



The Contribution of Prosperity Gospel to the Rise of Pentecostalism in Mansa Township, Zambia

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Abstract: The purpose of this article was to explore the prosperity gospel and its contribution to the rapid rise of Pentecostalism in Mansa Township of Luapula Province in Zambia. The study was deemed important in the sense that it would contribute towards the current debates on the prosperity gospel and how it has contributed to the rapid rise of Pentecostalism in other parts of the country other than the area under study. It was also believed that the study would add to the body of knowledge and literature on the influence of the prosperity gospel. Theoretically premised on Marx Weber's (1930) essay "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism", focusing on Calvin's doctrine, the study drew upon the data obtained through qualitative research strategy from 25 respondents. One-on-one interviews and Focus Group Discussions were conducted with experienced clergymen, the youth, laymen and women from Neo-Pentecostal churches and Non-Pentecostal churches. Data were analysed qualitatively using thematic analysis techniques. The findings of the study were that the rapid rise of Pentecostalism in Mansa Township was a result of some social, economic, spiritual and health factors which included illnesses, bareness, poverty, unemployment, misfortunes, and marital issues that people underwent. It was also discovered in the study that, the prosperity gospel possessed some aspects that made people get attracted to churches that propagated the gospel. Some of such aspects included extensive motivation, providing quick solutions to people's problems, the attractiveness of the gospel, and building competition, to mention but a few.

Keywords: Gospel, Pentecostalism, Prosperity gospel, Mansa, Zambia.

1. INTRODUCTION

This Study investigated the contribution of Prosperity Gospel to the rise of Pentecostalism in Mansa Township of Luapula, one of Zambia's Provinces.

Dr Hermen Kroesbergen opens his first chapter in his book entitled Neo-Pentecostalism in Southern Africa with the remarks "A spirit is haunting Southern Africa – the spirit of Neo-Pentecostalism" (Hermen Kroesbergen, 2018:1). He observes that the Pentecostal ministries have been changing over time, that we now see a similar spirit moving, a spirit he calls "the spirit of Neo-Pentecostalism". Kroesbergen contends that a group of scholars from Southern Africa – Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe – had reflected upon this influence which he says had dramatically changed the face of religion and society in general in Southern Africa.

As for the time when the Charismatic movement gained entry into Zambia, Anderson (2015) contends that stating exactly when the movement emerged in Zambia could be quite challenging because its emergence is not precisely known. Nevertheless, Cheyeka (2009) observes that what is worth knowing is that up until the 1980s, there was no official Charismatic movement in Zambia's mainline Christianity because Pentecostal spiritualities were discriminated against and marginalized as unorthodox Anderson further contends that the seed of the movement was sown in Zambia in 1967 when Billy Graham, an American Pentecostal Televangelist, staged the "7-day Crusade" in Kitwe, which attracted over 28,000 people. From that time, Zambian Charismatics adopted practices which would characterize the movement in the 1990s (Ibid).

The article, however, does not claim to give an extensive report on the history of Pentecostalism in Zambia, for this would imply going outside the scope. Its focus is rather limited to exploring the contribution of the Prosperity Gospel to the rise of Pentecostalism in Mansa Township of Zambia.

It was hoped that the findings of the study would contribute to the ongoing debates by adding fresh perspectives from Mansa on the subject.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The spiritual movement of Pentecostalism is rising rapidly in Southern African countries, using the prosperity Gospel to grow to prominence. In Zambia, the movement which initially began as an urban phenomenon has since expanded to suburban and rural areas, including parts of Luapula Province. Various factors responsible for the rapid rise of the movement in different African societies have been cited by scholars. In Mansa however, the contributions of the Prosperity Gospel to the rise of Pentecostalism were not known. This necessitated the inquiry by the current study, with the hope that the findings would not only provide an empirical reference to Mansa but would also add a suburban/rural perspective in explaining the influence of the prosperity gospel on the spread of Pentecostalism.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

The general aim of the study was to examine the contribution of the prosperity gospel to the rise of Pentecostalism in Mansa township of Zambia.

Specific objectives were:

- To find out how Pentecostalism made inroads into Mansa district in Zambia
- To establish the actual factors of the Prosperity Gospel that were appealing to people and motivated them to join Pentecostalism
- To determine why the preaching of the Prosperity Gospel in Neo-Pentecostal Churches was a factor in fueling the rise of Pentecostalism in Mansa

1.3. Theoretical Framework

1.3.1. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism Theory*

This study adopted the theory of Marx Weber in his famous essay, “*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*”. Weber says the origins of *sober bourgeois capitalism* must be found in some religious doctrines of certain protestant groups such as the Calvinists (Weber, 1930).

1.3.2. *Calvinism and the Rise of Protestant Ethics*

Weber (1930) suggested that work in the Calvinist doctrines is important for only three important aspects. Firstly, Calvinists believe that as a creature of inherent original sin, man is damned and impotent to attain salvation. Secondly, Calvinists include a strict belief in God's providence and predestination. Thirdly, it is a belief that everything is pre-ordained by God's eternal design. Calvin taught that salvation is not for all but only for the elect and that, not everyone was going to be saved (Weber, 1930). He based much of his doctrine on the interpretation of a biblical passage in Romans 9:9-24 which directed him to the conclusion that God not only has foreknowledge of an individual's salvation or damnation, but He, in fact, predestines some to eternal salvation and others to eternal damnation.

Weber further argues that Calvin's doctrine, not only precluded salvation through the church and sacraments but it also motivated believers to individualism. Weber further retained that, Calvinism fashioned a salvation anxiety among the faithful, as each believer was so much concerned, whether he or she was part of the elect or not (*Ibid*: 110). It was amidst such anxiety that the ordained priests or rather the clergy taught their adherents that the signs of election included honest, punitive living and material success. According to Weber, this teaching stirred the duty to reach one's certainty of election and rationalisation in the daily struggle of life, which ultimately led Protestants to embrace what Weber calls “*this-worldly asceticism*” (Weber, 1930: 149). Adherents sought to exhibit their belief of being part of the elect by living a temperate life, not losing sight of the inexorable alternative, chosen or damned. “In its extreme inhumanity”, Weber writes, “this doctrine however had one consequence for the life of a generation which surrendered to its magnificent consistency ...a feeling of unprecedented inner loneliness”

Weber contends that “two developments occurred with Calvinism. First, it became obligatory to regard oneself as “chosen” since lack of certainty became indicative of insufficient faith. Second, the performance of good works in worldly activities like business entrepreneurship became accepted as the medium whereby such surety could be demonstrated” (*Ibid*: 104). However, it is believed by Weber that the spirit of modernism and Western Capitalism arose from the theological notions of Martin Luther and John Calvin. Giddens (1971) adds that, yearning for wealth existed in most times and place but only in the West was the capitalistic activity allied with rational organisation of legally free labor. He further explains that the accretion of wealth was morally acceptable for it was combined with temperate diligent occupation. Weber (1930) says wealth was condemned if it was employed to a life of idle, luxury and self –indulgence. Thus Protestants worked devotedly in their calling whilst avoiding all sorts of temptations of the flesh such sexual promiscuity, gambling, beer drinking and other unacceptable behaviors that were believed to bring money to waste. It is worth noting that Calvinists regarded their success in worldly doings as clues on redemption and came to value profit and material success as signs of God's approval. Despite other religious groups such as the Methodists and Baptists having similar ideas with the Calvinists, Weber (1930:179) argues that, “it was the Calvinists that had broken down the traditional economic system paving the way for Modern Capitalism.”

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Global Origin and Development of Pentecostalism

The Origin of Pentecostalism can be traced back to the first century when the Early Church experienced the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. However, the modern day Pentecostalism is believed that to have its roots from the Azusa Street in Los Angeles in North America (Anderson, 1979). The movement's explosion beyond a local Holiness revival in Kansas and Texas resulted from the multiracial Azusa street revival in Los Angeles between 1906-1909, under Black Pastor, William J, and Seymour. Within two years of the Azusa street outbreak, the Pentecostal movement had centres throughout USA, in many Northern European countries, India, China and West and South Africa. Talking about the results of Pentecostalism, Anderson says during North America's worst racist period, people of all races and social backgrounds “achieved a new sense of dignity and community in fully integrated Pentecostal services” (*Ibid*:122). Much as Anderson's work is influential to the origin of Pentecostalism, it does not provide insights into the movements' presence in Africa.

One of the scholars who wrote about Pentecostalism in Africa is Mashau. In his account, Mashau (2013) suggests that African Pentecostalism must be seen as a much broader movement that operates in a much broader context and one that manifests three waves of Pentecostalism namely classical Pentecostalism, Charismatic and Neo- Pentecostal or neo-charismatic Pentecostalism. Mashau further believes that African Pentecostalism is directly linked to the classical form of Pentecostalism of the 20th century which is an expression of evangelical Christianity that emphasizes on the works of the Holy Spirit in all its operations.

2.2. Classifying Pentecostalism in Africa

Wariboko (2012) identifies the following three types of Pentecostal movements in Africa:

2.2.1. The African Initiated Churches

These, Wariboko observes, include churches that started in the early 20th century by African leaders. He says these churches are preferably known as churches of the spirit established because of African prophets. He provides different names in various African regions, such as Zionists, the name common in South Africa and West Africa.

2.2.2. The Classical Pentecostal Churches

Wariboko considers these to have originated from the Western revival that took place in Azusa Street, where Missionaries were sent in 1906 to places in Africa like Liberia, Congo and South Africa. These, he says, have a common doctrine believing in the baptism of the Holy Spirit which is an empowering experience with of course the evidence of speaking in tongues.

2.2.3. Neo-Pentecostal / Charismatic Churches and Ministries

According to Wariboko, *Charismatic Churches* are regarded as independent neo- Pentecostal churches and they emerge in Africa around the 1970s. They include groups such as new- urban centered charismatic's prosperity oriented churches, trans-denominational fellowships and renewal movements within historical mission denominations. Anderson (2015:69) adds that neo- Pentecostal and neo - Charismatic churches consist of faith churches. Their belief, he says, is that through faith you can obtain physical health and material prosperity. They are called "prosperity churches.

2.3. The Origins of the Charismatic Movement

Cheyeka (2005:55) affirms that "the term 'Charismatic' derives from the Greek word 'Charis,' which means supernatural gifts of the spirits, which are most often considered as those listed in 1Corinthians 12:14-25." Johnson and Mandry (2001) also define "charismatics' as those who testify to a renewing experience of the Holy Spirit and present exercise of the gifts of the spirit. According to Faricy (1983:91) the term "charismatic' is, an expression used to refer to a movement within historic churches and it manifests itself principally in the practice of praying for the baptism with the Holy Spirit, and in the exercise of the charisma - such as prophecy, praying for healing, tongues and other miraculous gifts.

However, Most researchers do not know how and when exactly the Charismatic movement first entered Africa and through which country. But Ojo (1988), a Charismatic movement researcher in Nigeria, as cited by Cheyeka (2005), suggests that the movement might have come to Africa via Nigeria. He further states that by mid 1980s, the growth of the Charismatic movement across Africa had been significantly helped by Nigerians as they came in contact and interacted with other Africans in some of the regional and global activities of the Student Christian Movements such as Christian Scripture Unions.

2.4. Origins and Development of the Charismatic Movement in Zambia

Cheyeka (2005) observes that the Charismatic movement grew rapidly in Zambia between 1980 and 1990. The founding of new churches and organisations went hand in hand with successive open-air evangelizing campaigns or crusades. He contends that many Zambians "gave their lives to Jesus' at many of these crusades, which were mostly staged by such international Pentecostal or Charismatic evangelists as Reinhard Bonnke. This, he observes, was seen as an inspiration and motivation that resulted in many Zambian well renounced charismatic preachers such as Dr. Nevers Sekwila Mumba to start staging evangelistic crusades that resulted in many local people especially on the copperbelt to come to Christ. Cheyeka (2005) goes on to state that, international crusades encouraged local Zambian pastors in the Charismatic movement to begin open-air evangelizing. He regards Dr Nevers Mumba and Bishop Joe Imakando as two Zambian figures who have played a very important role in the growth of the Charismatic movement in the country.

Cheyeka recounts that in 1981 Dr Mumba met with the German international Pentecostal evangelist by the name of Reinhard Bonnke and later became his interpreter. He adds that, Bonnke got impressed with Dr. Mumba's oratory and interpretive skills and sponsored Dr. Mumba's to study Theology at Bible College in Dallas, Texas. Upon completion of his theological studies, Cheyekanarrates, Dr. Mumba returned to Zambia and began his local and international evangelistic gospel campaigns. He embarked on what he called the "Zambia Shall Be Saved crusades. Dr.Mumba is believed to have given Zambian Pentecostalism visibility, first among ecumenical leaders of Protestant and Mainstream Mission Churches and the Roman Catholicism.

Concerning Bishop Imakando, Cheyeka narrates that in 1990 Imakando had an encounter with God that transformed his life, a change which was evidenced through his preaching and ministration of God's word in Zambia. He describes Bishop Imakandoas an overseer of more than hundred local and slightly over ten international churches today. Furthermore, he says today Imakando has been recognised by most clergymen as a man who has contributed in lifting the credibility of the Charismatic and Pentecostal movement as well as the growth of Christianity in Zambia. In 2010, Cheyeka adds, Bishop Imakando was elected as president of the Association of Evangelical in Africa (AEA) an organization

Cheyeka's generalised accounts of neo-Pentecostalism and Charismatic movement in Zambia, however, are silent on the inroads of the movements in such specific remote suburban and/or rural areas as Mansa.

2.5. Meaning and the Global Origins of the Prosperity Gospel

Asamoah- Gyadu (2013) suggests that Prosperity theology, sometimes referred to as the prosperity gospel, the health and wealth gospel, or the gospel of success is a Christian religious doctrine that financial blessing is the will of God for Christians, and that faith, positive speech, and donations to Christian ministries will always increase one's material wealth. Johns (1998) further observes that Prosperity theology or the prosperity gospel has been ascribed many names such as the "name it and claim it gospel", the "blab it and grab it gospel", the "health and wealth gospel", the "word of faith movement", the "gospel of success" and "positive confession theology."

Lausanne Theology Working Group (2009) defined prosperity theology as "the teaching that believers have a right to the blessings of health and wealth and that they can obtain these blessings through positive confessions of faith and the "sowing of seeds" through the faithful payment of tithes and offerings." The followers of the prosperity gospel believe that, wealth and good health is a sign that a believer has been blessed by God and this usually comes through faithful prayers and also in giving much to the clergy and the church at large (*Ibid*).

However, in tracing the origins of the prosperity gospel on a global scale, Koch (2014:3) suggests that, "the roots of the Prosperity Gospel can be traced from the Great Awakenings to Evangelical Protestantism, through the Holiness Movement, on to Pentecostalism, through the itinerant Pentecostal preachers to the Charismatic (or neo-Pentecostal) Movement, and finally to the Faith Movement." Koch further alludes that, the father of this movement was Kenneth Hagin, whose ministry was thriving by the 1970s. He contends that the Movement, and its Prosperity Gospel, is alive and well today.

It is worth noting, Koch urges, that the proponents of the prosperity gospel especially the founding fathers of the gospel emphasised on prosperity gospel having three important tenets, which according to him includes divine healing, material prosperity, and positive confession. According to Butler in his thesis (2014) Positive confession is a practice wherein Prosperity proponents verbally claim the blessings they desire as a means of manifesting them into their lives. Faith, he says, is critical to the success of the confession, so any doubt about its future manifestation will prevent the blessing. Butler says these tenets are emphasized at different levels others concentrating on material prosperity while others on divine healing as a sign of God's approval to a believer.

Asamoah- Gyadu (2005: 202) additionally alludes that prosperity preachers draw upon several verses from the Bible to justify their teachings on prosperity and that the most prominent biblical text often cited in relation to the prosperity gospel is 3 John 2: "*Beloved, I wish above all things that thou may prosper and be in good health even as thy soul prospereth*" and also Genesis 26 in the old testament which talks about the covenant God made with Abraham (King James Version). He says despite the emphasis on these biblical references, there are necessary principles to be followed in efforts to become prosperous: engaging in hard work, positive oral confession and sowing seeds of prosperity.

2.6. Summary

In summary, the focus of this study was on the contribution of the Prosperity Gospel to the rise of Pentecostalism in Mansa. The literature reviewed has defined the Pentecostalism and described its inroads into Africa in general, then Zambia and Mansa in particular.

Despite the works of the above scholars being relevant to the phenomenon under examination, none of them has drawn direct reference to the Pentecostalism in Mansa to highlight the contribution of its aspect of Prosperity Gospel to the people, and hence the need for the current study to address this omission in the body of existing knowledge on the subject.

3. METHODOLOGY

Methodically, the study used descriptive techniques of the qualitative strategy. This was considered appropriate since the study was essentially descriptive, in the sense that it aimed to discover answers to underlying questions by attempting to describe and define the problem (Blumberg, 2014). The

population was Churches of Mansa district: the youth, the laymen and women and the clergy from two neo-Pentecostal churches. It also comprised the clergy from non-Pentecostal churches. These were chosen because the researchers believed they would provide firsthand data especially since the respondents were the adherents to the churches under study. Thus they acted as key informants in the study. Since the study was of a descriptive nature, it only gripped a limited number of respondents that were appropriate for its scope and the time given. Thus the study sample comprised about 14 respondents that included church leaders (Elders, Pastors, Reverends or Bishops) from the two Pentecostal churches and 6 from non-Pentecostal churches.

Primary data were collected through semi-structured interview guides and focus group discussions. Secondary data were accessed in the literature related to the study. Primary data were analysed qualitatively by way of detecting and analysing underlying themes and making sense of them.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Understanding of Prosperity Gospel by the Youths

On the questions that sought the youth's understanding of the prosperity gospel, respondents gave different answers depending on how much knowledge they had. One youth from Bread of Life Church defined prosperity gospel as “an extension of the gospel” which means the gospel should be stressed to meet the exposition of the spirit in the modern church. It is also the gospel that has been built on the philosophy that, for one to sustain the gospel in the minds of the people, it should have a motivating factor which is the exposition of the prosperity message.

Another youth from the same church defined prosperity gospel as:

...the aspect of talking about the wellbeing of a believer without concentrating on the spiritual aspect. A human being is understood to be made up of three parts, which is the body, the soul and the spirit. Thus for a man to be successful in the church, he must succeed in three dimensions, meaning the gospel should handle the spiritual aspect, the mental aspect and the material aspect. Prosperity gospel mostly talks about perfect health, perfect wellbeing, ecumenical success and overall wellbeing of a believer. The bible in the book of Deuteronomy 28:13 says “you are the head and not the tail” meaning a Christian should dominate in all spheres of life - that is in political system, business circles, academic circles and in every dimensions of life in society (Interview with a youth, Mansa, April 25, 2019).

The other youth from Bread of Life Church further went on to define prosperity gospel as, “*the gospel that has been used to talk about success other than the spiritual aspect of a believer.*” He further suggested that “prosperity gospel has been taken as a motivational message and not really directed on the spiritual aspect of a believer.”

A junior teacher at one school in Mansa urban gave his own description of prosperity gospel as “...the gospel that presses emphasis on success, having good health and wealth as a sign that one is truly a Christian and is favored by God.”

Commenting in defense of the prosperity gospel message that was propagated in Mansa, one female youth said Christians were not called to suffer but to enjoy life in all spheres. She said people in the society needed to know what it meant to be a Christian through the life they lived. She said if one did not have good health, and always begged for anything from neighbours, then such a one was not a true and faithful Christian.

A Clergy from Pentecostal church further emphasised that:

Prosperity gospel is a biblical phenomenon that stresses much on Christ's work while here on earth. Jesus came into this world to deliver, heal and give hope to the people who went through challenges of life. He delivered those who were demon possessed, healed those who were sick and above all gave hope to those that did not have hope for the future. Let's take as an example the verse from **3 John 2** which simply says, “Beloved, I wish above all things that you may prosper and be in good health, even as your soul prospers” (*Interview with a Clergy, Mansa, April 25, 2019*).

A young man observed that “Prosperity Gospel is the word of God to every believer. The coming of Jesus Christ was to make believers prosper in all spheres of life.”

When asked whether the gospel was preached in their church and how much the 'prosperity' aspect was emphasised, all the five youths from Bread of Life Church said the gospel was hugely preached and the prosperity message highly emphasised. Stressfully, one youth respondent from the same

church said "today a modern church's preaching without the gospel of prosperity is incomplete. Thus, in the church today, from giving out announcements to the conclusion of the reaching, it is the gospel of prosperity." Another youth said "the church proceeding in the modern church from genesis to the end has been made in such a way that the word success materialism possession and accomplishment should be mentioned.

The youth also indicated that prosperity gospel was part of the church's doctrine thus time and again it was preached, especially with the current prevailing harsh socio-economic circumstances in Zambia, and Africa as a whole. They observed that poverty had become so rampant such that when a preacher thought of coming up with a message to give to the congregants, it was important that it addressed the prevailing situations of the people. Thus, prosperity gospel, in their view, was often preached in order to answer questions that were in the minds of the people thereby, giving assurance that there was still hope at the end of the tunnel.

Though the youths from Winners Chapel gave observations slightly different from those at Bread of Life Church by saying the gospel was not preached so often in their church and by alluding that the prosperity aspect was only emphasised once every after two months as per preaching schedule of the sermons, the fact that the gospel was preached and the prosperity aspect emphasised during the sermons were unanimously admitted by all respondents from the two Neo-Pentecostal Churches in Mansa.

4.2. How Prosperity Gospel Contributed to the Rise of Pentecostalism

The research was also concerned with finding out about how the prosperity Gospel contributed to the rapid rise of Pentecostalism in Mansa Township. The revelation from the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) held involving eight Neo Pentecostal church youths show a diverse of views as to how the prosperity gospel had contributed to the rapid growth of Pentecostalism in the township. Eight out of ten youths agreed that the rapid rise of Pentecostalism was mainly due to prosperity gospel being preached in the Pentecostal churches, while the other two gave different views to what contributed to the rapid rise Pentecostalism in Mansa Township.

In trying to find out what aspects the prosperity gospel has which had contributed to the rapid rise of Pentecostalism, the youths from the two neo Pentecostal churches gave the following views:

4.3. Extensive Motivation

Wide preached motivation was cited as one of the aspects which contributed to the rapid rise of Prosperity Gospel. During the FGD, a youth from Bread of Life church remarked:

The preaching of the Prosperity gospel has a very serious effect on the rise of Pentecostalism especially in Mansa Township. Because one should really ask who the beneficiary is at the end of the day. Is it the congregant or the one propagating the prosperity gospel? Definitely when a balance is weighed, you will discover that the rationale of the prosperity gospel is more motivating and more rewarding to the person propagating it than it is to listeners. The gospel of prosperity is well safe guarded in the doctrine and it is about who is benefiting at the end of the day. So as people, if you witness that somebody used the gospel of prosperity, he or she is benefiting from it and the livelihood of that person has changed, this will motivate the next person to put on the garment of priesthood and there by rising a church by using the same message of prosperity (*Interview with a youth, Mansa, April 25, 2019*).

When probed further on how prosperity gospel gave extensive motivation, another youth replied:

Prosperity gospel is believed to be the gospel that gives extensive motivation to individuals because; the gospel that motivates is appealing and so attractive to the people and thereby attracting the masses into the Pentecostal churches. The gospel of prosperity carries what they call extrinsic motivation. This simply means that prosperity gospel possesses the motivation that is driven from external rewards such as money, fame to mention but a few (*Interview with a young man, Mansa, April 25, 2019*).

A female youth from Winner's Chapel Church also agreed to the view by saying that:

Motivation is very important in the church. Youths today want to hear or listen to motivating messages. More so, the human defiance where people, especially the youth, are lacking basic and social needs is leading them to join Pentecostalism because, that is where they feel they are being motivated and hope for the future is given to them. The respondent further gave an example of a female youth who is looking for marriage, the youth surely will need someone or go somewhere where hope is provided for a prospective partner in marriage (*Interview with a young lady, Mansa, April 25, 2019*).

4.4. Prosperity Gospel Gives Solutions to Problems

Youths from Bread of Life Church also indicated that the prosperity Gospel gave immediate solutions to prevailing problems of the people. They said people in life undergo a lot of problems and challenges hence in need of answers to these problems. They added that the human deficiency where people are lacking basic needs, such as physiological needs, marriages, children, good health, or in short the general deficiency in human development, is one area the gospel of prosperity has taken advantage of. One respondent remarked:

If someone who has no child, no marriage has been motivated by the gospel of prosperity that tomorrow he or she will have all what is desired, definitely that person will move into the church where he or she is finding hope of having something so much desiring in life (*Interview with a Mansa resident, April 27, 2019*).

Other youths added to the discussion that the Prosperity Gospel had a lot of other benefits. They observed that apart from being motivational, it also gave hope, and sustained the belief that God can make a believer to prosper. They also observed that there were laws or rather principles attached to prosperity. They cited a Bible verse in Matthew 6:33 which says "seeking first the kingdom of God and its righteousness and everything shall be added unto you." They said the second principle was "work"; where people are urged to learn to work diligently to attain a good and prosperous life. The third principle cited was one where people are urged to manage their resources wisely by investing and by being entrepreneurial. They argued that these constituted what they termed "the essential aspects" of prosperity the modern church which should be preached in order to help people to succeed in life.

4.5. Promotion of Possibility Thinking

Two youth respondents, one from the Winners' Chapel Church and the other from Bread of Life Church further observed that the prosperity gospel gave people the ability to think outside the box. They said it enabled people to have a positive mind of possibilities and things happening in the way they want them to be. They argued that the prosperity gospel had come to uplift people from the inferiority of thinking that poverty is righteousness to a level where people today thought it was a sign of unrighteousness. In short prosperity gospel, according to them, had come to destroy the inferiority complex in the people and energies the superiority complex.

4.6. Builds Competition

Instilling the idea of competing and motivation in people was another aspect the prosperity Gospel was thought to have contributed. One youth respondent from Bread of Life Church pointed out by that prosperity gospel currently is motivating people to work extra hard to achieve what they want in life. He remarked:

Let me give an example of a church which has only one doctor and that one doctor is the only person that is being over recognized in the church and here I am just a certificate holder, I will be forced to start upgrading myself so as to attain a certain level of education so that I gain the same recognition as the doctor, not that God has helped me to do it, because God has already given man the ability to make wealthy and to become successful. The book of Proverbs says "God is the one that guides your steps, therefore; man has no power over his own". So in this way, God will bring opportunities and do his purpose, because he has said "the battle is not of the strong or favour to the intelligent but opportunity and chastise happens to them all." So in this life, there will be opportunities and it is the responsibility of me as an individual to take it up and use it (*Interview with a young man, April 27, 2019*).

4.7. Promotes Possession

One youth from Winners Chapel Church also expressed her view by saying that prosperity gospel promoted possession. “By this, I mean a person needs to acquire, expand his or her orison in social influence, in physical influence and materialism.”

4.8. Promises Wealth and Health

The other aspect of prosperity gospel that was mentioned by the respondents was wealth. Three of the respondents plainly stated that prosperity gospel “promises wealth” to a believer. According to the trio, wealth was a proof that a person is chosen by God. One female respondent stated:

The unseen faith of a believer should be visible through the heavenly rewards of one being rich and not poor. Our God is not a poor God, why should we the children be poor? Poverty should not be a portion of a true believer, poverty is sin, being poor is sin. There must be something wrong with a believer who finds pleasure in being poor and take it as a blessing from God. God wants His children to be rich both spiritually and physically. We should always claim what belongs to us in faith. God's promises are true and it only takes faith to claim them. He has stated in Malachi 3:10 that we need to try Him through faithful giving and He will open the floods gates of heaven on us (Interview with a Mansa resident, April 27, 2019).

Another male respondent from Winners Chapel Church sturdily emphasised by that Poverty to a believer was a spiritual evil that must be confronted with positive confession. He said God wants his children to be rich. Respondents referred to the Bible in the Old Testament where it indicates that God blesses his people with abundance wealth and that wealth should be enjoyed as a gift from God. They cited Abraham and King Solomon as examples of people that were blessed with abundance wealth. A scriptural reference was drawn from Genesis 22:18, 26:4, where the covenant was made between God and Abraham, which the current generation is believed to be part of. One Neo-Pentecostal Church member said:

I can even say Jesus Christ was rich as well; I think that is even why he had Judas Iscariot as a treasurer. If he did not have money why then did he have a treasurer? There is only one important rule a Christian should adhere to in order to acquire wealthy and that is faithfulness in giving. One has to give abundantly so as to reap abundantly, that is all (Interview with a Mansa resident, April 27, 2019).

Two respondents also mentioned that prosperity gospel promised good health. Through further probing, one interviewee said good health was considered as a proof that a believer was faithful, as she contended:

One can only obtain good health by following the sacred law. A person may obtain healing or good health through prayers and regular fasting coupled with positive thinking and confession. Today people are burdened with diseases that even health institutions and personnel have failed to cure but once a person who has been burdened with such sicknesses visit our church, they find healing. What is important is having faith that our God is a healer (Interview with a Mansa resident, April 28, 2019).

The respondent gave an example of a typical scenario by saying:

I remember sometime early this year, a man from the Seventh Day Adventist church came to our church for prayers, *alilwelemoukufimba* (meaning he was suffering from swollen legs). He had visited the hospital for quite some time and confessed that the hospital had failed to heal him. So he decided to come to our church for prayers; he was prayed for and was completely healed from his disease. Finally he joined our church because he had found healing from here (Interview with a Mansa resident, April 28, 2019).

4.9. Materialism and Satisfaction

There were, however, some respondents who viewed prosperity Gospel to be materialistic, other than spiritual. One example is from a non-Pentecostal Church member who noted that that prosperity gospel was too materialistic and that it did not focuses on spiritual welfare of a believer, but on earthly things. He said it addressed people's personal needs such as having wealthy, good health and fame. He further narrated that people normally desire good lives; driving expensive cars and having very beautiful and

appealing houses, hence they feel prosperity gospel is fulfilling their desires. They feel satisfied when they sow seeds of faith to men of God believing that, their lives will change. Another member of the same church said:

Yes I cannot deny the fact that these miracles happen, it only takes the faith of a person and that of a man of God to pray for the things one desires for it shall be given. For instance , if a person is in need of marriage, or maybe good healthy, when this person is prayed for ,then a miracle does happen in his or her favor then, this person will feel satisfied with life (Interview with a Mansa resident, April 28, 2019).

5. CONCLUSION

This article focused on investigating the contribution of Prosperity Gospel to the rise of Pentecostalism in Mansa Township of Zambia. Drawing upon the sample that comprised the youth, the clergy, the laymen, and women in Neo-Pentecostal churches and respondents from non-Pentecostal Churches, the findings of the study were that the Prosperity Gospel had contributed to the rise of pentecostalism in the Mansa township. This was mostly because the prosperity gospel possessed some aspects that made people get attracted to churches that propagated the gospel, such as the economic, spiritual and health factors which included illnesses, bareness, poverty, unemployment, misfortunes, marital issues and so on, that people went through

5.1. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the current study, the authors make the following recommendations:

- Pentecostalism should be commended not only for addressing the spiritual aspect of its followers but for attending to their socioeconomic needs as well, especially in rural communities of Southern African countries where it is beginning to make inroads.
- The Church and Government ought to come together and play a complementary instructional (empowering) role where the clergy and local government experts should organise workshops, seminars, and conferences aimed at solving pertinent religious and socioeconomic challenges facing people. The two should not exist and work as separate allies

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