



The economic influence of prosperity gospel on individual followers in neo-Pentecostal movements in Karingani Ward Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya

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Abstract

The study sought to investigate how prosperity gospel influences the economic aspect of its followers in neo-Pentecostal movements in Karingani Ward Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. In Kenya, Neo-Pentecostal movements are growing and spreading from urban to rural areas, as witnessed in Karingani Ward, Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. There has been an increase in self-founded churches, commonly known as charismatic movements, over the past decade. The Functionalism Theory guided the study in analysing the prosperity gospel's influence on its followers' economic aspect. The theory indicates that religion is a social influencer that leads to changes in behaviour and perception or worldview that are essential to economic growth. The study applied the descriptive survey design. Yamane's formula was applied to obtain a sample size of 288 respondents. In addition, six pastors were selected from the churches; the total sample was 294 respondents. In the six selected churches, a larger population was between (20-50 years); the majority were women and indicated to be small business owners and employed in the private sector. The research instruments utilised were questionnaires, interviews, and focused group discussions. The study's findings revealed that prosperity teachings in Neo-Pentecostal movements positively influenced its followers. Prosperity teaching with biblical grounding had influenced adherents in these movements to have financial, investment, and entrepreneurial abilities through seminars, idea sharing, and continuous assistance from members, which have impacted their followers to experience social status mobility. This paper recommends a future study on how perceived YouTube or social media incomes can benefit all adherents.

Key terms: Clergy, movements, neo-Pentecostal, productive prosperity gospel, prosperity gospel.

INTRODUCTION

Prosperity gospel is a doctrine based on the belief that wealth and health can be attained through faith. Followers of this gospel believe that God wants His people to be wealthy and enjoy good health on earth. Faith is essential for one to attain these blessings; in most cases, those who are poor are considered to have no faith in taking action, such as exercising their faith through confessing and actions such as seed planting, offering, and tithing, to mention (Ehioghae & Olanrewaju, 2015). Prosperity gospel promises financial breakthrough to its believers, attracting those seeking financial growth. The prosperity gospel doctrine is well embraced and accepted in Africa in the neo-Pentecostal movements, where many followers believe they will experience an economic transformation when they join these movements. Karingani ward is turning into a metropolitan town since many people have relocated to this region for employment, starting businesses, or education purposes. Believes that God rewards his faithful followers with material blessings dominates much of these teachings in neo-Pentecostal movements; Prosperity gospel preacher derive their teachings from the bible, especially in the New Testament, which indicates the coming of Jesus Christ as a means of redemption from sin and worldly struggles. Some highly utilised books are John 10:10, 2 Corinthians 8:9, 2 Cor 9:6, Matthew 7:7, and others.

Followers of prosperity gospel have raised multiple questions concerning the ability of Jesus Christ to redeem his followers from sin and all demonic powers, concluding that if Jesus delivers them from sin, therefore it was worth trusting him to deliver them from poverty, illness and other social injustices (Barron, 2022). Therefore, they view wealth and health as fulfilling God's promises in the Bible (Gbote & Kgatla, 2014). Prosperity gospel followers, especially in Africa, have found the teaching to be more attractive as it offers solutions to all financial or economic crises they face, bearing in mind that prosperity gospel penetrated Africa at the onset of African economic crises where governments were collapsing. People lacked basic needs, such as food, shelter, and education. The entrance of the prosperity gospel with a promise of faith that leads to financial transformation was a more attractive message than ever. It was essential to study how the prosperity

gospel has impacted its followers within the Karingani ward in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Financial giving has dominated prosperity gospel teaching for decades; wealth accumulation in one's life is viewed as God's will to bless all believers. Financial giving in these churches is evidence that one has faith (Copeland, 1974). Monetary giving is also considered the greatest means of portraying faith. (Soboyejo, 2016). Offering and seeding in faith in these churches is built mainly on the book of Malachi 3:10, which emphasises that one will be rewarded when one tests God with one's giving. For instance, Gloria Copeland practised this in her teaching, promising congregants a 100 fold reward when they give in church, "Give \$10 and receive \$1000; give \$1000 and receive \$100,000. A culture of giving more to receive more is established, and wealth increases indicate God's favour. Despite these teachings, Nkonge and Maina (2014) and Shorter and Njiru (2001) show that followers of prosperity gospel remained poor without demonstrating the reason for the prevalence of poor members in neo-Pentecostal movements. This study indicated how prosperity teaching had influenced prosperity gospel followers economically.

Prosperity gospel teaching creates pressure and the zeal to accumulate wealth by all means in some circumstances. Nel (2020) indicates that the search for God's breakthrough in provision with job chances and healing conception has led to the selling of 'spiritual items' compelling people to give. This has promoted greed in the church. Lauterbach and Vähäkangas (2019) indicate that prosperity teaching includes selling 'spiritual items' during a church service as fakery. The above studies focused on manipulation and the emptiness of the prosperity gospel, while this study assessed how much selling, emphasis on offering, and tithing impacted individual congregants' financial discipline.

Neo-Pentecostal movements are becoming commercial centres where favour from God is bought. Hence, financial disciplines, such as individual financial management, financial investment, and financial accountability and transparency, were addressed (Koch, 2009). Soboyejo (2016) asserts that healing is exploitatively charged in prosperity churches.

Prosperity preachers claim to have the power to heal chronic diseases where healing prayers are accompanied by other elements sold during church, such as anointed Oils, handkerchiefs, salt, brooms, water, etc. This promotes wealth to preachers in these churches at the expense of believers of prosperity gospel. According to Van Wyk (2015), a study conducted in South Africa on Prosperity and the Work of Luck in the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (a branch in South Africa) found that more emphasis was placed on tithing and committing money for sacrifice. Believers were encouraged to pledge despite the momentary lack. Van found that in the desire to activate God's blessing, members committed all their money; many failed to meet their daily necessities. The above research benefited this research since it focuses on teaching made by prosperity preachers, creating a gap in the effect of such teaching. This study investigated the impact of prosperity teaching on adherent financial skills and what skills they acquire afterwards.

A study by James (2019) indicates that prosperity gospel Churches were significant in helping people to truncate the social structure in Kenya and South Africa. These movements developed plans and programs that enhanced prosperity gospel followers adapt to current economic challenges. Teachings on finances were promoted that focused on savings, investment, and entrepreneurship. And that there was social mobility to middle-class status. He agrees with Lee's (2007) findings that the prosperity message was proclaimed by TD. Jakes incorporated investment and entrepreneurial sermons. Adding that individual social mobility was beneficial to the church and the large community. as offerings and tithing in some churches were channelled back to the community. This study remains similar yet unique, for more effort was put into how such gospel influences individual congregants economically.

Additionally, Medina and Cornelio (2021) indicate that marrying financial management skills and Biblical values promotes individual financial management. Additionally, the prosperity gospel has a positive influence on the economic boom that was experienced in the Philippines since the 1990s. Claiming that El Shaddai's prosperity teaching compelled citizens to have moral correction and social

status, leading to upward mobility from a state of economic ruin elicited by corruption. Attributing Tan and Sanchez's prosperity gospel and publications to have promoted spiritual (faith) and monetary management skills enhancing good life as per individual aspiration and spiritual growth, terming them as individual efforts to achieve. Their findings differ from similar research in Africa, which indicates that despite the proliferation of the prosperity gospel, the African population struggles with poverty. The study was conducted in the Philippines, a country that lacks similarities to the Karingani ward in Kenya. Therefore, the current study assessed the impact of prosperity gospel teachings about finances on individual followers' and found that the prosperity gospel played a key role in empowering the followers.

Material reward expectations lead to changes witnessed within the Neo-Pentecostal churches. Nelson et al. (2023) indicate that emphasis on material gain has led to unethical activities contrary to Christ's. For example, he points out that adherents to acquire wealth leads to looting, embezzlement of funds, armed robbery, internet fraud, kidnapping, drug trafficking, prostitution, killings, and other ills in our society. In addition, prosperity teaching results in a group of lazy congregants who wait for miracle expectations rather than hard work, hence developing a culture of greed that is easily manipulated by prosperity preachers (Atoi, 2019). This work was different from the above works as it focused on how prosperity gospel directly influences individual financial transparency and accountability since most prosperity preachers are not interested in the source of the money nor the reason why some members have stagnated in poverty.

Accountability and transparency are minimal in most prosperity gospel movements since they are individually owned (Soboyejo, 2016). Transparency and accountability of followers remained an area of investigation. Soboyejo proceeds to say that followers of the prosperity gospel are influenced negatively by their financial transparency, as many maintain a false image of prospering. Church leaders enjoy and display wealth in public, while the church generally remains dishonest on financial matters. The emphasis God will provide may create an adverse effect that may lead individual congregants into financial ruin. Wrenn

(2020) reports that the phrase that God will provide may influence individuals who seek proof of God's intervention to debts that accumulate without any reliability of paying just because God will provide (Maxwell, 1998). Therefore, this study assessed how prosperity gospel influences individual followers on financial honesty and acceptability of change in financial status.

Financial investment, financial accountability, and transparency are inseparable. Scholars have indicated the positive and negative impact of the prosperity gospel on individual congregant financial accountability and investment. According to Míguez (2001), apart from faith over poverty, Africa is experiencing a new form of prosperity gospel that offers economic tips (guidelines) that may bring about financial growth when applied at an individual level. A change of mindset and behaviour to an accumulation of entrepreneurship skills that leads to the establishment of a business is emphasised as a way of overcoming poverty. Togarashi (2014) and Köhrsen (2018) view economic development strategies as an avenue to fight poverty. They indicate that life improvement strategies applied by neo-Pentecostal churches help to improve the living standards of their followers by instilling entrepreneurial skills and increasing the accessibility to business ideas through group integration.

As indicated by Miguez, prosperity churches emphasise financial rationale where one is encouraged to invest and minimise expenses on unbeneficial activities such as alcoholism, substance abuse, and irresponsible indulgence in sex. Prosperity teaching has affected individual congregants' lives by encouraging them to pursue their full potential through hard work, identifying their talents, and having focused and informed investment (Chesnut, 2012; Milemba, 2017). They also indicate that to some specific conditions, Neo-Pentecostal movements also provide monetary sponsorship to some members to establish business. Despite prosperity gospel being classified as one factor contributing to poverty in Africa by scholars such as A.O, Dada, McKnight, and Jones, Togarasei (2011) concludes that through prosperity teaching, adherents are encouraged to acquire entrepreneurial skills. However, these skills are not only acquired through regular church teaching.

Some churches push the tab to form business fellowships where men gain new ideas and financial support to establish and run their businesses. Women are stimulated to start both small and big businesses. In addition, prayer and positive confession without action toward prosperity are discouraged (Daniels & Vandewarker, (2021).

In conclusion, prosperity gospel dominates teachings in neo-Pentecostal movements, propelling a belief that wealth and health are God's mandates that all believers should enjoy. Despite having faith, and confessing these teachings creates psychological pressure to attain wealth and social mobility. These studies created a gap in how prosperity gospel influences the economic aspect of followers in these movements.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive survey design to obtain qualitative and quantitative data from a selected sample. Through its findings, an assumption or a conclusion was made to describe the economic impact of prosperity gospel on its followers (Daniel, 2006). Manjunatha (2019) notes that descriptive survey design is suitable for research; one has no control over independent variables. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected through questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions to examine the impact of the prosperity gospel on the followers of the prosperity gospel. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for its interest in describing social matters as they exist (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Its main aim is to discover how the health and wealth gospel positively or negatively influences its followers economically in the selected neo-Pentecostal churches. For a while, prosperity gospel has been accused of manipulation and deception to its followers (Essien, 2020). Therefore, this study intended to understand the economic impact that prosperity gospel has on its followers in the selected neo-Pentecostal churches. The qualitative data that was obtained was analysed thematically, while the quantitative data was analysed using SPSS version 27.

Target Population

This study had a target population of 1049 followers of the prosperity gospel in the selected neo-Pentecostal movements within the Karingani ward in Tharaka Nithi County. The target respondents comprised the clergy and followers of the prosperity gospel of the six selected neo-Pentecostal movements, especially those above 18 years. Neo-Pentecostals are aggressive propellers of prosperity teachings. Within the Karingani ward were approximately 58 Neo-Pentecostal movements (Chief Office Records, 2023). The study leveraged 10 per cent of the total number of churches in Karingani ward, as Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) suggested. Selected churches were Deliverance church, with 180 members; World Harvest, 289; Evangelical Kingdom, 215; Grace Chapel, 152; Breaking Limitation Church, 109; Jesus Winners Ministry, 104, totalling 1049 members. The number of followers is approximated because membership in these movements keeps changing (Church Records, 2023).

Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

Purposive sampling was utilised to obtain a sample of six Churches, and a similar technique was applied to obtain the clergy sample of the six pastors of selected churches. The study employed a cluster random sampling method to obtain a suitable sample of respondents from every church. Pastors were consulted to ascertain a regular member, a one-time visitor, or a recent member.

The study used Yamane's (1967) formula to obtain a sample size from an estimated population. The participants of this study included the six pastors from the six Churches, who were purposively selected, and members in the selected churches who were selected using a cluster sampling method.

Therefore, the following sample size was obtained from the six churches of study using Yamane's (1967) sampling formula:

$$n = N / (1 + N (e)^2)$$

Where n = Sample size

N = population of the study

e = marginal error

The study intended a 95 per cent confidence level; hence, the marginal was (+ 5%). A sample of 1049 was accounted for. Therefore, the sample size (n) for this study was;

$$= 1049 \div (1 + 1049(0.0025))$$

$$= 1049 \div 3.6225$$

$$n = 288.47$$

Therefore, the sample size for congregants was (n=288), and six church pastors were included in the study (Table 1). As a result, the sample size from each church was as follows: Deliverance (n=49), World Harvest (n=79), Evangelical Kingdom (n=59), Grace Chapel (n=42), Breaking Limitation (n=30), and (n=29) Jesus winners.

Sample Size

Table 1: Sample Frame

Churches	Target Population (N)	Population Size	Sample	Pastors	Total
Deliverance Church	180	49		1	
World Harvest	289	79		1	
Kingdom Evangelical, C. C	215	59		1	
Grace Chapel	152	42		1	
Breaking Limitation	109	30		1	

Jesus Winner Ministry	104	29	1	
Total	1049	288	6	294

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Economic Influence of Prosperity Gospel on Individual Followers

This study sought to investigate the occupation of the congregants to lay a foundation for the economic

engagement and productivity of the congregants. Scholars such as Shorter and Njiru (2001) indicate that most of the prosperity gospel followers seek solutions to get jobs, overcome poverty, or seek job promotion.

Table 2: Current Occupation

		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	Public servant	55	19.9
	Self-employed	63	22.7
	Unemployed	55	19.9
	Working in the private sector	39	14.1
	Others	65	23.5
	Total	277	100.0

Table 2 indicates a summary of occupations of congregants where those who work in other options were the majority (23.5%, n=65), government servants (19.9%, n=55), and the second largest represented group was self-employed (22.7% n=63) there was also the unemployed group with 19.9 per cent (n=55) a group that worked in the private sector had (14.1%, n=39). The study found that most of the prosperity gospel followers were either self-employed or unemployed, and others were casual workers, making up 66.1 per cent. As indicated, poverty compels people to join prosperity gospel movements with the belief that their needs will be met when they join these movements. The majority view monetary commitment as covenanting with God, seed planting, tithing, and offering as ways to make God bless them (Mwongera et al., 2023). As Ngoma (2021) indicates, the teaching of "I am blessed and highly favoured" makes them obsessed with success.

Prosperity gospel is usually attractive to middle-class youths with financial challenges such as financial insecurities and poor savings. According to Ngoma (2015), People in the middle class are mostly attracted to these movements due to the message of

empowerment and success; other promises include overcoming evil spirits and poverty, which is mostly an African worldview (Anderson et al., 2016). Anderson classifies the middle class as managers and small business owners who seek to overcome present and future unseen financial frustrations. These movements are known for providing members with a network and creating opportunities to ensure constant financial flow. During a focused group discussion, members in Grace Chapel indicated that the church is more concerned with the youth. The pastor creates employment networks and starts businesses where church youth are employed. Shorter (2016) and Milemba (2017) indicate a similar case. Pastor 3 OI (2024) said that apart from teaching about finances, they empower their congregants through mentorship programs and financial support. In other instances, they connect their youth with available job markets where they are influential.

Financial Management before Joining the Church

Understanding the financial management behaviour of the study participants before and after joining the church was essential to determine if the prosperity teaching was impactful.

Table 3: Financial Management before joining the church

		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	Worse	60	21.7
	Bad	45	16.2
	Good	57	20.6
	Best	64	23.1
	Better	51	18.4
Total		277	100.0

The study found that (16.2%, n=45) of the respondents' financial management was terrible, (23.1%, n=64) were best managers of their finances, (18.4%, n=51) indicated that their financial management was better, and (20.6%, n=57) indicated they were good managers of their finances. Finally, (21.7%, n=60) indicated they were worse financial managers before joining these movements. This was because of their limited finances and poverty.

Benyah (2018) indicates that many people seek alternative interventions to their current situations when faced with poverty and weak state welfare services, and religion becomes an alternative route. Therefore, the belief that God can change someone's life through aspects of giving in the church becomes more enticing and attractive. The desire for a good life, success, and good health attract people to prosperity gospel teachings. Most respondents indicated they were facing financial struggles, and those who were stable desired improvement in their financial literacy or wealth.

Kimaiyo (2021) indicated that the majority of Kenyan households were experiencing poor financial skills and had low financial literacy. Indicating that lack of financial management contributed to poverty by (72.5 %). He added that the money-making process was not easily accessible by many people. This is a good indication as to why many people seek prosperity gospel as a solution to their challenges when it comes to finances. A promise of divine intervention on their finances and good health creates hope for followers of prosperity gospel.

Change Experienced after Joining the Church

For the viability of this study, assessing the changes that the followers of prosperity gospel experienced after joining the church was essential. This was vital to comprehend the impact of prosperity teaching to its followers. The summary is as follows;

Table 4: Change after Joining

		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	No	97	35.0
	Yes	180	65.0
	Total	277	100.0

In Table 4, the majority of the followers of the prosperity gospel had experienced change with a representation of (65.0%, n=180). Those who had not experienced change were (35.0%, n=97). Illustrating that the prosperity gospel is impactful. The impact of

the prosperity gospel was determined by how one implemented the prosperity teaching and the advice offered at the church. As Yong (2012) indicates, the prosperity gospel movement provides people in poor urban neighbourhoods with vision, actualisation,

motivation, and enactment of Christian virtues that result in implementing economic advice. This justifies why there is a consistency in attachment to these Neo-Pentecostal movements. Economic betterment is highly emphasised in these churches. Yong adds that poverty in churches was caused by other factors, such as government policies. The prosperity of success and financial well-being motivate adherents in these movements. Their association of prosperity growth in terms of wealth is connected to the African tradition,

which teaches that a good relationship with the gods is denoted by the wealth that one possesses.

Main Teaching Concerning Finances

It was crucial to determine the financial teaching offered in the selected six neo-Pentecostal movements to determine the impact of the prosperity gospel on its followers' financial aspect, which is key in economic growth. The findings are as follows:

Table 5: Financial Teaching

		N	Per cent
financial teaching	Give, and God will bless you with wealth and health	162	33.1%
	Giving is investing to God that compels him to reward you	135	27.6%
	your reward is determined by the amount of money and time that you commit to church	124	25.4%
	you have to give for the pastor to pray with you	68	13.9%
Total		489	100.0%

Table 5 contains multiple checks where respondents could have more than none check; the teaching that give and God will bless you with wealth and health was highly ticked with 33.1 per cent checked 167 times, giving is investing to God that compels him to reward you was the primarily second checked teaching with 27.6 per cent distribution of 135 checks, additionally, your reward is determined by amount of money and time that you commit in church had 25.4 per cent checks of 124 checks and lastly, you have to give for the pastor to pray with you was the least selected teaching with a 13.9 per cent of 68 checks.

Giving in church is perceived as giving to God, a well-ornamented teaching in many neo-Pentecostal movements. Historically, this form of teaching can be traced back to the proponents of the prosperity gospel, such as Gloria Copeland, Keneth Copeland, and others. They taught that givers in the church should expect multiplication. Gloria Copeland insisted on one receiving 100 fold returns of any amount one gives. Teaching delivered from the bible in Mark 10:29-30.

Sadiq (2019) indicates that such teachings are a trap that seduces prosperity gospel followers to empty their wallets with a hopeful expectation of receiving more, yet it only applies to their pastors. Scholars criticise such teaching, indicating that it is a subjective interpretation. Resulting in competition among pastors from different churches who concentrate on making their teaching sweeter to attract more followers.

Brogdon (2015) indicates a list of prosperity teachings such as prosperity as empowerment, prosperity as a financial breakthrough, prosperity as a divine favour, and seed faith prosperity, to mention a few. Adding that prosperity gospel is in a developmental mode from faith expectation to strategic teaching incorporating work discipline. Terming such teachings as the highbred prosperity gospel. Other scholars with similar perceptions are Togarasei (2011). Cornelio and Medina (2020) term this new version of the prosperity gospel as prosperity ethics characterised by self-help and consumerism. The belief in the practicability of

gaining wealth and health is mandatory in this new variant of the prosperity gospel. Brogdon adds that despite the generalisation and the negative criticism, prosperity gospel varies from one preacher to another. Some emphasise faith alone, while other

preachers introduce the aspect of the work plan for one's life as a concrete plan to overcome poverty, as it has worked for some pastors.

Financial Seminars

Table 6: Financial Seminars

		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	No	68	24.5
	Yes	209	75.5
	Total	277	100.0

A large number, 75.5 per cent, indicated that financial seminars were part of their church program, and a small number, 24.5 per cent, indicated that no financial seminars were held. Adding that all talks were aimed at eradicating poverty among members. Pastor 1 (O.I 2024) indicated that to fight poverty, prosperity gospel was to be more relevant, adding that poverty was not fought through prayer and bible reading alone. As much as people seek God's grace and favour, they have a duty to implement ideas that God conveyed to them. In addition, he said that faith without action is dead, quoting the book of James 1:14-17;

¹⁴ What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? ¹⁷ Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead (James 1:14-17) NKJV

This means that prosperity gospel in Africa was action-driven, bearing in mind that prosperity gospel gained root and acceptance in Africa when African governments were facing system failures, unable to provide jobs, good health system, paying good salaries, good infrastructures and other essential services. Therefore it is not worthy concluding that prosperity gospel is the course of poverty in Africa.

Prosperity gospel has proven to be impactful in Africa (Togarasei, 2011; Anim, 2020). Integrating entrepreneurship and financial teaching with Biblical guidelines in the neo-Pentecostal movements has been an eye-opener. The majority of its followers have started small and big businesses, visualised as a tool that can help eradicate poverty within Sub-Saharan Africa. This has increased job creation and business ideas commonly shared during fellowships. The wealthy members in these movements help the upcoming businesses or young population visualise expected market trends, helping them start viable businesses. Togarase (2011) lists some prosperity gospel forums meant to help adherents in neo-Pentecostal movements grow economically. These include the African Christian Business Fellowship, Victory Business Forum, and Might Man Project and Investment Desk. Financial ideas are supported biblically, with biblical icons such as Abraham and the woman in Proverbs 3, to mention but a few. In addition, Anim (2020) agrees that prosperity teaching is good for economic growth.

During a group discussion, it was indicated that the prosperity gospel has benefited its followers. The respondents indicated that before joining the church, they had poor financial status and desired God's intervention to uplift them from poverty, which they perceived as a generational curse. The majority indicated that they could attest that their economic status has improved due to financial seminars and other business idea-sharing sessions organised by the church. They have successful businesses such as photography studios and electronic shops, own

motorcycles, and participate in improved farming strategies and other income-generating opportunities. The unemployed indicated opportunities to work in businesses owned by their fellow brother and sisters in Christ, but they were also in the process of establishing their jobs. Neo-Pentecostal movements are a source of employment due to their programs, where churches are always open for mid-week, evening, and morning services. Servants are employed to ensure that the programs do not fail. A token of appreciation was given to other servants, such as drummers, ushers, bassists, and pianists. This is contrary to Neubert et al. (2013), who found that hard work is not valued in prosperity gospel churches due to hours spent praying and miracle expectations in these movements.

In addition, lessons of saving and budgeting were said to be impactful to followers of prosperity gospel since they joined these movements. The majority indicated they have improved financial handling skills, adding that they can now control their expenditure. Their disclaimer was that they had not achieved much despite being employed for years. They witnessed changes in their pleasure life that consumed much of their income. Listening to prosperity teachings enshrined with biblical bases and interacting with these groups' experts greatly impacted their lives. They indicated they had been impacted by the prosperity gospel, adding that they had managed to buy land and construct residential houses where they did not have to be tenants. The church is not destined for poverty since the church will fail when men are not healthy and wealthy. The church has to change its view on prosperity teachings (Pastor 2, 2024 OI). Nwankwo (2019) indicates that Africa has to overcome the consumerism and the neoliberalism culture that prosperity message has transferred to Africa, indicating that despite the power of words, actions are to be put in place to ensure that the vicious cycle of consumerism is broken. Prosperity gospel in Africa is taking a new route that is more ethical than proclamation words and expectation of reward. Emphasis on prosperity has to align with biblical instruction to overcome the nature created by the capitalist culture of competition and consumption.

It's not in denial that the prosperity gospel is toxic when not handled with godly thought and having no biblical foundations. Anim (2020) indicates that prosperity gospel could be a danger in Africa, especially when people are possessed with artificial needs and desires that result in a consumeristic spirit that leads to competition and lifestyle showoff of individual blessing. Many lack balance in their financial life by giving more in church or accumulating more debt to indicate that they are blessed. T.D. Jake calls for balance in issues of church, family, and finances. This indicates that extremism is more harmful and hinders success.

Prosperity gospel is known to be commonly found in individual mega-churches, which Lauterbach (2015) indicates to be pastoral entrepreneurship. Social mobility is an aspiration of all people, and in most cases, entrepreneurship is key. Pastors have ventured into and utilised such socioeconomic opportunities. Pastors are among the recognised members of society, and the prosperity pastors have proven to accumulate wealth and live a flamboyant life that many desire to attain.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion: Prosperity gospel has contributed to the eradication of poverty. It motivates, inspires, and encourages its followers to establish businesses, creating links for jobs and employment. Prosperity movements have also created job opportunities for many youths in church and created more connections. Prosperity gospel has replaced the big man role in Africa. The prosperity gospel in Africa is developing a new form of the productive or ethical prosperity gospel that combines biblical teaching and work; the productive prosperity gospel is different from a consumerism prosperity gospel inherited from America. In conclusion, the prosperity gospel is economically beneficial to followers.

Recommendation: This paper recommends that policies should be developed to facilitate members enjoying the perceived benefits of social media platforms such as YouTube.

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