

National Fellowship of Born-again Pentecostal Churches faith consistent guidelines for investment in agriculture and forestry.

Background

The National Fellowship of Born-Again Pentecostal Churches of Uganda (NFBPC) is a national umbrella network of over 30,000 Pentecostal churches and Para-church organizations. It is a premier network of indigenous Pentecostal institutions covering all districts in Uganda. NFBPC is non-denominational and politically non-partisan.

The National Delegates Conference (NDC) is the highest decision-making body of the fellowship above its National Executive Committee (NEC). There are smaller executive committees serving at Regional (REC), Provincial (PEC), District (DEC), and Sub- County (SEC) levels. The Fellowship's strategic plan on Agriculture and forestry seeks to enhance the quality of life of the people by encouraging agricultural production through a selection of programs.

Nature and scale of investments by NFBPC

Members of NFBPC have investments in the following sectors:

- Formal education (primary, secondary and tertiary institutions); informal education involving youth trainings in entrepreneurial skills, healthcare, environmental monitoring, theological education, media and advocacy.
- Agricultural investments include farming (coffee, maize, tea, citrus, pepper, lemon etc), animal rearing (cattle, pigs, goats etc), poultry keeping and agro forestry. The parish model guideline was instituted at the national level to be replicated in all the 14 regions.

Most financial investments are still on a small scale except for agriculture which is on a large scale in some regions because of export tendencies. A few churches have made long term investments for their old age security.

Nature and scale of charitable giving

Charitable giving is practiced especially for the vulnerable groups in communities including the orphans, widows, elderly, the sick, people living with disabilities and the economically disadvantaged. These take forms of provision of household items like food, clothing; economic empowerment through giving out seed funds, young domestic animals; health care for the sick, and education for the vulnerable people in communities.

Guiding principles in making investments.

Overall NFBPC fellowship members follow the word of God in making their investments. Although the group does not have clearly streamlined general guidelines for the entire organisation, each region refers to the written word of God, community needs and available skills and resources in the region. The following three principles offer guidance on how individuals can wisely carry out investment in the prioritized sector.

The principle of stewardship

This is anchored on the God given responsibility to man of caring for all creation. (Genesis 1:28-31 and Psalm 24:1). Man is accountable to God over the creation, Neglect and abuse of creation is sin to God. Therefore environment related investments promotes care of creation as well as improving peoples' livelihoods for sustainable development.

Principle of multiplication; (Genesis 1:28)

When man was put in the Garden of Eden, he was told to multiply and replenish the earth. Working and investment brings about abundance. Jesus' story about the talents in Matthew 25:14-28 encourages individuals to multiply all that is in their hands. All investments made in the different key areas embrace this principle with visible evidence of abundance leading to sustainable development.

Principle of Love

The greatest commandment as Christians is to Love according to Mark 12:29-31. Our love for God is reflected in fulfilling our role of creation care and also for our neighbours.

NFBPC members are committed to following the above principles to overcome environmental degradation, climate and ecological crisis, which have adverse effects on human health and creation.

Investment screening by NFBPC

Investors follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, word of God and the council of elders of the fellowship. These offer guiding principles as to what is screened in and out.

Investments screened in: Education, health provision, agriculture, forestry, hospitality services especially to the vulnerable groups

Investments screen out: Anything contrary to the word of God for instance; trading in tobacco and alcohol related ventures, certain medical practices like abortion, promotion of pornography among others.

Potential faith-consistent investments

All investments have set targets and are in line with the faith consistent objectives. The biggest percentage of investments goes for social development, education, health and spiritual concerns. Partnerships are encouraged to enhance achievement of set targets and the list below is not exhaustive but will guide potential investors in the field of agriculture and forestry to achieve SDGs.

- i. Sustainable agriculture: Large scale farming in marketable commodities like coffee, cocoa, tea, maize; bee keeping, rearing of animals on a large scale, poultry keeping' urban farming
- ii. Forestry ventures like tree planting
- iii. Solar irrigation technologies
- iv. Establishment of medicinal gardens in homes, schools, and churches.
- v. Sustainable environmental policies and programs including conservation and biodiversity.
- vi. Training communities in environmental education.

Capacity building is done for the regional overseers in various fields like farming, forestry, environmental protection among others. They in turn train other member churches in the rest of the regions.

Faith teachings that guide investments

The organization is inspired by various biblical teachings about work and poverty. The book of Proverbs teaches how fantasies lead to poverty and Paul writes to believers that those who don't work should not eat (2Thesalonians 3:10). More still individuals are encouraged to invest at all times by Genesis 26:12, where Isaac sowed in the famine and reaped a bumper harvest. During the Babylonian captivity, God encouraged the Jews to make investments buy land build and marry so even in captivity one can invest according to Jeremiah 32:8. Therefore the word of God is the guiding principle for the organization and all investments are done in line with faith objectives.

The future.

To achieve the best results in all our investments, NFBPC has to embark on massive sensitization, advocacy and vigorous training of different communities in areas that need urgent attention. Biblical teachings are also to be equally emphasized for proper exercise of freedom.