in details here.¹⁰ Before the coming of the colonial masters to the country, subsistence agriculture was dominant.¹¹ There was sufficient food supply for the populace. But after the British invaded Lagos in 1851 and made it their crown colony in 1861, a lot started to change in the country. People were forced to focus on cultivating cash crops for European industries, much more than producing food crops.¹² The northern part of the country was majorly known for production of groundnuts, peanuts, beans, potatoes, tomatoes, rice, yams, cowpea, and so on. The West (Yorubaland) majorly produced cocoa, rubber, fresh fruits, cotton, kolanuts and so forth, while the East produced more of yams, vegetables, maize, oil palm coupled with palm kernel and some livestock produce.

The colonial legacy on agriculture in Nigeria has continued to have significant impact on the nation's agricultural development. Oluwaseyi B. Abiwon rightly notes that part of the reasons Nigeria is still battling with the problem of food security today is because of the colonial legacy on agriculture. He explains that, "While agriculture was the mainstay of the colonial economy, emphasis was on export and not on food production. The present food crisis in Nigeria could, therefore, be traced partly to the advent of British colonialism..."¹³ Besides, as earlier stated the problem with the various administrations in Nigeria after independence is that they have continued to pay lip service to the agricultural sector. Often, various governments would draw wonderful policies (on paper), while in practice they lack the will power and proper machineries to implement such policies and projects.

Various governments in Nigeria have been unable to move beyond policy-making and intellectual engagement, to implementation of such policies. They have not been able to model in very practical ways, an economy in which agriculture is paramount or vital. Izuchuwku Oji-Okoro lists some of the policies and programs to include Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) launched in July 1986, National Accelerated Food Production Program (NAFPP), Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs), River Basin Development Authority (RBDA), Nigerian Agricultural Cooperation and Rural Development Bank (NACRDB), Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), and much more recently, the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) initiated by the Goodluck E. Jonathan's administration. The Presidential Economic Diversification

Initiative (PEDI) was initiated by the present government of Muhammad Buhari.¹⁴

The Development and Place of Agriculture in the Old Testament

The Bible is full of good things to say about agriculture and socio-economic empowerment. And it is the duty of Biblicists to reconstruct the economic and agricultural history of the biblical times and to present the activities in their social contexts. Since the text under study (Genesis 26:12-14) is from the Old Testament, it is expedient to briefly discuss agriculture, which is the focus of this study, in that context. A careful study of the Bible shows that agriculture played a remarkable role on the economic state of the ancient Near East as a whole.

Many believe that Hebrew agriculture developed with the growth of the nation, as to be expected of most other nations. From the beginning of human history, and, according to the Hebrew account of Creation (cf. Genesis 2:15; 4:2; 9:20), the first work given to humankind was agricultural in nature. God commanded Adam and Eve “to dress and keep” the land (the Garden) (cf. Gen. 2: 8, 15). It is clearly stated that both Cain and Abel, Adam’s children were farmers. Cain tilled (Heb: *’obed*) on the soil; while Abel shepherded (Heb: *ro’eh*) animals. Subsequently, Noah was referred to as a vineyard dresser. And so, later, one notices that the Patriarchs were skilful crop farmers and shepherds. James Packer and Merrill Tenney aver that, “...by the time the Hebrews entered Canaan, they had mastered many other agricultural skills”.¹⁵

The laws that God gave the Israelites through Moses encouraged farming and agricultural business. Moses encouraged the people (landowners) of Israel to develop their agricultural skills, and more especially to remember to worship Yahweh with the produce of the land (Deut. 26: 1-11). Farming in the Israelite culture was thus an honorable, indeed a divine career and for this reason, all the tribes received their own allotment of land in Canaan. They were not to sell it. It was a perpetual inheritance (Deut. 19:14). Everybody was encouraged to have his vineyard and orchard (1 Kings 5.5; Micah 4.4; Zech 3.10). Therefore, land and/or vineyard inheritance were so much treasured that the Hebrew could die for them (1Kgs. 21).

During the Exile, when the Southern Kingdom was carried away into captivity in Babylon, one of the important advices that God, through his prophet, Jeremiah, gave to His people was to plant vineyards, rear animals, and get involved in agricultural activities so as to experience economic prosperity (Jer. 29:5). These accounts are there for people to

learn. Land is in consequence, an important theme in the Old Testament. For the Hebrews, land was a very important asset. They looked upon it as a gift from Yahweh. Because the land belonged to Yahweh, the Hebrew farmer was instructed to observe many feasts and festivals to express that there's a holy partnership between him and Yahweh who is the Owner of the land. The farmer had to remit to Him some of the produce of the land as a way of thanksgiving and worship and in turn expect blessings from above.

Some of the crops often mentioned in the Bible are: grapes, grains, date and figs, flax, lentils, coarse beans, cucumbers, onions, leeks and garlic among others. Some of the fruit trees include: almond, almug or algum, apple, ash, bay, box, cedar, chestnut, Cyprus, fig, fir, juniper, lign-aloes, mulberry, myrtle, oak and oil tree among others (cf. Gen. 43:11; 1Kgs. 10:11, 12; Joel 1: 12; Isa. 41:19; 1Kgs. 10:27). The animals include: sheep, goats, rams, camels, cattle, asses, mules (hybrid offspring of a male ass and a female horse), among others. All of that demonstrates that agriculture was a serious affair in the Old Testament

The Choice of the Text (Genesis 26: 12-14)

The book of Genesis was chosen for this study for the following reasons: first, the Book is considered and placed as the first book of the Bible. Second, it is the most significant and authoritative book in Jewish tradition. Third, this important book is the book of origins. It contains the origin of all things including the universe, humans, marriage union, horticulture, agriculture, sin, salvation, nations, and sundry.¹⁶ Fourth, Genesis touches existence at every point and areas.

The name "Genesis" (Γενεσις- *geneseos*), is of the Septuagint (LXX) Greek translation, meaning "creation", "origin", "beginning" or "generation"; while the Hebrew title of the book is derived from the first word or two in the book, *bereshit*.¹⁷ The book might not be the first book written, but it is placed first in the Hebrew canon and in the Septuagint (LXX) because it gives the origin and background of things-hence, the name.

The Text: Genesis 26:12-14

ESV Translation	<i>Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i> (BHS)
v.12 And Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold, The LORD blessed him, v.13 and the man became rich, and gained more and more until he became very wealthy. v.14 He had possessions of flocks and herds, and a great household, so that the Philistines envied him.	וַיִּזְרַע יִצְחָק בְּאֶרֶץ הַהוּא וַיִּמְצָא בַשָּׁנָה הַהוּא מֵאָה שְׁעָרִים וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ יְהוָה: וַיִּגְדַּל הָאִישׁ וַיְלֶה הָלוֹךְ וַיִּגְדַּל עַד כִּי־גָדַל מְאֹד: וַיְהִי־לוֹ מִקְנֵה־צֹאן וּמִקְנֵה בָקָר וַעֲבֹדָה רַבָּה וַיִּקְנְאוּ אֹתוֹ פְּלִשְׁתִּים:

Lexical Analysis and Comments

Wayyizera' : The prefixed verbal form with the *Waw*-Consecutive introduces the narrative. This is a typical Hebrew narrative construction (*Waw*-Consecutive followed by the prefixed verbal form and then the subject). The verbal form is *Qal* perfect *waw*-consecutive 3rd masculine singular (3ms) with a particle *Wa* from the root *zara'*, meaning “to sow”; figuratively, “to disseminate” or “to plant” KJV (bear, conceive seed, yield). According to the BDB (OT: 2232), the root means, “to scatter seed”. Hence, Isaac scattered (indicating multiple, manifold, massive sowing/investment) seed in the land during the famine and reaped a hundredfold.¹⁸ Walter Wiersbe notes that it was in the same land that Isaac’s neighbours planted that Isaac “scattered” his seed. Thus, like his neighbours they all depended on the same soil, rain, sunshine and/or climatic condition; however, the difference was that Isaac enjoyed Yahweh’s *hesed* (loving-kindness) and favour¹⁹

The second word that is important in the text is *ba'arets*. This is a common noun feminine singular in the absolute state. The particle *ba* serves as a preposition. The article *ha* has been assimilated by the particle. BDB (OT:776) points out that the noun, *'erets* can be translated as “land, country, a region, a piece of land, the land of Canaan, Israel, the soil.”²⁰ It appears approximately 2400-2504 times in the Old Testament; hence, it is the fourth most frequently used noun in the Old Testament.²¹ And as earlier noted, the theme, “earth/land” is a very important subject matter in the Old Testament/Hebrew religion; and thus, the Hebrew placed much value to it. It is Yahweh that owns the whole earth and everything in it (the fullness- *umelow'ah*). Human beings are just tenants/stewards.

Wayyemetsa is another verb that deserves to be considered and analyzed. It is *Qal waw*-Consecutive 3rd person masculine singular from the root, *matsa* meaning “to attain to, find”. Though there are approximately 450 usages of the root in the Old Testament and most are in the *Qal* stem; Matthew Dahood however has noted that scholars do not agree on the number of the usage of the verb. According to him, Gerleman observes that the root is used only 306 times; while Koehler says 310. The basic meaning of this verb is “to find” and the LXX translates it as *euriskein* (cf. Deut. 4:29; Jer. 29:13; Isa. 55:6; 2Chron. 15:2; Prov. 1:28).²²

Me’ahshe’ariym: This is a form of Hebrew numeral; a cardinal number, feminine singular and here, in the absolute state. *She’arim* (from *sha’ar*) serves as a unit of measure: 100 measure for 1-100 fold (cf. Isa. 7:20). There seems to be an emphasis laid upon the time by the narrator(s)...it was the same year when there was famine in the land. As a result, the emphasis is that Isaac reaped a hundredfold (LXX: *ekatosteuousankritheen*) of what he sowed the same year that there was famine. Karl Keil and Delitzsch Franz understand this to be unusual. According to them, this was an uncommon or unusual blessing simply because even in very fertile regions, the yield is not generally greater than 25-50 folds.²³ Matthew Henry agrees with Karl and Delitzsch that the yield was unusual. He admits that God was behind the prosperity.²⁴

Though Isaac had no land of his own, and that the land belonged to the Philistines, he went ahead to sow even as a tenant and his corn and barley multiplied “strangely”. Because he was faithful enough to obey God and stayed back and sowed, God blessed him with superabundant increase. Another important verb in the narrative is *Wayebarkehu*. This verb is a *Piel waw*-consecutive, 3rd person masculine with a 3rd person masculine singular suffix. The root is *barakh* meaning “to bless” or “to praise, salute”. Walter Eichrodt observes that the root and its derivatives occur 415 times. The verb refers to being blessed or endowed with good things. In the patriarchal narratives, *berakah* is often linked very specifically to reproductive power and agricultural fruitfulness. Moreover, in Hebrew worldview, Yahweh alone has the sole power to bestow this blessing on the obedient person (Gen. 12).²⁵ The Old Testament understands God to be the one in control of blessing and cursing (Num. 22; Deut. 28). Thus, the narrator(s) attribute Isaac’s prosperity to the God of his father, Abraham and not to any other factor.

Wayyigdal: This word is very significant in this *pericope*. It is a *Qal waw*-Consecutive 3rd person masculine singular from the root *gadal* meaning to “grow up”, “to become great or important, promote, make

powerful, praise and to do great things” BDB (OT: 1431). Harris Laird commenting on this root word notes that it is often used for physical growth of people and other living things- that is, being great in seize. According to him, it is often combined with the great name (Yahweh) to form personal names like Gedaliah, “The Lord is great” (2Kgs. 25:22-25). However, in 2Samuel 26: 24, it means “to set a high value on one’s life”. It also often speak of God’s greatness (2Sam. 7:22). In Micah 5:3, the Messiah is described as one who “will be great into the ends of the earth”. Besides, Isaiah the prophet uses the word in a negative sense. In Isaiah 9:8; 10:12, the word *gadal* is used to connote the pride (insolence) of the human heart.²⁶

The point is that Isaac grew in his farming business and became prominent, powerful, and important. He became a very strong force to be reckoned with economically and this of course, caught the attention of the Philistines. God blessed him with great harvest, material wealth/riches, flocks and herds because he dared to plant. He did not run away from the land. Many in Isaac’s time would have been discouraged to sow because of the drought, but Isaac sowed and became rich that he needed many hands to manage his wealth: hence, the narrator(s) added that he had great store of servants- he became an employer of labour. He had many domestic servants born in his own house and others purchased with money.

Lessons for Nigeria

This is a great lesson for Nigerian leaders and citizens. The nation can revitalize its economy by investing in the agricultural sector and when this is done, her citizens will be gainfully employed, foreigners will like to come and invest their resources and expertise and there will be enough to eat and to export. Also, for many, especially the young people who think that they can succeed and become useful in life only when they travel to Europe and America; they can as well learn from Isaac’s case. God has the power and authority to bless any person irrespective of where s/he is. But of course Nigerian government has a lot to do, by sowing peace, security, and infrastructure in the land. No country can develop and become economically prosperous if the economy is not diversified. And the agricultural sector is one of the most important sectors that can make a nation great.

Isaac lived in an agrarian environment, and he was guided by the right principles and values. He was godly, industrious, peaceful, and determined. Today in Nigeria, it is common to see/hear many ministers of

the gospel promising untold wealth/prosperity to their audience...as if prosperity is by chance, wish or luck. When one visits an average ministry in Nigeria, the trend seems to be the same. Often what is common in the churches are prayers like: “By this time tomorrow, you will receive an alert in your bank account”; “Success is not by hard work; it is by grace”; “All you need to survive is grace...receive that grace in Jesus name”; “Seven, ten or fifteen or so people hearing my voice will experience unexplainable miracle this week”, etc. The people would echo amen seven or three times as the case may be. And many a times, one wonders whether these prayers/promises from these so-called men of God ever come true because, if God answers them the way they are being said here, I do not think there will be many poor person in Nigeria. In Isaac’s case, God blessed him because he labored/sowed in the land. Hence, that promise/blessing was tagged to obedience and hard work/diligence; not on “say it and receive it”. Henry affirms that God prospered Isaac in all he did (labored) with his hands. His corn and barley multiplied strangely (v.12).²⁷

Wayyelekh Halokh: These two words are from the same root *halak*. The first word *Wayyelekh* is a *Qal waw-* Consecutive 3rd person masculine singular with an apocopate suffix. The word, *halak* meaning “to go,” or “walk” denotes movement in a general sense. The second word *Halokh* is a *Qal* infinitive in the absolute state. This implies that Isaac “went forward” (a perfect tense), until he became great. The Hebrew rendition puts it this way: “...and he (Isaac) went (*Heb: wayyelek* - proceeded), going and becoming great.” The stress here is that Isaac’s growth in material possessions, reputation, influence and power continued steadily until he became very prominent, important and influential in the land. The construction is emphatic and remarkable. Isaac grew up *Wegadel* meaning “to become great or wealthy, significant, valuable.” The word is a *Qal* Hebrew participle masculine singular in the absolute state (BDB: 1431). While the word *umiqneh* is a common noun masculine singular in the construct state from the root *qanah* meaning, “to create” and by extension, “to procure, especially by purchase”. According to BDB (OT: 7069) it means “to acquire, buy, possess, and obtain”.²⁸ Hence, he obtained, procured and/or purchased numerous servants that the Philistines envied him. The Hebrew verb *qan* translates “jealousy” or “envy” here implies intense jealousy and hatred that can often lead to aggressive, violent and/or hostile actions. And so, we see the Philistines closing up the wells that supplied water to Isaac’s flocks of animals and later, asking him

to leave their land. Yet most of the patriarchs, starting with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob prospered even in difficult situations.

Findings/Implications of the Study

There are many findings and implications that are apparent in the text subjected to exegesis above. Five of them are mentioned and discussed here.

1. Obedience to the voice and will of God and following godly principles are necessary for economic recovery and prosperity. It is God's will that people prosper as individuals and as a nation. And when people obey his word and follow godly principles, He will bless them irrespective of the circumstances of the nation where one finds him/herself. In his well-researched book, "The Book that Transforms Nations", Loren Cunningham remarkably shows how many of the powerful nations and great economies especially in Europe and America were founded and/or built on biblical principles. According to him, at some points in the history of some of these nations²⁹, their founding fathers chose to apply biblical principles in building their economy.³⁰ Isaac obeyed the voice of God that commanded him to stay in the land. The Hebrew construction of the imperative statements: "Stay (Heb: *gur*) in this land. Then I will be with you and will bless you..." (NET) shows that the promise of blessing and protection are conditional...only if Isaac would stay.

2. Only God has the power to bless one and make him/her prosperous. Isaac depended on God and prospered in a period of famine/economic recession.

3. Hard work and diligence are necessary for economic recovery. Isaac was not discouraged by the famine/economic recession in the land; he rather went ahead and sowed massively. What he sowed was what God multiplied in hundredfold. Nigerians should therefore wake up and work with their hands. But of course the government should encourage and give them the necessary support that they need, if the country's economy is to recover and prosper.

4. One does not need to travel outside the country for greener pasture to be successful in life. Almost every year, Nigeria loses many of her young people to the Mediterranean Sea and many, who survived, are in foreign prisons/cells. In every country, the young people are supposed to be the human agents from whom inventiveness springs. If the nation continues losing her young able-bodied, trained and intelligent youths to foreign countries, one wonders how the nation can move forward and experience technological and economic prosperity.

History has it that during the middle Ages and subsequently, Europe depended heavily on Africa and some parts of Asia for trading of consumer goods. Rodney notes that during the 15th century AD, “Europeans relied heavily on Indian clothes for resale in Africa, and they also purchased cloths on (sic) several parts of West African coast for resale elsewhere.”³¹ Moreover, according to history, during the late sixties and early seventies, Nigeria used to be a great country where many foreigners including Europeans and Americans, came to look for greener pastures. Many of them were laborers, doing menial jobs like road-mending in the country. That time young people easily got jobs. Before they finished their education, employers were already knocking at their doors. It is however unfortunate that these experiences/ privileges are no longer here with the younger or present generation; and even when they are, it is for some selected privileged few.

Today, many young people go into ritual killings, kidnapping, armed-robbery, gambling, and recently, “yahoo” (scamming), and betting (NairaBet, NaijaBet, BetKing, BetBonanza and so forth), just to make ends meet and with the hope of becoming rich. Are these the proper ways to prosper? Are these the right ways to recover the nation’s economy? This study exemplifies Isaac engaged in agriculture that does not fail.

5. One may not need to own a personal land to invest in agriculture. Isaac was a tenant in the Philistine region. The land was not his; he perhaps rented or bought it. He was not afraid to start small and from where he was. The government and private individuals can learn from Isaac. Nigeria as a nation does not necessarily need foreign donors/grants to boost her economy. Government and private individuals can start from where they are and with what is already on ground, trusting God for increase and blessings. Government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) must not always depend on World Bank assistance and poverty alleviation schemes of foreign forces to finance and implement projects. Agro-business is one of the easiest entrepreneurial activities that government can encourage the youths to engage in with minimal capital.

Recommendations

Arising from the findings of this study, one would recommend as follow:

1. Young people should rise up and be proactive by way of investing in and involving in agro-business for job creation and economic recovery.

2. Nigerian government should seek for practical ways to diversify the economy of the nation.
3. Government and financial institutions should provide cheap and easily accessible loans/grants to people who are interested in agro-business. They should also subsidize fertilizers for farmers.
4. Government should make policies that favor the agric sector.
5. Multinational companies and relevant NGOs in Nigeria should help in training and offering technical support to farmers. They should regularly organize entrepreneurship/agro-business trainings for the young people and also seek ways to empower them.
6. Religious leaders and traditional institutions should encourage and emphasize the principles of diligence and hard work among the youths.

Conclusion

This study on the need for the nation, Nigeria, to revitalize the agricultural sector using Genesis 26:12-14, was borne out of the researcher's deep concerns that the recent economic recession was partly caused by the inability of the various governments to practically encourage the agric sector. From the exegesis of the text under study, it is obvious that even at a time when there was recession/famine in the whole land; God encouraged Isaac to sow in the land and not to run away. When he obeyed that simple instruction, he experienced economic boom/prosperity. The agricultural sector is thus an important sector that should not be overlooked if the country, Nigeria, is to experience economic recovery and progress. The government, religious and traditional institutions should try to encourage young people who are interested or are already in the sector. This way, the issues of kidnapping, armed robbery and unemployment can be minimized and/or curtailed.

Notes and References

- 1 This paper was first presented at the Baptist College of Theology, Obinze, Nigeria, *1st Annual Academic Conference*, 11th-13th November, 2019. Conference theme: “Religion & Economic Recovery in Nigeria” and later updated for publication. This work is dedicated to the Holy Spirit for His grace and inspiration.
- 2 For more details visit AfterSchoolAfrica.com
- 3 Ben Aigbokhan “Resuscitating Agricultural Production (Cocoa, Cotton, Groundnuts, Palm Oil, Rubber, Etc) For Exports.” (Paper Presented At the 10th Annual Conference Of Zonal Research Units Of The Central Bank Of Nigeria, On The Theme ‘Resource Endowment, Growth And Macroeconomic Management In Nigeria; Held In Owerri, June 4-8, 2001), 3-4. www.cbn.gov.ng/OUT/PUBLICATIONS/OCCASIONALPAPERS/RD/2001/OWE-01-6.PDF
- 4 Boaz Yakubu “The Impact of Cassava Production on Employment Creation in Gboko Local Government Area of Benue State” (paper presented at the Department of Economics, Benue State University, Makurdi, November 30, 2017), 2-4. Accessed November 3, 2019.
- 5 International Labor Organization, *Global Employment Trends for Youth*, <http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp/groups/public/dgreports/documents/publications/180976.pdf>. Accessed August, 23, 2019.
- 6 National Bureau of Statistics, *An Overview of Nigerian GDP in quarter two, 2016*, www.nbs.org.ng/nigerian/gdp_in_quater_two/2016. Accessed on August 22, 2019.
- 7 National Bureau of Statistics, *Labour Force Statistics, Unemployment And Under-Employment by State- Q2 2020*. www.nbs.org.ng/nigerianstat/umemployment. Accessed on February 3rd, 2021.
- 8 Patrick McGroarty and Heidi Vogt. Muhammadu Buhari Defeats Goodluck Jonathan in Nigeria, *The Wall Street Journal*, (March 31, 2015) <https://www.wsj.com/articles/officials-tally-remaining-votes-in-nigeria-presidential-election-1427796882>. Accessed on November 3rd, 2019.
- 9 Omonisa Oghene. New Year Oil Price crash: Nigerians as victims, *Vanguardngr.com*, (January 23, 2016)

- <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/01/new-year-oil-price-crash-nigerians-as-victims/>. Accessed on July 12, 2018).
- 10 For more details, see Izuchukwu Oji-Okoro, “Analysis of the Contribution of Agricultural Sector on the Nigerian Economic Development,” *World Review of Business Research* vol 1, no. 1 (March 2011). Accessed October 20, 2019. www.researchgate.net/publication/264887608_Analysis_of_the_Contribution_of_Agricultural_Sector_on_the_Nigerian_Economic_Development/
 - 11 Our ancestors used crude farm implements like hoes and cutlasses and when it comes to selling their farm produce they used the barter system of trade.
 - 12 For more details, see Oluwaseyi B. Abiwon, “The Prospects of Agriculture in Nigeria: How Our Fathers Lost Their Way- A Review,” *Asian Journal of Economics, Business and Accounting* Vol 4 (2) (September 2017). Accessed on October 15, 2019. www.researchgate.net/publication/The_Prospects_of_Agriculture_in_Nigeria
 - 13 For more details, see Oluwaseyi B. Abiwon.
 - 14 For more details, see Oluwaseyi B. Abiwon.
 - 15 James I. Packer and Merrill, C. Tenney, eds., *Illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers 1980), 263.
 - 16 Benjamin H. Carroll, *Studies in Genesis*. (USA: Convention Press 1937), 5.
 - 17 Anderson, W. Bernhard, *Understanding the Old Testament*.(New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc. 1957), 27.
 - 18 Brown Francis, Driver R. Samuel, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew-English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907).
 - 19 Walter W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary: OT*. (Colorado: Cook Communications 2003), Electronic Database Version.
 - 20 Walter W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary....*
 - 21 John Whitcomb, “The Creation of the Heavens and the Earth.” *Grace Journal* Vol. 8:26-32.
 - 22 Matthew Dahood, “Northwest Semitic Philology and Job”, *In the Bible in Current Catholic Thought*. (New York: Herder and Herder 1962), 55-74.

- 23 Karl F. Keil and Delitzsch, Franz, *Commentary on the Old Testament*. Trans. by James Martin, (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Pub. Inc.). Electronic Database Version.
- 24 Matthew Henry's, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, PC Study Bible Formatted Electronic Database. Copyright 2006 by Bible Soft Inc.
- 25 Walter Eichdrott, *Theology of the Old Testament, 11*. Trans. By J.A. Baker. (Westminster: Westminster Press 1967)
- 26 Harris R. Laird, ed., *Theological Workbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press 1980), 200-210.
- 27 Harris R. Laird, ed., *Theological Workbook...*
- 29 For example, some of these nations include Belgium, Norway, Holland (Netherlands), Switzerland (Geneva), United Kingdom, USA among others.
- 30 For more details, see Loren, Cunningham. *The Book that Transforms Nations: The Power of the Bible to Change any Country* (Seattle, WA: YWAM Publications 2007).
- 31 Rodney Walter. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Abuja: Panaf Press 2009), 119-120.