

A Critical Evaluation of the Four Cardinal Dimensions of Prosperity Gospel: Spiritual Prosperity, Material Prosperity, Social Prosperity, and Social Well-Being – A Case Study of the Dunamis International Gospel Church

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Abstract— The central problem addressed in this study arises from the apparent imbalance in prosperity teachings, which often place greater emphasis on material and physical well-being than on the primary message of salvation and discipleship. The primary objectives of this study are to identify and analyze the four cardinal dimensions of prosperity as taught in Dunamis Church, to appraise their theological and biblical foundations, and to assess their impact on the spiritual and social lives of members and the broader society. The research adopted a qualitative methodology, utilizing a case study approach that combined doctrinal analysis, textual interpretation, and review of relevant theological literature. The study is grounded in the Prosperity Theology framework, which posits that faith, positive confession, and covenant obedience are the keys to comprehensive and all inclusive prosperity. The findings reveal that Dunamis Church presents a complete view of prosperity that incorporates spiritual growth, financial achievement, social influence, and overall well being. While this comprehensive approach has empowered many faithful economically and socially, it also risks promoting the problematic teaching that God’s blessings are measured solely by material achievements. The study discovers that placing excessive emphasis on material achievements may unconsciously weaken Christian values of humility, service, and redemptive suffering. Through case studies and interdisciplinary insights, the study concludes that Prosperity theology as taught and practiced in Dunamis Church encompasses both strengths and weaknesses. Its emphasis on faith, productivity, and human flourishing aligns with the biblical vision of abundant life, yet it requires theological balance to maintain the preeminence of spiritual transformation over material achievement. The study recommends that theologians and preachers of the Gospel should communicate messages that emphasize a more Christocentric understanding of prosperity, one that incorporates salvation, stewardship, and social responsibility. It also calls for profound theological education among Prosperity Gospel preachers to teach the Gospel that promotes both spiritual maturity and social justice in the Church.

Keywords: Prosperity Gospel; Spiritual Prosperity; Material Prosperity; Social Prosperity; Dunamis Church.

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INTRODUCTION

It is indisputably true that modern Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity, within Africa and Nigeria in particular, is primarily defined by the dominant feature of the Prosperity Gospel. This is a theology that demonstrates that God desires all His children to prosper in every ramification of their lives, spiritually, materially, socially, and physically (Warekoromor, et al., 2025). It teaches that faith, obedience, and positive confession are the indispensable keys to accessing God's abundant blessings. This doctrine resonates powerfully in societies plagued by economic hardship, unemployment, and social inequality, offering hope for empowerment and transformation.

The Prosperity Gospel has gained wide acceptance in Nigerian society through the ministry of a number of Pentecostal ministers, among whom Dunamis International Gospel Church, founded by Dr. Paul Enenche, uniquely stands out. The Dunamis Church underscores the restoration of human destiny and dignity through divine empowerment, industriousness, and faith in God's promises. The Church sees prosperity as a four dimensional reality: spiritual prosperity, which concerns one's relationship with God; material prosperity, involving financial and physical blessings; social prosperity, relating to influence and relevance in society; and social well being, which includes peace, health, and emotional stability.

Although the whole idea and understanding of prosperity theology is apparently consistent with the biblical idea of abundant life, it has equally generated substantial theological debate. Some critics have argued that the Prosperity Gospel sometimes overstresses material achievement and success, thus disregarding the spiritual discipline, contentment, and social justice that form essential components of Christian discipleship. These concerns call for a critical and balanced evaluation of how Prosperity Gospel is taught and practiced, especially in Dunamis International Gospel Church. Therefore, this study seeks to critically evaluate the four basic dimensions of prosperity (spiritual, material, social prosperity, and social well being) as expressed in Dunamis Church, and to examine whether these doctrines align with sound biblical and theological principles.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Prosperity Gospel

Prosperity Gospel is a theological movement that teaches that positive confession, faith, and generous giving to God will bring physical health, material wealth, and overall success to the faithful. This teaching presents prosperity as a sign of God's favour and as part of the believer's redemptive inheritance in Christ (Bowler, 2013, p. 7). It practically emphasizes that poverty, sickness, and failure are not God's will for His

people but can be overcome through faith in God and obedience to biblical principles (Gifford, 2004, p. 19).

Spiritual Prosperity

Spiritual prosperity refers to the inner well being and development of a believer in relationship with God. It stresses faith, obedience, holiness, and the fruits of the Spirit as proof of a prosperous soul (3 John 2). Kenneth Hagin (1995) opines that true prosperity begins in the spirit; when the heart and mind are united with God's will, external blessings naturally follow (p. 12). Accordingly, spiritual prosperity is the foundation upon which other forms of prosperity are built.

Material Prosperity

Material prosperity represents the possession of physical blessings, financial resources, and economic stability that enable a believer to live contentedly and support the work of God. Material prosperity is often regarded in prosperity theology as the outward manifestation of God's covenant blessings (Adeboye, 2012, p. 56). Nevertheless, scholars caution that while God provides for His people, material wealth should be understood as an instrument for service rather than a measure of spirituality (Ukah, 2008, p. 102).

Social Prosperity

Social prosperity refers to the believer's relevance, influence, and harmonious relationships with people in society (Chimene-Wali, 2025; Ogurinka & Chimene-Wali, 2026). It comprises success in family life, career progression, leadership, and positive community engagement (Ojo, 2006, p. 77). In the Prosperity Gospel framework, social prosperity is understood to be evidence of God's favor manifesting through social advancement and influence.

Total Well Being

Total well being or holistic prosperity refers to the complete state of human flourishing in spirit, soul, and body. It involves physical health, emotional stability, mental stability, and moral uprightness (Enenche, 2015, p. 24). This teaching corresponds with the biblical ideal of abundant life that Christ promised in the Gospel of John 10:10: "I have come that you may have life and have it abundantly." In the view of Allan Anderson (2014), true prosperity must incorporate all dimensions of human existence and not be restricted to material wealth alone (p. 41).

CONCEPTUAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF PROSPERITY GOSPEL

Historical Development of the Prosperity Gospel

The Prosperity Gospel, also known as the Health and Wealth Gospel, started in early twentieth century American evangelicalism and Pentecostalism. The historical development of Prosperity Gospel can be traced through several different phases, starting with the New Thought movement of the late nineteenth century, whose doctrine stressed that the human mind has creative power to form reality through positive thinking and faith filled speech (Bowler, 2013, p. 25). This philosophical ideology greatly influenced early Pentecostal religious leaders who synthesized biblical faith with metaphysical ideas of health and success.

Between 1920 and 1930, religious leaders such as E. W. Kenyon propagated the belief that confession and faith are capable of producing concrete results, including health giving and financial blessings. The teachings and writings of Kenyon formed the theological foundation for future prosperity preachers by stressing that believers are capable of claiming God's promises in Scripture through faith filled words (Harrell, 1985, p. 14). Kenyon's teachings were later embraced and expanded by Kenneth E. Hagin. The ministry of Hagin organized these ideas between 1960 and 1970, maintaining that prosperity was a covenant right for all Christians who practiced tithing, faith, and positive confession (Hagin, 1995, p. 33).

With technological advancement in information and social media between 1970 and 1980, the Prosperity Gospel became highly institutionalized in American televangelism through preachers such as Kenneth Copeland, Oral Roberts, and Jim Bakker, who joined divine blessing with financial giving. The extensive broadcast of these teachings through media such as radio and television resulted in the globalization of the Prosperity Gospel, establishing it as a defining feature of Charismatic Christianity worldwide (Coleman, 2000, p. 59).

The Prosperity Gospel gathered momentum in Africa, particularly in Nigeria, around 1980 and 1990 amidst economic degeneration, political instability, and growing poverty. During this period, Pentecostal leaders such as Pastor E. A. Adeboye of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Bishop David Oyedepo of Living Faith Church, and later Dr. Paul Enenche of Dunamis International Gospel Centre, customized the Prosperity Gospel message to African realities. These religious leaders presented the prosperity message as a theology of empowerment and restoration, an answer to economic hardship and spiritual oppression (Ukah, 2008; Warekoromor, et al., 2025). Presently, the Prosperity Gospel has grown into an all inclusive theology that emphatically teaches spiritual vitality, material wealth, social influence, and physical well being. It has become a church growth strategy in Pentecostal worship in Nigeria. However, scholars continue to debate its biblical authenticity and ethical implications,

arguing that while it inspires faith and diligence, it occasionally risks equating holiness with material success (Gifford, 2004, p. 31). Currently, prosperity theology is no longer an exclusive product of Pentecostal churches; it is gaining momentum even in mainstream and orthodox churches across the globe.

Biblical and Theological Basis of Prosperity Teaching

Several biblical passages buttress the central message of Prosperity Gospel that upholds God's desire for the well being of His people. Proponents of this Gospel argue that spiritual prosperity, material prosperity, social prosperity, and physical prosperity of believers are expressions of the covenant relationship between God and humanity. Prosperity theology states that divine blessing is not restricted to the salvation of the soul but covers every area of life. This understanding seeks to demonstrate that the God who saves also provides and sustains His people in abundance (Hagin, 1995, p. 27).

Old Testament Foundations

Prosperity is consistently shown in the Old Testament as a sign of divine favour and covenant faithfulness. The wealth of Abraham, Isaac, and Solomon is presented in Scripture as blessings from God for their faith and obedience (Genesis 13:2; 26:12–14; 1 Kings 10:23–25). In Genesis 13:2, Abraham was richly blessed by God: "Abram was a very rich man, with sheep, goats, and cattle, as well as silver and gold." Similarly, Isaac was abundantly blessed: "Isaac sowed seed in that land, and that year he harvested a hundred times as much as he had sown, because the Lord blessed him" (Genesis 26:12). Another beneficiary of God's blessing was King Solomon: "King Solomon was richer and wiser than any other king. Everyone who came brought him a gift, articles of silver and gold, robes, weapons, spices, horses and mules. This continued year after year" (1 Kings 10:23-25). These Old Testament passages are clear indications that God abundantly blessed those who were close to His heart.

New Testament Foundations

Prosperity preachers base their messages on several passages in the New Testament which emphasize abundant life, divine provision, and answered prayer. The Lord Jesus declares, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). In the same way, the Apostle John's prayer, "I wish above all things that you may prosper and be in good health, even as your soul prospers" (3 John 2), is often quoted as a scriptural basis for the balance between spiritual and material prosperity (Bowler, 2013, p. 92).

The teachings of Paul on giving and reciprocity also form a crucial basis for Prosperity theology. Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 9:6–8 writes, "He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will reap bountifully." This principle inspires many prosperity messages in present day Pentecostalism.

Theological Interpretation

Prosperity theology is rooted in the belief that Christ's redemptive work on the Cross restores humanity not only from sin but also from sickness, poverty, and failure. Kenneth Hagin (1995) contends that "poverty and sickness are part of the curse of the law," from which Christ has redeemed believers (p. 45). David Oyedepo corroborates this teaching when he says that redemption grants believers access to covenant blessings of wealth and dominion as part of their spiritual inheritance (Oyedepo, 1999, p. 22). Theological critics argue that this interpretation often separates God's promises from the larger biblical perspective of discipleship, humility, and suffering. Gifford (2004) notes that many prosperity preachers interpret Scripture through the lens of human comfort and achievement rather than God's ultimate purpose of spiritual transformation (p. 63). Therefore, true biblical prosperity must be understood as all inclusive well being, encompassing spiritual growth, moral integrity, and responsible stewardship of material blessings. In sum, the prosperity that God promises is not purely financial but a complete experience of life in communion with Him.

Critiques of Prosperity Theology in Contemporary Christianity

The Prosperity Gospel has generated considerable argument and controversy within modern Christianity. Although the prosperity message of hope, divine favor, and material success has found a home with many believers, it has equally encountered loud theological, ethical, and pastoral criticisms. Many scholars and religious leaders contend that the message of prosperity alters biblical teaching, promotes materialism, and weakens basic Christian values such as sacrifice, humility, and compassion.

Theological Critiques

Within theological parlance, one of the major criticisms of the Prosperity Gospel is its misinterpretation of Scripture. Critics state that proponents often extract biblical verses from their historical and theological contexts to support claims of guaranteed wealth and health. In the view of Kate Bowler (2013), Prosperity Gospel recasts God as a cosmic vending machine, dispensing blessings in exchange for faith and positive confession (p. 45). This perspective diminishes God's grace to a transactional system of cause and effect, contradicting the biblical teaching about divine sovereignty and grace.

Following the same line of thought, Paul Gifford (2004) submits that Prosperity Gospel preachers "change the gospel from salvation through the Cross into success through confession and giving" (p. 83). Gifford contends that this paradigm shift undermines the fundamental message of Christ's suffering and self-denial, upholding instead a triumphalist and consumer driven spirituality. The teachings of Apostle Paul on contentment and patience in suffering (Philippians 4:11-13; 2 Corinthians 12:9) are

often set aside in favour of instant satisfaction and material blessings. Paul writes, "I am content, whether I am full or hungry, whether I have too much or too little. I have the power to face all conditions through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:11-13). According to Simon Coleman (2000), Prosperity theology places excessive emphasis on the believer's agency, suggesting that lack of prosperity is a result of personal spiritual failure (p. 102). This submission can lead to guilt and spiritual anxiety among Christians who remain poor in spite of their dedication in the Church and faithful religious observance.

Ethical and Social Critiques

From an ethical perspective, Prosperity theology faces considerable criticism for promoting materialism and greed under the guise of faith. In the view of David Jones and Russell Woodbridge (2011), the teaching of prosperity exalts wealth to an idolatrous level, equating riches with righteousness and poverty with sin (p. 28). This worldview disregards the Christian vocation to social justice, simplicity of life, and solidarity with the poor.

Furthermore, Prosperity Gospel has been accused of exploiting vulnerable believers through unscrupulous fundraising strategies. According to Hollinger (2010), prosperity preachers more often than not commercialize the gospel, turning the Church into a marketplace of miracles (p. 62). This commercialization of the Gospel ministry downgrades the spiritual honesty of the Church and diminishes the pastor believer relationship to a business enterprise.

Socially, the teaching of Prosperity has been connected to the individualization of faith, a situation where personal success is rated above communal welfare. Allan Anderson (2014) contends that this theological teaching encourages self centered religiousness rather than communal responsibility (p. 181). From this point of understanding, Prosperity theology risks dividing Christian communities, especially in settings where poverty requires communal social engagement rather than individual accumulation of wealth.

Pastoral and Practical Critiques

Pastorally, the Prosperity Gospel is capable of causing spiritual disillusionment among the faithful when the miracles and prosperity that were promised by preachers fail to materialize. In the view of Craig L. Blomberg (1999), such disillusionment often leads to crises of faith, as numerous believers conclude that either God has failed them or they have failed God (p. 153). This psychological affliction seriously contradicts the biblical understanding of faith as trust in the will of God, even in the midst of suffering and lack.

It is worthy of note that within the African context, where poverty and inequality are prevalent, Prosperity theology has both pleased and been criticized by several theologians. Byang Kato (1975) cautioned that African Pentecostalism's fascination with wealth could weaken the gospel of the Cross by replacing salvation with success (p. 89). In the same vein, Emmanuel Katongole (2011) warned that the Prosperity Gospel risks Christianizing capitalism rather than evangelizing culture (p. 63). In the words of Olofinjana (2012), several African scholars insist that Prosperity Gospel must be reinterpreted through an all inclusive theology that integrates moral discipline, social justice, and stewardship (p. 42). Despite the fact that Prosperity theology encourages genuine desires for dignity and hope, it must be reoriented toward a biblically based theology of holistic prosperity, one that values uprightness, stewardship, and kindness as fundamental expressions of divine blessing.

THE FOUR CARDINAL DIMENSIONS OF PROSPERITY GOSPEL

i. Spiritual Prosperity

Spiritual prosperity denotes the believer's growth and development in holiness, faith, and intimacy with God. It forms the foundation of all other dimensions of prosperity, stressing the inner transformation of the heart and alignment with the will of God. Kenneth Hagin (1995) submits that true prosperity starts within the human spirit before it expresses outwardly (p. 27). Hence, a person who is spiritually prosperous shows the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23) and walks in obedience to the word of God.

Holy Scripture consistently highlights spiritual prosperity over material benefit. The Lord Jesus says, "Be concerned above everything else with the Kingdom of God and with what He requires of you, and He will provide you with all these other things" (Matthew 6:33). Apostle Paul's letters further emphasize that true riches are found in godliness and contentment (1 Timothy 6:6–10). Theologically, prosperity flows from humanity's restored relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. John Piper (1986) contends that the essence of prosperity is joy in God, not in the gifts of God (p. 112).

Even though Prosperity Gospel preachers rightly uphold spiritual growth as crucial, critics note that in practice, this aspect is often dominated by the pursuit and desire for material wealth. Kate Bowler (2013) opines that prosperity theology spiritually justifies material desire by equating inner faith with external success (p. 102). A balanced theology must consequently restore spiritual prosperity as the basis of all inclusive Christian living, where faith produces contentment, not materialism.

ii. Material Prosperity

Material prosperity means physical health, financial abundance, and economic success as signs of God's blessing. It is based on the belief that God wishes His children to live free from poverty and want. David Oyedepo (1999) opines that prosperity answers to covenant practice, not luck; it is the inheritance of God's children who are obedient to Him (p. 19).

Preachers of material prosperity contend that material prosperity is part of the believers' inheritance. They buttress their opinion with relevant biblical passages that reflect their ideology. Moses admonished the Israelites, "Remember it is the Lord your God who gives you the power to become rich. He does this because He is still faithful today to the covenant He made with your ancestors" (Deuteronomy 8:18). This evidently explains that God desires His children to be wealthy, for it is the inheritance He promised their ancestors. Similarly, Apostle Paul teaches that "God is able to give you all that you need, for yourselves and more than enough for every good cause" (2 Corinthians 9:8).

From a theological perspective, this understanding is based on the covenant of Abraham, where God promises material blessings to Abraham and his descendants (Genesis 12:2-3). The New Testament has a contrary teaching about material prosperity. It re-expresses prosperity from possession centered to stewardship centered. The Lord Jesus cautions against accumulating material possessions, saying that "a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (Luke 12:15). According to Craig Blomberg (1999), the New Testament emphasizes generosity and responsibility rather than entitlement (p. 141).

Even though material prosperity is expressed in the pages of Scripture, overemphasis of it distorts Christian values. Paul Gifford (2004) condemns Prosperity theology's transactional approach, where giving guarantees wealth (p. 75). Therefore, wealth is God's given gift for service and community development, not a measure of spiritual standing. Hence, the Church must at all times teach contentment, stewardship, and social responsibility as indispensable to authentic material prosperity.

iii. Social Prosperity

Social prosperity means the believer's cordial relationship with others and active involvement in the welfare and safety of the community. It includes justice, peace, family stability, and social influence. Paul Enenche (2015) maintains that God's prosperity program includes relevance in society and positive impact on others (p. 31). For Enenche, one's prosperity is determined by his or her societal relevance and the degree to which he or she has positively impacted others.

It is established in Scripture that prosperity includes social harmony and communal flourishing. Prophet Jeremiah advised the people of God to seek the peace and prosperity of the city (Jeremiah 29:7). In the same vein, Prophet Micah advocated

for mercy, justice, and humility as expectations of God (Micah 6:8). In the Gospel of Matthew, our Lord Jesus Christ says that believers are called to be salt and light to the world (Matthew 5:13–16), transforming the entire society through righteousness and service.

From a theological perspective, social prosperity corresponds with God's kingdom ethics, stressing relational wholeness and justice. Emmanuel Katongole (2011) argues that prosperity must be redefined in terms of community flourishing rather than individual success (p. 65). A critical evaluation of social prosperity reveals that this Gospel often disregards the communal dimension of prosperity and focuses rather on personal success. Allan Anderson (2014) maintains that Pentecostal prosperity movements gravitate toward individualizing salvation and privatizing wealth (p. 178). The biblical method must reintegrate social prosperity and encourage believers to employ resources for charity, social transformation, and justice.

iv. Total Well Being

Total well being, also known as holistic prosperity, refers to the combination of spiritual, physical, emotional, and social health of the people. It is a state of total and comprehensive peace and harmony between God, humanity, and creation. According to Creflo Dollar (1999), total well being or complete life prosperity means spiritual, financial, physical, and relational wholeness (p. 15).

In the Scriptures, total well being is based on God's creative and saving plan. Jesus asserts, "I am come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). By extension, this abundance goes beyond wealth to peace, joy, and purpose. In the view of Augustine (1984), total well being or holistic prosperity occurs when love for God and neighbor is prioritized (p. 211).

John Wesley, in the early 18th century, expressed his thought on total well being prosperity theology. He submitted that true prosperity encompasses spiritual health, physical strength, and active love for neighbor, all governed by God's grace. He admonished believers in his sermon "The Use of Money" to gain all you can, save all you can, and give all you can, stressing stewardship and service rather than self-indulgence (Wesley, 1986, p. 218). In the view of Wesley, material achievement was morally acceptable only when it served the common good. He taught that total well being flows from perfect love, love for God and humanity, rather than sheer accumulation of wealth (Maddox, 1994, p. 146). Hence, Wesley's teaching of grace balances spiritual and material prosperity under the importance of holiness.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Prosperity Theology Framework

The Prosperity Theology Framework is a Christian theological framework that states that God wills for all believers spiritual prosperity, material prosperity, social prosperity, and total well being. The theology affirms that faith, covenant obedience, and positive confession trigger God's blessings and transform the believer's condition from lack to abundance (Bowler, 2013, p. 7). This theological framework was developed by preachers such as E. W. Kenyon, Oral Roberts, and Kenneth Hagin in the mid 20th century, who joined the promises of the Bible with practical teachings on faith, health, and wealth. Kenneth Hagin (1995) opines that prosperity is part of the believer's redemption in Christ; sickness and poverty are curses that Christ has already borne (p. 14). As a result, Prosperity theology views salvation as a comprehensive platform that redeems all aspects of human life, including spiritual, physical, financial, and social dimensions.

Essentially, Prosperity theology understands the covenant of Abraham, "I will give you many descendants, and they will become a great nation. I will bless you and make your name famous, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, but I will curse those who curse you. And through you I will bless all the nations" (Genesis 12:2-3), to mean both spiritual and material blessings, and it stresses the role of believers as heirs of the promises of God (Coleman, 2000, p. 24). The framework incorporates confession, faith, giving, and obedience as instruments for accessing the covenant of abundance.

Critical Evaluation

The Prosperity Theology framework offers a powerful theological foundation for human flourishing and hope in situations of poverty and despair, specifically in Africa. Its combination of spiritual and material dimensions confirms divine care for the whole person. Nonetheless, critics warn that too much emphasis on material wealth risks misrepresenting the gospel's call to self denial and service. Kate Bowler (2013) maintains that Prosperity theology can inadvertently repackage economic opportunity as God's reward, confusing faithfulness with success (p. 109). Correspondingly, Gifford (2004) warns that African prosperity movements must balance faith and charity with justice and stewardship (p. 86). However, when appropriately interpreted with emphasis on faith, kingdom purpose, and righteousness, Prosperity theology remains an authentic and valid framework for understanding the fourfold dimensions of prosperity: spiritual energy, material sufficiency, social relevance, and total well being.

BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF DUNAMIS INTERNATIONAL GOSPEL CHURCH

The Dunamis International Gospel Centre is a Pentecostal Christian ministry founded by Dr. Paul Idoko Enenche and his wife Dr. Becky Enenche on November 10, 1996 in Abuja, Nigeria. The word Dunamis is a Greek term which means power. The name reflects the Church's emphasis on the manifestation of God's power through the Holy Spirit in deliverance, healing, prosperity, and the total transformation of lives. Through divine guidance and a period of fasting and prayer, Enenche started the ministry and named it Dunamis.

He held the first Sunday service of the Church at the Abuja Centre for Arts and Culture. After a short while, the Church moved to worship at the Abuja Sheraton Hotel and Tower for about six months and later moved to its permanent headquarters called the Glory Dome, situated at the Lord's Garden, Abuja. The Glory Dome was dedicated in November 2018 with a seating capacity of 100,000 worshippers.

Dr. Paul Enenche was a trained medical doctor before becoming a preacher of the Gospel. He founded the church with a vision to restore human purpose and dignity through the propagation of the word of God and the demonstration of power. His ministry gives emphasis to the four primary dimensions of prosperity theology: spiritual empowerment, material upliftment, and social transformation. The main characteristics of Dunamis Church are passionate prayer, vibrant worship, and emphasis on faith and holiness.

Dunamis Church has national and international recognition. Over the years, it has expanded with hundreds of branches across the entire nation of Nigeria, Africa, Europe, and North America. The Church has a global reach by operating Dunamis Television, a satellite channel that broadcasts the message of salvation across the nations of the world. The central message of faith theology and prosperity makes Dunamis Church align with the Pentecostal Charismatic tradition of Nigerian contextual spirituality which integrates divine healing, holiness, prosperity, and service.

Dunamis Doctrinal Teaching on Prosperity

Dunamis Church teaches an all inclusive Gospel of prosperity which encompasses spiritual, material, social, and physical or total well being of all believers. The Church's doctrinal teaching on prosperity is rooted in the belief that God desires the total well being of His people in all aspects of life. According to the founding pastor, Dr. Paul Enenche (2015), prosperity does not only entail accumulation of wealth but the total well being of the believer, which includes spirit, soul, and body (p. 21). The Church centers its teaching mainly on 3 John 2, which says, "Beloved, I pray that everything may go well with you, and that you may be in good health, as I know you are well in spirit." This scriptural passage is a divine confirmation that spiritual prosperity is the

root of all other forms of prosperity. Dunamis Church thus teaches that prosperity is a covenant right of all believers who are obedient to the word of God, exercise their faith, and practice righteousness.

THEOLOGICAL WEAKNESSES AND CRITIQUE OF PROSPERITY GOSPEL

i. Over Emphasis on Materialism

Critics argue that Prosperity theology always equates faith with financial prosperity, thereby creating a teaching of transactional blessing. Kate Bowler (2013) observes that prosperity preachers turn wealth into a measure of God's approval (p. 109).

ii. Distortion of Suffering Theology

Classical Christian theology upholds the redemptive importance of suffering (Philippians 3:10). Prosperity theology often overlooks this, suggesting that adversity indicates spiritual failure (Gifford, 2004, p. 85).

iii. Anthropocentric Focus

Prosperity theology risks shifting attention from the sovereignty of God to human strength, making the blessing of God appear mechanically obtainable through giving or confession (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005, p. 76).

iv. Neglect of Social Ethics

According to Ogbu Kalu (2008), African Prosperity movements are capable of underplaying the gospel's call to justice and communal sharing, concentrating instead on individual success (p. 114). By and large, although Prosperity theology is contentious, it also expresses a legitimate human thirst for wholeness and God's provision. Theologically, Prosperity Gospel reminds the Church that God shows great concern for every single aspect of human life. Nonetheless, the emphasis on prosperity must be moderated by social concern, biblical humility, and Christ centered discipleship. Authentic prosperity is therefore not measured by possessions or material wealth but by generosity, faithfulness, and all inclusive well being in Christ.

PROSPERITY GOSPEL: IMPLICATIONS FOR CHURCH AND SOCIETY

The Prosperity Gospel, often characterized by its emphasis on material success, physical health, and positive confession, has had far reaching implications for both the Church and society. Emerging in the mid twentieth century from Pentecostal and charismatic movements, its influence has transcended denominational boundaries and

geographical borders. While it has offered hope and empowerment to millions, it has also generated theological, ethical, and socio economic controversies.

Within the Church, the Prosperity Gospel has redefined the understanding of faith, grace, and divine blessing. Traditionally, faith has been viewed as trust in God's character and sovereignty; however, in prosperity teaching, faith becomes a mechanism for claiming wealth and success. This reorientation risks turning faith into a transactional tool rather than a relational response to God's grace (Jones & Woodbridge, 2011, p. 118). Consequently, grace, which classical theology defines as unmerited favor, is reframed as a principle that can be activated through giving or positive confession (Bowler, 2013, p. 67).

Furthermore, the message of prosperity can distort pastoral priorities. Churches emphasizing financial prosperity may focus more on motivational preaching and entrepreneurial strategies than on discipleship and social holiness. Wright (2013) observes that such an approach reduces the gospel to a formula for self advancement and neglects the cross centered call to servanthood (p. 154). This distortion threatens the Church's spiritual identity, turning it into a marketplace of religious commodities rather than a community of grace and transformation.

The Prosperity Gospel exerts a significant influence on economic behavior within congregations. Proponents encourage generous giving through the seed faith principle, promising divine multiplication of financial offerings. While giving is a biblical discipline, critics argue that this theology commercializes faith and can exploit vulnerable believers who are seeking relief from poverty (Gifford, 2004, p. 112). The expectation of guaranteed financial returns from giving may lead to disillusionment and loss of faith when outcomes fail to materialize.

Ethically, the movement raises questions about the moral responsibility of church leaders who accumulate immense wealth from congregants' donations. McDannell (1995) notes that prosperity teaching risks sanctifying consumerism by portraying luxury as a testimony of divine favor (p. 162). This trend can weaken the Church's moral witness in a world plagued by inequality, as it appears to legitimize greed rather than challenge it. The focus on material blessing also diverts attention from social justice, poverty alleviation, and compassion, which are core aspects of the Christian mission.

The societal impact of the Prosperity Gospel is multifaceted. On one hand, it has empowered marginalized communities by fostering a sense of agency, optimism, and possibility. In economically depressed regions such as parts of sub Saharan Africa and Latin America, the message of divine upliftment has inspired entrepreneurship and social mobility (Anderson, 2014, p. 176). For many adherents, it functions as a theology of hope amid scarcity.

On the other hand, critics warn that the Prosperity Gospel may reinforce systemic inequalities rather than challenge them. By individualizing success and attributing poverty to a lack of faith, it can delegitimize social structures of injustice and discourage collective action for reform (Gifford, 2004, p. 147). The result is a privatized religion that equates moral worth with financial status, undermining the biblical ethic of communal responsibility. In this way, prosperity teaching reflects and perpetuates the values of neoliberal capitalism rather than offering a prophetic critique of them.

Pastorally, the Prosperity Gospel challenges the Church's approach to suffering and discipleship. Believers who are taught that faith guarantees health and wealth may experience spiritual crisis when confronted with illness or economic failure. López (2015) warns that such teachings can lead to guilt, denial, or even the neglect of medical care in pursuit of miraculous healing (p. 69). This creates pastoral dilemmas for ministers who must reconcile promises of victory with the reality of human suffering.

Missiologically, the global spread of the Prosperity Gospel has reshaped Christian witness. While it attracts large audiences and encourages evangelistic zeal, it also risks diluting the gospel's transformative message. As Bowler (2013) observes, the movement's marketing of faith as success translates the mystery of grace into the language of self help (p. 212). The Church's mission, therefore, must discern how to affirm messages of hope and empowerment without compromising theological depth and ethical integrity.

Addressing the implications of the Prosperity Gospel requires a balanced response rooted in sound theology, pastoral care, and social engagement (Adekanmbi, et al., 2026). The Church must reaffirm the biblical teaching that prosperity is holistic, encompassing spiritual growth, relational harmony, and moral integrity, not merely material gain. As Calvin (2008) argued, wealth must serve the common good and be tempered by gratitude and generosity (p. 331). Furthermore, the Church should cultivate economic discipleship, teaching financial stewardship and social responsibility rather than promoting prosperity formulas. At the societal level, Christians must challenge structures of inequality and advocate for justice. By integrating the ethical dimensions of traditional theology with the hope embedded in prosperity preaching, the Church can articulate a gospel that both uplifts and transforms society. This synthesis aligns faith with compassion, responsibility, and the pursuit of the common good.

THE PERCEPTION AND EXPERIENCE OF PROSPERITY OF MEMBERS OF DUNAMIS CHURCH

Bartholomew Oche, the senior pastor in charge of Dunamis Church, Calabar, maintained that Dunamis is a Greek word representing power. He emphasized that Dunamis Church is primarily concerned with saturating the world with power

demonstration for the total restoration of the human person. According to him, the moment you come to Christ, there should be total restoration in your life. He quoted from the biblical passage which says, "Beloved, I wish above all things that you may prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers" (3 John 2), to buttress his assertion that God wishes a person's overall well being. He further emphasized that besides divine healing, God equally desires divine health for believers.

Oche concluded by saying that Dunamis Church believes in manpower development, developing their members for upward mobility in all spheres of their lives. According to him, they facilitate intellectual development of their members by establishing educational institutions to train their members to become relevant to society. His associate pastor, Isaac Obiabo, declared that Dunamis Church is out to reshape those whose destiny has been shattered. He maintained that Dunamis is a holistic church that is concerned about the total well being of the person. He added that the Church teaches healing prosperity, righteousness, and career development, for the Church believes in education and therefore encourages her members to be educated.

FINDINGS

Adherents of the Prosperity Gospel within Dunamis Church often report feeling empowered and motivated by the messages of prosperity preachers, as the teachings encourage individuals to pursue financial stability and personal goals. This sense of motivation is linked to improved self esteem and ambition, which many find transformative in both their spiritual and material lives (Hagin, 1995, p. 45; Meyer, 2007, p. 62).

Furthermore, prosperity oriented congregations tend to create strong community bonds, serving as networks of emotional and social support that enhance members' overall well being. This sense of belonging provides comfort for those experiencing economic or personal difficulties, offering both spiritual encouragement and practical assistance (Jakes, 2008, p. 78). Many preachers and followers defend these teachings through biblical justifications, often citing figures such as Abraham, Isaac, and Job as examples of divine prosperity. They argue that material success is a sign of God's favor and faithfulness, reinforcing the idea that obedience and giving can lead to abundance (Osteen, 2007, p. 91).

However, critics emphasize the potential dangers of such interpretations, arguing that the prosperity message may foster materialism and distort the biblical understanding of faith, humility, and contentment. They caution that this theology risks reducing Christianity to a transactional relationship with God, where faith is measured by wealth and success (Dollar, 1999, p. 54). Findings equally reveal that Dunamis Church reshapes those whose destinies have been shattered and gives meaning to their

lives, helping them to find a level playing field to thrive and improve in all ramifications of their lives.

Additionally, studies reveal that the Prosperity Gospel tends to attract economically disadvantaged individuals, who may perceive it as a pathway out of poverty. Scholars warn that this dynamic can sometimes exploit vulnerable populations by encouraging financial contributions in expectation of divine returns that may not materialize (Meyer, 2007, p. 103). Overall, the findings suggest a dual reality in which prosperity teachings both inspire and endanger believers, highlighting the need for balanced theological reflection and ethical pastoral practice.

CONCLUSION

The Prosperity Gospel, often associated with certain Christian movements, posits that faith, positive speech, and donations to religious causes can lead to personal wealth and physical well being. While it appeals to many, especially in its promise of financial and spiritual rewards, it is also subject to criticism. Detractors argue that it distorts biblical teachings, focusing excessively on material gain rather than spiritual growth or community support.

The Prosperity Gospel highlights a significant intersection of faith, finance, and personal well being, but it raises important ethical and theological questions. Individuals engaging with this doctrine should critically examine its implications, considering both its potential benefits and its criticisms. As with any belief system, a balanced approach that values both spiritual integrity and practical realities may be the most constructive path forward.

Finally, the complexity of Prosperity Gospel teachings shapes believers' experiences and expectations. Recommendations include encouraging a more holistic understanding of prosperity that encompasses spiritual growth, community support, and ethical practices, urging church leadership to balance prosperity messages with traditional Christian values of humility, service, and stewardship.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Balanced Approach to Teachings:** Churches promoting the Prosperity Gospel should strive for a balanced message that emphasizes both spiritual and material well being without neglecting the importance of community support and ethical financial practices.
2. **Education on Financial Literacy:** Incorporating financial literacy programs can help members make informed decisions about money management, investment, and saving, promoting genuine wealth building strategies alongside faith based teachings.

3. **Encouraging Generosity without Coercion:** It is important to create an environment where giving is encouraged as a voluntary expression of faith rather than a transactional expectation, fostering healthier spiritual and financial practices.
4. **Diversifying Resources:** Prosperity churches could benefit from diversifying their resources to provide support that extends beyond financial prosperity, including emotional, educational, and vocational assistance.
5. **Engagement with Criticism:** Church leaders should engage with critiques of the Prosperity Gospel constructively. Hosting discussions or forums with theologians and financial experts can help believers navigate the complexities of faith and finances.

These findings and recommendations aim to foster a more reflective and responsible approach to the Prosperity Gospel, enhancing its positive aspects while addressing its criticisms. By promoting a holistic view of prosperity that encompasses spiritual, emotional, and financial dimensions, both believers and critics can contribute to a more equitable and supportive community.

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