
Prosperity Gospel Teaching And Its Impact On Building A Strong God Fearing Society. A Case Study Of

Nakifuma Sub County Mukono District

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Abstract

This qualitative study examined the impact of prosperity gospel teaching on building a strong god fearing society while focusing at Nakifuma sub county Mukono district. The study was guided by the Max weber's theory of idealism that explains that, the more wealth an individual accumulates; the closer he or she is to the kingdom of heaven. The objective of the study was divided into three objectives namely, to assess the missiological concepts of prosperity gospel preachers in Nakifuma sub county, identified the contradictions associated with prosperity gospel teaching and the teaching of the Bible and examined the effect of prosperity gospel teaching on an African Christian believer in Nakifuma sub county. The study adopted a descriptive research with a population of 196 respondents from Nakifuma sub county who included prosperity gospel preachers, local masses, and other religious leaders among others. It was revealed that prosperity gospel teaching has resulted to high rates of poverty and there is no evidence that whoever sows will get twice sown. It is evidenced that it is through prosperity gospel teaching that there is an increase in non- shameless societies with no fear of the hand of God the father, the Son and the Holy spirit. Several Christian groups such as protestants, Catholics, seventh day Adventists and orthodox are continuing to teach the communion of the living God, and other scholars have resorted to understanding the influence, impact, effect and role of this to the current stagnant societies.

Keywords: Prosperity, Gospel, Teaching, Building and God-Fearing Society

Background of the study

The Lausanne Movement (2010) defined the prosperity gospel as a teaching that typically focuses on the key themes of health, wealth, and happiness that believers who have sufficient faith are entitled to through Christ's atoning sacrifice (Allan et al., 2023). Faith and financial contribution are understood as basic tools that activate spiritual power and attract divine blessings of all kinds into the lives of believers. Although success and prosperity preachers consider the right of Christians to cover all areas of life, the emphasis on material wealth and good fortune is paramount (Victoria et al., 2023) Luke 1: tells us that God the Lord shows mercy from generation to generation to all who fear him. Genesis 22:12 tells Abraham not to lay his hand on his boy because the lord knew that Abraham feared God. Isaiah 11:1-4 tells us that the Lord God will bless us with the spirit of wisdom and understanding, power, knowledge and the spirit of the fear of God our lord, and he will give justice to the poor and make righteous judges for the oppressed. So the fear of God is a spirit that believes in God in any situation and makes righteous judges for the afflicted and the poor. So this study will define the fear of God as anyone who believes in the Lord under any conditions with cursing and false accusations against God. Prosperity gospel teaching is not only practiced in Kampala but also in other parts of the country such as Mukono district in particular. Mukono as a district in Uganda is governed by sub-counties and municipalities among which Nakifuma Sub County is one of the sub-counties that make up Mukono District. Prosperity gospel teaching in Nakifuma county is at a stage where several new churches are coming every

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day to spread this kind of gospel among Christians and non-Christians in the county. Churches like Nakifuma Heart of Christ Ministries, Nakifuma Disciples Church, Kasawo Nakifuma Church Ministries, Nakifuma Anglican Church, Kutung Nakifuma Mukono Church, Nakifuma Kingdom Life Church, Nakifuma Kimenyede Discipleship Church, Good Samaritan Church Urban Ministries, West Nakifuma Truth Evangelism Foundations Church , Ndeeba Church Nakifuma, Brothers of Christian Learning Church Nakifuma, Faith Evangelism Church Nakifuma Karagi and Nakifuma Miracle Center are among the prosperity teaching gospel churches in Nakifuma district. Based on the existence of these churches, it is against this background that the study will study Nakifuma District under Mukono District (Anthony et al., 2023).

Problem statement

Prosperity Gospel teaching has seen tremendous explosive growth worldwide, but its teaching methods are not biblically friendly. One thing these preachers have in common is a focus on achieving success (Godfrey et al., 2023). The preachers of these messages promise that God abundantly provides whatever needs believers ask for, provided they have enough faith to claim them. Closely associated with Jesus' call to discipleship was the understanding that something could be paid for at every stage of a disciple's life. A decision for Christ marked a person and it automatically cost him. Jesus emphasizes community and constant spiritual transformation, which prosperity gospel preachers fail to notice and recognize in their teaching. It is a call to all believers of all ages and levels of spiritual growth to continue their journey of discipleship. Discipleship refers to the way Christ's followers apply their faith in their relationship with Christ and with each other, and how they are to practically reflect the kingdom of God to the world they are called to witness to. It is against this background that this study assessed the impact of prosperity gospel teachings on a devout faithful believer in Nakifuma District under Mukono District.

Specific objectives

1. To assess the missiological concepts of prosperity gospel preachers in Nakifuma sub county.
2. To identify the contradictions associated with prosperity gospel teaching and the teaching of the Bible Nakifuma sub county.
3. To examine the effect of prosperity gospel teaching on an African Christian believer in nakifuma sub county.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design with both qualitative and quantitative methods. The study population was limited to 500 respondents from Nakifuma sub county Mukono district.

The researcher sampled 30 Pentecostal prosperity preachers from Nakifuma Sub County who were sampled by purposive sampling, 100 prosperity preacher followers who were sampled by cluster sampling and 100 non prosperity followers who were sampled by cluster sampling method. The study incorporated the use of various methods in the process of data collection in a bid to come up with sound, concrete and credible research findings. The researcher therefore used questionnaires and interview analysis in the process of collecting primary data. This method was used by the help of questionnaires which were distributed to respondents. Questionnaires were divided into sections each intended to collect data on a specific research objective. The advantage of using this method is that it collected unique data and there was no altering of data. Self-administered and close ended questionnaires were used because they

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reduced the costs of collecting data from the field. Through the use of this instrument, the researcher did not travel all away to meet up with research subjects or hiring face to face interviewers. The researcher just sent questionnaires to the respondents and forward them after filling them in an agreed period of time. Edited data was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively as follows; Quantitative data was grouped and statistical description such as tables showing frequencies and percentages for better interpretation were used. However, qualitative data is analyzed in a way of identifying the responses from respondents that are relevant to the research problem. Such data was analyzed by explaining the facts collected from the field under which the researcher quoted respondents 'responses. Data was analyzed inform of tables, frequencies and percentages using SPSS & STATA (Nelson et al., 2022)

RESULTS

Table 1: Showing respondents responses on the missiological concepts of prosperity gospel preachers

	Statement	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Prosperity gospel believers, believe that poverty characterizes the work of the devil and is inimical to productivity	153	78.1	5	2.5	38	19.4
2	They believe, believers should have a victorious faith to	168	85.7	9	4.6	19	9.7
3	Prosperity preachers teaches that physical health, material wealth, and good life is given as the result of Christ's	191	97.4	5	2.6		
4	The gospel is rooted on physical and financial Mastery.	196	100				
5	The teachers focus on preaching material wealth that draws intentions of believers to sow in big amounts	102	52.1	3	1.5	91	46.4
6	They pick a biblical passage and, instead of giving their audiences insights into the passage, they integrate messages of health, wealth and success.	102	52.1			94	47.9

7	Prosperity gospel preachers use Luke 6: 38 and notices that whatever a Christian desires, he or she need to sow it first and God will give abundantly in response and in proportion to the seed sown.	139	71	16	8	41	21
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Source: primary source 2023

The first objective of the study was about examining the missiological concepts of prosperity gospel preachers and the results of this study as indicated in table 3, above shows that more than half 153 (78.1%) of the respondents agreed that prosperity gospel believers, believe that poverty characterizes the work of the devil and is inimical to productivity, 5 (2.5%) of them were not sure of the concept while 38 (19.4%) disagreed with the concept. The second concept was that prosperity preachers believe, that believers should have a victorious faith to claim their share of divine healing, and more than half 168 (85.7%) of the respondents agreed to the statement while 9 (4.6%) of the respondents were not sure with the statement however, 19 (9.7%) disagreed with the concept

Furthermore, the researcher examined the concept of teaching that physical health, material wealth and good life is given as the result of Christ's atoning sacrifice and the result shows that 191 (97.4%) of the 196 respondents agreed to the concept however, 5 (2.6%) were not sure with the statement. With respect to rooting on physical and financial mastery, 196 (100%) of the 196 (100%) agreed to the concept and this covered even pastors and believers. The fifth concept that was examined was focusing on preaching material wealth that draws intentions of believers to sow in big amounts and the result shows that over half of the respondents 102 (52.1%) agreed to the concept while 3 (1.5%) were not sure of the stated concept however, 91 (46.4%) disagreed to the concept stated.

More so, 102 (52.1%) of the respondents agreed to the concept that states that prosperity gospel preachers pick a biblical passage and, instead of giving their audiences insights into the passage, they integrate messages of health, wealth and success however, 94 (47.9%) disagreed to this concept. Lastly of the first objective, it is evidenced that 139 (71%) of the study respondents agreed that prosperity gospel preachers focuses on Luke 6:38 which says that whatever a Christian desires, he or she need to sow it first and God will give abundantly in response and in proportion to the seed sown while 16 (8%) of the 196 (100%) total respondents were not sure on the focus on Luke 6:38 however 41 (21%) disagreed that they don't focus on using this biblical statements.

Table 2: Showing respondents responses on the effect of prosperity gospel teaching on an African Christian

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believer

No	Statement	Agree		Not sure		Disagree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
1	True prosperity will only be experienced in the afterlife (Rev. 7:16; Is. 49:10).	171	87.2	6	3.1	19	9.7
2	Jesus demands His followers a devotion that surpasses their instinct to preserve their own lives.	129	66	18	9.18	49	25
3	Prosperity teaching ignores the suffering and the instructions of Christ.	93	47.4	35	18	68	34.6
4	Paul was teaching to the Corinthians that since Christ accomplished so much for them through the atonement, they should empty themselves of their riches in service of the	90	46	43	22	63	32
5	Seeming fixation on the act of giving						
6	Galatians 3:14, refers to –the blessings of Abraham that come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus. Prosperity preachers ignore the second half of the verse: –that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith	116	59.2	32	16.3	48	24.5
7	Prosperity teaching fails to recognize Luke 4:16 which put	78	40	53	27	65	33

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	preach to the poor did not state that Jesus had come to remove poverty even though that may not be a palatable condition						
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Source: primary source 2023

Table 2 above shows respondents responses about the contradictions of prosperity gospel teaching and the teachings of the Bible and the results shows that of 196 respondents who participated in this study, 171 (87.2%) of them agreed that the holy bible teaches that the real prosperity is not on earth but rather be experienced in the afterlife as Revelation 7:19; and Isaiah 49:10 tells, while 6 (3.1%) of the respondents were not sure of the contradiction however 19 (9.7%) disagreed to the contradiction. With respect to Jesus demanding His followers a devotion that surpasses their instinct to preserve their own lives, 129 (66%) agreed with the statement, 18 (9.18%) were not sure with the statement while 49 (25%) disagreed with the contradiction. The third statement states that prosperity teaching ignores the suffering and the instructions of Jesus Christ and 93 (47.4%) of the respondents agreed with the statement, 35 (18%) were not sure of the contradiction that this statement has, however 68 (34.6%) of them disagreed with the statement.

With respect to the fourth statement that reads that Paul was teaching to the Corinthians that since Christ accomplished so much for them through the atonement, they should empty themselves of their riches in service of the Savior and the responses shows that 90 (46%) of the respondents agreed that prosperity teachers contradict to this teaching, while 43 (22%) of them were not sure with this statement however 63 (32%) of them disagreed with the statement. The study went further and examined seeming fixation (being un able to think) on the act of giving for the good of God and the result shows that majority 95 (48.5%) of the respondents agreed that prosperity teaching does not recognize this act while 51 (26%) of them were not sure with the statement, however 50 (25.5%) of them disagreed with the statement.

The sixth statement states was drawn from Galatians 3:14, which refers to –the blessings of Abraham that come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus. Prosperity preachers ignore the second half of the verse: –that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith and majority of the respondents agreed that prosperity gospel teaching contradicts with this statement while 32 (16.3%) of them were not sure with the statement however 48 (24.5%) disagreed with the statement and believe that the preaching does not contradict with Galatians 3:14. The study lastly of the second research objective examined whether prosperity teaching fails to recognize Luke 4:16 which put it clear that in deed the anointing to preach to the poor

did not state that Jesus had come to remove poverty even though that may not be a palatable condition and results shows that 78 (40%) of the study respondents agreed it the contradiction, 53 (27%) among them were not sure whether there is a contradiction with Luke

4:16, however 65 (33%) disagreed that Luke 4: 16 contradicts with the teachings of prosperity teachings.

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Table 3: Showing respondents responses on the effect of prosperity gospel teaching on an African Christian believer

No	Statement	1		2		3		Total	Mean	Sd
		f	%	f	%	f	%			
1	It has reduced corruption	81	41.3	51	26	64	32.7	196	1.91	6.15
2	It has reduced faith in God among believers and started believing in preachers.	109	55.6	21	10.7	66	33.7	196	1.78	5.6
3	Africans have failed to transform to Jesus the ownership of everything to us.	98	50	16	8.2	82	41.8	196	1.9	7.24
4	The preaching has created greed among Christians that is inherent in sinful man	98	50	16	8.2	82	41.8	196	1.9	7.236
5	Prosperity gospel teaching has resulted to selfish societies since it taught that everyone should look for	124	63.3	15	7.7	57	29	196	1.66	3.59
	the needy									
6	The zeal to gain wealth by all means has resulted to increased crimes like armed robbery, kidnapping, ritualism, and fraudulent	108	55	39	20	49	25	196	1.7	3.598

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7	African Christian believers are manipulating God which is condemned by God Himself	123	63	12	6	61	31	196	1.6	4.297
	Total								$\Sigma=12.45$	$\Sigma=37.711$

Source: primary source 2023

The third objective of the study was about examining the effect that prosperity gospel teaching has on an African Christian believer and the study results shows that 81 (41%) of the respondents agreed that prosperity gospel teaching has resulted to a decrease in corruption, 51 (26%) were not sure of the effect however, 64 (32.7%) disagreed with the statement. The second statement was about reducing faith in God among believers and start believing in preachers and the results shows that 109 (55.6%) agreed to the effect, 21 (10.7%) were not sure however 66 (33.7%) of the respondents disagreed to the effect it cause to believers.

The third statement examined whether prosperity gospel teaching leads the failure to transform to Jesus the ownership of everything to us and the results shows that 98 (50%) of the respondents agreed to the effect, while 16 (8.2%) were not sure of the effect, however, 82 (41.8%) of them disagreed to the effect. The fourth effect was creating greed among Christians that is inherent in sinful man and the results shows that 98 (50%) of them agreed to the effect while 16 (8.2%) were not sure of the effect and 82 (41.8%) disagreed with the effect. Furthermore, 124 (63.3%) of the study's respondents agreed that prosperity gospel teaching has resulted to selfish societies since it teach that everyone should look for wealth than helping the needy while 15 (7.7%) were not sure however 57 (29%) disagreed to the effect.

The study also revealed that 108 (55%) of the study respondents agreed that the teaching of prosperity that focuses on the zeal to gain wealth and titles by all means has resulted to increased crimes like armed robbery, kidnapping, ritualism, and fraudulent activities while 39

(20%) of them were not sure with the effect however 49 (25%) disagreed with the effect. Lastly the study examined the manipulation of God which is condemned by God Himself and the results shows that 123 (63%) agreed to the effect while 12 (6%) were not sure with the statement however, 61 (31%) disagreed to the statement.

Conclusion

Since the advent of prosperity gospel teaching in Uganda, there has been an increase in poverty, robbery, and short of God's glory as well as increase in corruption, miss use of God's name and forced miracles. Emphasizing on the communion and continuous spiritual transformation among gospel teachers is imperative in transforming a Godly faith

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based communities which will serve for the love of God, promote peace among neighbors, protect the mature and work for the love of others. With the current increasing number of prosperity gospel preachers, churches and believers in our societies, the more that our societies will receive shame, deserters, poverty and the more we shall live without meaning, value and purpose. It is through prosperity gospel teaching that people have experienced the highest poverty line since they are being asked to sow, pay he tithe, offertory, counseling, for prayers, thanks giving among others yet these people lack enough to offer. It is through this that prosperity gospel preachers commit the tenth commandment of God –thou shalt not covetll. Prosperity gospel teachers covet when they wish themselves for prosperous life, expensive cars, miracles among others. This has resulted to a non-shameless societies with no fear of the hand of God the father, the Son and the Holy spirit. Several Christian groups such as protestants, Catholics, seventh day Adventists and orthodox are continuing to teach the communion of the living God, and other scholars have resorted to understanding the influence, impact, effect and role of this to the current stagnant societies. In future, we hope this research will provide a profound impact in tackling the effect of prosperity gospel teaching.

Recommendations

Prosperity gospel teaching has achieved tremendous coverage, however there must be greater restrictions, scrutiny among those who would wish to start and there must be greater supervision of these churches to avoid the belief in healing by the hand of God without seeking medical attention.

It has been revealed that majority of these preachers are illiterate and therefore, all these preachers must go back to school and learn more about theology and attain other important education levels.

Believers should be taught the exact way of sowing and giving their tithe from the current way that these preachers teach their followers. This will improve the living standards of people among our societies.

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