

AN EVALUATION OF PROSPERITY PREACHING AND ITS ATTENDANT CONSEQUENCES ON ECONOMIC STABILITY

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Abstract

Prosperity preaching which is very popular among the Pentecostal/Charismatic preachers is a Christian religious belief that is based on the idea that God provides stupendous material blessings and uncommon affluence to believers in Christ and that it could be received through positive confessions of faith and by sowing of uncommon seeds through faithful and sacrificial payment of tithes and offerings. Previous scholarly works on the concept have focused on the origin of the teaching whereby some school of thought posit that the phenomenon of the prosperity preaching was exclusively an American ideology imported into Africa and popularized by the prevalence of poverty and survival instincts of its advocates. This paper therefore sought to evaluate the logic and theology of prosperity preaching and its attendant consequences on the economic stability in the life of the preachers and their followers. It investigated the extent at which the teaching has contributed to the economic stability of some selected members in some selected new Pentecostal churches in Nigeria. The paper explored the consequentiality approach in its investigation. Data was gathered through observation, review of video tapes on prosperity preaching, Christian literature and other scholarly materials. Data was contextually, critically and constructively analysed. This paper observed that many general overseers of churches are being accused of extreme flamboyant lifestyles and misplaced priorities in their conduct of church activities. This controversial theology is assumed by the public as an instrument being used by pastors to extort money from the public and also maintain their extravagant lifestyle. This doctrine of prosperity at all cost has led many vulnerable and innocent young believers astray in one way or the other. It has made mockery of most of the age long principles of hard work, integrity, and perseverance among others. It observed that prosperity preaching is designed to profit the advocates and their cronies only at the expense of the congregation. Apart from entrenching materialism, encouragement of corruption among other vices, it has equally plummeted the finances of many members thereby adversely affecting their economic and financial stability. The paper concluded that the proponents of prosperity preaching had misplaced the most important central theme of the gospel which is salvation of soul by making people to seek God for the wrong reason and invariably negatively affecting the life of their members.

Keywords: Prosperity preaching, implications and consequences, financial stability.

Introduction

There is no doubt that in the country today, proliferation of churches has become the order of the day. New churches spring up daily and they are found in their tens and scores on almost every corner and street depending on the location and length of a particular popular street. In most cases, the society has witnessed many situations whereby we have two or three churches clustering together in the same building, each with its own loudspeaker disturbing not only others, but also the public especially at night. Interestingly, it has been observed that the massive rise in the number of church leaders started about 30 years ago in Nigeria in the 1980s as a direct or indirect result of the adverse economic hardship upon the masses and a way for survival (Atoi, 2019). During this period, young and fresh graduates from universities and polytechnics who find it extremely difficult to be gainfully employed by the government started floating churches as a means of survival. At that time, due to the desperation for financial breakthrough by the populace,

the only marketable doctrine that could guarantee quick membership and a means of liberation from poverty was nothing but the message of prosperity, hope, deliverance, and breakthrough. One could only imagine the gravity of damages that this “make money quick” and “anyhow” doctrine has done to the church and the nation. As expected, it has robbed society of some of her cherished values like honesty, dignity of labour and the principle of hard work. To worsen the situation, pastoral dignity and integrity, righteousness and probity had been generally disrespected because of the ways most of these make money-preaching pastors comport themselves in society.

It was precarious and highly embarrassing to note that at a particular point in time in the history of the nation, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) had to ban all unverifiable healings or miracles on the Nigerian television stations, simply because miracles, healings and prosperity preaching dominated most of the screens of the Nigerian television channels (Ekwowusi, 2004). It was quite disheartening that very few preachers preached on salvation, righteousness, or holiness. As a matter of fact, prosperity teaching has been made the central message of many churches and indeed prosperity has become synonymous with the church ministry.

The prosperity gospel, like miracle television, aims to trick its followers into taking their eyes off Jesus by looking onto mammon (wealth); that is, focusing on the wrong thing: wealth, while ignoring the right thing- **true salvation**. It is very important to note that it was not that Jesus Christ hated wealth if it is gotten legitimately because we have it on record that there were so many of his followers who were wealthy, yet he vehemently warned his disciples against the crave for wealth at the detriment of one’s soul. It is also important to note that the ultimate purpose of Jesus’ death and resurrection to mankind is to redeem man from the bondage of sin and prepare him for his heavenly kingdom, thus, this is the central cardinal point of the message of the church from the outset. To seek the kingdom of God and its righteousness is the instruction of Jesus to all, every other thing is just an added advantage.

Prosperity Preaching

There have been various ways of defining prosperity preaching, depending on the individual that is doing the definition. For instance, some mainland theologians simply interpret the prosperity gospel as “a gospel that promises only financial affluence” or “a sermon that does not speak to the idea of salvation from sin, but only insists that God will make everyone physically rich” (Michael & Blessing, 2008:24). Others interpret it as “the good news of some ministers that emphasizes ephemeral abundance”. Still, others interpret it as “a gospel that defines poverty as a sin” (Michael & Blessing, 2008:26)”. Two points sum up these definitions: It is exclusively financial, and it neglects the spiritual well-being of the people. It must however be noted that prosperity preachers themselves will never define their theology in such a manner.

Furthermore, it was Hanna Rosin in her own write up who posits that the prosperity doctrine (also known as prosperity theology or the health and wealth theology, or prosperity gospel) is a Christian religious belief that is based on the idea that God provides material affluence and prosperity to some believers in Christ to whom He favours. She went on to say that prosperity gospel is a Christian belief that asserts that “the essence of Christ death is to bless believers with uncommon riches” or more specifically that it is the doctrine that teaches that “believers in Christ are entitled to some degrees of opulence and blessings in terms of health and wealth and such blessings could be received through positive confessions of faith and by sowing uncommon seeds of faith through faithful and sacrificial payment of tithes and offerings (Rosin, 2009). In her own view, she avers that the prosperity gospel is not a clearly defined denomination, but a high measure of faith that runs through the Pentecostal Church and a surprising number of popular evangelical churches with varying degrees of intensity.” (Rosin, 2009).

Meanwhile, some scholars have suggested that there are other fundamental elements that make up the prosperity gospel other than financial success. For instance, Danny McCain asserts that the

prosperity gospel specializes in the teaching that there is abundance of “health and wealth for believers in Christ,” (McCain, 2000) while Ken L. Sarles states that the gospel of prosperity is made up of having exceptional and extraordinary divine healing from sickness, breakthrough, casting out of demons and deliverance from financial poverty (Sarles, 1986). These two commentators among others, assume however that salvation from sin and concern for spiritual growth is not an element of the prosperity gospel.

It is worthy of note that the word prosperity comes from the word proper. It means to excel, to do well, to be superior, especially in material wealth. It also connotes to succeed in an enterprise or activity especially to achieve economic success or to become strong and flourishing. Furthermore, the Microsoft Encarta defines prosperity gospel as a materialistic Christian belief, the doctrine taught in some Christian groups that God will grant wishes to the faithful, especially those wishes involving material wealth (Olukunle, 2012). Olukunle went further to explain that we should know that prosperity is more than material possessions. It includes other things such as wealth, good health, friendliness, a good name and general well-being (Olukunle, 2012).

However, it is widely believed that prosperity Gospel is the gospel of materialism, whereas the general understanding of prosperity is that of material wealth. This explains why the word prosperity is often being misused and abused. Prosperity is the gospel that teaches that the acquisition of material wealth and affluence (personal wealth) is an indicator of a person’s standard of spirituality, righteousness, or holiness (Adeboyejo, 2008). The prosperity gospel is of the opinion that the more you have is an indicator of the measure of your spirituality. Prosperity gospel teaches that you can use your faith to gain wealth, fame, and power. It is a teaching that emphasizes the more you give the more the blessings you will receive from God. In a way, it is a self-centred gospel, the gospel that only pronounces self and self alone without giving glory to God. Speaking about the doctrine of materialism (prosperity gospel), Ayegboyin concluded that “it is motivated by lust and sustained by lust” (Ayegboyin, 2006). It is a gospel that plays with people’s love for greed, lust and lack. Like the gospel of miracle, it is a gospel targeted at the spiritually gullible or scripturally ignorant.

The prosperity gospel is projected to profit only one person, and one person only, the preacher and of course, his cronies, not even the church or the congregation. It is designed to scam people out of their honesty and hard-earned money. In other words, it is a spiritual 419. It is a gospel where the preacher, using some passages of the Scripture out context, reading into the scriptures to give the meaning that suites their selfish desires thereby promise their congregants that they will be abundantly blessed only if they can give abundantly to God because it is their covenant promise from God as a Christian. However, they usually claim that for anyone to receive that blessing, such a person must sow uncommon and sacrificial seeds into the kingdom or in his vineyard, that the more seeds you sow, the more successful you will become not minding your spiritual lifestyle.

Those who are advocates of the prosperity gospel anchored their arguments on the fact that since it is the will of God for believers to fully enjoy life possible as recorded in John 10:10, then, it is equally the will of God for believers to equally have extraordinary financial prosperity and entrepreneurial success (Deut. 7:12-26; Josh 14:9). They equally claim that as far as God is concerned, living in poverty violates His will and dishonors His name. They are of the opinion that lack of faith is labelled as the major reason why Christians fail to be healed, enjoy abundant wealth, and so on. Moreover, they aver that it is not the will of God for His people to suffer in anyway or be poor. They attributed suffering to Satan and sin and that it is not usually from God. In a nutshell, sin, lack of faith and Satan are said to be the culprits behind every form of sickness, tragedy and hardship that exists. Allegedly, the devil uses pseudo-symptoms of non-existent ailments to trick believers into imagining they are not feeling well and to entice them to think or saying negative confessions.

If one listens to some of these prosperity preachers whenever they preach about prosperity, one will think that the major reason for the ministry of Jesus, that is his birth, his suffering, his death and resurrection and his second coming is all about making believers to be blessed materially. However, the paramount reason for Jesus' death and resurrection is to seek and save the lost. Jesus died for the remission of human sin and to reconcile man back to God. He came so that man might have life here and have a place in eternity. Invariably, everyone who believes in him will not perish but will have everlasting life. Jesus himself said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it abundantly (John 10:10)", that is, that they may have eternal life.

Therefore, throughout the earthly teachings of Jesus or his early disciples, there was no record in the scriptures that they ever at any time preached about prosperity the way it is being done nowadays by some prosperity preachers. As a matter of fact, Jesus himself and his early apostles did not usually talk about money among the people and whenever they did so, it was often about meeting other people's needs and demand but not about getting rich abruptly.

One way to determine whether a concept is in accordance with the Scriptures or not is to examine such concept in the light of the Scriptures, especially in relation to the life and times of Jesus and the Early Church. This is expedient because Jesus' life is the ultimate model for all believers today. So, when one looks at the way Jesus and his disciples viewed money and material prosperity, one will notice that Jesus and his disciples taught more about the dangers and deception of wealth than they did on acquiring it. In a particular passage of the scriptures, He said:

Do not lay-up treasures on earth for yourselves, where moth and rust will destroy it, and where thieves will break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves cannot break in or steal. Because where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:19-21)

Apostle Paul, in his letter to Timothy, warned him not to be consumed with getting rich. Rather he wrote to him saying:

Now, godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience (and) gentleness. 1 Timothy 6:8:11.

A cursory study of the scriptures will avail one of copious passages like these, whereby the Bible is warning man on the consequences of lust for money and the deceitfulness of riches. From the series of in-depth studies of the scriptures, it has been submitted that one of the major reasons why the Bible warns man strongly against believers indulging in lust for money is because money even though created by God for our use and enjoyment, if not properly handled, will make people lose their focus on what is important and what has eternal value. Probably, that is why Apostle Paul while writing to the Colossians admonished them not to set their affections on earthly things but on things above or heavenly things. (Colossians 3:2).

Sarles observes that the gospel of affluence has robbed believers of "human faith ... with its biblical foundation" and imposed upon them an entirely new meaning that is at variance the context and structure of the scripture". He went on to opine that it has in one way or the other

become a “form of magic”, whereby the spoken word is used “as the incantation...” (Sarles, 1986).

In contrast, the Bible teaches that faith is the assurance of the efficacy of the power of God and His word as it is revealed in His Word. In this way, it means that believers will have to consistently exhibit trust and commitment to God and His word. This means that any exercise of faith will have to involve the totality of the whole person—the mind, emotions, and will. With the mind, one believes in God’s existence and in the teaching of Scripture (Matt 22:37; 2 Thess 2:13). With the emotions, the sinner exercises a personal faith in Christ as the only one who can redeem from sin (Luke 24:32, 41; Rom 15:13). With the will, one surrenders to Christ and trusts Him as Lord and Saviour (Acts 16:31; 1 John 5:1, 4-5). This faith helps man recognize that the one crucified on the cross and buried in a tomb was raised to life by the power of God. Faith helps man to affirm that Jesus’ resurrection and life also opens the way for him to live eternally.

The havoc that the prosperity gospel has done to its adherents is that it has succeeded in leading the people to seek God for the wrong reasons. It must be noted that whenever we speak about people seeking God for the wrong reasons, what it means is that they are seeking after Him not because they love Him or because they believe in Him as their personal Lord and Saviour but basically because of the ephemeral things that they would benefit from His at the expense of the salvation of their souls. In that wise, the extent of their love for God is as high as the extent of the things they hope to receive from Him. That is why in most cases, they only pretend to love and be committed to God as much as they continue to benefit materially from Him. However, it has been proved in many instances that it is practically impossible for one to succeed in forcing people to love you with what you give to them.

Whenever we compare the teaching of the Bible about wealth or prosperity with what most of these prosperity preachers teach, one thing that is very clear is that most of them (both the preachers and those people who fall for their deception) do not actually understand the basic teaching of the Bible about prosperity. Most of these preachers are confused by equating biblical prosperity with earthly or worldly prosperity. To start with, a careful and critical study of the Bible will reveal to one that one will never find the word prosperity being used in the New Testament. The only closest word that one can find is the word prosper or prosperous, which means “to be successful.” In this context of the Bible, success here does not necessarily mean money or material wealth. For example, academic or athletic success does not necessarily mean accumulation of money or to be opulent. Rather, prosperity in this context only means that one is being successful in whatever one does, in most cases in relation to what people do for the Kingdom of God or for His glory and honour.

Meanwhile, a cursory look at the Old Testament (Hebrew) text revealed that the word used as: prosper, prosperous or prosperity is in most cases often used interchangeably with the word shalom, which means peace or any of its derivative. Many a time in the Old Testament, whenever the word prosperity or prosper is used, it is usually used in the context of having peace or being favoured. For example, when Joseph was sold by his brothers into slavery, the Bible records that Joseph was exceedingly prosperous even while he was serving as a slave and that the Lord was with him to the extent that he was very successful in the house of his Egyptian master” (Genesis 39:2). It is worthy to note that, had it been that the Old Testament interprets prosperity in terms of accumulation of money in every passage of the Bible, then, the passage we have just considered above would not have said Joseph was prosperous while he was still in slavery. Rather, what it means is that Joseph found uncommon favour of God and the peace of God.

Consequently, prosperity in the Bible is a state in which people enjoy God's favour or and find peace with Him. Moreover, biblical prosperity goes beyond material wealth or affluence. It means having something that money cannot buy such as peace of mind, good health, joy, love, tolerance, etc. Sincerely speaking, there are many rich people who would love to give up their money so that

they could have peace of mind or good health. In the same way, having a lot of wealth is not tantamount to having God's favour. When it is said that someone is having God's favour, what it means is that such a person is having everything. In other words, Biblical prosperity is having God with you every step of the way, no matter what you are going through.

Therefore, it is expedient for us rather than running after fleeting riches, instead, we should hunger and thirst for righteousness. "Seek first the kingdom of God, and its righteousness and other things shall be added on to you" (Matthew 6:33).

The Emergence of the Prosperity Gospel

Prosperity theology is not a denomination, a tradition, nor a school of thought (Amanze & Shanduka 2019). It is a broadly based variegated movement that overlaps both the charismatic and non-charismatic spectrums. It seems to be a blending of the positive thinking emphasis of motivational speakers and the faith healing ministry of some new generation churches. It certainly has a charismatic flavouring to it but is by no means limited to Pentecostalism. The movement imbibes deeply from the existentialism of the present age, which places a premium on human experience. It also borrows heavily from the materialistic emphasis of affluent, sub-urban Christianity.

According to Olukunle, prosperity preaching took its root from Latin America, but was popularized among the black in the U.S. It was developed against the background of poverty, unemployment and deprivation of the blacks (Olukunle 2012). Van Biema David on the other hand, opined that it arose in the United States after World War II and that it was championed by Oral Roberts and later became particularly popular in the decade of the 1990s. According to him, the theology has been exported to less prosperous areas of the world such as Africa and the likes with mixed results (David, 2006). It must therefore be observed that the emergence of prosperity teaching was because of the prevalent dominating poverty level, high rate of unemployment, political instability, oppression by the rich and the ruling class.

Ethics of Prosperity Gospel

Ethics is a holistic approach to human behaviour and decision-making that considers positive and negative behaviour and consequences. Ethics can either positively or negatively affect many situational and fixed variables in organizational situations. These include profits, mood and group dynamics. Theologians believe that prosperity preaching is a violation of the fundamentals of the Biblical message. Sondra Ely Wheeler of Wesley Theological Seminary posits that prosperity teachers are "giving people the divine prerequisite and the moral justification to be greedy. It is a wrong interpretation of Scripture and tradition. It misses the whole basis of Christianity, which is trust in God and not the acquisition of wealth". (Wheeler, 1995). Wheeler who did a critical analysis of the treatment of wealth in the New Testament from an ethical perspective submitted that "as far as the New Testament is concerned, in most cases, wealth is associated with fraud, corruption of justice and disregard of the laws established by God in order to prevent the means of wealth from being concentrated in the hands of a few" (Wheeler, 1995).

In essence, there are several ways in which scholars have studied the effects of prosperity preaching from the ethical point of view. Among others, Trevino and Nelson did good work on the consequentialist approach which was adopted in the evaluation of this paper.

Consequentialist Perspective: When determining "what's right or wrong, consequentialist theories focus attention on the results or consequences of the decision or action" (Wheeler, 1995). Applying this theory to the decisions and actions of a prosperity preacher, one would assume that the preacher should consider all possible consequences (good and bad) for all stakeholders regarding teaching the prosperity message. If the list of bad consequences outweighs the possible good outcomes, then the preacher should be ethically obligated to not practice prosperity gospel. A literature review of available research on prosperity gospel provided zero evidence supporting the premise that the more people give to their church, the richer God will make them.

However, there are various documented cases where heavy giving caused financial hardship for some people. For instance, The News Magazine reported that some years ago, a male individual, who happened to be an assistant pastor in one of the new generation churches where prosperity preaching was very dominant and who equally at that time worked as a cashier with Lagos Sheraton Hotels and Towers, in obedience to the teaching of the church donated cash and gifts worth N39 million to his church then. He also bought a 250 KVA generator valued at N4.4 million and another 27KVA generator for N1.5 million and turned them over to a satellite arm of the church. It was further reported that the man also gave N400, 000 to his pastor, who needed money for a trip to Australia. All these were done by the man who believed that he had obeyed the teaching on seed sowing and that he would get multiples in return in accordance to the theology of his pastor. What then happened was that his pastor wrote to commend him as a cheerful giver” and prayed for him that May God, who gives seed to the Sower and bread for eater, multiply his seeds in Jesus’ name” (Michael & Blessing, 2008).

Unfortunately, Jesus did not multiply the man’s seeds, but rather, the giver became a guest to the police when his employers discovered that he had stolen from them to give to the church. The man’s employers demanded a refund of the stolen money and the church was contacted after the man’s confessional statement. However, the church issued a statement admitting that the man made donations but refused to make the desired refund (Michael & Blessing, 2008).

In another seemingly fashion about a year after the first incident, another man who was then an assistant manager with the defunct Eko International Bank, stole about N40 million from his employers and donated N10 million out of the money to the church with the hope that he would reap in multiple folds and then repay what he had stolen. He was equally apprehended by the law enforcement agents and lost his job and reputation. Based on these findings, one can conveniently conclude that based on the consequentialist theory of appraisal, prosperity preaching is indeed unethical to a very large extent as it thus harms most of the members of the congregation adversely by hampering their economic stability rather than enhancing it the more.

The Weaknesses of Prosperity Preaching

The prosperity gospel, as it stands has serious weaknesses. Some of these are theological, the first major weakness that can be identified in the prosperity preaching as it stands today is the fact that it has replaced prosperity as the central theme of the gospel. In a more serious tone, it contradicts the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel of Jesus is about eternal life while prosperity teaching is about this world. As a matter of fact, at no time did Jesus or his disciples preached prosperity as being preached today. Throughout his life time, Jesus set his face against worldly possessions and told those who wanted to inherit eternal life to forget about having possession here on earth. This is because these possessions may likely impede or obstruct their quest for eternal life. Even when we consider that preaching the gospel is all about making people receive Jesus as their personal Lord and saviour, then, it is a fatal error if we now make prosperity the central core of the gospel.

One other major deficiency that has been identified in this prosperity preaching is that there is hermeneutical bias in the procedure of interpretation of the scriptures as adopted by most prosperity preachers. It is a well-known notion that hermeneutics is the study of general principles of biblical interpretation, by showing the different ways in which a verse of the Bible could be interpreted with the aim of discovering the basic and sacred truths and principles contained in the Holy Scriptures. In the history of biblical interpretation, four main types of hermeneutics have been identified: the literal, moral, allegorical, and anagogical models of interpretation. It is unfortunate to note that many self-proclaimed prosperity preachers have theological deficiency because many of them never attended any standard theological institutions that could have assisted them with the necessary foundational theological and hermeneutical acumen needed for propounding sound doctrine and help them to approach the interpretation of the Bible appropriately. Most of them also might not have passed through good Sunday school classes that could have helped them in their formative years. The worst part of it is that many of these

preachers never received proper discipleship training and mentorship after their conversion. It is generally believed that if they passed through sound and biblical based discipleship training, perhaps, their good and well-grounded theological understanding of the scriptures would have influenced their understanding of what biblical prosperity is all about and in their formulation of church doctrine.

Almost all Bible verses used by these preachers to prove that prosperity gospel is biblio-centric are interpreted incorrectly out of context and the translations are not faithful to the grammar and true purpose of the texts. For instance, many prosperity preachers do usually interpret 3 John 2, which is a general greeting by the author to his audience as an endorsement for accumulating wealth. They also usually interpret 2 Corinthians 8:9 as a promise of financial prosperity. Whereas Paul would not have encouraged the Corinthians to accumulate wealth when he himself had not done so (1 Corinthians 4:11). The prosperity gospel may be right that “Christ is the answer to all problems,” but it fails to demonstrate this through a powerful interpretation of the words they use to teach. The worst thing is that the theologians of traditional denominations do not reach out to Charismatics in dialogue, but in hostility.

One other major weakness that is observable in the prosperity gospel as it is being preached by many of its advocates that needs to be urgently corrected is the inherent dangerous way these pastors teach the prosperity gospel. It indeed over-estimates Satan and his power and at times the teaching approaches dualism. Such a teaching can produce bondage instead of deliverance. As a matter of fact, this teaching leads to the re-introduction of witchcraft and the worship of mammon back into the church. Again, prosperity teaching wrongly relieves men of responsibility for their sins, and their problems, instead of owning up all the blame is now shifted to Satan, Demons, or witches for one’s predicament. Overemphasizing material prosperity endangers the great traditional Christian themes like love of God, sacrifice of Jesus, suffering for Christ’s sake, holiness, righteousness and grace.

The prosperity gospel is mistaking in thinking that God has decreed that every believer in every generation will equally succeed in financial wealth. Financial success is relative. Jesus barely had what he needed (cMatthew 8:20; 17:24-27). The prosperity gospel is also in error by teaching that believers have the spiritual capacity and ability to command God to do something for them without a recourse to God’s will thereby contravening His Sovereignty. This is because of the teaching that people can command God to do anything they like without minding what the will of God is, which is an aberration to the word of God and His Sovereignty.

Conclusion

From the discussion above, one can see that the proponents of prosperity preaching had misplaced the most important central theme of the gospel which is salvation of the soul with their prosperity theology. They have misplaced the priority of thinking and working for the kingdom of heaven with ephemeral things. If not because the church had lost almost all her authority these preachers would have long been declared heretics and thereby excommunicated from the church. This is because as it stands now, it is a poisonous pill to the Christian church and it is very dangerous as such it needs to be curtailed.

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