



## The Effects of the Prosperity Gospel on Non- Pentecostal Churches in Mansa District, Zambia

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**Abstract:** *The focus of this article was to explore the effects of the prosperity gospel on non-Pentecostal Churches in Mansa Township of the Luapula Province in Zambia. The study was significant in the sense that it contributed towards the contemporary discussion on the prosperity gospel and how it has affected non-Pentecostal churches not only in Luapula Province but the nation as a whole. Besides, it was hoped that the finding of the study would add to the body of knowledge and literature on the effects of the prosperity gospel in general. Theoretically underpinned by Marx Weber's (1930) essay on "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" with special focus 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 on clergymen, the youth, laymen and women from Neo-Pentecostal churches and Non-Pentecostal churches while data were analysed thematically. The findings of the study were that the prosperity gospel had effects both negative and positive on non-Pentecostal churches. Negatively, the gospel had made the non-Pentecostal churches compromise in the mode of worship, led to membership stealing, and made people become lazy and have dual membership. Positively, it contributed to the evolution of the Charismatic Renewal Groups. Finally, it was discovered that the prosperity gospel had much influence on the women and the youths causing them to move from their mainline churches into Pentecostalism, exacerbating the rise of Pentecostalism in Mansa Township.*

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

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This study explored the Prosperity Gospel and its contribution to the rapid rise of Pentecostalism in Mansa Township of Luapula Province. Christianity in Zambia was brought by Christian missionaries over a hundred years ago. For many years worship during this time remained traditional orthodoxy. 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, 2015). Stating exactly when the Charismatic movements emerged in Zambia could be quite challenging because its emergence is not precisely known. However, it is certain that the seed of the movement was sown as early as 1967 in Kitwe, where Billy Graham, an American Pentecostal Televangelist, staged the "7-day Crusade", which attracted as many as 28,000 people. From that time, Zambian Charismatics adopted practices which would characterize the movement in the 1990s (Cheyeka, 2009). Cheyeka (2009:) argues that:

*It is Billy Graham's visit to Zambia between 1960 and 1970 and the Scripture Union that laid the definite foundation for the charismatic movement in Zambia. The Scripture Union first arrived in Zambia in 1963 and was preached on the Copperbelt before spreading to the rest of the country. Rev. Dr Dan Pule, founder of DUNAMIS Ministries, Bishop Joshua Banda, of North Mead Assemblies of God, and Pastor Dr Nevers Mumba, of Victory Bible Church, are all products of the Union. The most fertile grounds for the movement seem to be heavily urbanized areas, concentrating mainly along the line of rail from Livingstone to Mufulira.*

Lumbe (2008) further says that Pentecostalism in Zambia could be traced back to Western Pentecostal mission enterprises which were established by missionaries sent from Classical Pentecostal churches in America, Europe and South Africa. Examples of such Pentecostal churches include Apostolic Faith

Mission, Church of God, Pentecostal Assemblies of God, Full Gospel Church and the Pentecostal Holiness church. He contends further that Zambia Pentecostal Movement owes its growth to these Mission Pentecostal Churches.

However, the article was not precisely intended to cover the wider history of Pentecostalism in Zambia, but rather, the limited scope of exploring the influence of the prosperity gospel to the rapid rise of Pentecostalism in Mansa Township of Luapula Province. The Pentecostal churches, more especially the neo-Pentecostal or neo-charismatics have used the prosperity Gospel to grow to prominence and is seen as one of the controversial themes in today's Christianity. It is the gospel or messages popular among Pentecostals that advocate financial blessing, good health and wealth as irrevocable plans, programs and desires of God for man.

The findings of this study had, therefore, added to what may have already been written and offered some fresh perspectives on the subject.

### **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

Pentecostal Christianity which initially began as an urban movement has been expanding into rural areas of Zambia at a very rapid rate, using the prosperity Gospel. In Mansa to be specific, the effects of the Prosperity Gospel on non- Pentecostal Churches based on empirical research were not known. This prompted 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 investigate the effects of the prosperity gospel on non-Pentecostal Churches in Mansa.

Specific objectives were:

- To determine the various ways in which the Traditional / Mainline Churches in Mansa were affected by the influence of Pentecostalism
- To establish what made Pentecostalism more appealing to the already established members of non-Pentecostal Churches
- To find out why the category of the youth were the mostly affected by the Prosperity Gospel than any other age bracket

### **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."

In her dissertation, Milemba (2015) considers that:

*Today people live in a consumerist society where creation of wealth is through good use of resources. Many founders of the prosperity churches believe that their work must be fulfilled in achieving their potentials and thus make their churches attractive to many who wish to transform their lives. She further says that, individuals who join continually want to improve their economies of scale and fit in the consumer society believing that they have a calling hence gain an extra, powerful dimension from God materially. They believe having material possession, good health and success is a way to prove that one is blessed by God hence their struggle to achieve the same.*

## **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 20<sup>th</sup> 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:

**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.

**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.

**Neo-Pentecostal / Charismatic Churches and Ministries-** These, according to Wariboko, 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 charisms - 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 Imakando as 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, this study focused on the effects of the prosperity gospel on non- Pentecostal churches in Mansa. Related sources have defined the prosperity gospel and described its roots. The literature reviewed has further shown the origin, development and classification of Pentecostalism in Africa and Zambia in particular.

Nevertheless, despite the works of the above scholars being relevant to the phenomenon under investigation, none of them has drawn direct reference to the effects of the prosperity gospel on non-Pentecostal churches in Mansa district, 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 only comprised about 25 respondents that included church leaders (Elders, Pastors, Reverends or Bishops) from the two Pentecostal churches and 3 from non-Pentecostal churches, 10 youth from the two Neo-Pentecostal churches 6 women and 6 men from the two neo-Pentecostal churches who were willing to take part in the study.

Primary data were collected through semi-structured interview guides, focus group discussions and observation. A few church services were attended and the worshipping sessions were observed. 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

The findings of the study came from the youths, the clergy, the laymen and women in Neo or Charismatic Pentecostal churches and the clergy in mainline churches that were selected purposively. The respondents were asked to give their understanding of the prosperity gospel before answering the question on its effects.

### 4.1. The Effects of the Prosperity Gospel on Non- Pentecostal Churches

A question was asked on what effects the prosperity gospel had on Non-Pentecostal churches. The general findings of the study on the effects of the prosperity gospel as based on what came out from interviewees were twofold; the two categories of responses; were identified as the negative and the positive effects, respectively.

All the youths that participated in the study agreed that the prosperity gospel had an effect on the non-Pentecostal churches. One youth from the *Bread of Life Church* said the Traditional (mainline) churches were in so much trouble because of the prosperity gospel being propagated in Pentecostal churches. In her view, Traditional Churches were considered to be too conservative and did not create room for a youthful generation which had a lot of "appetite" to anticipate, "appetite" to gain and "appetite" to be recognised. This, in her view, caused the current youthful generation and "people of status" to migrate to Pentecostal Churches which were considered to be churches of the status. A youthful man from the same church gave the following narrative which depicted the context of the responses from many other youths who were approached for interviews:

The prosperity gospel has not only affected the non-Pentecostal churches negatively but also positively. One of the positive effects is that, it has enabled the traditional churches to wake up from slumber to start practicing certain practices the mainline churches thought were not important to be part of their churches. For example practicing deliverance of people who are demon-possessed, praying for those in witchcraft practices once they come openly that they want

to forsake their charms and be born again. Nowadays the conservativeness which most traditional churches had has been compromised. Thus all credit has to be given to Pentecostalism and its prosperity gospel (*Interview with Bread of Life Congregant, Mansa, March 25, 2019*).

#### **4.2. Effects Caused by the Evolution of Charismatic Groups**

A lady in her early thirties from Winners Chapel Church observed that the evolution of Charismatic groups in some mainline or rather Traditional Churches was one of the positive effects the prosperity gospel had on non-Pentecostal Churches in Mansa. Her view was supplemented by similar sentiments from a teacher congregating at another Pentecostal church in the town, who observed that the Roman Catholic Church and the United Church of Zambia (hereinafter referred to as UCZ) were not spared from the effect. He narrated:

*Today the Catholic and the UCZ churches are moving with the modern era; they have finally accepted Pentecostalism to the extent of establishing what they are calling the Charismatic groups so as to preserve their members and keep them within their churches. These Charismatic groups have been made in such a way that they try to give members an image of Pentecostalism within the mainline church so that they do not get attracted to what is happening in Pentecostal churches. It seems the two mainline churches have come to appreciate the importance of being charismatic. This time around you will even find the UCZ worshipping the way Pentecostals do; they can also speak in tongues and prophesy. Deliverances and healing are also being practised in both the Catholic Church and the UCZ Church by the same Charismatic groups. So a wave of change and acceptance of Pentecostal practices have come in some mainline Churches (*Interview with a teacher, Mansa, March 25, 2019*).*

Close follow-ups of the insights in the two sets of verbatim above gave an impression that the Traditional Churches were initially not comfortable with the dimension of prayers being done in Pentecostal churches. For instance with the praying in tongues and shouting during prayers. With the passage of time, Traditional Churches got used to and adopted similar practices of shouting and praying in tongues. One youth recounted that currently, what he termed as the spirit of God was upon all flesh and a revival had come. He prophetically attributed that to the scripture which says, “*In the last days, God shall pour out the spirit upon all flesh, young people shall dream dreams, be able to prophesy, and see visions.*” He said this was evident in what transpired in Mansa, where a person would be in a Traditional Church but able to be moved with the spirit of prophecy. He gladly narrated that the boundary that was created by the Traditional Churches in Mansa had been broken and the acceptance had been seen of Traditional Churches doing what the Pentecostals were doing.

A further observation was made by another youth from the *Bread of Life Church* on the drastic reduction in the membership figures in most traditional (mainline) churches in Mansa. Talking about what he termed as the negative effects on non-Pentecostal Churches, he said there was a common tendency for rapid migration of people from the mainline churches into Pentecostalism. Membership in the mainline churches, he observed, was going down while the Pentecostal churches were getting flooded. He said the reasons for migration included the unattractiveness of the messages being preached in Pentecostal churches. The quickness and practicality of resolving problems affecting people was another reason he cited. People, he contended, had reached a point where they wanted quick solutions to problems, but they were unable to find answers at the time they needed them, in their non-Pentecostal Churches. According to him, this prompted some people to leave their churches and join Pentecostalism where they would be given immediate solutions to their problems. Furthermore, the respondent narrated that youths, especially, were in need of a modern way of doing things, so once they realised that their churches were too strict and too conservative, they decided to leave and joined where they were being attracted.

A youth from yet another Pentecostal Church in Mansa noted that the gospel of prosperity in the district had also prompted some mainline churches to start revisiting their beliefs and compromised on some of their doctrinal beliefs so as to accommodate the people at whatever status, just to enable them to feel part and parcel of the church.

#### **4.3. ‘Sheep Stealing’**

A Church Elder from the Christian Missions in Main Land (hereinafter referred to as “CMMML”) church on the outskirts of Mansa town had his own way of describing the effects of the prosperity gospel on non -Pentecostal churches. He narrated:

One effect the prosperity gospel has on the Traditional Churches is “sheep stealing.” Our sheep [church members] have gone leaving the shepherds [pastors]. They have gone to look for greener pastures that the shepherds in their churches have failed to provide for them. Others leave the Church because their needs are not provided for by the church where they belong; others leave because they have been promised healing, success and wealth which their own churches have not promised and given them. Not only that, others would only go away for some time and then return to the fold. They leave their churches because they are given a bag of mealie meals and a small amount of money and that is “*akakonkelelo*” (meaning an incentive or an attraction), (*Interview with Church Elder, CMML Church, Mansa, April 5, 2019*).

The Church Elder cited one scenario where a member of a Pentecostal church in Mansa Township used to patronise the “*Mabumbaarea*” with a bus loaded with bags of mealie meal and salt. Every Sunday, he said, the bus would go with the commodities to give to worshippers after the church service. So people would flock to that church so as to get a bag of mealie meal and salt. According to him, this led to most people, especially women, to leave their Traditional Churches and join the Pentecostal church.

Substantiating the CMML Church Elder's observation on the issue of Pentecost Church “poaching” members from non-Pentecostal churches, a Priest from the Catholic Church said it was true that there were people who had left the Catholic Church also to join Pentecostalism, though he could not determine the extent because it was difficult for him to do so. Responding to the same concern, a Reverend from UCZ Church said:

I strongly agree that the prosperity gospel has an effect on the mainline churches. The first effect is the loss of members, especially the youth. Youths have been carried away by the wind of prosperity gospel that is blowing so strongly in Mansa Township. We do not know what to do and how best we can preserve our youths. But one thing we have come to realise as leaders of the church is that youths want a modern way of doing things (*Interview with the Reverend, UCZ Church, Mansa, April 7, 2019*).

#### **4.4. Promotion of Dual Membership**

The other effect Pentecostalism had on non-Pentecostal churches observed was that of causing people to have dual membership or rather belonging to two faiths. A Church Elder from CMML Church observed that the maintenance of church membership records at his church had become an issue because some of his fellow church members had dual memberships. They belonged to Pentecostal churches as well as to the CMML church. The Church Elder said leaders of his church did not know where to place such worshippers with dual membership. A priest from the Catholic Church also approved this state by saying:

There are instances where the church may have members with dual membership or belonging to two faiths. This actually happens. But this is against the catholic orthodox. We call this apostasy and apostasy according to the catholic orthodox is a sin. So if a person has done such a thing then he or she has apostatised. So we usually encourage members to be decisive over this, either to come back or to go for good. As a church, we will try by all means to counsel our members but also bear in mind that the spirit of God has fallen in other churches as well and is working as it is in our church, so a person should choose what is really best for him or her, either to stay in the Catholic Church or to go where the spirit has led such a one. It is very true nowadays to believe that people are chasing after miracles, and once they hear where things are happening as they want them to; they will simply desert their own church and join Pentecostalism. To those who come back, there is a procedure of readmission, because we would have taken someone as committing a sin of apostasy. Thus confession is done and then instructions are once again given to such a person who went into apostasy (*Interview with a Priest, Roman Catholic Church, Mansa, April 9, 2019*).

A Reverend from another UCZ Church also shared how it was a challenge for Church leadership for his members to have dual membership. He observed that sometimes church members would not be considered completely lost per se, but would have divided attention to church adherence due to dual membership. He observed that this, in turn, brought in challenges that resulted in conflicts of interest.



#### 4.5. Promotion of Laziness

More than half of the non-Pentecostal clergy cited the promotion of laziness among the effects of the Prosperity Gospel. They attributed this phenomenon, especially to the youth. When probed further about how the prosperity gospel promoted laziness, a Reverend from UCZ Church said:

Since youths are so attracted to the prosperity gospel and Pentecostalism, the element of handwork and self-dependency in our youths has been destroyed. And at the end of the day we have youths who just think that even if they don't work, they will still find a job or pass the exams even without studying as long as they spend their time praying and fasting at church. They don't realise that they need to work and then get what they want. They keep shouting "I receive it" thinking that is what will change their lives. So this prosperity gospel has subjected our youths in the church to a level of laziness you can ever think of (*Interview with a Reverend, UCZ Church, Mansa, April 13, 2019*).

The Reverend further narrated that he had an experience with one youth from his church the previous year where he had found him early in the morning around 04:00 hours at church praying. He asked the youth what he was doing at that awkward time at church, and the youth simply answered, "Reverend I just want to take everything by force, because the Bible tells me that the violent shall take it by force." The Reverend further asked the boy what he meant by that, and the boy simply told the Reverend "I will pray the whole day today for me to pass the examinations". According to the Reverend, this was one example of how the youths were deceived by the Prosperity Gospel that they could prosper in life even without working.

The Reverend's views were echoed by a member of the CMML Church who recounted:

The prosperity gospel is killing people without them realising it. It has subjected them to poverty levels because they don't want to work but believe everything they need will simply come on a silver plate or just like manner falling from heaven. This has also posed a challenge to the economy of the country. People don't have a good work culture in them and it is believed that a wrong work ethic may result in adverse consequences on the economy of the country and for sure no one would aspire for that. The Bible tells us in 2 Thessalonians 3: 7-8...for even when we were with you, we commanded you this; if anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. It is so unfortunate that today we have Christians who have been carried away by the prosperity gospel who think they just have to sit back and relax without working and because they have been praying and fasting, God will simply perform miracles in their favour and take care of their needs. This is a wrong notion altogether. People need to work to get what they want in life.

#### 4.6. Summary

The scholar Hermen Kroesbergen, echoes the findings of this study in his contention that the new Pentecostal churches have, indeed, a complex history. Their gospel of prosperity is premised on the idea that God is omnipotent and all will be well for those that diligently follow him (Kroesbergen 2018:64). Supernatural gifting is valued in Pentecostal circles. With the increase of their followers in urban centres, their ambition also grew and the believers aspired to seek prominence even in rural areas where the effects of their luring prosperity gospel on non-Pentecostal churches became evident. Mansa is one such case.

### 5. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this article was to investigate the effects of the Prosperity Gospel on non-Pentecostal Churches in Mansa District, in Zambia. The study drew upon a sample of respondents comprising the youth, the clergy, the laymen, and women in Neo-Pentecostal churches and the clergy in non-Pentecostal Churches. The findings of the study were that Pentecostalism had affected the non-Pentecostal churches both positively and negatively, through its luring Prosperity Gospel. One of the positive effects was that the Prosperity Gospel led to the introduction of Charismatic Groups in Traditional / Mainline churches and caused the adherents of these non-Pentecostal churches to adopt the practices of speaking in tongues and shouting during prayers. The non-Pentecostal churches were compelled to compromise their conservative church doctrines by introducing these practices considered to be "*elements of the modern era*" in order to keep their members in the fold. The study also highlights some negative effects, which include the rapid loss of church members from

non-Pentecostal churches, especially the CMML and the Roman Catholic Church present in the area, who were lured by Pentecostalism's Prosperity Gospel which promised them instant wealth and healing powers. The movement also made people lazy which had a telling effect on the country's economy as it resulted in subjecting the youth who had joined Pentecostalism to poverty, as they expected God to miraculously provide for their needs at the expense of dedicating themselves to work. Another negative effect was that Pentecostalism, through its Prosperity Gospel caused some youth who drifted away from their Traditional churches to have divided attention as they served dual memberships, a conflict of interest which made non-Pentecostal church leaders face the challenge of having it difficult to account for their members.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Inasmuch as the prosperity gospel is popular and irresistible to many Christian believers in Mansa Township, the Neo-Pentecostal preachers, when propagating the prosperity gospel should encourage hard work because faith and action are important in a believer.
- People should also be taught, especially in non -Pentecostal churches, that the greatest wealth a Christian should have is a good relationship with Jesus Christ and not material wealth or financial prosperity.
- The non-Pentecostal church leaders should address the misconceptions of the prosperity gospel in their churches and better still attend to their members daily needs either spiritually, economically or physically. This should be done especially among the youth and women in their congregations as these are the groups of members so much influenced by the prosperity gospel.

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