

## Article

# The Relationship between the Economic Strand of Contemporary Pentecostalism and Neo-Liberalism in Post-1994 South Africa

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**Abstract:** South Africa endured racial segregation under the national party for many years until 1994, with the attainment of democracy. In the process of negotiating a democracy like the CODESA negotiations, the ANC-led government found itself adopting economic policies that embraced neo-liberalism, which later became unfavorable to the black majority in South Africa. Consequently, although these economic policies of the post-colonial South Africa have made a few black people rich, many still live under the triple socio-economic challenges like unemployment, poverty, and inequality. In addition to the triple challenges, many people still lack basic needs like water, sanitation, food, clothing, and shelter. This paper is a discourse on the relationship between contemporary Pentecostalism and neo-liberalism in South Africa. Given their economic standing, the paper seeks to demonstrate that contemporary South African Pentecostalism has potential to become an alternative economic reform.

**Keywords:** politics; economy; Pentecostalism; neo-liberalism; democracy

## 1. Introduction

In 1994, the African National Congress (ANC) took over government after many years of oppression by the National Party (NP). However, in trying to solve the problems of the past like inequality, poverty, and unemployment among Africans, the new ANC government failed significantly because of the process of political settlement negotiations. The ANC government lost the gains of what they fought hard for over many years, because of accommodating other economic views. This has resulted in the decreasing support of the ANC government, because they are failing to deliver on the promises they made to the people of South Africa. People who were rich during apartheid in South Africa continue to be rich, and the poor continue to suffer (Fine 2018). Thus, the ANC's receiving of political power in 1994 did not translate into filling the economical vacuum created by the apartheid regime. To some extent, the vacuum has worsened since 1994. It has rather created another form of elitism in policies like the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE). In fact, the battle has shifted from the ANC and the NP to become a battle between the ANC and the social movements. Hence, there is a connection between the ANC-led alliance and infighting since the dawn of democracy in South Africa (Marais 2013).

Most recently, as stated, the battle has shifted from being the battle between the ANC and the social movements to become a battle between the ANC and the opposition political parties in South Africa. The noisiest and most irritating party to the ANC has been the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), who are more pro-poor, calling for free education and expropriation of land without compensation. The pro-poor policies of the EFF have made them popular among young people. However, the EFF cannot do much because they are not in government; hence, many people remain in poverty. The purpose of

this paper is to investigate the economic standing of contemporary Pentecostalism under the economic difficulties facing South Africa. While the government is struggling to deal with unemployment, poverty, and inequalities, contemporary Pentecostalism is thriving financially in the midst of these challenges. The paper seeks to link the economic strand of contemporary Pentecostalism in addressing the failure of neoliberalism in South Africa. In order to achieve this goal, it is important to highlight the economic policies and succinctly highlight their connection with neoliberalism in a South African economy. It is also pivotal to highlight the reasons for the failure of neoliberalism in South Africa. The paper will go into depth to demonstrate that instead of aligning themselves to neoliberalism, the contemporary Pentecostalism is actually creating alternative economic reform.

## 2. Research Design

This paper is located within missiology, a study of some aspects of the mission of God, as that is carried out by a specific church, organization, or individual in a concrete context. The paper is specifically located in one of the important and growing trends of world Christianity, Pentecostalism, a form of Christianity concerned with the baptism of the Holy Spirit and initial evidence of speaking in tongues. As a missiologist, in order to fulfil the objectives of this study, the researcher will use the sevenfold matrix suggested by two South African missiologists, [Kritzinger and Saayman \(2011\)](#). The sevenfold matrix will assist the researcher in answering the following questions:

- Agency: What is neo-liberalism, and why has it failed in South Africa?
- Spirituality: What is contemporary Pentecostalism in South Africa, and how is it different from other sub-traditions?
- Contextual understanding: What is the connection between the economic strand of contemporary South African Pentecostalism and neoliberalism?
- Ecclesial scrutiny: Is the economic strand of contemporary South African Pentecostalism neo-liberal?
- Interpreting the tradition: What are the arguments for or against neo-liberalism?
- Discernment for action: What are the requirements for contemporary South African Pentecostalism to provide an alternative economic reform?
- Reflexivity: Concluding remarks on neo-liberalism and contemporary Pentecostalism in South Africa.

## 3. Methodology

This paper will use literary analysis on the available data that focus on the discourses of neoliberalism and contemporary South African Pentecostalism. According to McGee's account of literary analysis ([McGee 2001](#), p. 1), when representing an argument in literature, the researcher should provide evidence to support claims made on any specific subject. The purpose of supporting claims with evidence is to convince the reader that the findings of the study are true, coherent, and rational.

Hence, this paper will also cite examples of how contemporary Pentecostalism is dealing with neo-liberalism in South Africa to validate the findings. With the assistance of literature, the paper will begin by first defining the meaning of neo-liberalism in general terms and move towards defining neoliberalism in a South African context. This shall be achieved by looking at economic policies in post-colonial South Africa and their relationship with neo-liberalism. It is important for this paper to illustrate why neo-liberalism has failed in South Africa in order to demonstrate the importance of contemporary South African Pentecostalism in addressing the gaps created by neo-liberalism. At the end, the paper asks an important question: Is the economic strand of contemporary South African Pentecostalism neo-liberal? If not, what can be done for contemporary South African Pentecostalism to create an alternative economic reform?

## 4. Neo-Liberalism: A Working Definition

Neo-liberalism is not easy to define given many complexities around the terminology; hence, in this paper, one speaks of a working definition of neo-liberalism. Neo-liberalism in this paper will be

defined in relation to the political past in a South Africa context, and one scholar to assist with such a definition is [Harvey \(2007, p. 2\)](#), who defines Neo-liberalism as:

a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. ([Harvey 2007, p. 2](#))

Therefore, neoliberalism is a system that is hostile to economic policies that regulate economic behavior to protect consumer and labor rights or the environment and/or to promote equality or to promote a “moral economy” ([Davies 2016, p. 6](#)). In a South African context, [Clarno \(2017, p. 12\)](#) defines neoliberalism as a system that “denies the continued significance of racism and enables assaults on corrective policies such as welfare, affirmative action and land redistribution.” Therefore, although a political solution saw the end of racial segregation in South Africa, neo-liberalism, through its austerity measures and reduction in government, became a system that hindered economic liberation. In addition, neoliberalism failed because pro-poor policies were restricted by deregulations, freeing up movement of capital and goods, cutting the public sector, and promoting private sector entrepreneurialism. Furthermore, neoliberalism does not work in South Africa because it is a system that instils in the minds of people some form of individualism as a way of prospering and being productive in life ([Spencer 2016, p. 23](#)). In summary, neo-liberalism is known by seven main characteristics: Free market, privatization, globalization, reduction of government spending, repayment of apartheid debt, cutting corporate taxes, and cutting social programs. The seven characteristics shall be discussed in light of South African neo-liberalism in the next section.

## 5. Neo-Liberalism in Post-1994 South Africa

The ANC government has had good economic policies since taking over governance in 1994. The five main economic policies of ANC had potential to change the economic status of the poor masses of South African citizenry. The first one is Reconstruction and Development Policy (RDP), whose purpose was to make sure that all the citizens have access to the mainstream economy and economic rights ([Peberdy 2001, p. 26](#)). Second is Growth Employment and Reconstruction (GEAR) strategy. The main purpose of GEAR was to ensure that there is a relationship between the government and the policies of the ANC in relation to the economy ([Malakwane 2012, p. 36](#)). Third, under the presidency of Thabo Mbeki, the government introduced Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA) to specifically deal with the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty, and inequality. Fourth, when ASGISA failed, according to [Malakwane \(2012, p. 47\)](#), the government introduced the National Growth Path (NGP), which was aimed at the economic growth of South Africa that will ultimately deal with the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty, and inequalities. Last, under Jacob Zuma, the South African government implemented National Development Plan (NDP). NDP realized the division in the country caused by economic inequalities, therefore the aim of NDP was to bring balance among South Africans of all colors, races, ethnic groups, ages, and other divisions ([Meyer 2014, p. 74](#)).

The above-mentioned economic policies of the post-1994 South Africa have achieved some level of economic growth, but many people in South Africa still live in poverty. The question is, why are they failing? It is not an easy question to answer, but in this paper, their failure is connected to neoliberalism because of the following reasons. First, privatization: The above-mentioned economic policies were inclined towards private companies with a clear distinction between what is public and private. In addition, the state became more dependent on foreign market, which did not favor the poor people and the working class. The South African government became more of a regulator than an active participant in the economy, as the private sector dictated the terms and conditions of how it wanted to relate with the state ([Sebake 2017, p. 2](#)). It is very unfortunate that even the South African reserve bank is partly owned by private shareholders, who can also dictate how it should function in a South African economy ([Bond 2005, p. 75](#)). Second, in post-1994, South Africa entered the free market economy, in

which many poor people cannot be participants (Schneider 2003, p. 23). The most harmful thing about free market is its failure to give way for the equal distribution of wealth, including land (Bond 2005, p. 173).

Third, globalization made it impossible, according to Bond (2005, p. 196), to “regulate or transform national and local economies.” Fourth, the government cut spending in an attempt, according to Williams and Taylor (2000, p. 34), “to lower the budget deficit.” Fifth, although the repayment of apartheid debt was done to give South Africa a positive credit outlook, it meant that the money that was supposed to help the poor was spent on the crimes of the past regime. Six, tax cuts favored the rich while leaving VAT intact on basic goods needed by the poor (Bond 2005, p. 217). Seven, cutting of social programs meant that the citizens under these policies experienced the undermining of social activities by the capital, which also hindered social reproduction (Sebake 2017, p. 5). In the words of Schneider (2003, p. 24), the policies engaged in “draconian fiscal conservatism and cut social programs, thereby hurting the poor, while bending over backwards to repay apartheid-era debt.”

Therefore, the economic policies of the ANC have achieved some level of economic growth, but many people in South Africa still live in poverty. The reason for this assertion is that all of the economic policies of the ANC embraced a neoliberalism system characterized by: Free market, privatization, globalization, reduction of government spending, repayment of apartheid debt, cutting corporate taxes, and cutting social programs. The economic policies of a democratic South Africa are unable to resolve the issues of unemployment, poverty, and inequality. In failing to address structural unemployment, despite the democratic government’s pro-poor policies, its real problem is its lack of vision and direction in comprehensively tackling poverty because of unemployment. Another failure of the ANC is the Black Economic Empowerment policies that appear very good when viewed from the outside, but a closer look at BEE reveals that this policy has actually created further inequalities among the black people of South Africa. What BEE has done is produce a few rich ANC card-carrying members, while the majority of South Africans still suffer. Most South Africans are still struggling with basic needs like shelter, food, water, and electricity. The other problem with BEE is fronting whereby many companies appear black by their names, but are actually owned by white South Africans who have fronted black people as directors. Thus, the real black economic empowerment is yet to happen in South Africa, which brings us to the next section, the failure of neoliberalism in South Africa.

## 6. The Failure of Neoliberalism in South Africa

The economic policies of the ANC led government have failed miserably. Whether RDP, GEAR, ASGISA, NGP, NDP, or even BEE, they have all failed. Statistics show that the majority of South Africans live in absolute poverty. The picture of poverty in South Africa is overwhelming. Kruidenier points out in the population, 27% fall in the bottom 20% of the households, and are classified as ‘ultra-poor’ (Kruidenier 2015). In addition, 56% of black people in South Africa are below the poverty line, as are 60% of adult females (Molobi 2016). Furthermore, recent statistics reveal that 56% of women in South Africa live in poor households in contrast to 51.8% of men (Mtshiselwa 2016). Poverty remains very high in South Africa, and there is a view that poverty might be increasing particularly as the South African economy is deteriorating further (Gumede 2014). In South Africa, there is no confinement of poverty to one racial or ethnic group, but it cuts across all groups. However, the concentration is higher among black people (Kruidenier 2015). Black people clearly continue to account for a much larger share in poverty than their share in the population, with the other race groups accounting for a considerably smaller share of poverty relative to their population weight. In contrast, white people account for less than 1% of the poor population, while constituting around 10% of the population (Bhorat and Van der Westhuizen 2010).

The large portion of South Africans continue to suffer and live in poverty. After 25 years of democracy, people are still fighting for their rights to water, sanitation, electricity, shelter, and other basic needs. The 25 years of democracy have become the years of hope that is hopeless. Every year, the governing ANC continues to promise services to people, but fails to deliver. Amid these promises, the

people continue to live in shacks and squatter camps, while the elites live in suburbs and estate houses. Most of the black majority live below the bread line, while their white counterparts live better lives. There are still cases of the children of black people learning under trees or travelling long distances to access quality education. Alternatively, black parents will have to send their children to far away schools where they pay high fees to educate them. The scary thing is that among the South Africans who are suffering, it is mainly black people who have sacrificed their lives in the past with the hope of living better lives afterwards. However, the situation has not changed. The other category of those who are suffering is that of women and children. Not only are they suffering because they are facing poverty, unemployment, and inequality, but they also face abuse.

## 7. Description of Contemporary South African Pentecostalism

South African Pentecostalism can be summarized by three sub-traditions. The first is classical Pentecostalism, which is basically known for upholding the basic teachings of Pentecostalism like the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in other tongues. The second is the Pentecostal type African Initiated Churches (AICs), which are known for retaining the fundamental teachings of Pentecostalism, but use African culture in their practices. According to [Gifford \(1998, p. 33\)](#), AICs are “an African expression of worldwide Pentecostalism”. The third is Independent Charismatic Churches, which are known for their belief in spiritual gifts, but also connect to the Word of Faith movement of leaders like Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, and Creflo Dollar. However, recently, a new stream of Pentecostalism has emerged, which can be categorized as New Independent Pentecostal Churches, or in simple terms, “contemporary Pentecostalism”. In South Africa, these churches are uniquely known for their practice of one-on-one prophecy, one-on-one deliverance, miracle money, and other miracles. The examples include, among others, the Enlightened Christian Gathering led by Prophet Shepherd Bushiri in Pretoria, Alleluia Ministries led by Alph Lukau in Midrand, Shekainah Healing Ministries led by Apostle Mohlala in Cape Town, and numerous others. The reason the researcher has chosen this stream is the economic standing of these type of churches and their wealthy pastors. This brings us to the next section, the economic strand of contemporary South African Pentecostalism.

## 8. The Economic Strand of Contemporary South African Pentecostalism

As highlighted in previous sections, the economic policies have failed to provide economic solutions. Later in the paper, contemporary Pentecostalism will be discussed as an alternative economic reform. As [De Witte \(2018, p. 3\)](#) points out, the emergence of Pentecostalism is exactly in response to the oppression that the society is enduring, even in the midst of political liberation. However, the question is how can they achieve such, therefore, before one can look at the contemporary Pentecostalism as an alternative Pentecostal economic reform, there is a need to look at their economic strand. Contemporary Pentecostalism is economically able, as most of their churches financially thrive in urban environment where there is commercialization and the society is already used to consumerism in big cities. Thus, the middle class and business people are easily lured to these types of Pentecostal churches, as they are used to consumerism. The churches mentioned above, that is ECG, Alleluia ministries, and Shekainah ministries, are all located in urban South Africa and are therefore able to spend millions of Rands on a monthly basis. In these churches, there is a strong concentration of people who are economically capable of making financial contributions of large amounts of money. This is not to rule out other contemporary Pentecostal churches that are located in township economies and some in the villages that are equally prospering amidst economic challenges.

In addition, at contemporary Pentecostal church services, there is a provision of other needs like health, education, and developing people, which is the work that is supposed to be done by the government ([Myers 2015](#)). In the words of [Woodberry \(2006, p. 30\)](#):

Pentecostalism may influence the economy through increasing health, investment in family; rule of law/honesty, volunteerism, education, “economically friendly” attitudes, and savings,



and by mitigating violent forms of intolerance in areas where they are dominant—although they may also divert resources out of the economy.

Therefore, while some scholars criticize contemporary Pentecostalism for having a negative effect on social responsibility, there is also evidence that Pentecostalism is available to meet the needs of the people. Contrary to the negative reports, contemporary Pentecostalism goes further than providing for basic needs to make a difference in people's life. Thus, contemporary Pentecostalism has potential to change human life by providing the economic, material, and social aspects in the life of their followers (Akanbi and Beyers 2017, p. 2). In South Africa, contemporary Pentecostalism has potential for encouraging young people to become entrepreneurs and alleviate poverty not only for their families, but also for the communities where they live as well.

Furthermore, according to Freeman (2015, p. 6), contemporary Pentecostalism has an ability to bring development, especially among people without skills. In other words, contemporary Pentecostal churches have an ability to bring change in the lives of the people that will ultimately change their environment. This ensures that the prevailing system of neoliberalism in the country holds no monopoly for the prosperity of the people. Freeman (2015, p. 6) goes on to list three key interlinked processes of change that are brought about by Pentecostalism:

Firstly, a major embodied personal transformation and empowerment of the individual; secondly, a shift in values that provides moral legitimacy for a set of behaviour changes that would otherwise clash with local sensibilities; and thirdly, if other factors are favourable, a radical reconstructing of the social and economic relationships in families and communities.

According to Kakwata (2017, p. 160), if development is successful, it has to bring not only change on the individual, but also a structural development. It is supposed to bring change in the community where individuals are located, which will include economic change that includes a proper functioning of the systems. This development should be a holistic one that does not only change a person spiritually, but also brings change in body, soul, and spirit. Thus, development among contemporary Pentecostals involves material blessing, not only spiritual wellbeing of congregants.

In summary, it must be stated that Pentecostal theologians should no longer perceive contemporary Pentecostal churches in South Africa as places of spiritual renewal only, but also as places where people's lives are transformed to become better human beings. The walls of the temple of contemporary Pentecostalism are not only places of prayer and revival, but have become sites to develop people so that they are leaders in society. They have become spaces where those who used to be economically excluded by the society are now taking part in it by knowing how to survive the economic hard realities of neoliberalism (Kaunda 2015, p. 123). Therefore, there is a need for theologians to rethink the way they study prosperity gospel among Pentecostals, because while there are a few instances of abuse of finances, there is also evidence of churches that create social capital for the well-being of their congregants and followers. According to Kaunda (2015, p. 128),

The theology of prosperity should become part of the Pentecostal commitment to the future of South Africa's social capital which is built around bonds, bridges, links and acceptance of the other indicating the processes that facilitate individual and social well-being and positive communal and societal outcomes within a nation or a group.

## 9. Contemporary South African Pentecostalism and Neo-Liberalism

It has been established above that contemporary Pentecostalism does prosper in the midst of neoliberalism. However, the main question then is, are not these churches also embracing neoliberalism? In answering this question, Benyah says that we should consider the fact that contemporary Pentecostalism offers an opportunity for individuals to succeed as well. However, unlike in neoliberalism, the individual success ultimately benefits the group. Benyah continues to say that although there is some form of consumerism in the form of buying and selling the church products

in most Pentecostal churches, this type of consumerism is done in the hope that those who buy such products will change and become better people in all the areas of their lives (Benyah 2018, p. 123). Therefore, the type of consumerism in contemporary Pentecostalism is not meant for disempowering the people of God, but to ensure that the hopeless have hope for the future. When a pastor or a prophet is selling something in church, the believer is encouraged to buy in order that their behavior will change. It is not initially meant for the profit, but to change the lives of those who are engaged in consumerism. However, the profit should also be channeled towards changing the lives of the members who support a specific new Pentecostal church.

Instead of being neoliberal, Pentecostal members are taught on how they should cope with neoliberalism. In the words of Maxwell, as much as the mainline churches taught their members on how to deal with imperialism, in recent times, the members in contemporary Pentecostalism are taught how to cope with neoliberalism (Maxwell 2005, p. 28). Therefore, the relationship between contemporary Pentecostalism and neoliberalism is not one accepting the other, but one learning how to live in the midst of the other (Comaroff 2010, p. 22). Therefore, it is necessary to differentiate between the two. Although both of them are interested in the prosperity of their members, one needs to argue against the point made by Obadare (2016, p. 4) that Pentecostalism is the extension of neoliberalism. It is correct to say that Pentecostalism is thriving in the midst or at the failure of neoliberalism. It is also important to state that although Pentecostalism preaches the gospel of accumulation of wealth, the believer can also benefit by coming out of their own poverty as well.

The contemporary Pentecostalism is more appealing to many people in South Africa because it promises salvation in both spiritual and material or financial prosperity (Gauthier 2016, p. 8). In contrast to mainline missional churches, contemporary Pentecostal churches in South Africa have an ability for economic reform and transformation for both individuals and their families. In many ways, contemporary Pentecostalism is capable to bring a kind of development that neoliberalism for many years failed to bring in developing states. They are capable of bringing continuous help and revival of economies in a way that people will be able to cope with capitalism in South Africa. Pentecostal churches are vehicles of change in the society to the majority of people going through poverty, unemployment, and inequalities (Freeman 2015, p. 6). In addition, the contemporary Pentecostalism carries a lot of influence given its growth and impact on the whole religious movement in developing states. Pentecostal churches appear to be a solution to the prevailing challenges in recent times, as they provide training in new technology and financial literacy (Barker 2007, p. 408). The contemporary Pentecostalism in South Africa can also address challenges of modernization because it is already used to modern technologies. Pentecostal churches offer an alternative in terms of the ability to deal with the revolutions in the market spaces and industries.

## 10. Contemporary South African Pentecostalism as Alternative Economic Reform

Contemporary Pentecostalism in South Africa has great potential to promote an alternative economic path to neoliberalism, which has failed many people over the years. These churches have great potential to influence the behavior of people, which can lead to prosperity of all people if managed well. Therefore, in contemporary Pentecostalism, people are taught to work hard for themselves and come out of poverty in order to take care of their families, and in some churches, people are discouraged from engaging in fruitless consumerism. The leaders in contemporary Pentecostalism encourage people to take part in the economy, which leads to the upward spiral of the people instead of running in circles (Freeman 2015, p. 15). In addition, Pentecostal churches have potential to harness the harshness of neoliberalism because they are engaged with communities on a weekly basis and can therefore bring together unequal societies. They provide ways in which their followers can deal with the difficulties created by neoliberalism. In most cases, the contemporary Pentecostalism does the work of government in addressing the gaps that the government is failing to fill. Furthermore, contemporary Pentecostalism, given its type of theology of experience and its kind of liturgy, creates

transformation that motivates people to be leaders in all the sectors of the economy like business, sports, education, arts, and culture (Barker 2007, p. 409).

Therefore, contemporary Pentecostalism provides hope for the miserable people who face the challenges of economic depression in developing states like South Africa. These challenges might be difficult for individuals to overcome, but by joining others in the movement, people are able to cope with economic challenges. Although, Pentecostalism does not face neoliberalism directly in order to offer a political solution, they provide an alternative economy to their members (Maxwell 2005, p. 28). The most valuable asset of Pentecostalism to deal with economic pressures is the use of family as a center of economic growth, whereas the government is looking for growth within the governance system. The families that prosper are given guidance on how to respond to the challenges within the system (Maxwell 2005, p. 29). These teachings include lessons on how individuals can start their own small businesses and grow them to become big companies. In addition, they are taught on how wealthy Pentecostal businesspersons may use their wealth to solve the issues of poverty in society. Most churches offer programs that support their members in drawing their own business plans to present or submit as business proposals. In the end, it must be reiterated that contemporary Pentecostalism stands a good chance of providing not only economic alternatives, but also unity among communities (Kaunda 2015, p. 119).

The members in contemporary Pentecostalism are not allowed to become static in any areas of their lives, including spiritual, physical, emotional, and financial. They are taught to prosper body, soul, and spirit. Instead of stagnancy, the members are taught about revival, including the change in their finances or economic status. The members in contemporary Pentecostalism are always encouraged to enter into a continuous revival that brings change in their lives. This revival has potential to bring change, including an economic change in families and the whole Pentecostal movement (De Witte 2018, p. 18). The preachers in these churches teach people that their situations are not permanent, but are bound to change because the poor should confess that they are rich as much as the weak confesses that they are strong. However, it is not only a confession to be rich, but people are taught that they can indeed prosper in material wealth. Moreover, they are promised that although they encounter challenges in the now, they should hope in the then, meaning God will intervene in their situations (De Witte 2018, p. 3).

## 11. Conclusions

The government of South Africa has embraced neoliberalism even after the black majority have taken the leadership of the country after the democratic elections in 1994. The economic policies of government like RDP, GEAR, ASGISA, NGP, and NDP have all failed to address the challenges facing South Africa like unemployment, poverty, and inequalities. The only good thing the neoliberal policies of the ANC have produced is the few rich individuals who happened to be the card-carrying members of the ANC. The reality is that the majority are still looking for jobs, while others have actually given up their dreams of working. The surprising thing is that the contemporary Pentecostalism continues to thrive in the midst of these economic challenges. Thus, the contemporary Pentecostalism stands a good chance given its gospel of prosperity that gives people hope to actually create an alternative model for economic reform that will create jobs and empower the poor people. The contemporary Pentecostals should not align to neoliberalism, but seek to be different in their approach to realize their dream. They can do so by ensuring that opportunities to create wealth and get educated become available to all the congregants. They can do so by ensuring that those who are uplifted find a way to plough back and uplift other people.

This paper is important for South African Pentecostalism and ultimately global Pentecostalism because it has been able to demonstrate the role that Pentecostal churches play in the South African economy. However, there is a need for further studies specifically based on empirical data that will be able to demonstrate the economic standing of contemporary Pentecostalism and its relationship with development and social responsibility among its followers. Other studies can outline an ideal vision of



how Pentecostal churches in South Africa might apply their teachings, practices, values, and resources to address economic deprivation and inequality.

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