

MOTIVATIONS, VALUES, AND BELIEFS BEHIND THE EMBRACING OF THE
PROSPERITY GOSPEL BY SELECTED AFRICAN CHRISTIAN
COMMUNITIES: HOW AN AFRICAN WORLDVIEW ENCOUNTERS THE
TEACHINGS OF THE PROSPERITY GOSPEL IN NAIROBI, KENYA

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved father, Rudolph Jennings who has never ceased to inspire me to work hard and to my Savior Christ Jesus who has given me strength.

Abstract

This thesis examines a phenomenon of the rapid growth and proliferation of prosperity gospel churches in Nairobi. It presents field research findings which demonstrate that the attraction to churches preaching the prosperity gospel arises because those teachings resonate, subconsciously or informally, with the motivations, values, and beliefs of the African understanding of evil and in the centrality of God as the source of all blessings in daily life. The focus of the thesis was not theological and did not attempt to uncover social ills related to the prosperity gospel. This thesis used anthropological methods and was concerned with cultural influences especially in regard to the African worldview. It argued that there is a framework in the African worldview that allows the prosperity gospel to dwell.

While several African scholars have asserted that the prosperity gospel attracts many Africans because of the similarities between the two, the literature regarding the link between the prosperity gospel in Nairobi and the African worldview has not been a focus in literature dealing with the Nairobi setting. This thesis focuses on the Nairobi setting and presents field data in the light of this contemporary issue facing the Church in Kenya.

The research revealed that the prosperity gospel recognizes the felt need of the African to gain power in order to have a full life and to do God's will. In the past, the failure to acknowledge the African's belief system when many missionaries heralded the Gospel of Christ, did not allow Africans in some instances to examine their own beliefs and become integrated Christians. The prosperity gospel engages it. Moreover, it gives people an alternative to resigning themselves to their circumstances. In addition, the prosperity gospel uses the African worldview for its own purposes with the use of symbols and words that communicate deeply in the African mind even penetrating to the emotions and fitting itself either sub-consciously or informally into the African paradigm for living a successful life pleasing to God.

Chapter One

1.0 Introduction

Oft times, at the beginning of a New Year, people will draw up a list of resolutions. These resolutions (resolves) serve to help such an individual move toward success. Such resolutions cover many areas of life, but the focus in every case is to direct the one making the resolutions on to a prosperous life. The definition of what constitutes a prosperous life may vary from individual to individual and from culture to culture. Nevertheless, the universal desire of all people is for prosperity.

That natural human desire has been expressed throughout the centuries in many fashions. The most recent, though not completely new, phenomenon of the prosperity gospel plays into how that desire works out in a culture. The prosperity gospel is a rich (pun intended) and controversial topic affecting the global culture. This thesis examines the phenomenon as it is occurring in one setting, that of Nairobi, Kenya.

The concept of prosperity is, of course, not new to African culture. Because of the African's understanding of God, to experience prosperity is part of the African's experience of God. God's nature is to care for his creatures and to do good to them all the time. Thus the absence of prosperity can indicate something is not right in the universe. After all, God created the world for humanity to enjoy and to experience His goodness. If something happens, such as illness or poverty, the problem lies not in God but in the person or the community. A frequently quoted statement, (originating with the late scholar and church leader, Tokunboh Adeyemo), to which the respondent will always reply, is heard on the streets and in the churches here in Nairobi. It goes like this: "God is good all the time." (Response) "All the time God is

good.” The full response sometimes given that both join in saying adds, “For that is His nature.”

During the course, “African Spirituality, Personhood and Psychotherapy” given at MARYKNOLL INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN STUDIES, Drs. Herbert Pinto discussed the concept of harmony exploring how misfortune and fortune work out in the African belief system. That piqued my interest in understanding what the current and popular term “prosperity” meant in the urban context here, thus I set about researching and writing on the topic: “African Spirituality and the Quest for Prosperity among Various Ethnic Groups in Nairobi, Kenya”. Misfortune is not what a community expects to experience in this life. As long as the community does what it needs to do, harmony will result.

The research for that short paper confirmed what had been emphasized in class. Undergirding an African’s belief system is the understanding that God can only do good because it is God’s nature to do good. If the harmony of the community has been disrupted for some reason, then it is not God’s fault. With the disruption, prosperity now cannot be experienced. The definition of prosperity or fortune is an important one in understanding the worldview of the African in his/her endeavor to live as a whole person connected to God and community. From that prior research, a definition of prosperity emerged demonstrating that an African sees abundance and security essentially as the major components of prosperity, just as the African has understood it in the past.

Additionally, today money plays a prominent part in the understanding of prosperity, perhaps a result of globalization of the world economy. Money can buy those things that bring security such as, food, education, and health care. Money can also buy those things that signify abundance such as, vehicles, the latest technological

gadgets, and houses and land. Money can supposedly also purchase those very things that demonstrate abundance and security, such as health and wealth, from God via these prosperity preachers, who play a part in the phenomenon of the prosperity gospel movement.

These prophets, men of God or bishops, or whatever title they may have, dispense to the people for a small (sometimes large) fee whatever it is the people want from God. Do you want a child? The man or woman of God can pray for you and you will receive one, for a fee. Do you want a job? The prophet or bishop will pray over you and you will get a job, for a fee. Do you want a vehicle? Let the preacher pray for you, after you give him/her a big wad of cash, and you are guaranteed to receive that vehicle, of course for a fee. This fee is often called “seed money” and the act is called panda mbegu (Kiswahili for plant a seed). Figuratively speaking, one is to plant the seed of money so money will be produced out of faith that is demonstrated by the action of sowing the seed money. If the seed doesn't work, a person must sow another bigger seed.

The attraction to churches preaching the prosperity gospel in Kenya (and the world over) seems to be increasing weekly as noted in the Daily Nation editorial section (10 October 2008), “It is official: the Government receives an average of two new applications daily from people seeking to register churches.” People are drawn to these preachers with their promises of hope. With media functioning almost as its herald, the reach of these prosperity gospel churches and ministries seems limitless. How many millions of practitioners are there in the world today, let only the perhaps one million in Nairobi? (It would be a useful study to measure adherents to the prosperity gospel in Nairobi but this thesis does not address that issue.) How many of

those adherents or practitioners in Nairobi struggle each day for their daily bread and often fail to pay for an education that may assist their children out of poverty?

What is it that motivates a mother earning 200 shillings a day in kibarua (Swahili term for casual day labor) to give all her week's earnings to the preacher who tells her to put it all in the offering plate so that she will get one-hundred fold? What about the father who has received a bonus at work that will cover his firstborn's school fees? Yet anapanda mbegu (Kiswahili for "he plants a seed") to the preacher to demonstrate he is acting in faith. The result expected is that he, the sower will receive 100-fold from sowing the seed and thus be able to pay for the school fees of not just the firstborn but also his other two children as well. He will pata mavumo (Kiswahili for "reap a harvest"). Why is the quest for prosperity so important? It has to be more than just the words they hear from the prosperity gospel preachers. What is behind prosperity gospel teachings that makes these teachings so alluring to thousands of people in Nairobi from various walks of life?

Media sources not only give prosperity preachers opportunity to advance their kingdom, the media has also exposed the questionable work of these prosperity preachers over the years. Kenfrey Kiberenge (October 10, 2009) writing at the time for the Standard Digital News section, wrote that Lucy Nduta, the pastor of Salvation Healing Ministries in Nairobi was convicted of fraud and sentenced to two years in jail for claiming to heal individuals who have tested positive for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) after they paid this pastor a hefty amount of money between 2004-2006. These people, who tested positive for the virus, complained because none of them got healed from HIV and continued to test positive for the disease. Instead, collectively they lost over 1.6 million shillings and all remained HIV positive. Moreover, November 6, 2014, the Kenya Television Network (KTN) aired a

program exposing some of the tricks these prosperity preachers use to draw believers/followers and consequently money from their followers. One tactic revealed by that KTN program called “Inside Story: Prayer Predators” was that these preachers will use potassium permanganate, which turns water the color of blood. The preacher involved in that story turned out to be the son of Lucy Nduta. The son was merely following in his mother’s footsteps. Was it only because of example? Why did people follow the mother and son prosperity preachers? Is there any possibility that the prosperity gospel is connecting with the African Worldview? Where did this prosperity gospel come from that has permeated Nairobi, Kenya?

To help begin the discussion a brief overview of the prosperity gospel will follow in sections 1.0.1 through 1.0.5. The rest of Chapter 1 will overview of the Academic Discipline, Problem Statement, Hypothesis, Research Questions, Significance of the Thesis, Assumptions, Limitations and Scope, Definition of Terms, and Description of the Remainder of the Essay.

1.0.1 The Prosperity Gospel: Brief History and Developments

What is the prosperity gospel? Mbugua (2015) writes, “It is a ‘gospel’ claiming freedom from sickness, poverty, and all suffering on the basis of Christ’s death on the cross” (p. 3). Not only is there freedom from these things, there is also the guarantee of riches and success and “emphasizes material prosperity and physical health as the divine right of every Christian” (Harrison 2005, p. 8).

The history and development of the prosperity gospel began to capture the attention of scholars and theologians in the late 1980s but the critiques were few. McConnell (2004), himself a Pentecostal pastor, did a thorough analysis of the faith/prosperity movement with his original thesis showing that the roots of the prosperity gospel lay in the metaphysical cults of the 19th century in the US. He was

concerned that the Pentecostal movement was being blamed for “a serious threat to the theological orthodoxy and spiritual orthopraxy of the independent charismatic movement” (p. x). His work has been the springboard for other scholars as they attempt to uncover the origins of the faith movement, later called the prosperity gospel movement.

The most distant roots of the prosperity gospel can be found in a heresy called Gnosticism dating back to the days of St. Paul (Horton 1990, Miller 2014). These gnostic preachers claimed to have a direct line to God that no one else could have. Despite the Church attempting to keep the heresy from affecting the church, the heresy was able to become part of the thinking in many cultures over the years. While current scholars present different points or beginnings for the prosperity gospel—from Gnosticism in the first centuries of the early Church to social thinkers in the 19th century with their emphasis upon New Thought—many researchers include E. W. Kenyon (1867–1948), as the influential father of the Faith Movement or what has become known today as the Prosperity Gospel Movement (McConnell 2004, Harrison 2005, Jones 2011, Bowler 2013, Miller 2014). Kenyon, originally a Baptist preacher, was at first, a critic of the Metaphysical Movement (McConnell 2004, p. 30, 49).

The Metaphysical Movement, with something of a gnostic influence, (McConnell 2004, p. 26) taught that reality was “created in the mind and affirmed in the speech” (Harrison 2005, p. 6) but stressed using Jesus’ name in order to get healing or provision (McConnell 2004, p. 51). Also referred to as “Mind-Cure, Mental Healing or Harmonialism,” it advanced ideas such as: people are divine; God is a force; and people can determine their own lives by thinking them into existence (Jones 2011, p. 27). Kenyon was not so successful in combating the metaphysical movement and ended up embracing many of the teachings and using them in his own

ministry (McConnell 2004, p. 24, 43, 48, 49). He has been credited with the development of positive confession, something very prevalent in the prosperity gospel teachings today where one is told to confess what they want to possess or what they want to happen or what they want to become. Kenyon is credited with first using the phrase, “I confess what I want to possess.” Like prosperity preachers who followed him, Kenyon used the media (radio and distribution of pamphlets) to his advantage and also founded a training school to propagate his teachings.

Though the movement began to grow slowly under Kenyon’s teachings, it was Kenneth Hagin who is acknowledged as the Father of the Faith Movement/Prosperity Gospel (McConnell 2004, p. 3, Adeleye 2011, p. 67). Hagin, “popularized the prosperity gospel through what became known as the Word of Faith movement” (Jones 2011, p. 51). Hagin plagiarized Kenyon’s teachings (McConnell 2004, p. 5-13) and astutely followed Oral Roberts’ example on how to perform before the congregation (Perriman 2003, p. 3). Hagin also claimed an “anointing to prophethood” in the early 1960s and began building his ministry through radio, later TV, and forming his own theological school called Rhema Bible Training Center. His claims of personal encounters with Jesus set the trend for prosperity gospel preachers today claiming these special visitations to verify their anointing (McConnell 2004, p. 56-65). It is from Hagin’s teaching that the foundation for “mystical anointing” and “revelation knowledge” took root (McConnell 2004, p. 59) and the foundation of the “Rhema Bible Training Colleges” was laid (McConnell 2004, p. 77).

When Hagin laid down his mantle, “the heir apparent” was Kenneth Copeland (Perriman 2003, p. 3) though there were a number who in some way were mentored by Hagin. Some of those include Fred Price, Charles Capp, Robert Tilton, and Africans such as Benson Idahosa and David Oyedepo (Perriman 2003, p. 6).

Copeland has been credited with the expansion of the Faith/Prosperity Gospel Movement. The particulars of the movement as it is today will follow the next section on the Prosperity Gospel's move into Africa.

Also important to include are specific African American preachers besides Fred Price who is considered the main figure for bringing the Prosperity Gospel to the African American Community (Harrison 2005, p. 134). George Bakker also known as "Father Major Jealous Divine"; Charles Manual Grace also known as "Sweet Daddy Grace;" and Dr. Frederick J. Eikerenkoetter II also known as "Reverend Ike" all established large churches and were influential in the movement in the early 1900s (Harrison 2005, p. 134-135). In the 1970s Johnnie Coleman started her Johnnie Coleman Institute to train ministers to carry forth her legacy of the Christ Universal Temple for Better Living (Harrison 2005, p. 134-135). These preachers were influential in the lives of today's famous prosperity preachers like Creflo Dollar and T.D. Jakes and many more (Harrison 2005, p. 140).

1.0.2 The Prosperity Gospel: Its Move into Africa and in Nairobi

America exports more than the products it produces. It appears that it is responsible for the import of the prosperity gospel onto the African Continent (Adeleye 2011, p. 78).

In the early 1970s Benson Idahosa, first Pentecostal archbishop in Nigeria, established several prosperity gospel churches named Church of God Mission International in Nigeria and Ghana (Perriman 2003, p. 6). Many African prosperity gospel evangelists were influenced by Kenneth Hagin, T.L. Osborn, Morris Cerullo, Reinhard Bonnke, Benny Hinn (Perriman 2003, p. 5-9). Those Africans influenced by these prosperity gospel preachers also include David Oyedepo of Nigeria; Enoch Adeboye of Nigeria; Nevers Mumba of Zambia; and Nicholas William Duncan of

Ghana (Perriman 2003, p. 6, Adeleye 2011, p. 87). Some of these Africans served as translators when these Western prosperity gospel preachers visited their countries. Later on the in 1980s Kenneth Copeland came on the scene on the African Continent with “Fire Conferences” (Perriman 2003, p. 6).

Adeleye (2011) explains how the Charismatic Movement in the 1970s opened the doors for the reception of the prosperity gospel into Nigeria (p. 29-39). He writes that when investigating some of the particulars in the prosperity gospel movement, such as the use of important sounding titles, he saw the “strong link with American televangelists (p. 35). Interestingly he says that it was the “loss of focus on the fundamentals in some of the charismatic and fellowships in the 1980s [that] led to all kinds of delusions in the late 1980s and 1990s” (p. 37). The delusions he summaries on pages 37-39 will be included in the next section on the particulars of the prosperity gospel.

Gathogo (2011) explains how the East African Revival, which had spread to Kenya by 1937, paved the way for televangelists such as T.L. Osborn and Oral Roberts to hold effective crusades in Kenya. Billy Graham also visited Kenya in the early 1960s and though he cannot be considered in the same category as these prosperity preachers, he came at a time when Kenyans were very open to being instructed in the new emergence of faith coming from East African Revival (p. 5, 6). Bonnke, Hinn, Cerullo, and many other televangelists also found their way to Kenya to hold massive crusades at Uhuru Park (Gathogo 2011, p. 5). Of course they would need local translators. This would prove very helpful in spreading the prosperity gospel in their absence.

In his article Gathogo (as cited in Parsitau and Mwaura, 2010) gives a list of the prosperity preachers currently popular in Kenya:

In Kenya, as in Asia, this trend is also noticeable and some Pentecostal Christians have advanced in terms of their socio-economic status. Credit for this is owed partly to the gospel of prosperity and divine blessing that many of these churches support and preach. Pentecostal televangelists in Kenya, such as Bishops Mark Kariuki, JB Masinde, Pius Muiru, Margaret Wanjiru and Wilfred Lai, who are exponents of this theology, have challenged the urban poor to believe in a mighty God who will meet all their physical and spiritual needs (p. 9).

Other names included in Gathogo's article are Bishop Allen Kiuna and wife Pastor Kathy Kiuna, the founders of Jubilee Christian Center in Nairobi (p. 10).

During a field interview with a lesser-known prosperity preacher in Nairobi, Kenya, the researcher was given the account of how his mentor, a well-known prosperity preacher in Nairobi, had received his anointing for ministry. His mentor had travelled to the USA to attend a meeting with Hagin. It was at this meeting that he locked eyes with Hagin and at that moment felt the mantle pass from Hagin to himself. He claimed that God told him that the baton had been passed to him and that he was now to pattern his ministry after Hagin (cf. App. A. no. 15). At least two other respondents during field research mentioned that their pastors had served as translators for Bonnke or for someone else and because of that connection have received an anointing for ministry (cf. App. A. no. 12, 13).

These connections continue today in many ways, especially through the "International Ministers Conference" which are connected to Copeland's Fire Conferences (Perriman 2003, p. 6). All one has to do is find one of the many videos available on the Internet to see this (Kenneth Copeland 2016, 2016; Nene Susan Ekuvero, 2015; The Faith 2016, 2016). For example, during the 2016 International

Ministers Conference, Oyedepo introduces Copeland by saying to the audience, “I met this young man in 1977 and [turning to Copeland says] I’ve kept faith with the things you teach and with the things God reveals to you and it’s working” (The Faith 2016, 2016).

1.0.3 The Prosperity Gospel: Its Characteristics and Emphases

Olouch (2012) aptly summarized the characteristics of the prosperity gospel by creating a list of eight distinct features. His characteristics (all included in the subsequent quotation) are as follows:

1. Popular—...promises its adherents comfort and fulfillment through wealth and good health (p. 127, 128).
2. Promotional—...promoted and advertised attractively through media, like everyday goods and services (p. 127, 128).
3. Prosperous— based on the presumption of superabundance supply or provisions of God to those who know the right formula—the so-called faith (p. 127, 128).
4. Positional—(status symbol)... Most of its proponents have to adorn some status title (Dr. So-and-So or Bishop So-and-So) to gain audience acceptance (p. 127, 128-129).
5. Parasitical—...Prosperity gospel is parasitical in nature because, as someone said a few years ago, preachers have turned into parasites, living on other people’s finances...There is always that urge in their tone that you should give a little more or increase your giving amount (p. 127, 130).
6. Presumptuous—...Normally, they preach as if they are restoring prosperity as a truth that has been missing from the church for a long time, but which they discovered (p. 127, 131).

7. Personality Cult—...TV preaching requires charismatic talkers who can hold the audience to his or her shows. Thus such preachers have to cut out a specific image for themselves, which they are sensitive about and want portrayed to the audiences (p. 127, 139)
8. Price tagging the gift—...It happens when the so-called anointed ministers or preachers put individual price tags on the function of their gifts. If they minister to you in any way—prayed for sent books or ministry tapes or anointed clothes or handkerchiefs and so forth, then you are to reciprocate by giving to their ministry... their promotional language...“give a special gift to my ministry, then the Lord will bless you” (p. 127, 140, 142)

Olouch helps his readers to understand that the prosperity gospel at its core, is characterized by big name preachers, who effectively communicate with the masses certain ideas concerning the secrets of prosperity.

In considering the main teachings of the prosperity gospel Adeleye (2011) summaries those teachings into two: the “Seed-Faith Principle” and the “Hundred-Fold Principle” (p. 81-87). In its beginnings in Nigeria, Oral Roberts was the greatest influence whose teachings, especially this Seed-faith Principle based upon Genesis 8:22, were promoted by Bishop Benson Idahosa (p. 81). This Seed-faith principle teaches that, “we receive back from God only as much as we sow as seeds” (p. 82). The “Hundred-fold Principle” popularized and promoted by Kenneth and Gloria Copeland teaches that there is a “spiritual law of prosperity” (p. 83). Adeleye quotes from Gloria Copeland’s book (1978) stating, “You give \$1 for the Gospel’s sake and \$100 belongs to you; give \$10 and receive \$1,000; give \$1,000 and receive \$10,000” (p. 83).

In the next section concerning the African Worldview, a list will be included with a brief, general comparison of those teachings and how the prosperity gospel appears to be promoted by selected African prosperity preachers. This thesis is concerned with how the African worldview relates to the phenomenon of the prosperity gospel. Before giving a general comparison of the prosperity gospel teachings today to what is found in the Nairobi setting, it is important that African worldview be defined.

1.0.4 African Worldview: Definition and Realities

A worldview is the way individuals and communities understand visible and invisible realities. Within a worldview, questions are answered concerning life and its origin. Every culture is a communication system possessing its own worldview. Culture, shaped by past and present environments adapts to changing times and to the environment; however, it keeps the core beliefs from which the culture was developed. The African worldview is inside the mind of the African and is the “control box of culture” (Katola, Class notes, Sept 2014). For that reason it guides how people think, act and determines what they value.

This thesis deals specifically with the African worldview, the core belief system that unites Africans from the 3000 ethnic groups in the fifty-four countries across the African Continent. Just like any people group, Africans in their various people groups developed their own understanding of realities by asking questions such as: Where do I come from? Who are we? What are we here to do? Where are we going after this present world? How is life sustained? Who sustains it? Every people group answers these questions and other such questions by developing their belief systems. Though there are numerous different people groups/ethnic groups on the African continent, each with their own culture and philosophy, there is a strong core,

which runs through all these people groups in Black Africa. Scholars recognize this, despite the difficulties Western scholars had for some decades in acknowledging that fact. The acknowledgment of an African Worldview as something just as valid and complex as any European or Western worldview began with work of African scholars and or leaders challenging the ideas at that present time regarding the African peoples. Temple's Bantu Philosophy was one of the first European work to even acknowledge Africans have a philosophy of life and therefore must be human beings, too.

Just to name of a few of the ground-breakers were: Leopold Sedar Senghor, first president of Senegal (concept of Negritude); Kwame Nkrumah, first prime minister/president of Ghana (concept of Pan-Africanism); Julius Nyrere, first president of Tanzania (concept of Ujamaa); Jomo Kenyatta, first prime minister/president of Kenya, (Facing Mount Kenya-his anthropological work on the Agikuyu demonstrating a sophisticated religious system as opposed to a primitive religion); Kenneth Kaunda, first president of Zambia, (concept of Zambian humanism); John Mbiti, African theologian from Kenya who first challenged the idea that African Traditional Religion is primitive and heathen; Bolaji Idowu, African theologian from Nigeria who exposed many of the inaccuracies or biases that had been previously recorded concerning African Traditional Religion; Kwame Bediako, African theologian from Ghana whose focus was on the development of African theologians for the Church in Africa; and the list goes on.

The African worldview has been alive and well and is alive and well today, as this thesis will demonstrate in data that reflects whether the African worldview resonates with or responds to the phenomenon of the prosperity gospel in Nairobi,

Kenya. This thesis will also demonstrate that prosperity gospel preachers are benefitting from the reality of an African worldview.

People create meaning through their culture and in worldview we find two main aspects of culture: practical and theoretical. Practical includes what is done and who does it, while the theoretical includes the why of what is done (Nyarwath, Class notes, Jan 2014). This thesis examines the African worldview and how it is that the prosperity gospel can find a place in the framework of the African worldview.

It is necessary though not very easy to summarize something as complex as the African worldview but for the purposes of this thesis some of the important components of the African worldview are that God is the Creator of all things and there is no division of the sacred and the secular. Everything relates to God. Nkemnkia (1999) tells us,

For the African, God is the foundation of everything. Such a God is not a concept but a reality. He is the God of life...He is the beginning and the end of all things. That is why for Africans, God is Someone with whom one can speak, to whom one can render worship. He listens to the words of the people and answers their requests (p. 152).

The African Worldview is founded on the African belief system. At this point it would be helpful to give at least five summary points, though not comprehensive points, concerning the African belief system that make up the African Worldview for the purposes of examining the response of the African Worldview to the prosperity gospel. The summary points to follow will be briefly in section 1.0.4.1 to 1.0.4.5.

1.0.4.1 African Belief System: God

This is the foundational belief. Not only is God the origin of all there is, He is also the source of power through which life begins and continues. He is Spirit, He is

Personal and He is the greatest Power. There is nothing that originates without God and there is nothing that continues or is sustained without God. There are those African scholars who would dispute that. For example, P'Bitek (2011) is concerned that most of the research and literature on African Religions (he uses the plural form) has been tainted with the Western perspective and concerns. He writes, "Whenever we read that an African people believed in a 'creator' we can be assured that it is the results of such soliciting on behalf of the reporter" (p. 30).

Nevertheless, many African scholars do believe that originally, and even now, for the African, God was/is involved in His world and the lives of people. He may at times appear remote, but He is ever-present. All other beliefs in the African world view spring from this belief in an All-Powerful God. This is a God actively involved in the lives of His people and He is good. God is an All-powerful Good God that cares for His people and wants them to be experience His power and goodness in their lives. The experiences of His people occur in accord with His good purposes and not in some arbitrary fashion and those experiences are a testimony to His goodness and His presence.

1.0.4.2 African Belief System: Spirits and Ancestors

A second part of the African worldview is the belief in spirits and ancestors. God is the Great Spirit and is the Creator of and is overall the lesser spirits. Ancestors are the departed dead relatives of the community who were at one time the living dead. This is an ever-present reality and many rituals surround this belief. Power is also operant in this component of the African worldview as spirits and ancestors are able to interrupt the flow of power in the lives of the community for one reason or another, such as in the case of broken taboos (Katola, Class notes, Sept 2014).

1.0.4.3 African Belief System: Power

Third part of the African worldview concerns the belief in power. Although God is the source of this power, it is possible for some people or specialists and some objects to have more power than others. When Africans are evoking God's name or seeking the help of a specialist, they are after power (Katola, Class notes, Sept 2014). Power enables a person to get blessings from God and to prevent power from an evil source from disrupting the harmony in one's life (Katola, Class notes, Sept 2014). It is impossible to live life without power.

That power has been referred to as vital force by scholars, such as Kapolyo, Magesa, Mbiti, Temples, et al. It is the power through which people can control the material universe. "All Africans know there is a mysterious power in the universe and they want to use it to do with as they please... it can work for or against your life... called vital force, life force, dynamism" (Katola, Class notes, Sept 2014). People depend on power in order to fulfill whatever obligations and responsibilities come as a part of being in a community.

1.0.4.4 African Belief System: Necessity of a Mediator

A fourth part that goes along with the belief in spirits and ancestors is the importance of mediators or mediums. The African worldview includes God who is near to His people and the One who hears His people, but there is also at times the need for a go-between. Here is where the religious specialists play a very important part. These specialists help people to know what rituals are necessary to reach God or to reach God through the ancestors. These specialists are acknowledged to have power from God to be used for the good of the community (Katola, Class notes, Sept 2014). Okolo (2012) writes, "According to the traditional belief, the African ancestors--the morally good ones, of course--are held in high esteem. People have

great recourse to them as powerful intermediaries between God and the living members of their particular families” (p. 74).

1.0.4.5 African Belief System: The Experience of God’s Presence

The fifth part of the African worldview concerns the experience of God in everyday life or blessedness. Africans do not separate the experience of God from the concept of God. As Nkemnkia says in the previous quote: “God is not a concept but a reality.” Because God is a reality He must be experienced in the lives of His people and because He is a good God, the way people experience God is through the good that comes into their lives. In the past: health, fertility, an abundance of food and security were considered as demonstrations of the presence of God in the life of the community. In the present, those very same things have taken on modern forms but are still considered as manifestations of the presence of God in the community.

These five points do not necessarily make up a comprehensive list of the beliefs in the African worldview. Whole books are written on the African Worldview. For the purposes of this thesis however, these points comprise a brief summary to assist the reader. The important question is: How does the African Worldview respond to the prosperity gospel phenomenon? To follow briefly, before moving on to section 1.1 Academic Discipline, will be a list of a few of the particular teachings of the prosperity gospel and their occurrence in Nairobi, Kenya.

1.0.5 Western Interpretations of the Prosperity Gospel and the Nairobi Setting

This brief section is included only for background on the issue. In an effort to facilitate the advance of the hypothesis that the African Worldview resonates with the prosperity gospel, a simple list comparing a few of the prosperity gospel teachings being preached in the US and what is being presented by Men and Women of God in Nairobi is included here in Table 1.0. The reader can make the comparisons by

nothing that the ⇨ bullet quotes are from US based prosperity gospel preachers and the ❖ bullet quotes are from Nairobi based prosperity preachers or preachers who have a church plant in Nairobi. The ❖ bullet quotes are to be compared with the previous ⇨bullet quotes.

Table 1.0

- “The devil is trying to take the words out of your mouth...This [tongue] is the kindling...Death and life are in the power of your words.” —Kenneth Copeland (Life is a Blessing 2016).
- ❖ “I said, ‘Your miracle is tied to your praise....Let me shout out my miracle’ —Teresa Wairimu (Nixon Gitau 2015).
“The Lord said, ‘My word in my mouth is just as powerful as my word in your mouth.’”
Reinerd Bonnke (2kbodya 2016).
- ❖ “As long as God said it, your hereafter is here. Someone say, ‘My hereafter is here.’ Say it like a warrior...I came as a prophet of God to let you know with a prophetic utterance with my lips to let you know that that thing will not kill you, that that thing will not take you out, that that thing will not have you in the name of Jesus!” —Kathy Kiuna (KTN News Kenya 2014 Nov).
- “Many times God will use your enemies to catapult you to success more than your friends...God does it where all your enemies can see it. Many today you are facing some kind of enemy...God is preparing a table...the angels are taking the food out of the oven...any moment God is going to say, ‘It’s your time. Here’s the meal I’ve prepared for you...your enemies will see it...they are going to see you blessed and promoted living out your dreams in the place of honor and influence.” —Joel Osteen (Smith Adam 2016).
- ❖ Lift up your two hands and call down fire like Elijah did. Listen. Say with me, ‘My God is a consuming fire’ Hebrews 12:29 and when Elijah called the fire of the Lord fell consumed the stones...How many of you want to see fire on your enemies? Now call for it!” —David Oyedepo (Nene Susan Ekuvero 2016).
- “Give what you want and you’ll get what you need.” —Holly Furtick (Elevation Church 2016).
- ❖ “The seed sown...whatever leaves your hand is what God multiplies...I decree and declare increase in everything that you do.” — Allen Kiuna (KTN News Kenya 2014 Oct).

The examples in Table 1.0 reveal several emphases in the prosperity gospel as it is found in the West and the prosperity gospel as it is found in Nairobi. Those emphases include a focus on positive confession; fighting the devil; acting out what you have claimed for yourself; accepting the words from the prosperity preacher as if they were directly from God; making a channel through which you can get power released; and removing bridges that the devil can use to bring setbacks. Chapter Four and Five will include more about those emphases. This chapter gives a digest for the purpose of introduction in order to continue in the presentation of this thesis, which argues that the African Worldview resonates with the prosperity gospel. Some understanding of the prosperity gospel teachings coming from the West are necessary though this thesis does not treat the theological particulars of the prosperity gospel whether in Kenya or the USA in depth.

This brings us to the question: How is it that prosperity gospel teachings are drawing people? Why is it becoming a regular import with people so quick to believe what these prosperity gospel preachers are telling them. Perhaps the following quote can begin to direct our thoughts as we think about whether and how the African Worldview is responding to the prosperity gospel:

The emergence of these NPCs [New Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches] at the end of the 20th century indicates that there are unresolved questions facing the church in Africa, such as the role of “success” and “prosperity” in God’s economy, enjoying God and his gifts, including healing and material provision, and the holistic dimension of “salvation,” which is always meaningful in the African context. (Cf. Anderson, 2001, p. 186)

Although Anderson (2001) in the above citation is specifically talking about Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, nonetheless according to recent works on the

prosperity gospel, it does have some historical roots in the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements originating in the West (cf. Adeleye 2011, pp. 29-39; Gbote & Kgatla 2014, pp. 3-4; Kroesbergen 2014, pp. 3-7; Perriman 2003, pp.1-18, 59-77; Shorter & Njiru 2001, pp. 11-34, 114.). Anderson brings out the possibility of a connection of prosperity, which is being overtly addressed in these New Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches (NPC), to the deeply embedded understanding of God's role in the lives of human beings, especially those belonging to the Christian faith.

According to prior field research the preferred word to use these days is prosperity rather than fortune (cf. App. A. no. 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10). Today prosperity is understood in terms of money and what it can buy—food, shelter, clothing, medical care, school fees, land, cars, smart phones, computers and whatever else may fit into the person's understanding of what makes him/her feel prosperous. This gives people the feeling of having abundance and security and it gives people the status in the eyes of others that will earn them respect, a very important part of living in community. The term prosperity, which is used in this thesis, refers to flourishing financially and being successful in any area of life. Money is an important component of that.

The addition of the word gospel to the word prosperity signifies that there is a particular set of thoughts or doctrine attached to the attainment of prosperity. Taking the word gospel by itself and looking at the decidedly Christian use of it, the word "Gospel" means the Good News of Salvation offered through Jesus Christ. It is the Truth. The strong association of the word gospel with the concept of truth has led to expressions such as, "It is the gospel truth." That expression is said if a person wants to leave other people without doubt to the integrity of the matter being discussed, whereas, joining the word gospel to prosperity has an altogether different meaning. What people understand about the term prosperity gospel may be related to whether

they are or are not adherents to the doctrine. For followers, it may indeed mean truth or good news. But for those outside that framework, it is code of beliefs and teachings surrounding the acquisition or pursuit of wealth, which is guaranteed by Christ Jesus' death and resurrection. It is defined as a health and wealth doctrine that teaches Jesus did everything necessary for anyone who has faith to receive unlimited prosperity in terms of money, success, health and fertility. Doctrines have implications for the way people live their lives. This research examined motivations, values and beliefs in play in attraction to the prosperity gospel churches in Nairobi and why the African Worldview among selected African Christian communities living in Nairobi resonates with the prosperity gospel.

1.1 Academic Discipline

This thesis has been conceptualized, interpreted, expressed, presented and discussed through the discipline of cultural anthropology. First of all, its results and observations were grounded in field data collected by lens of anthropological research methods and techniques aiming to uncover the grounded theory. An interdisciplinary approach combining social sciences to employ ideas mainly from anthropology, and some from sociology, and psychology, have been used to categorize and analyze data that was uncovered thus enabling an evaluation of the grounded theory. The words "prosperity gospel" do indicate some type of theological belief involved in the research topic. Africans believe in God, whose nature is to do good to all those He created. In that sense theology or religion is a part of the research. One cannot separate an African's life into the two compartments of religious and secular. However, while theological analysis is not in view in regard to how the prosperity gospel compares to the Gospel of Christ as taught in orthodox Christianity, religious understanding as it relates to worldview is part of that analysis.

1.2 Problem Statement

An interesting phenomenon is occurring in Kenya—the rapid growth and proliferation of churches that are heralding what is being called the prosperity gospel but disagreement exists as to what are the motivations, values, and beliefs behind the African's attraction to the prosperity gospel churches.

A common question heard in conversations on various topics is, “What can be his/her motivation to do that?” Those having that particular conversation understand that the action or crime or whatever was mentioned did not just happen. An incentive, a desire, or a need lay behind the act. In other words, there was a motivation for what was done. Behind that motivation, furthermore, are the deep-down priorities of that person or community, which demonstrate the values held by that person or society. For example, if the community values marriage because children are brought forth who can continue the cycle of life, then pressure in some way, will be brought to bear on single men and women until a marriage or child results. The value of marriage springs forth from the belief, (an understanding that a community or person holds as true), that children will continue the cycle of life, thereby making the ancestors happy and either maintaining or creating harmony in the cosmos. Another important distinction regarding beliefs is that they can be held consciously and unconsciously. Sometimes people can clearly articulate their beliefs. Other times those beliefs are intrinsically held and not as easily articulated. Here is where fieldwork sought to bring out those beliefs.

Many Kenyans are being attracted to these churches preaching the prosperity gospel. In urban settings prosperity preachers are growing in abundance. These kinds of churches are filling with people desperate to gain prosperity. At the same time some people say that trickery may perhaps be used in these churches as those in the

leadership or connected to the leadership gain in wealth while the poor continue from one desperate situation to another (cf. App. A. no. 2, 4, 9). These prosperity preaching churches will put up billboards, advertise on radio and television proclaiming, “This is your year of release” or “Claim your miracle now.” Passengers riding in public transportation may be subjected to the radio broadcasting of these men or women of God, or if walking through any of the informal settlements, people cannot help but see small prosperity preaching churches with names like, Shekinah Glory or Maximum Miracle Center are in abundance. Ride or walk along any of the roads going through the City Centre, neighborhood areas throughout Nairobi and even ones such as, Westlands or Karen and one can see imposing church structures for the prosperity preaching churches.

It would be hard to spend any day outside one’s home in Nairobi and not be reminded that prosperity gospel preaching is alive and well, even after the exposé of a certain prosperity preacher, on KTN’s Inside Story, called Prayer Predators on November 2, 2014. What are the motivations, values and beliefs in the African worldview that bring certain Africans living in Nairobi to embrace the prosperity gospel? Could it be linked to the African worldview?

1.3 Hypothesis

The basic hypothesis is that the African worldview influences the attraction to churches preaching the prosperity gospel in Nairobi, Kenya.

This attraction arises because those teachings resonate, subconsciously or informally, with the motivations, values, and beliefs of the African understanding of evil and in the centrality of God as the source of all blessings in daily life. The African quest for prosperity has significance not just for what it does for the individual, but also for the cosmos. Divination has been part of that quest for

prosperity in the past and in some lives it is still part of the quest. To understand African spirituality including the attraction to the prosperity gospel, we must seek to comprehend the African understanding of divination. Divination as an important part of the African sense of we has only more recently been acknowledged. Peek (1991) argues in his introduction,

Because European and American scholarship has granted divination only marginal status in human affairs and presumed it to be magical in nature, one must glean those factors which have affected divination research from broader discussions of religion. In the later 19th century several prominent themes, including evolutionism and secularism, shaped anthropology's approach to non-European belief systems; but most influential was positivism, which accepted only verifiable observations as "truths" and automatically denied any ideas of religious or esthetic causality. (p. 5)

There are specific ways the African has sought traditionally to rectify disrupted harmony and to restore that sense of wholeness. Mugambi (2001) says:

If the cycle of the seasons and the rhythm of life in the community were interrupted by such occurrences as prolonged rain or drought...Diviners would therefore be consulted to investigate whom among the members of the community has caused this breakdown, and how it may have been caused. The diviners would also be expected to indicate what remedies the community would have to use to restore the balances of relationships and resume the normal cycle and rhythm. (p. 57)

The prosperity gospel has as its focus the acquisition of prosperity and living in abundance as manifestation of the presence of God. It also has rituals and symbols, which indicate how one believing in the prosperity gospel might grab onto the way

forward to gain the prosperity that is lacking. Africans live very positively and believe that God will always be there for them. It is their spirituality that gives them their behavioral patterns to act appropriately to get good and not evil. There is constant tension between good and evil, and the African must always show that they are good, and on the side of the good. Similarly, the prosperity gospel appears to deal with that tension in a quest for wholeness demonstrated by prosperity and health. Byaruhanga-Akiiki (1995) states, "It is a fact of life that wealth does not necessarily ensure wholeness in every sphere of one's life" (p.100). The African may desire prosperity in terms of material gain but it would not really be a complete prosperity, we could say. Unless that prosperity is tied in with harmony in the community, it is more destructive than it is good. Byaruhanga-Akiiki goes on to make that point, "Thus, wealth is known to often lead to destructive relationships. It does not even assure of a good life in the spiritual world" (p.101).

This research sought to uncover the links between the contemporary Nairobiian and the cultural underpinnings of his/her belief and adherence to the prosperity gospel. As already noted the African lives in a world of harmony or in balance. God does his part and humanity does its part. This equilibrium effects prosperity. At times, there is disharmony and the resulting lack of prosperity.

The prosperity gospel's roots seem to be in Western individualism, something at the opposite end of the spectrum from the African understanding of the individual, who is, as Mbiti (1969) has famously written, "I am because we are" (p. 141). So are Nairobiians drawn to the prosperity gospel because they are now part of a global individualistic culture? How does one acquire a global culture? Are some Africans living in Nairobi drawn to the prosperity gospel because it enables them to focus on themselves as individuals as we, Westerners understand that focus of individualism?

In some sense the human heart is the same regardless of the culture and yet there is also the aspect of the culture, which has in some way shaped that heart. For that reason it seems that to understand how Africans balance their lives, one must perceive what balances their world or restores harmony, in what could be called a collective sense. Collective sense has been called the Community 'I' Concept or the Communal Self as opposed to the Individual Self, (Pinto 2014, class notes). This does not mean that the African has no sense of himself/herself as an individual. All human beings develop the self-sense. Peek's (1991) quotation, on previous page, is bringing out the idea that Western scholarship has misunderstood or ignored the sacral sense of life the African lives in.

The African understanding of life as sacred includes the seeking of restoration with the cosmos whether or not a person seeks a diviner. The idea that an imbalance can occur ultimately points to the problem of evil. If the prosperity gospel did not, even marginally, address the problem of evil, the African would probably find such teachings of no benefit. This research attempted to uncover the cultural significance of the attraction to the prosperity gospel preaching church. That is, it sought to find those motivations, beliefs and values in the African worldview of urban dwellers in Nairobi that drives them to accept something of the teachings found in the prosperity gospel. It seeks to answer: Why are many Nairobians joining the movement? How do Nairobians interpret and evaluate the prosperity gospel?

1.4 Research Questions

1) Research Question 1 (RQ1). What are some of the intrinsic African traditional beliefs that make the African congregations vulnerable to the prosperity gospel?

Behavior and beliefs come to us through the community in which we are born. Geographic location has much to do with the culture a people develop. Nevertheless,

geographic location does not necessarily limit the development of culture in an ethnic group. Culture is, after all, the way a particular group of people organize themselves that they may enjoy and make the most of their environment. As people move from one location to another, either physically or technologically (as through the internet), their cultures encounter those of other ethnic groups and cross-pollination results, at least in some sense. Behaviors may be adopted but the underlying beliefs for the behavior may be very different.

The phenomenon of the prosperity gospel is sweeping across the globe. It looks like a good thing to many people the world over and many are embracing it. But the reasons for embracing it cannot be the same as cultures are not the same. In the USA, a post-modern society is the belief in what is called moralistic therapeutic deism. It is the belief for those that believe in God that God wants me to work hard at being good, and He also desperately wants me to be happy. This is a foundation of the very popular preacher Joel Osteen (2010) whose many books, such as It's Your Time: Activate Your Faith, Achieve Your Dreams and Increase God's Favor, have flooded Kenya. To some Americans the titles of his books betrays his moralistic therapeutic deism, an operant worldview of the American culture, probably underscoring every page of his books.

So here we have some Americans embracing the prosperity gospel because of their belief in this moralistic therapeutic deism. Is this also operant in the urban Kenyan worldview or in the traditional African worldview? Perhaps or perhaps not? This research question endeavored to bring out some of those beliefs that make swallowing the prosperity gospel quite easy for people living in Nairobi.

2) Research Question 2 (RQ2). What motivates prosperity gospel preachers to take up their role as leaders and what motivates people to follow them?

Leadership develops out of a culture while at the same time leadership has an affect on culture. Those leading the way in the prosperity gospel have been shaped by culture and they are shaping culture. Behind leaders are followers and other economic, political, social, religious forces at play. Looking at this aspect enabled a deeper probe into the belief system and how it facilitated acceptance of the prosperity gospel.

3) Research Question (RQ3). What African values do people hold which draw them to accepting prosperity gospel teachings?

The focus here was more on the followers of the prosperity gospel, as they have been influenced by leaders of the movement and by other people in the movement. Who follows a leader sometimes tells a lot about the leader, too. Information was collected giving adequate data for analyzing how the values a leader holds affects followers or outsiders.

4) Research Question (RQ4). What do people believe about the rituals found in the practice of the prosperity gospel?

Beliefs are demonstrated through actions. That is true in every realm of life whether social, economic, political, or religious. It is not uncommon, for example, for a Westerner to tell someone, “Keep your fingers crossed” when that person is hoping for a job offer or some other good happening. That bit of advice suggests that luck (power) can be put at the disposal of the person who crosses his/her fingers. Supposedly it is done symbolically and without meaning, but if you were to ask the person not to cross their fingers when they are hoping for a good outcome, they may feel insecure. Those feelings of insecurity would be an indicator of a belief, even if they said they didn’t believe in luck.

The link between the two concepts—vital power as understood in African Traditional Religion and power as understood in the prosperity gospel lies near the heart of the attraction to the prosperity gospel. However, attraction to the prosperity gospel for the African goes even deeper than the quest for power or does it? This research question sought to find those rituals involved in the prosperity gospel for gaining power that indicate especially how to deal with the problem of evil and what it all means.

5) Research Question (RQ5). What values do the prosperity gospel preachers show to their followers?

In previous research on the topic of vital force, some respondents spoke of vital force in terms of gifting for leadership. Not all respondents knew the term vital force. Nevertheless, the idea of leaders being specially endowed with power resides in the minds of most Africans. While everyone has vital force to some degree, leaders have it in abundance and they gain it in abundance. Kapolyo (2005) says,

Human beings are able both to grow and to diminish in their possession of this vital force...People aspire to greater and greater heights of Ubuntu through this life force gained through certain stages of life, such as circumcision, procreation, accession to positions of traditional leadership. (pp.36-37)

Vital force or power is part of the person and cannot really be separated from people as it is part of the nature of Ubuntu or human connectedness. Yet in this human connectedness is a hierarchy, which may very well coincide with the way followers of the prosperity gospel regard their leaders. Does this African view of a special power endowment for leaders accord with the way prosperity preachers are regarded by their followers, especially in Nairobi? Another very important point that

is brought out in the field data with this question is whether or not prosperity gospel preachers are benefitting from the fact that there is an African worldview.

6) Research Question (RQ6). What motivates the spread of the prosperity gospel throughout Nairobi, Kenya?

Before the advent of the Internet, movements did travel the globe. Several researchers of the prosperity gospel have included histories explaining the origin of this phenomenon. This question is not concerned with the history, though history certainly has made its impact on the spread of the movement. This research question aimed to uncover the current flow and spread of the prosperity gospel in Nairobi, Kenya.

1.5 Significance of the Thesis

The significance of this research has sought to contribute more of a field-based data thesis rather than a historical or theological approach in seeking to answer the phenomenon of the attraction of the prosperity gospel. The data has been collected using anthropological methods. Hopefully when people read this research, they will understand that the African worldview resonates with and responds to the prosperity gospel. It is not adding new knowledge but rather is uncovering the indelible understanding written on the African's heart.

This research has importance because it addresses contemporary challenges and a contemporary phenomenon facing African Christians. It is a controversial topic to be sure but one the African Church is seeking to address. Moreover, it is not merely a local issue but is far reaching throughout the globe. Churches in the West are now looking at Kenya as shown in a recent article in Christianity Today. The article, which no doubt will be read by many Western Christians, reveals that Kenyan pastors are

concerned not so much with the number of “miracle-working” preachers but rather with the people who are attracted to them (Osango, 2016).

Research questions, as listed in the previous section, were designed to draw out the understanding and experience of those being interviewed. Perhaps the data uncovered can give those who are seeking a solution to this attraction some information on how to combat it, if that is their aim, or to reform it, if that is, otherwise, their aim. The significance of this thesis lies not in the ability of this research to expose economic, political, sociological, and theological problems arising from this phenomenon. Nonetheless, those aspects of life have presented themselves in the data in particular ways. The significance, rather, in the data, is in the grounded theory exposed in the worldview of those being interviewed in regard to the prosperity gospel.

For some Africans, the understanding of prosperity leads them to seek both diviners and prosperity preachers to enable them to gain prosperity. But the focus of this thesis has been to get to the core belief of the average Nairobiian who finds fulfillment in the prosperity gospel. In that sense the operating anthropological theory of this research has been that belief drives us to do or not to do certain things. Culture plays a role in shaping that belief system. How does that culture shape that belief creating an unconscious bond? Here is where the grounded theory lies. Hopefully the grounded theory present in this thesis will create a new platform for researching the topic of the prosperity gospel.

1.6 Assumptions

1) Assumption 1 (A1). Health and wealth are considered part of the normal experience of an African’s life and if one is not experiencing such, there is disharmony in their world.

Africans believe God cares for all He has created and wants people to experience the good things in life. He created everything good. From the beginning of creation God has cared for people and the world. It is only because of humanity that evil came into the world bringing about poverty and sickness. Evil can originate from any heart and finds its fullest expression through witchcraft. Evil blocks that which is good and all the good that God intends. Therefore, when an African is not experiencing prosperity, evil is at work blocking good from flowing from God to the community.

2) Assumption 2 (A2). Those who attend prosperity gospel churches will not speak negatively about their leaders.

Because these prosperity preachers claim to have a special anointing from God, to talk against them is to talk against God. No one wants to be working against God.

3) Assumption 3 (A3). More women than men embrace the prosperity gospel, but the leaders are mainly men.

One of the features of a prosperity gospel service is the testimonies. These testimonies given by people who attend the church detail the problem the person was encountering and how it was that God brought them deliverance from the problem. It could be the person did not have a job or wanted a husband or wife or had some kind of sickness. In every case, the person giving testimony gets whatever deliverance or success he/she was seeking. Many of those standing up to give testimony are women.

Whenever the media shows videos or photographs of these prosperity services, it seems that the audience is predominately female. Though it is the aim in data collection to gather an even number of responses of women and men, it may be

possible to discover if this assumption is valid by noting the composition of the audiences while doing non-participant and participant observation.

On the other hand, it seems the dominant gender of the leaders of the prosperity gospel is male.

4) Assumption 4 (A4). Special objects, such as water or oil, are believed to have power instilled in them from the prosperity preacher and are given to a congregation member to use for healing or success.

There are many different devices prosperity gospel preachers employ that are supposed to release the power to prosper or to be healed. Persons using prescribed actions must do as the prosperity preacher instructs them to do and to employ what they call faith in order for things to work.

5) Assumption 5 (A5). These prosperity gospel preachers are believed to have been specially contacted by God and given the job of transmitting health and wealth to people.

When listening to any prosperity preachers, they will refer to God speaking to them and telling them certain things. Special messages they receive from God are called revelations.

6) Assumption 6 (A6). Media contributes to the spread of the prosperity gospel.

With the ease of transmitting information via the Internet and the availability to get the Internet on cell phones, the stories about these prosperity gospel preachers spread widely. Someone in Western Kenya would never have known about some of the prosperity gospel preachers in Nairobi if friends had not told them. Billboards with large pictures of the miracle worker or apostle can be seen through Nairobi. These adverts are easily viewed by people walking, riding in city buses or matatus

(commercial mini-vans) or private vehicles broadening the spread of information of the prosperity gospel or handed out on the streets (cf. App. E. Fig. E1).

1.7 Limitations and Scope

In looking for an audience for this research, the researchers first aim was to attach to three different prosperity gospel churches for one month at a time. Of course it was to be done with the permission of the clergy. Selecting those churches was not easy. The number of prosperity-gospel churches in Nairobi is yet to be counted. One friend living in Kawangware said that there are such churches on every small corner in informal settlements like Kawangware or Kibera. Because the number of these churches is large, sampling all such prosperity-gospel churches for this research would be impossible. Another factor is that new prosperity-gospel churches spring up frequently, and they also die out frequently when the person in charge has gotten enough money or people have caught on to his/her schemes. Thus, selecting churches to study was an interesting endeavor and done with input from some good Kenyan friends.

The scope of this thesis covered churches in Nairobi that have been around for several years teaching the prosperity gospel. The churches selected do not use Kiswahili exclusively for their services and much of their services are in English. This made it possible to collect more data in a shorter period of time and to listen to services through media channels. More on the experience regarding the limitations and scope is presented in Chapter Three in section 3.8 Findings Related to Limitations and Scope.

The location of Nairobi for the collection of the data was selected first because what goes on in Nairobi influences what goes on in the rest of Kenya. Also as I noted in the section on the Significance of the Thesis the Western world is also looking at

Kenya and what is going on in Nairobi. Nairobi is a very important city globally. Interestingly, a particular prosperity gospel ministry arrived in Kenya over twenty years ago and set up in Western Kenya. It failed at that time to get anywhere due to its location in Western Kenya where most of the people had been well grounded in their faith, be it Catholic or Protestant. So it moved to Nairobi and set up in Kibera where it has been going strong ever since. Things are changing, however, with the onset of media, so that now in the rural areas, people are also welcoming these prosperity gospel churches. A future study in how the prosperity gospel is impacting other portions of Kenya might shed further light on the attraction to this prosperity gospel. The names for the churches researched are not used in writing this thesis.

Further limitations in data collection was the possibility that people would not be open to being interviewed, especially in light of the investigative reporting and story called Prayer Predators that was done by KTN November 2, 2014 and subsequently the government seeking to address the problem by requiring leaders of churches to pass certain criteria. That backfired and people were very angry at what they considered government intrusion.

Moreover, it was anticipated that people might be afraid to say anything negative believing that it amounts to negative confession, something the prosperity gospel teaches against. Leaders of the prosperity gospel movement may be suspicious of questions as well or they could even welcome the idea thinking it might help their publicity. Fair to mention and important to mention also was not only the lack of fluency in the Kiswahili language and but also, the worldview barrier of this Western English-speaking researcher and the possibility that people would not be comfortable sharing with an outsider or may feel shy about it. For that reason, I have relied heavily upon field-assistants and some good Kenyan friends to help me. As has been

emphasized at MIASMU, in order to do ethnographic research, one has to take on a conscious attitude of almost complete ignorance. Admittedly, easier said than done.

The scope has been multi-ethnic but mainly Kenyans living in Nairobi. Other Africans, some from South Sudan, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, and even Cameroon, have participated in interviews and the questionnaires. African women and men from age 18 and up were the informants. The data scope includes the variables of age, gender, education, marital status and employment status.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Apostle, Bishop, Prophet, Man or Women of God—Titles used by some prosperity preachers to suggest a special position of authority in the church. The typical definition employed in traditional Christianity may or may not apply, as it is the preacher him/herself that usually decides to take the title.

Belief—Ideas about life and reality either held consciously or unconsciously.

Moralistic therapeutic deism—An operative belief in American society where people regardless of whether they attend church or not believe in a God who wants them to feel happy and fully actualized as individuals according to his/her own definition of what is good.

Motivation—An incentive, a desire, a need which is behind an action or statement.

Prosperity—Having abundant wealth and financial success, fertility and full health.

Prosperity gospel—The teaching that Jesus Christ makes it possible for the normal state of the Christian to be healthy and wealthy at all times and Christians should be experiencing success in everything at which they desire to be successful.

Prosperity-gospel preacher or teacher—A person whose vocation is leading other people to believe in the prosperity gospel by teaching or preaching to them.

Values—The deep-down priorities of the person or community demonstrated in life.

1.9 A Description of Remainder of the Thesis

This chapter has given an introduction to the thesis topic in which it is argued that the people in Nairobi are drawn to the prosperity gospel because the African worldview resonates with the prosperity gospel. This chapter presented the research questions and assumptions used for collecting the data under the sections 1.4 and 1.6; however, the research instruments are included in Chapter Two under section 2.3. This thesis argues that there is a framework in the African worldview that allows room for the prosperity gospel to dwell. The prosperity gospel benefits from the fact that there is an African Worldview and this comes out in the data included in Chapter Three.

Chapter Two describes the methodology used for data collection. That includes the entire research process, field assistants, description and function of the research instruments and the particular methodology used to explain and justify populations, sampling procedures, criteria for inclusion, description of each variable used and how the data has been analyzed. The focus of the methodological methods was to draw out those motivations, values, and beliefs in the African Worldview to demonstrate that they exist and are functioning to examine and even embrace prosperity gospel teachings.

Chapter Three presents the field research data as it relates to the Thesis Topic, Problem Statement, Hypothesis, Significance of the Thesis, the Research Questions and Assumptions as well as Limitations and Scope. The field data in Chapter Three reveals what people in Nairobi are thinking and doing in regards to the prosperity gospel. This is where the respondents demonstrate their African worldview. Care has been taken to let the data speak and to wait until Chapter Five to draw any conclusions.

Chapter Four describes the literature related to the topic of the Prosperity Gospel. Included in the literature reviewed are books, periodicals, journals, some of which are on-line; descriptions of any media viewed; and any other documents that have been helpful in researching the prosperity gospel in Nairobi. The literature is evaluated according to the Thesis Topic, Problem Statement, Hypothesis, Significance of the Thesis, the Research Questions and Assumptions as well as Limitations and Scope.

Chapter Five presents a synthesis of the research findings in light of the literature review. It answers the question: Is there any possibility that the prosperity gospel is connecting with an African Worldview? Chapter Five brings everything together to reveal that the research and the results do in fact demonstrate that there is an African worldview and that African worldview interacts with the prosperity gospel. This thesis reached that goal by examining the prosperity gospel in light of the values, beliefs, and motivations in the African Worldview. The highlight of Chapter Five, with regard to Thesis Topic, Problem Statement, Hypothesis, Significance of the Thesis, the Research Questions and Assumptions as well as Limitations and Scope, is the African cultural knowledge that has been revealed in the field research verifying the prosperity gospel depends on the African worldview in order to gain ground in Nairobi, Kenya. Implications from the data described in Chapter Three are presented as well as the results of the data in light of the literature review in Chapter Four. Appendices included in this thesis include the list of respondents, the research instruments, field research summary and figures and an example advert for a prosperity gospel church.

Chapter Two

Methodology

2.0 Introduction

Chapter Two presents the methodology used to conduct the research for this thesis and the process by which the field research data was analyzed. Approaches for data collection are described as well as the process of data analysis. Also included in this chapter is a description of the role and function of field assistants, ethics, description of and function of the research instruments along with the particular methodology used to explain and justify populations, sampling procedures, criteria for inclusion, and the description of each variable used.

2.1 Research Process

At the very heart of the research process is the problem. It was after spending several years, not only in Kenya but also in Zambia, that the phenomenon of the prosperity gospel and its attraction became clearer in the researcher's focus. It seemed like it was more of an American thing, so the researcher was surprised to encounter it on the African continent almost two decades ago. First exposure to this concept in Christianity came while the researcher was in university. A friend challenged her to watch a particular program on TV and "get a load of it" (slang expression used to tell someone to pay attention to something new or interesting and get informed).

Not long afterwards out of curiosity, the researcher found a TV program called, The 700 Club, with Pat Robertson. It looked like a comedy program as Pat Robertson said; "The lady out there who is struggling with gall bladders problems should touch the TV screen right now. God will heal you." Later on when sharing with her friend about what Pat Robertson said, they had a good laugh even making fun of Pat Robertson with gestures and imitations. But that same year, however, the

researcher met students who believed it and were very emotionally involved in it. If the researcher offered a funny line or criticism to an adherent she was told, “Touch not the Lord’s anointed.” A hesitation developed within the researcher to poke fun at these preachers but the curiosity and observance of it in that society continued. Little did the researcher know that years later she would see and hear many of the same things in Zambia, especially after Trinity Broadcasting Networked opened a TV headquarters in the capital, Lusaka. Upon arrival to Kenya a few years ago, it seemed there was also no escape.

Jump ahead to when the researcher began studies at MIASMU. As was pointed out earlier, the topic of prosperity itself, not the prosperity gospel, became a focus for another research paper but from that research, the researcher’s curiosity in the prosperity gospel was brought more to the forefront of her mind. After discussing the idea with the MIASMU staff, this research project was born in which the researcher would seek to discover the motivations, beliefs, and values behind the attraction to the prosperity gospel for people living in Nairobi.

The research data collection began with an earlier participant observation before crafting research questions. The goal was to let observations help to guide the formation of my research questions. Some of the questions had risen during the other research paper for the course on “African Spirituality, Personhood and Psychotherapy.” There is the saying among the Bemba in Zambia, Umunwe umo tausala inda: translated, “One finger does not pick lice.” In other words, you can’t do it alone. Teamwork brings about the best results. Certainly, Kenyan friends who knew of my interest and invited me to events or would take time to tell me about their experiences were a big help. This led to many discussions concerning the prosperity gospel. Later on this experience helped to formulate the six research questions that

were used for group discussion and one-on-one interviews. A self-guided questionnaire was fashioned from the six research questions and the six assumptions. More discussion on that in section 2.3 Research Instruments.

The original aim was to attach to a couple of prosperity gospel churches for few weeks in order to have more of an insider view for the participant observation. While able to interview two admitted preachers and teachers of the prosperity gospel, this researcher was not able to attach to their churches for the desired length of time, even with the help of field assistants. Perhaps if this research had been conducted well before the KTN program and the resulting pressure on the churches from the government to meet certain requirements, the researcher would not have run into any resistance. Regarding both prosperity preachers who did agree to interviews, they were willing to discuss what they taught and believed, even though they were not as willing for me to discuss the research topic with their congregants. Also there were a couple of prosperity preachers, whom the field assistants and the researcher approached, who did decline to be interviewed; they let us know the research was not welcome there regardless of whatever approval was granted for this project. Graciously, we thanked them for their time and told them they were certainly free to make that choice.

Nevertheless, plenty of people were very interested in assisting our research. The longer we were out in the field, the more we encountered interested people. After almost three months in the field and lots of data, it seemed necessary to bring the data collection for this thesis to a close. During that time the field assistants and the researcher were able to visit several churches, mainly on the Sunday mornings but at other times too. While the researcher watched a number of services on-line, that was

not required of the field assistants. However, this researcher would elicit their comments on some observations from viewing those on-line services.

For one-on-one interviews along with the two prosperity preachers we interviewed, we were able to talk with several members of different prosperity gospel churches, interview a former Woman of God (in terms of her being a former prosperity preacher) and a man, who actually became a Pentecostal preacher in order to warn people against the prosperity gospel after he and his family were impoverished by a woman Bishop. Overall 37 people were interviewed in one-on-one in-depth interviews. In addition, five focused group interviews of not more than twelve people in each group, were conducted.

For the self-guided questionnaires, distribution was rather random and not done in any particular area. Not only did the field assistants help to distribute them, friends of the researcher were also very helpful in distributing them and in collecting them. Out of 130 that were distributed 113 were returned. Although the original plan to be attached to particular prosperity gospel churches did not work, relevant data in abundance was still collected through participant observation, focused group interviews, one-on-one interviews and self-guided questionnaires.

2.2 Field Assistants' Role and Function

For this research assignment, two field assistants, one male and one female, facilitated the collection of data. Being a research team of three enabled us to collect data quicker and we were able to do it in less than three months. It meant that our field of contacts was larger making snowballing a greater possibility.

The two field assistants discussed their findings with me and commented on the researcher's questions of observations. Since a vehicle was available, time was not spent waiting on public transportation and we could go anywhere or any time it was

convenient. The field assistants knew the city very well and could navigate wherever we needed to go. The field assistants accompanied the researcher to most of the church services and were present for the bulk of the interviews. One problem encountered was the Nairobi traffic. Though we tried very hard to allow good time to reach destinations, we were very late for one interview despite allotting plenty of time to get to the appointment. Traffic jams can be unpredictable aside from the rush hours jams. However, if it had not been for one or the other of the field assistant knowing a way around the jam, we may have missed appointments entirely.

Both field assistants had been a part of the MIASMU program at Tangaza as students and field assistants for some time. They were recommended by the staff at MIASMU. The training that these field assistants had received in MIASMU helped them to offer very good tips as we navigated through the data collection. Not only were the field assistants able to assist me to navigate the culture, they were able to do any translation that was needed at any given time. We picked up any adverts or written materials given to those in attendance or displayed on a table for the public to take for free.

The field assistants served in helping to collect data, conduct interviews, find respondents, distribute questionnaires, offer translation, navigate the city, and provide necessary advice to keep everything running smoothly. They were also extremely cautious and willing to uphold ethical practices with the data collection.

Honesty and openness are important in collecting data. People need to feel they can trust those collecting the data. The presence of the field assistants helped people to trust the researcher. Consent was granted by those interviewed. The respondents were glad for us to take notes. Taking notes allowed for clarification on ideas plus provided much verbatim field data. The field assistants helped the

researcher to secure permission from a church leader wherever we sought to do research. Instructions were followed to maintain privacy of the interviewees, clarification given throughout the interview, and we encouraged people to ask us questions as well. Because we guaranteed anonymity to all respondents no names of individuals or churches are used in writing this thesis.

2.3 Research instruments

Three guides were designed for the following type of interviews: focused group interviews, stream of consciousness interviews and one-on-one interviews using the six research questions. Structured protocol was used before every interview. Verbal consent was always granted. No audio recordings or photographs were taken for any of this research and people were informed that as well. A self-administered questionnaire was also developed which included seven different types of questions learned in the research methods courses at MIASMU. Crafting seven different types of question for each research question elicited plenty of data and allowed for some of the different types questions, such as hypothetical or story questions that expanded the data collection for the research question to go unanswered, while still provide enough data to answer the research question itself. Having seven types of questions per research question helped perhaps to counter the problem with people not being able to ask the researcher a question for clarification on a question.

For the self-guided questionnaires, each question was coded and labeled according to the type for data sorting purposes. The questions were both closed and open-ended. These questions were structured with the respondents in mind and to determine the lack or the presence of a motivation, belief or value found in the Africa worldview. A paragraph was included at the top of the questionnaire introducing the researcher and the research project. It had below ten pages.

For observation purposes, guidelines taken from Spradley (1980), and noted on a piece of paper, were carried into the situations. It was also reviewed beforehand not just in the setting. Each field assistant also had the noted guide available. Additionally, we discussed what we wanted to investigate during the event using time afterwards to talk about our observations. We looked at the physical situation itself plus did a number of observations concerning people, such as a person's appearance and other indicators of group membership or status; a person's verbal behavior and the dynamics of interactions; physical behavior, gestures and actions done; human movement in and out and during the event as well as whom received what attention.

During participant observation, mentally asking one question would lead to other questions. For example, in going into a church the question may come to mind, "What kind of structure is used? Does it look like other churches?" Upon seeing a banner in the church, another question might be, "Why does that banner say that and why is placed there?" Of course, these questions would be jotted down as soon as possible. Spradley (1980) suggested seeking to identify actors, rituals, activities, and places where the event occurs. Finding a good place for observation sometimes led to the researcher moving about and not sticking to one seat. After awhile it seemed to be automatic to observe and note details about people and places no matter where a person was.

2.4 Research methodology

This section gives the explanation and justification for the following: Populations, Sampling procedures, Criteria for Inclusion, and Variables.

2.4.1 Populations

The population for this research includes residents in Nairobi, even if they were not originally from Nairobi, and includes many ethnic groups though for this

research ethnic groups were not identified. Non-Kenyan Africans who happened to be in the churches or who were been recommended by another informant are also included in the population. The total population statistic fits into five categories: Age, Gender, Education, Marital status, and Employment, listed and explained in section 2.4.4 on the variables. There are a total of 37 interviews and 113 questionnaires which brings the number of respondents to 150, thus N=150. Included in the data analysis is information from the focused groups though these groups do not account for variables and thus cannot be quantified. All the data was collected within Nairobi primarily areas in South, Central, and East sections of Nairobi.

2.4.2 Sampling Procedures

The data collection procedure began with purposive sampling. We went to particular churches asking for interviews and for permission to observe a service with the possibility of conducting either focused group or in-depth interviews at a later date. Obviously, it was not easy in such a case to specify whom to talk to in terms of the five variables used in this thesis. What normally happened is that we were able to accomplish some purposive sampling. At the same time, we found ourselves doing random sampling. That would occur after seeing someone who seemed friendly or interested in us. Then we would approach that person for some type of interview at a later date.

There were two outcomes of the random sampling more so than from the purposive sampling. One outcome of the random sampling was that the person randomly selected might gather together a focused group. The second outcome was that the person randomly selected might give us a contact or two thus resulting in snowball sampling. The snowball sampling was continuing up until we closed the

research. Even now, it still has the possibility of gaining traction again if more research is wanted at a later date.

2.4.3 Criteria for Inclusion

To be eligible for inclusion in the research as a respondent, individuals had to be at least 18 years of age of either gender, single or married and from any educational or employment situation. All informants were Africans residing in Nairobi, whether long term or short term. Though originally the attempt was to target only those populations in particular prosperity gospel churches, that goal had to change due to the difficulty of acceptance for such a research project to be allowed in those churches. It was modified to include people who were adherents of the prosperity gospel attending any church in Nairobi and as well as people who had experience with it whether positive or negative.

2.4.4 Description of Each Variable and Justification of Their Inclusion

Variables used in data collection include 1) Age, 2) Gender, 3) Education level, 4) Marital status, and 5) Employment status. The findings concerning each of the variables in regards to the data is discussed in Chapter Three under each research question and assumption findings.

2.4.4.1 Variable: Age

Age was divided into the following categories: 1) Age 18-35; 2) Age 36-49; 3) Age 50-up.

1) Age group 18-35 has the most variety of views. Some may be students, may be working, may be married, or may be single. Many of those factors are also a variable that have been measured. It was not measured whether or not the respondent was presently a student in university or other post secondary school. Youth, one might say, tend to have less responsibilities and more time for thinking about

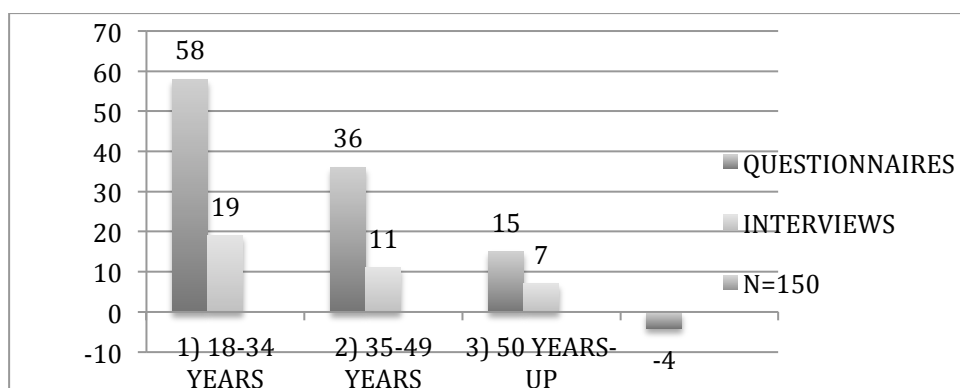
themselves than those in the older age groupings. Could the prosperity gospel appeal to the individual's dreams of success that a youth might possess?

2) Age group 36-49 are generally more settled in their jobs and schooling. Many are married and have families by this point. These issues seem to have a bearing on acceptance of the prosperity gospel.

3) Age group 50-up is people who generally know what they believe and have been living based on that belief for decades. This group may be the one to show to a greater degree that the African worldview meshes with the worldview of the prosperity gospel teachings.

The table (Table 2.1) of Sample Age Groups that follows shows a total of 150 with 4 questionnaire respondents who not select their age grouping. That was shown using the variable description of -4. The table divides the age groups according to interviews and questionnaires. So for Age Group 1, those answering the questionnaire numbered 58 and those interviewed numbered 19. For Age Group 2, those answering the questionnaire numbered 36 and those interviewed numbered 11. For Age Group 3, those answering the questionnaire numbered 15 and those interviewed numbered 7. Out of the 150 respondents (N=150) the age group distribution is as shown in the following table:

Table 2.1 Sample Age Groups



2.4.4.2 Variable: Gender

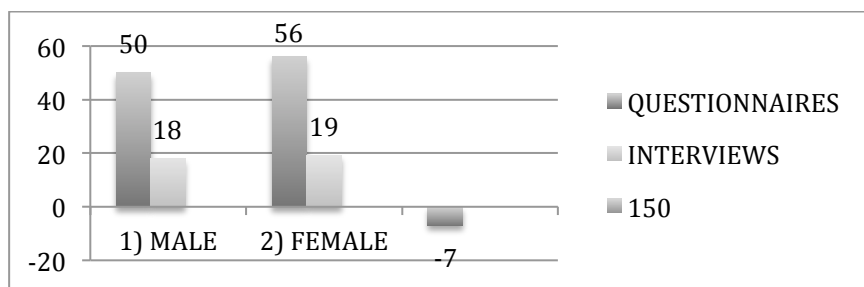
Gender has two categories: 1) Male 2) Female.

1) Male. The motives why men are involved in the prosperity gospel may be very different from why women are involved. Does being involved in the prosperity gospel belief system make a man think he is a better provider for his family? Does it take some of the responsibility off his shoulders to provide for his family the way an African man would be expected to provide?

2) Female. It has often been said that there are more women than men in any kind of church. Is this also true for the prosperity gospel churches? What does this say about the dynamics in such a church that more women than men attend? Are women more trusting of authority? Are they more traditional in their worldview? This phenomenon of whether there are more women than men in the services was studied through participant and non-participant observation.

The table (Table 2.2) that follows shows 7 questionnaires did not ✓ the variable description by using -7. The table divides the number of male and female according to interviews and questionnaires as in the previous table. So for Male, those answering the questionnaire numbered 50 and those interviewed numbered 18. For Female, those answering the questionnaire numbered 56 and those interviewed numbered 19. Out of the 150 respondents (N=150) the gender distribution is as follows:

Table 2.2 Sample Gender



2.4.4.3 VARIABLE: EDUCATION LEVEL

This variable has four categories: 1) Non-formal education; 2) Primary; 3) O-levels; 4) University.

1) Non-formal education. Will this variable affect how involved a person is in the prosperity-gospel church? Maybe there will be less people with informal education in a prosperity-gospel church because they might be less interested in strange teaching. Whatever the factors behind the lack of formal education, it will be interesting to see the difference this makes in one's belief system. In this case, it was difficult for this research to find people in Nairobi with no-formal education. Perhaps that would not have been the case if this research had taken place in a rural area.

2) Primary. The goal of this type of education is to prepare the mind for understanding new things and to develop a curiosity in the learner. Does this have a bearing on the attraction to the prosperity-gospel?

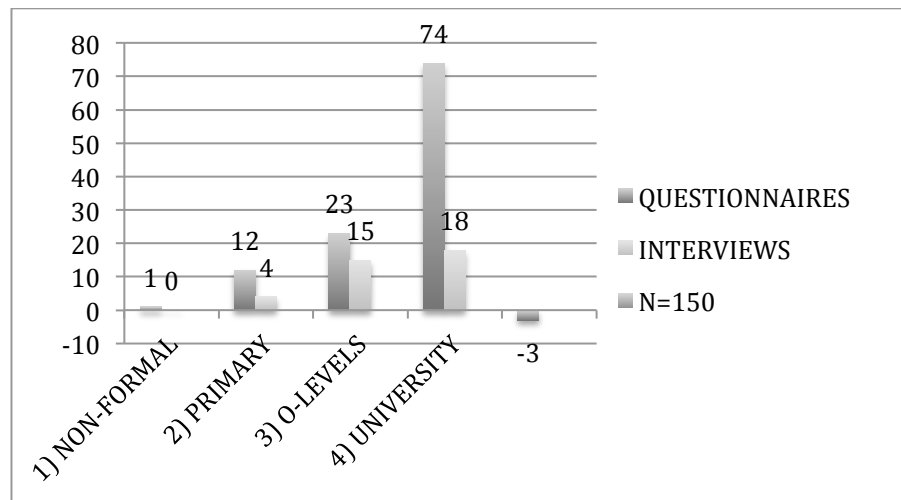
3) O-levels. Preparation for university may make a person more open to novelty, such as the prosperity-gospel. These students may be thinking about being able to move into university training and the drive to succeed may be very high.

4) University. This level is considered to bring the highest sophistication to people making them less vulnerable to schemes of people. Would these students feel the need to have more assistance to achieve their goals, something that the prosperity gospel may offer them? Is the prosperity-gospel something that even university students are grabbing?

The table (Table 2.3) that follows shows 3 questionnaires did not ✓ the variable description by using -3. The table divides the education levels according to interviews and questionnaires. So for Education level 1, those answering the questionnaire numbered 1 and those interviewed numbered 0. For Education level 2, those

answering the questionnaire numbered 12 and those interviewed numbered 4. For Education level 3, those answering the questionnaire numbered 23 and those interviewed numbered 15. For Education level 4, those answering the questionnaire numbered 74 and those interviewed numbered 18. Out of the 150 respondents (N=150) the education level distribution is as shown in the following table:

Table 2.3 Sample Education Level



2.4.4.4 VARIABLE: MARITAL STATUS

Only two categories are given for marital status:

1. Single.
2. Married.

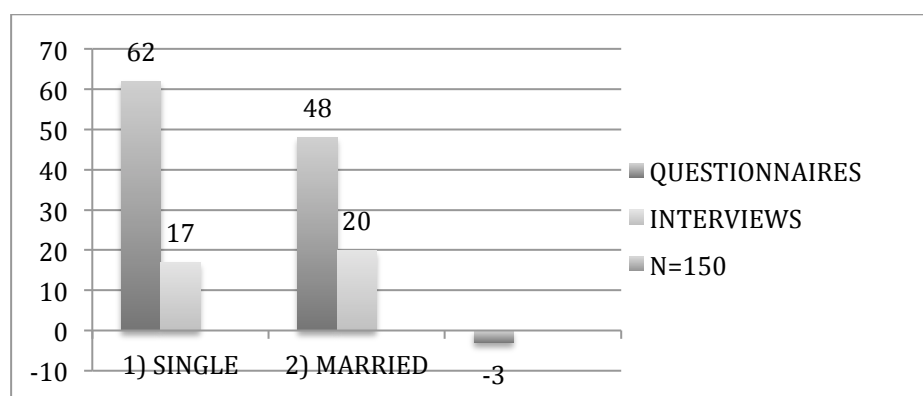
Single will include those that are also divorced or widowed because people may not want to divulge the particulars of why they are now single if they were married before. Singles may be hoping that the prosperity-gospel will help them to change their marital status. Perhaps by attending a prosperity-gospel church a single person may feel more respected by others. Single men have different concerns from married men as do single women from married women.

Married. The concerns of married people focus primarily on the health and education of children and on success in the workplace enabling them to have respect

in the eyes of the community. Is the prosperity gospel a way for married people to stand the stresses of marital family life?

The table (Table 2.4) that follows shows 3 questionnaires did not ✓ the variable description by using -3. The table divides the marital status according to interviews and questionnaires. The table divides the number of male and female according to interviews and questionnaires as in the previous table. So for Single, those answering the questionnaire numbered 62 and those interviewed numbered 17. For Married those answering the questionnaire numbered 48 and those interviewed numbered 20. Out of the 150 respondents (N=150) the marital status distribution is as shown in the following table:

Table 2.4 Marital Status



2.4.4.5 VARIABLE: EMPLOYMENT

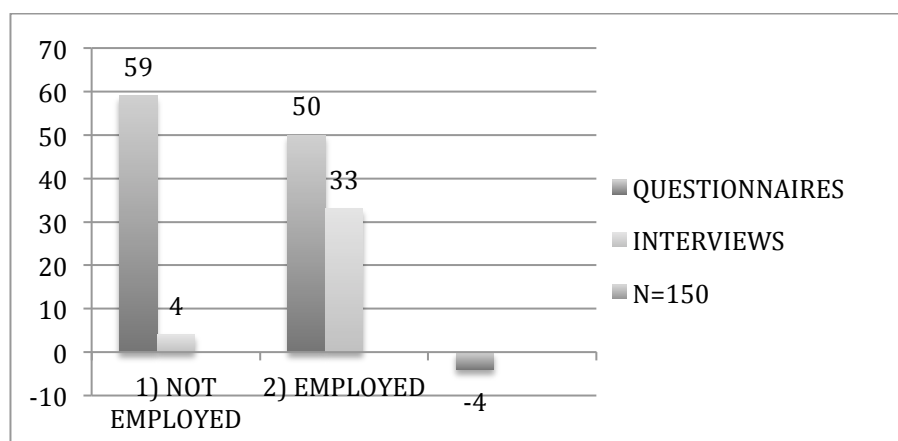
This variable has only two categories: 1) Not employed and 2) Employed.

1) Not employed. This category would include anyone who is not working at the present moment. It does not take into account whether the person was retrenched or retired. The assumption is that people in this category still have the need for funds for their lives. Could believing in the prosperity gospel give them hope that those funds will come to them whether or not they work?

2) Employed. The category for employed will include all types of employment: Part-time, Full-time, Temporary and Kibarua. While all of those categories share the fact that there is at least some kind of job bringing in money, each category may be more or less inclined to trust in the prosperity gospel. However, this research will not test that assumption and will leave that to other research.

The table (Table 2.5) that follows shows 4 questionnaires did not ✓ the variable description by using -4. The table divides the employment status according to interviews and questionnaires. So for Employment status 1, not employed, those answering the questionnaire numbered 59 and those interviewed numbered 4. For Employment status 2, employed, those answering the questionnaire numbered 50 and those interviewed numbered 33. Out of the 150 respondents (N=150) the employment status distribution is as shown in the following table:

Table 2.5 Sample Employment



2.5 How the data was analyzed

Qualitative research done in the form of participant observation and field data collection methods sought to answer questions in a systematic way. However, evidence collected was not to produce pre-determined answers. Rather the ethnographic data in the field notes and questionnaires has been analyzed

qualitatively and manually without the use of a computer program. In the following quote Spradley (1980) explains what occurs when the anthropologist gathers data.

The ethnographer sees artifacts and natural objects but goes beyond them to discover the meaning people assign to these objects. The ethnographer observes and records emotional states but goes beyond them to discover the meaning of fear, anxiety, anger, and other feelings... *Explicit culture* makes up part of what we know, a level of knowledge people can communicate with relative ease... At the same time, a large portion of our cultural knowledge remains *tacit*, outside our awareness (p. 7).

It is this tacit knowledge that the research sought to uncover through the different types of analysis.

Quantitative analysis occurred later when the responses were included in the questions that were coded according to type and as they related to the research questions and assumptions. But the analysis was more qualitative. Once data was collected initially, categorization began to occur by looking at smallest bits of data and then by compiling linked data. Care was taken to not formulate too much before the data collection was completed.

Ethnographies are the gathering of the point of view, the understandings, whatever is behind the way human subjects in a particular setting act and speak and the goal of the researcher is to learn from them, to obtain the “insider’s view” (Spradley 1980, p. 3). That means it is very important to proceed with caution doing data analysis and not to get too excited early on when it seems that puzzle pieces may be coming together. So more scrutiny was required every step of the way.

After taking care to organize all the field data, it was then subjected to more questioning and sorted by further coding and categorizing trying as much as possible

to use verbatim categories. After organizing the field data in this way, beginning with the focused groups, moving to the in-depth interviews and then the self-guided questionnaires, a more comparative analysis was undertaken, which will be further explained in the next paragraph. In sorting through the focused group data, possible domains began to emerge that were helpful in categorizing the other field data.

In order to do comparative analysis, data responses for only one research question was examined at a time with compiling further notes as one response was compared and contrasted to another response. This helped to bring out domains in the cultural scene. Spradley (1980) talks about cultural domains or domains in the cultural scene as an important part of the ethnographic analysis that is done in anthropology (p. 140). Cultural domains within the field data are not necessarily explicit. The way to get at those domains was by checking through the notes for descriptions of cover terms, included terms and the semantic relationships (p. 93). As much as possible folk terms or verbatim terms have been used for cover terms in the data analysis for this thesis. Constant comparative analysis was done of all the cover terms, semantic relationships and included terms that had already emerged from going through the field notes. But this time the comparative analysis was done to see what overlapped in the domains allowing for the collapsing of categories and the reduction of domains arising out of the comparisons.

Once that step of constant comparative analysis was done, notes from the literature review were perused to see what domains were mentioned. As many domains as possible were listed and then compared with the domains that had arisen from the field notes. Since domains are those words that give meaning to the people, places, artifacts, and cultural knowledge that emerge from the field data, not just any word will work.

The next step undertaken which was extremely helpful was a taxonomic analysis. This revealed more of the relationships that particular people, things or events had to all the others. It moved from having specific related categories to intermixing of the categories. So the whole parts that had come together in the comparative analysis were now overlapping in different ways. That opened up the emergence of patterns, a very important part of grounded theory. However, more analysis was undertaken before making judgments regarding the emerging patterns. Uncovering the patterns led to uncovering grounded theory, the goal of this research.

Questions of contrast were then applied to the taxonomy and then patterns emerged leading to yet another step in this data analysis, that of theme analysis. Themes began to emerge with the patterns. Cultural themes, the basic principles operating in a society may or may not be expressed explicitly. Theme analysis was part of the process in categorizing qualitative data. This facilitated the linking of the concepts of culture, which emerged in the data. The goal of the analysis was to discover the grounded theory, as to why the attraction to prosperity gospel teaching among Kenyans is so strong.

Quantitative analysis occurred when the qualitative data was coded and graphed for purposes of explanation and verification of the grounded theory. The results in Chapter Three give that analysis demonstrating that the African Worldview is interacting with the prosperity gospel.

Chapter Three

Results

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the results from the research data collected in the field. Five variables were selected for this research: Gender, Age Group, Marital Status, Education Level, and Employment Status. Tables and figures are used in this chapter, which give these variables in numerical form to present and to clarify the findings. Even though some statistical information is given through quantifying the data, the emphasis of the data analysis is qualitative and descriptive. The discussions give a summary of the data collected in the field using in-depth interviews, focus groups and self-guided questionnaires, as well as data collected during participant and non-participant observation.

This chapter also presents the way in which different variables either confirmed or negated the Thesis Topic, Problem Statement, Hypothesis, Significance of the Thesis, and Limitations and Scope. The conceptual framework derived from the field data is presented first. That is followed by findings related to the Thesis Topic, the Problem Statement, the Hypothesis and the Significance of the Thesis. The remainder of the chapter describes the data, including statistical information and responses from the respondents, and as the data related to the Research Questions and Assumptions and the Limitation of Scope.

3.1 Conceptual Framework

The Conceptual Framework was derived from the field data. The researcher did not go into the field with a particular theory in mind. The aim was to let the data speak in order to reveal the grounded theory. Based on the variables of gender, age,

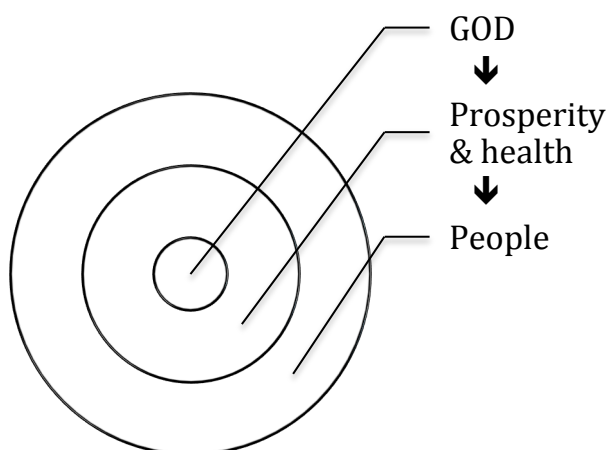
marital status, education, and employment, the following African beliefs, values, and motivations were revealed:

3.1.1 Conceptual Framework: Beliefs

The first and overarching belief is that God is good and that God's goodness is experienced through prosperity and health. The second belief flowing from that belief is that God gives power to people so that they might live a prosperous life. Thirdly, God also gives power to special people in order to help those under them in terms of social hierarchy, and fourthly, those specialists can transfer power to objects for people to use for experiencing prosperity and health.

There are three parts to these four beliefs: God, the experience of prosperity and health, and people. Though God is at the top of the hierarchy of beings, God is shown in Figure 3.0 as the center from which all things flow. This came out strongly in the data by the respondents' affirmation that God who is good, always does good to His people and that He is the one who gives prosperity and health at His pleasure. It is to be a part of the "normal" experience.

Figure 3.0. Normal Flow of Prosperity



Part of the conceptual framework consists of what happens in the experience of people in regards to prosperity and health. The reason prosperity is listed directly

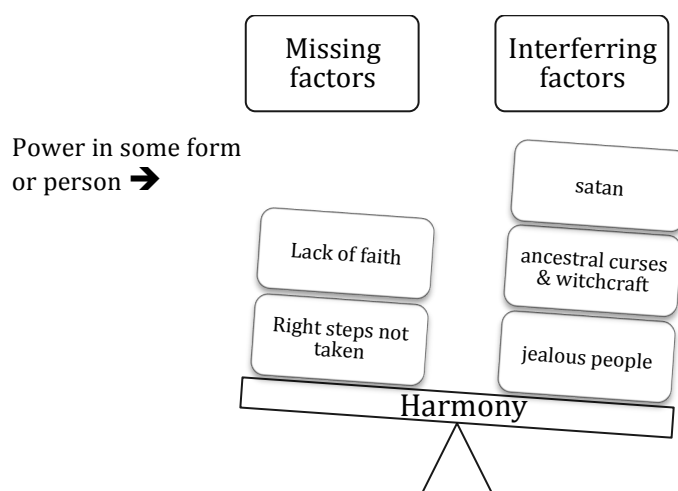
after God is that it originates in God and therefore flows from God. Individuals and those looking at their lives see the presence or manifestation (a word used by prosperity preachers) of God by noting the prosperity and healing that are received. The data showed that, while respondents expect prosperity and health as a normal state of life, they also thought it was possible for some good reason for God to withhold prosperity and healing or that there could be other reasons: like Satan or witchcraft, or not having enough faith or doing the right steps, that block the flow of prosperity as shown in Figure 3.1. If things are balanced then evil cannot stop prosperity though evil may still exist.

People are the third part of Figure 3.0 because they are the recipients. This figure did not account for the spiritual hierarchy of beings where ancestors (and living dead) follow after God and specialists follow after ancestors. People were instead pooled into one category representing recipients of prosperity and health.

Another part of the conceptual framework consists of what can be done to restore harmony in order to experience prosperity and health. The data showed specialists and particular rituals and artifacts are promoted as a medium through which blockages can be removed. Moreover, it is necessary for a specialist to be involved in the transfer of power. In this conceptual framework is the underlying theme of power.

In Figure 3.1 two sides of a scale are shown. The emphasis is that all parts must be lined up in order for harmony to exist. The factors listed under Missing Factors are meant to include specialists and/or some ritual that involves power whether words or faith or an actual object. The interfering factors have been put into three general categories to show those things that are feared could cause blockages in some way.

Figure 3.1.



The data reveals an underlying theory that power makes prosperity possible. Power, which originates from God, is mediated through specific people and specific objects, in order to effect prosperity by promoting good forces while blocking evil forces. Power is for assisting human beings to actualize their purposes, which includes prosperity not impoverishment. Thus, we can say four components have been revealed out of the grounded theory that fit into the conceptual framework: 1.) the origin of power, 2.) the mediators or mediums of powers, 3.) the function of power and 4.) the manifestation of power. This can be seen in looking at God, the experience of prosperity, and people. These are the foci in the understanding of prosperity.

3.1.2 Conceptual Framework: Values

A number of values can be drawn from the data; however, broadly speaking, three basic values were demonstrated, though they are not discussed in order of importance. First is the value of being a responsible member of community. The data showed that people generally wanted to do their part to enhance the life of their community as well as to experience the benefits of living as a responsible member in that community. Secondly, living a moral life, that is, one that agrees with the

community's understanding of what is good is also an important value. The data showed that people were concerned to know what they should be doing at particular times in their lives. Thirdly, it is important to be seen as someone who has the presence of God in his/her life. The presence of God is demonstrated by a person having prosperity and health. Again, the prosperity gospel talks about the manifestation of God in a person's life as that which is seen through prosperity and health. The data reveal the underlying theory that living in a way that reflects these values is what will maintain harmony in one's life and thus prosperity should flow.

3.1.3 Conceptual Framework: Motivations

Motivations are tied very closely to values and beliefs because they are demonstrated in the attitudes that flow from having particular beliefs. The motivations in general can be said to be first, the motivation to please the community; second, the motivation to fulfill cultural expectations; and third, the motivation to gain status and respect in the community.

The data revealed that regardless of the circumstances, these motivations reside in the attitudes of the people in the field. So whether consciously or subconsciously motivations, values, and beliefs are at play in the attraction to the prosperity gospel teachings.

In summary of the conceptual framework, the data showed that the prosperity gospel fits into the framework of the African Worldview consisting of its beliefs, values, and motivations. The prosperity gospel, according to data, offers solutions that are more acceptable, it appears, to those with less education than others, thereby demonstrating that educational level has a positive correlation in the attraction to the prosperity gospel. It also showed that for the variable of gender, women are more attracted to the prosperity gospel than men and for the variable of marital status, that

those who are single are more attracted to the prosperity gospel than those who are married. Being without employment can also be a significant influence in attraction to some of the prosperity gospel teachings. This is not saying that men or the unemployed or the well-educated are not attracted to the prosperity gospel teachings. Rather, it suggests that the singles, the unemployed, and the less educated seem to be attracted in larger percentages than men or those with employment.

3.2 Findings related to the Thesis Topic

The Thesis Topic, the Prosperity Gospel and its attraction, was mainly received with much interest. One respondent wrote, “You are researching a very important area” (cf. App. B, no.8). Another respondent wrote, “There’s only a thin line between some of these rogue preachers and genuine servants of God who must proclaim the whole counsel of God and prosperity is a part of it” (cf. App. B no. 97). People also expressed interest in reading the outcome of the research project. They were told where they would be able to read the thesis and were encouraged to do so.

The thesis topic concerns the beliefs, values, and motivations behind the attraction to the prosperity gospel among people in Nairobi. The definition for the prosperity gospel in this thesis is the teaching that Jesus Christ makes it possible for the normal state of the Christian to be healthy and wealthy at all times and Christians should be experiencing success in everything at which they desire to be successful. Various degrees of that are found in churches, but the prosperity gospel itself has its first aim, prosperity and healing and not salvation for one’s soul. However, prosperity preachers predicate that you have to be saved first in order to get prosperity from God. (They do allow for wicked people acquiring riches but they say those riches will be given to God’s children.) Many respondents in the field are/or have at one time been a part of prosperity gospel churches, as well as, some respondents are/or were

themselves prosperity preachers. Everyone had something to say about it. If they did not want to talk about it, they may have thought this research was along the lines of the exposé done by KTN (Kenya National Television) called Prayer Predators and so were reticent.

Variables had no significance on who was interested in the topic or gave contacts for other possibly respondents. One man issued an invitation to return to share the final work with the group of pastors he teaches (cf. App. A. no. 19). Another man who had a negative experience in a prosperity church asked if we could rent a loudspeaker and talk to the people in the informal settlements about this (cf. App. A. no. 27). The explanation given to these respondents in order to decline the offers was that, perhaps that was their part not mine.

The thesis topic was not acceptable for discussion at a couple of churches contacted for participation. No explanation was given, despite the initial contact with junior pastors being very positive. Not being able to talk directly to the one who made the decision may have hindered the possibility of data collection there. As one respondent told me in order to see some of these prosperity preachers, “you must pay Ksh 2000 to see a pastor and depending on the weight of the issue you might see juniors” (cf. App. A. no. 5).

Overall, the thesis topic was received well and with enthusiasm. This points to the validity of the topic and to the scope that is yet to be reached in researching it. People enjoy talking about their own worldview even if they are not completely conscious of its outworking in their lives.

3.3 Findings related to the Problem Statement

Problem Statement: An interesting phenomenon is occurring in Kenya—the rapid growth and proliferation of churches that are heralding what is being called the

prosperity gospel, but disagreement exists as to what are the motivations, values, and beliefs behind the African's attraction to the prosperity gospel churches.

The data collected verified the problem statement. Participant observation and general observation showed that these churches are opening everywhere and people are filling these places. While driving through areas in East Nairobi one can see makeshift shops are opened and packed with 40 people on a Sunday morning. But these really are not makeshift shops; they are churches with names like Holy Spirit Fire Independent Church (not its real name). The preacher shouts into a microphone loud enough for everyone walking or driving by to hear.

Not everyone interviewed in the field had the same thoughts as to why the prosperity gospel churches were so attractive. The data however, did reveal the grounded theory running through the attraction. Yes, there are many problems and desperate situations in the lives of people who are looking to the prosperity gospel. Yet the main focus was an attempt to remove the impediment to prosperity and health or to restore the harmony in the life of the individual and community in order to experience God's blessings, which are manifested through prosperity and health.

At one church visited, the sermon had already started by the time we arrived and it was preached in English being translated into Kiswahili. The topic was on Spiritual Parents and how submitting to their authority brings blessings. The emphasis was on getting things right in your life by making sure you were honoring your spiritual parents, those people who are mentoring or teaching you the things of God. The preacher used the command of honoring one's father and mother and applied it directly to what was being called spiritual parents. People were taking notes and would probably try to employ whatever methods they could to bring harmony back into their worlds by honoring their spiritual parents at that church.

Data verified that Nairobians are a church-going people and with all these people in a city close to 3.5 million, there are plenty of possibilities for many churches to begin or grow or expand with whatever message they have to deliver. One of the respondents had this to say about all these churches, “If you talk only about righteousness, you won’t get money. You need good instruments, hire a choir and tell the people what they want to hear. Attitude is ‘I open my own shop and whoever wins the majority of the customers works’. Now there is another dynamic in the church. Pray for handkerchief, or oil, or water. Take it home and it will change everything in life,”(App. A. no. 5). A different respondent said this about attraction to her church, “The way the Word is taught is so touching,” speaking about how she was moved by the way her Bishop interprets the Bible, (App. A. no. 20).

The research revealed that people do seem to have different reasons for being attracted to these churches preaching the prosperity gospel, but the conceptual framework shows the interrelatedness of their reasons.

3.4 Findings related to the Hypothesis

The basic hypothesis is that the African worldview influences the attraction to churches preaching the prosperity gospel.

Worldview is composed of motivations, values, and beliefs. Because prosperity gospel teachings resonate, subconsciously or informally, with the motivations, values, and beliefs of the African understanding of evil and in the centrality of God as the source of all blessings in daily life, there is an allure to churches teaching the prosperity gospel. Data confirmed the hypothesis. Respondents made very telling remarks, which confirmed the hypothesis. “Prosperity gospel appeals to African spirituality. We give to the god to obtain favor. That is why it is prevalent” (cf. App. B. no. 44). Another gave this comment,

(There are) Various shades of the prosperity gospel, not one homogenous whole. Prosperity gospel is a result of undue influence of control that pastors/men of God leave on their congregations. Prosperity gospel appeals to the miraculous and to the African Traditional beliefs that go to a miracle man for help (cf. App. B. no. 44).

One woman, who was at one time a prosperity preacher, agreed to be interviewed. Here is one of her comments on the tie between the African mind and the prosperity gospel:

They [prosperity preachers] know the tricks to use and they know the weakness and beliefs of the people because people believe so much in the old ways. People will accept if these leaders say whatever. For example, like me, I did the same but I reached a place where I knew what I was doing was wrong. Others have continued and are rooted in this thing. It is almost as if they have become a true witch. When you go to the witch, they will tell you your problems and say, “Your friend so-and-so wants your job and is planning evil on your children.” He will pretend he is listening to the wazee (the ancestors).

In the old days they would expect a goat, a certain number and color of chickens, traditional flours for the consultation fee. This was enough food to last for some time. Now for the full treatment there would be another charge. When our people go to the now new witches, that is, these churches, these men will say you must bring everything to the church. People are told you need to come every day for prayers and to bring money. These people are now in a life-long program that won't allow the penetration of their minds. Try to tell them to learn God's Word or to go to a different pastor, they can't! (cf. App. A. no. 32).

The data demonstrates that people want to control their world in order to derive the benefits from it they believe are granted by God, especially that of prosperity and healing. Obtaining power in some way assists them to do that. One respondent who does counseling said this, “The other area is insecurity. This says the cause of every problem is witchcraft” (cf. App. A. no. 36). Yet another respondent said,

Our limitation as humans is that we fear the future. If someone can tell me about tomorrow so I’ll be sure what’s coming, I’ll listen because I have no alternative way of knowing. Prosperity preachers exploit that part of human experience—that of desiring to know the future (cf. App. A. no. 38).

The data also showed that in many cases, the education level of the person has a bearing on how much of the prosperity gospel is accepted. This can be seen in Table 3.4 under Research Question 2 showing that the more education one has the less likely one is to believe that a prosperity preacher can give power to special objects such as oil, water, handkerchiefs, or soil. Data showed Primary education at 75% believe that prosperity preachers can give power to special objects. O-levels at 43.4% and University at 27%. There is a steady decline in the percentage according to education levels (see Table 3.4). With more education, comes more exposure to other ideas and a questioning of one’s own ideas and the worldview in which one is enculturated, (cf. App. 12, 14, 35, 38).

3.5 Findings related to the Significance of the Thesis

The significance of this research is that it is a field-research thesis based on bibliographic material rather than a historical or theological, in seeking to answer the phenomenon of the attraction of the prosperity gospel. The data has been collected using anthropological methods. This research has importance because it addresses contemporary challenges and a contemporary phenomenon facing African Christians.

It is a controversial topic to be sure but one the African Church is seeking to address. Moreover, it not merely a local issue but is far reaching throughout the globe.

For those respondents that cared to answer, they were given opportunity to tell how the prosperity gospel has impacted their lives. Some shared of healing or being able to leave a life of sin, while others of being disappointed. One respondent made this comment: “My life continues with the same trust in the True Living God. Preaching and outreach is however not easy in matatus anymore as the first impression (that comes to their minds) is the prosperity preacher” (cf. App. B. no. 78).

The following comment shows that people do want to understand what true prosperity is all about and they want understanding on how not to be led in a direction he/she is not exactly seeking:

I think the prosperity gospel is no gospel at all because it waters down the True Gospel and gives people false hope. While I don't want to throw away the baby with the bath water, there is a place for a prosperous life with no diseases or hate, lots of wealth and health and perfect peace. We can have foretastes of all this now but we ultimately look to the 2nd coming of Christ Jesus where all will be perfected. A want for the new creation, new heaven in this world is over-realized eschatology and it is not biblical (cf. App. B. no. 60).

3.6.1 Findings related to Research Question One

Research Question One asks: What beliefs in the African worldview lend acceptance to the prosperity teachings?

When doing face-to-face interviews, whether in-depth interviews or focus group interviews, the researcher often asked a follow-up question which asked, “Why

are people attracted to your church or why are your friends attracted to the churches they attend?”

Many responses in the field interviews indicate that people like going to worship God and that people feel like they need that time in church to do just that. Not a single person interviewed had a negative view of the value of a church where one could worship God. It is a community event and one of spiritual significance. For the African, spirituality is demonstrated in community actions such as church going. One respondent expressed in an earnest way how much she needed that time to worship God and that the longer the time spent the better (cf. App. A. no. 12). Certain ideas came up over and over again in the field interviews both in the in-depth interviews and in the focus group interviews as to why people were attracted to prosperity gospel churches. Those postulations include ideas such as; people are seeking for miracles, healing and help with their problems, people are looking for social connection, people are looking for identification with obviously successful people, and people are seeking connection with someone who can get things to work in their behalf.

During a time of participant observation at a particular church, the researcher and field assistants noticed that money was given to reward congregation members who had attended a church function that went very late and yet these congregation members returned for worship service early the next morning. One field assistant remarked that giving money like that would certainly draw people to come to church because they have in mind that perhaps they will be the next one to get some money. In such a situation, it appears money is drawing the person.

But this same church had a very long time of praise and worship. The music was so loud it was impossible to converse with anyone sitting beside you. One could

actually feel the music vibrating through one's body. It became too much for one field assistant who walked out for a reprieve. Congregation members of this church knew full well what the praise and worship time is like, so this must be a draw to the church members. This was the only church the researcher and field assistants attended where money was given publicly to the members, however this was not the only church where music was so loud you could hardly think, much like the deafeningly loud music in some of the matatus around town. The field observations revealed that people became absorbed in the praise and worship. One would see people closing their eyes with different emotional expressions on their faces lifting their hands or waving their arms. People would also make other gestures as if they were punching or pushing down something that was causing negative emotions and they would even shout, "Satan, I rebuke you in Jesus' name."

During an interview with a prosperity preacher, Research Question One was posed to him by asking him why people come to his church and whether or not he thinks they hear the prosperity gospel there. He was very affirmative that the people do hear the prosperity gospel at his church. He said, "Everyone believes in God and that there is a spiritual world with good and bad...People looking for prosperity find their way to [name withheld]" (cf. App. A. no. 4). To him it was a logical outworking of trying to find a place that preached about how to live what he referred to as "Kingdom living" (cf. App. A. no. 4). This is important because in the African worldview is a strong belief in evil forces which do not come from God. These evil forces can cause death and destruction. God is not behind those forces. These forces are used to oppress by evil spirits and by human enemies. It fits very well with Africans that a place that offers help in gaining good and preventing the bad would attract them as this prosperity preacher says his church does.

A woman who attends a large church known for its inspirational prosperity teachings in Kenya said, “People go to [her church] for the Word of God rather than to be in a denomination. People will leave if they do not get what they expect from the church, e.g. healing, miracles, jobs” (cf. App. A. no.13). She went on to say that her bishop does not do miracles every week. There was a rare occasion when a church member was sick in the hospital, so the church elders took a handkerchief that the bishop had blessed to the sick person and that person was healed (cf. App. A. no. 13). For this respondent, church is about learning how to apply certain teachings from the Bible that enable one to be successful. She did not consider her church a prosperity gospel church, though according to her, discussion at times does deal with money (cf. App. A. no. 13).

Another pastor interviewed, who himself, refuses to preach the prosperity gospel, sees how tempting it is to tell people what they want to hear to draw the crowds. He said, “Many poor people think something must be in place to keep them there in poverty. Most lack an education. They are drawn to the miracles and to prophecies” (cf. App. A. no. 14). An evangelist, who was interviewed and who had a background in the Lutheran church, explained how the Pentecostal church brought in the prosperity gospel. He remarked that the Pentecostal churches began to deal with issues, like witchcraft, that the traditional churches had ignored. He said, “The denial did not take away the reality for the African...and they were still exercising behind the scenes...But when the Pentecostal church began talking about it people began experiencing solutions through Jesus Christ...(that) showed the power of Christ and not the witch” (cf. App. A. no. 34). In the African worldview there has always been a place for the mediator who comes to the defense of the community. This respondent is saying that the church ignored that reality until the Pentecostals began preaching

that Jesus could be the mediator they needed to defend the community from witchcraft.

Over and over again respondents said the major reason people go to a church with miracles and healing is the expectation that they will be next to receive their miracle. As one non-prosperity preacher said, “When the poor hear it, they feel hope. But they lack education to understand what is behind the prosperity gospel and are let down” (cf. App. A. no. 14). Another respondent remarked, “People are looking for miracles. They don’t have training in the Bible to know what is happening” (cf. App. A, no. 16). To add to that in an earlier interview a respondent said, “People want quick prosperity so you go to a prosperity church where you can get help quickly...People are getting frustrated and are losing trust in church because of the prosperity gospel” (cf. App. A. no. 9). One respondent has a friend, who quit going to church after the KTN exposé because he now thinks that all ministers are liars (cf. App. A. no. 10). Clearly people have a deep trust of the Church and believe that they will find God there to assist them with life’s problems. When they do not find what they need in the Church typically they will look at another Church. But from what people were saying in the field, more and more are getting disillusioned because of trying these prosperity churches and failing to get the goods (cf. App. A. no. 1, 5, 8, 10, 14, 16, 28, 33).

To begin eliciting information from the respondents on the questionnaire in regard to Research Question One, the respondents were given a list of beliefs and asked to select any statements they believe. The list looked like this:

- God is good and always does good for His people.
- Everyone who has faith in God can be wealthy and healthy sometimes.
- Everyone who has faith in God should be wealthy and healthy always.

- Evil keeps a person from getting wealthy or being healthy.
- Faith in Jesus is necessary to get prosperity from God.
- People can get prosperity through evil methods that go against God.

The field data revealed the variables were not significant in the belief that God is good and always does good for His people. That was the one statement, which almost everyone checked. Out of 113 (N=113) questionnaires only 9 respondents neglected to indicate agreement in the statement, “God is good and always does good for His people.” Thus the 104 out of 104 all agreed with the statement.

Again, an overwhelming majority of the African respondents believe that God is good and always does good. This field data showing 100% of the respondents who answered the question assent to the belief confirms that Africans hold very closely to an understanding of God as good. Thus the variables of age, gender, marital status, education level and employment status has no bearing on the acceptance of this particular belief.

Moreover, some respondents wrote comments in regard to Research Question One. For example, one respondent wrote, “I believe faith always works, all I can say is that God takes his time to act. He can act instantly or later or never but that doesn’t mean that faith doesn’t work” (cf. App. B. no. 37). Another one wrote, “Faith helps me as an individual to appreciate the existence of a supernatural supreme being (God) who works in his order” (cf. App. B. no. 99). These respondents are giving voice then to their understanding of God as the Supreme Being who does work in the lives of His people despite their not selecting the statement, “God is good and always does good for His people.” This data show a positive correlation to people being attracted to the prosperity gospel in which the focus is on God giving prosperity and health at all times. In the African worldview evil looms large as it seems to operate unhinged, but

because God is good, he is never the one that is suspected as doing harm to someone. The harm comes from jealous community members or from immorality as defined by the community.

People believe God wants them to prosper and to be healthy and they especially like to attend churches that encourage that idea. Several respondents voiced that idea. “They like to hear from the pastor that God doesn’t want them to suffer. People hear that they can get help from a certain church, so they go there. They want hope for their situations so they listen to the prosperity gospel” (cf. App. A. no. 1). “The problems people have drive them, so when they hear about miracles or healing they go to that church” (cf. App. A. no. 6).

One respondent had this to say about what people believe that attracts them to the prosperity gospel, “People believe they are basically good. They believe sickness belongs to the devil. They believe that you are haunted by your ancestors, but with God on your side you won’t be haunted. If I have a cold my friend will say to me, ‘Tukeme pepo’ because I am not supposed to be sick because I am a child of God” (cf. App. A. no. 5).

Here is what a different respondent had to say: “In Christ we break curses. The blood of Christ is what draws people to Christianity. People are used to making a sacrifice in their traditions, so they want a quick way to God. That’s why they like the prosperity gospel. Just give and you get” (cf. App. A. no. 7). One preacher said in an interview, “People know what is found in Christianity but they do not know where to find it. They want to learn the ways from God to live in a good way to experience healthy homes and good living” (cf. App. A. no. 4).

In exploring further into the belief concerning God's will to give good things, another question was asked: Select any of the following you believe might keep you from getting healed or from getting whatever you ask God for:

- Someone has cursed you.
- Satan is blocking it.
- Sometimes it is God's plan to withhold the healing or prosperity.
- You have not done the right steps to get healed or to get success.
- Your faith is too weak.

Another large number of the respondents selected one item in particular. Data show 80 (71%) respondents out of 113 affirmed that, "Sometimes it is God's will to withhold healing or prosperity." Thus 71% of the respondents believe that if good doesn't happen in some form then it was part of the will of God. This is a high percentage affirming belief in a God who is in control overall. One respondent gave this reason to "Sometimes it is God's will": "I understand that God has three answers, 'Yes, no, and wait.' Whatever the answer it is to His glory" (cf. App. B. no. 96). The remaining 31 (27%) respondents gave other reasons for prosperity not happening. That data is discussed under 3.7.1 Findings related to Assumption One.

In examining the data regarding the variables in the population Table 3.1 shows God's will to withhold prosperity or healing by Gender. Of those 113 respondents (N=113), a total of 80 respondents believe that sometimes it is God's will to withhold prosperity or healing. Of those 80 respondents, 35 (62.5%) were female and 41 (82%) were male and 4 (57%) did not specify gender. Those answers other than, "Sometimes it is God's will" were 19 female (34%) and 9 male (18%) and 3 (43%) did not specify gender. A total of 2 (3.5%) female respondents refrained from answering the question.

Table 3.1. God's will to sometimes withhold prosperity or healing by Gender

(N=113)

Gender	Agree	Disagree	Refrain	Total
Female	35 (62.5%)	19 (34%)	2 (3.5%)	56
Male	41 (82%)	9 (18%)	0	50
No gender	4 (57%)	3 (43%)	0	7
Total	80	31	2	113

Thus of 56 (62.5%) female respondents 35 answered, "Sometimes it is God's will," whereas out of 50 (82%) male respondents 41 answered, "Sometimes it is God's will." There is a 19.5% difference between the gender responses. A higher percentage of male respondents indicate that they believe that when difficult circumstances come of which they cannot get a solution that brings health or prosperity, it is God's plan for some reason. Hence, a man would be quicker than a woman, according to this data, to accept a difficult situation as from God. The reason is that men feel the pressure to provide for the family and are task-oriented, whereas women are relationship oriented and are expected to be the sustainer of the family and community in terms of how the family is getting on physically, emotionally, and psychologically, thus they will not stop until they can accomplish that for the family.

This demonstrates a positive correlation between the prosperity gospel and the female gender, who see the teachings in the prosperity gospel as an encouragement to do certain practices than seemingly ensure the well-being of the family or bring about health and prosperity for the family.

The following story from a respondent verifies that men are quicker to believe, "Sometimes it is God's will" (cf. App. A. no. 32) and that women continue to

persevere in finding a blessing from God. The respondent told of her good friend whose son is age-mate with her son. Both sons were in Thika Boys School and were encountering many problems there. So each family made the decision to move their sons to different schools. Her friend decided to move her son to a boarding school in Western Kenya.

Within a week after being there, her friend's son became very ill and was taken to the hospital. The doctors could not seem to help him so they sent him from Mbale to Kenyatta Hospital. The boy continued getting sicker. After two weeks, the doctors said they couldn't do anything for him. The parents decided to take him to an herbalist who was recommended and known for helping people. Even that medicine did not work. The respondent said that when she saw her friend's son, she thought he would surely die.

The mother gave up on the doctors and the herbalist. The father said, "God, go ahead and take him; it's your will". The mother, however, started going to different pastors asking for prayer and she also began going to keshas, (all night prayer meetings). (Kesha is Kiswahili for stay awake or to be watchful.)

The father did not do those things with her. That did not stop her friend who continued to pray and ask pastors to pray and other people to pray. It took a few months but finally the boy returned to full health. His mother had continued in her pleading with God until she got the blessing she wanted—her son's health to return. A very telling comment came from the respondent at the end of the story, "Men lose hope very quickly. Women continue until they get help from God" (cf. App. A. no. 32). This gives female gender a positive correlation to the prosperity gospel. The data show that gender has an influence on this belief.

Data for variable of age show Age Group 1 (ages 18-35 years) at 71% (41 out of 58) believe that God sometimes withholds health or prosperity. For Age Group 2 (ages 36-49 years) 78% (28 out of 36) of those answering the questionnaire believe that God sometimes withholds health or prosperity. Between Age group 1 and Age Group 2 is a 7% difference, which is not significant. For Age Group 3 (ages 50-up) the percentage drops to 60% (9 out of 15). However, the number of respondents for Age Group 3 is not sufficient for comparison and no respondent indicated that age had any bearing on this belief. There is a no-variable data of 4 out of 4. Thus Age Group data is not significant and did not influence the response.

The variable marital status shows 68% singles (41 out of 60) and 77% married (37 out of 48), thus status data is not significant.

Data for the variable of education show Education Level 1 (non-formal) at 0, Education Level 2 (Primary) at 50% (6 out of 12), Education Level 3 (O-levels) at 70% (16 out of 23) and Education Level 4 (University) at 77% (57 out of 74) and No-variable of 1 out of 1. Thus a difference between Education Level 2 (Primary) and Education Level 4 (University) stands at 24%, which is significant. Comments from field interviews to follow Table 3.2.

Table 3.2. God's will to sometimes withhold prosperity or healing by Education (N=113)

	Agree	Disagree	Refrain	Total
Non-formal	0	1 (100%)	0	1
Primary	6 (50%)	5 (42%)	1 (8%)	12
O-levels	16 (70%)	7 (30%)	0	23
University	57 (77%)	16 (22%)	1 (1%)	74
N/A	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	0	3
Total	80	31	2	113

Field interviews confirmed this data. Though it may be true that not everyone with a university education comes from a middle class background or is rich, it is assumed that with greater education comes the possibility of better jobs. One respondent had this to say about who is found in the prosperity gospel churches, “The congregation is full of poor people. The prosperity gospel doesn’t work so well with the rich. Yes, they [the rich] have to be in the churches to entice the poor who are told to give Ksh 300 and that may be all they have” (cf. App. A. no 8). The data show that the more education, the less attracted people are to the prosperity gospel and the more they think hard work is what is important (cf. App. A. no. 1, 2, 5, 12, 13, 14, 16, 33, 35, 37). Education level has an affect on acceptance of the prosperity gospel. One component of the prosperity gospel is the teaching that if you do certain things then you will get prosperity and healing. The rituals are discussed further under 3.6.4 Findings related to Research Question Four.

In Table 3.3, the variable data (N=113) for employment status show Employment status 1 (not employed) 57% (34 out of 59) and Employment status 2 (employed) 84% (42 out of 50) believe that God sometimes withholds health or prosperity. According to this data, Employment status is a significant variable with a 27% difference in the belief that God sometimes withholds health or prosperity with those employed more likely to accept whatever happens as coming from God and those not employed would be more likely to keep pushing for something to happen or grab onto hope supposedly offered in something like the prosperity gospel.

Table 3.3. God’s will to sometimes withhold prosperity or healing by Employment (N=113)

Column1	Agree	Disagree	Refrain	Total
Not employed	34 (57%)	24 (41%)	1 (2%)	59
Employed	42 (84%)	7 (14%)	1 (2%)	50
No variable	4 (100%)	0	0	4
Total	80	31	2	113

According to a respondent who lives in one of the informal settlements, “People have to find a way to eat. There are so many churches in the slums where people go to give their little money to have the pastor pray for a job. That day they may get kibarua (a day’s work) and the next day return to give the pastor money to keep praying for a job for them” (cf. App. A. no. 11). The reason those without employment are less likely to believe that it is sometimes God’s will to withhold health and prosperity is that those very things signify God’s presence in a person’s life, so the unemployed will pursue the blessing of work until they finally obtain it.

More data confirms this. One respondent commented, “It is easier to believe in prosperity gospel when you don’t have a job because of the needs you have” (cf. App. B. no. 100). Another respondent who had himself at one time believed the prosperity gospel said, “Some people don’t want to work but want easy money. You go around saying, ‘I proclaim this is mine in Jesus’ name’ and you are not taught to work but to get what you don’t work for” (cf. App. A. no. 14). Additionally, a respondent wrote, “The unemployed believes more and the employed thanks God more” (cf. App. B. no. 23). Thus employment status variable show a correlation with attraction to the prosperity gospel for those who are without work or are poor. The reason is that those who do not have employment find inspiration in the prosperity gospel that has them do particular things to secure employment. Those things include using oil or water and claiming a job in Jesus’ name. This gives them the sense that they are still acceptable to God despite not having a job. The desire to be seen as having God’s presence in one’s life, through the blessing of work, comes to the forefront when someone is unemployed. The one who is employed already feels that God is blessing him or her.

Besides the overwhelming belief that God is good and always does good for His people, there is also the strong belief that sometimes it is God's will to withhold healing and prosperity. Yet at the same time to temper the belief that sometimes God withholds prosperity is the belief that if people are not getting the good they think they should, then there is the acknowledgement of something blocking the flow and the need for help in getting the blockage removed. Respondents mentioned ancestral curses, satanic covenants, jealous people and other similar ways they can be blocked. Said one respondent, "This spirit world is controlled by the preacher. God has given the preacher all the power. In the old tradition people believed there was God and that he had given certain people power to do for him. They also believed there is a devil and that the witch can use that power" (cf. App. A. no. 23).

Respondents also mentioned the way in which that power for people getting blessings of prosperity and health comes, and that was mainly through the preacher. One respondent said. "It's an incentive to follow a church if the pastor looks prosperous" (cf. App. A. no.12). She referred to that action as "follow the grace." So "grace flows from God to the leader and if you submit to him then you will be blessed, too" (cf. App. A. no. 12). Another wrote, "The pastor will speak blessings to the person who then becomes successful" (cf. App. B. no. 20). Still another wrote, "They have success because they follow a powerful Man of God" (cf. App. B. no. 21). As one prosperity preacher said in the interview, "The spiritual life of pastors brings people forward...The flow is interrupted if the pastor is not right" (cf. App. A. no. 15). The flow of prosperity from God through the prosperity preacher can be blocked if the preacher is also not following God's principles.

Respondents also brought out about their belief that prosperity is something from God. One wrote, "Prosperity is part of the blessings bestowed upon us by God in

the New Testament (Eph. 1:3). It's more than just financial breakthrough or material possessions. It is the right of every child of God to be blessed and prosperous" (cf. App. B. no. 39). Additionally, "There is the belief that under the sun, prosperity is equal to being blessed by God. That is why many people put prosperity more than anything else" (cf. App. B. no. 52).

The field data in this section show that the variables of gender, education and employment status have an influence on the belief that "Sometimes God withholds prosperity and healing." Those that are more positively inclined to this belief are men, more educated, and those with jobs. The variable of Age Group and Marital Status did not have any significant influence. Respondents in the field commented that education level has an impact on what people believe with those with less education to be more negatively inclined to the belief that "Sometimes God withholds prosperity and healing." Data confirms women and those without employment show a positive correlation to teachings in the prosperity gospel of health and prosperity that give their followers rituals and practices to obtain their goals.

3.6.2 Findings related to Research Question Two

Research Question Two asks: What motivates prosperity gospel preachers to take up their role as leaders and what motivates people to follow them?

To start this discussion in the field the researcher would ask, "Do you know the story behind how the Bishop or Apostle came to be involved in his/her work?" If it happened to be a preacher granting the interview the question posed to him/her was, "What led you to become a pastor/evangelist?"

One respondent in the field who also happened to be a prosperity preacher told the story of how God had moved him to become a pastor and how it was made clear to the leadership of the church that he had received an anointing for the role (cf. App.

A. no. 4). Another pastor who did not consider himself necessarily a prosperity preacher commented, “Sometimes God gives them an anointing if it is necessary” (cf. App. A. no. 1). The idea of God anointing a preacher or evangelist cuts across a wide spectrum of people. Several people during interviews brought up Prophet Owuor from Western Kenya saying that he claims to have an anointing from God for repentance (cf. App. A. no. 1, 12, 33). This theme of anointing came up again and again but not just for the Man or Woman of God’s role or for the anointing solely upon them, but also concerning anointing of objects. More of that discussion will be presented in the section for Research Question Four: What do people believe about the rituals found in the practice of the prosperity gospel?

Another question posed during field interviews was if they thought prosperity preachers had a special anointing or gifting from God. Married and singles, men and women during face-to-face interviews said that prosperity preachers are motivated to go into the profession because they want money or fame. (cf. App. A. no. 1, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11). “It’s a world of competition,” says one respondent, who had been a member of a prosperity gospel church until his family was almost completely ruined financially and the Bishop had run off with the members’ money and cars (cf. App. A. no. 5). Clearly to some people, who experienced negative results from anointed preachers, anointing has come to mean that which enhances the business (cf. App. A. no. 5, 17, 18, 41, 42). Others believe there is an anointing though it may not always be present at every service (cf. App. A. no. 4, 12, 13, 15, 20, 21).

The same question was presented on the questionnaire as the following:

Do prosperity preachers have a special anointing from God?

- Yes.
- No.

- Sometimes.

Out of the 113 (N=113) only 10 (N=113-10) refrained from answering the question with two respondents not being clear on the question. Their responses were as follows: One of the 10 respondents wrote, “I don’t know” (cf. App. B, no. 102) and the other wrote, “Define prosperity preacher” (cf. App. B, no. 6). That left 8 questionnaires with no answer or commentary for that question.

Another question was asked during field interviews regarding the functions of prosperity preachers and on the questionnaire respondents were given a chance to select any of the following ideas about prosperity preachers:

- They are chosen by God.
- They have special power.
- They get extra blessings from God.
- Their names have power.
- God tells them what people in the congregation say about them.
- They can give their power to special objects such as oil, water, soil.
- They can perform miracles of any kind except raise the dead.
- They can also raise the dead.

There were 80 total respondents who answered out of 113 (N=113). Of the 80 respondents 43 respondents selected, “They can give their power to special objects such as oil, water, soil,” while the other 37 either refrained from answering or selected different answers but not in significant numbers. Field interviews attested to the prevalence of the belief in the power given to objects by a prosperity preacher (cf. App. A. no. 1, 2, 4, 5, 12, 13, 15, 20, 21, 23). One respondent said that while she doesn’t believe in anointing oil itself, having the anointing oil to use for prayer

enables them (the people in the congregation) to attract the presence of the Man of God and that helps them in praying better (cf. App. A. no. 20).

Out of those 43 (N=113) respondents who answered, “They can give power to special objects”, the variables that showed significance were the Education Level and Employment status. Gender, age group, and marital status are not significant.

In Table 3.4 the research data for the variable of education show Education Level 1 (non-formal) at 1 out of 1 (100%), Education Level 2 (Primary) at 9 out of 12 (75%), Education Level 3 (O-levels) at 10 out of 23 (43.4%) and Education Level 4 (University) at 20 out of 74 (27%). The first category of Education Level 1 cannot be accurately assessed because in the entire 113 respondents only 1 person fit in that category. Those with primary education are a very small representation and may not be enough for a definite answer on that level either. There is a 16.4% difference between Education Level 3 and 4. The data show a steady decline in the percentage of respondents who believe a prosperity preacher can give power to special objects as one goes higher in the levels of education. This gives the educational level a positive correlation to whether or not one accepts the prosperity gospel where objects are used to help the church-goer to obtain healing and prosperity.

Table 3.4. Prosperity preachers can give power to special objects by Education (N=113)

Column1	Agree	Disagree	Refrain	Total
Non-formal	1 (100%)	0	0	1
Primary	9 (75%)	0	3 (25%)	12
O-levels	10 (43.4%)	2 (8.8%)	11 (47.8%)	23
University	20 (27%)	15 (20.3%)	39 (52.7%)	74
No variable	3 (100%)	0	0	3
Total	43	17	53	113

One significant data shows that 52.7% of those with university education did not choose to answer the question regarding if they believed a prosperity preacher could give power to an object. Was this question a little too personal to those respondents and they did not want to share what they really believed about the ability of the prosperity preacher to empower objects? Were they concerned that they would look uneducated? After all they did select “university” as their education level. Nothing was said during the interviews to explain that percentage. Two of the prosperity preachers who were interviewed had college degrees in fields other than theology before they went on to become preachers. So is this a deep core belief? The data indicates that the variable of Education Level to the prosperity gospel is significant in that it reveals people of different educational levels have different ideas about a prosperity preacher being able to give power to special objects. Education level seems to have significance in the attraction to the prosperity gospel.

Many respondents mentioned as well that they think the prosperity gospel is more attractive to those without much education. A respondent had this to say about the prosperity gospel and who tends to believe it: “The more exposure a person has to education their worldview broadens and they are not as easy to manipulate. They can more readily analyze what is coming forth more critically. There is a correlation between the level of education and manipulation. Those with a low level education are very vulnerable” (cf. App. A. no. 35).

One respondent gave her experience of a church meeting she attended in one of the informal settlements to see what kind of prayers they do. At the close of the prayer service, which lasted about an hour, the pastor gave all those attending water that he had prayed over for them to take with them to assist in their prayers. She did

not take the water but saw other people in attendance eagerly taking it. She said that there were about 40 people (mixed gender) and that most of those there did not have much education and were basically day workers if they could get work (cf. App. A. no. 23). This shows both variables of education and employment status at play in the situation described by the respondent.

Those with less education would be more responsive to the familiar. In the African traditional culture it is not uncommon for objects to have power transferred to them by a specialist. They would not be as skeptical as someone who has studied for O-levels or University where education focuses upon developing objective analysis before making judgments according to respondents in the field.

Employment status data show 25 out of 59 (42.4%) not employed and 15 out of 50 (28%) employed, that's 14.4%. The data indicates that employment status has an effect on the belief in a prosperity gospel preacher being able to give power to objects. There is a no variable data of 2 out of 4 (50%) believe a prosperity preacher can give power to special objects. In the field interviews people mentioned how those without work are drawn to prosperity gospel churches. One respondent said, "A lot of people are desperate and can't find work so they go to a good church to help, one that is prosperity" (cf. App. A. no. 38). This is not specifically stating that they are going to such churches for anointed objects. However it does show that they are possibly drawn to the idea that there is power in that prosperity gospel church that could help them.

The other variables of gender, marital status, age group, and employment status gave insignificant influence. Thus out 21 of 56 (37.5%) female respondents believe a prosperity preacher can give power to special objects and 19 out of 50 (38%) male respondents with a no variable data of 2 out of 7 (28.5%) believe a

prosperity preacher can give power to special objects. Marital status data show 23 out of 62 (37%) single and 18 out of 48 (37.5%) married with a no variable data of 1 out of 3 (33%) believe a prosperity preacher can give power to special objects.

The data for the Age Group 1 (ages 18-35 years) show 18 out of 58 (31%) believe a prosperity preacher can give power to special objects. Age Group 2 (ages 36-49 years) 15 out of 36 (41.6%) believe that a prosperity preacher can give power to special objects. Age Group 3 (ages 50-up) 6 out of 15 (40%) believe a prosperity preacher can give power to special objects. However, the number of respondents for Age Group 3 is not sufficient for comparison and no respondent indicated that age had any bearing on this belief. There is 9.4% difference in Age Group 1 and Age Group 2 demonstrating a lack of significant in the Age variable. Thus the variables gender, marital status, and age group gave insignificant influence to the belief that a prosperity preacher is able to give power to objects.

Moreover, the data, as stated earlier, show about half of the respondents believe that prosperity preachers have an anointing from God. This would create a motivating factor for people to follow them and would be a motivating factor for prosperity preachers to take up such a role. This gives a positive indication, of the relationship of the motivation of the prosperity preacher or the congregant's belief in a prosperity preaching being anointed by God, to attraction to the prosperity gospel.

3.6.3 Findings related to Research Question Three

Research Question Three asks: What values do people hold that draw them to accepting prosperity gospel teachings? This question is trying to uncover that which is of deepest importance in the lives of people here in Nairobi. The question was often rephrased to ask simply what is important in the lives of people living in Nairobi.

Respondents talked about the importance of financial freedom and property (cf. App. A. no.16, 17, 35). One prosperity preacher said that people “value faith, health, and prosperity, and going deeper in the Word of God” (cf. App. A. no.4). Another non-prosperity preacher said that we live in a world of competition so people value whatever shows they have prosperity—cars, houses, good education for the children (cf. App. A. no. 5). The key he said is, “Identity... Preachers always say big things and people don’t like being small or being little. They like to hear the preacher say, ‘Your children will go to the best schools,’ ‘You’ll no longer be tails. You’ll be heads,’ ‘God is shifting you from Kibera to Runda where we know God has visited his people,’” (cf. App. A. no.5).

Other respondents in the field said that people valued having their needs met no matter how. One said, “Very few people care about the spiritual results later. They have pressing needs. If food is provided, it doesn’t matter how that food is provided as long as it comes” (cf. App. A. no. 35). Another respondent spoke about the value of security. Here is what she said:

Our knowledge is limited and we don’t know what we are going to encounter. They (prosperity preachers) will tell things that are happening in general and say it is from God...Now when a person goes to a preacher, they have the mindset of tradition and they go to someone who is supposed to direct them to Christ. However, these pastors give the old system of tradition. The way of how the wazee (ancestors) met the needs now has Christ becoming that way. Africans have lots of needs and they are immediate and need a solution now. So a solution is provided by the pastor and that traps you (cf. App. A. no. 2).

A respondent wrote this regarding what is important, “because life has become so hard that people toil a lot to meet their basic needs and when they hear about healing

or miracles or whatever, they are easily moved” (cf. App. B. no. 12). Respondents also revealed how they valued healing or prosperous ways in other comments like, “He prayed for my children to pass exams and they did” (cf. App. B. no. 21). “My child passed exams” (cf. App. B. no. 19). Several have experienced healing (cf. App. B. no. 16, 22, 28).

Here are some comments from others that have also experienced healing, “God heals, not the preacher. Yes, he prayed. I believed. Ulcers and diabetes died out completely” (cf. App. B. no. 92). “I was once a member of a prosperity gospel church. I received healing for back pains I had had for years and saw many other family members get healed” (cf. App. B. no. 36). But this respondent had a very different experience. He writes, “Tried to get help from prosperity gospel preachers but they say that I’ve no faith and that I don’t believe in the servant of God” (cf. App. B. no. 41).

As has already been mentioned, Africans go to church to get their problems solved whether by a miracle or by healing or by a prosperity breakthrough. But they also go for the social connection, for the social experience because they are not alone when they go to church. Here is what one respondent had to say: “Most people go to church for company. Many churches don’t care how the members act so they can hide themselves easily there. They can present themselves as good people and have that relationship with people there” (cf. App. A. no. 9).

The questionnaire gave people an opportunity to tell how often they went to church. They could select from these categories:

- Every week.
- More than once a week.
- Once a month.

- Twice a month.
- Just when I feel like it.

The data revealed that people in Nairobi value going to church very highly. Everyone interviewed was a churchgoer who attended at least one time a week. The data from the questionnaire showed that out of 113 (N=113) a total of 105 people either went to church weekly or more than once a week. Only 4 people went less than that and only 3 did not answer the question. That means 97% (110 out of 113) of the respondents are in church on any given Sunday and even other days of the week. This data indicates that a high percentage of people in Nairobi value going to church. This also creates more possibilities for people to encounter the prosperity gospel.

One of the respondents, who had been a member of a prosperity gospel church until he was almost financially ruined, later became a pastor in order to try to encourage people away from the prosperity gospel. He had this to say about church going, “People should stay at home rather than go to these (prosperity gospel) churches. I always advise people when they move somewhere that it is better to stay at home and have church at home than to get caught up in one of these churches” (cf. App. A. no. 5).

The data show there is no significance in variables regarding the value in being a part of church. There Africans experience healing and solutions to problems. This points to a very practical application of belief. African religious practice has always been practical. Looking for practical solutions can make the prosperity gospel seem attractive because it appears to offer quick and sure solutions.

In further analysis of the data examining who attends more than once a week, the data show that the variables of gender, age group, marital status, and employment status do not have any significance. Gender shows 19 out of 50 (38%) male and 16

out of 56 (29%) female attend church more than once a week. There is a no-variable data of 2 out of 7. Thus gender data is not significant. Marital status data show 23 out of 62 (37%) single and 12 out of 48 (25%) married attend church more than once a week. There is a no-variable data of 2 out of 7. The marital status data is not significant.

Employment status data show 22 out of 59 (37%) not employed and 13 out of 50 (26%) employed attend church more than once a week giving an 11% difference, which is almost significant. There is a no-variable data of 2 out of 7. Given that employment status has appeared as a significant factor in the discussion for research questions one and two, this may indicate it is still an important variable in embracing the values demonstrated in the prosperity gospel churches.

The data for the Age Group 1 (ages 18-35 years) show 16 out of 58 (28%). For Age Group 2 (ages 36-49 years) 17 out of 36 (30%) of those answering the questionnaire. For Age Group 3 (ages 50-up) show 2 out of 15 (13%). There is a no-variable data of 2 out of 7. However, the number of respondents for Age Group 3 may not be sufficient for comparison and no respondent indicated that age had any bearing on this belief. Thus, the Age Group data is not significant.

The data for the Education Levels (Table 3.5) show a significant drop in attending church more than once a week as the educational level rises. Education Level One (non-formal) was not represented. Education Level Two (Primary) shows 58% (7 out of 12) attend church more than once a week. Education Level 3 (O-levels) shows a drop to 30% (7 out of 23) and Education Level 4 (University) shows 28% (21 out of 74) with a no variable of 3 (N=113). The first category of Education Level 1 cannot be accurately assessed because in the entire 113 respondents only 1 person fit in that category. Thus it is not enough of a representation of those with non-formal

education. Those with primary education are a very small representation and may not be enough for a definite answer on that level either. Of course, for weekly church attendance the percentages are still high. What is to note is how much more frequently people attend church who have just a primary education. The reason is that the less educated are more involved in the daily prayer and praise meetings at these prosperity gospel churches. As is noted further in the discussion, according to the prosperity gospel and the field data, the more one attends church the more likely one is to get the breakthrough or miracle. Of course, one is not supposed to come empty-handed to church if you want a miracle.

Table 3.5. Attends Church More than 1x Week by Education

Column1	More than weekly	Weekly	Less than weekly	Refrain	Total
Non-formal	0	1 (100%)	0	0	1
Primary	7 (58%)	4 (33.3%)	0	1 (8.3%)	12
O-levels	7 (30%)	14 (60.8%)	2 (8.6%)	0	23
University	21(28%)	49 (66.2%)	2 (2.7%)	2 (2.7%)	74
N/A	2	1	0	0	3
Total	37	69	4	3	113

The field interviews demonstrate this. One respondent said that the poor and undereducated people in the slums go from church to church and from NGO project to NGO project. She told this story:

There was a prosperity gospel church in Kibera that was praying for people with HIV to come and get healed. These preachers had rented a big hall. From 1-2 pm every day there would be praise and prayers. At first when people came, they got a packet of milk and a loaf of bread. But that stopped after a

few days. This praise and prayer went on daily for weeks. Every week the HIV+ people were sent to get tested, but not a one was healed. There were some 500 people who were going at first. Finally, after about three months, people stopped going and the place closed. People may not be educated but they know how to network. People with HIV have a strong network and let each other know about special events (cf. App. A. no. 30).

This same respondent said that the preachers “capture” their members by telling them that they have to come to church every day for prayers and not to come empty handed but to bring something if they really want God to work in their lives (cf. App. A. no. 30).

Another respondent was asked about those who frequent the prosperity gospel churches. He said: “It’s the uneducated. Bible knowledge is especially important here. They shall ‘know the truth and the truth shall set them free’ (Jn 8:32)” (cf. App. A. no. 35). Another respondent who attends a prosperity gospel church and works full-time said that she has tried to hire some people in the church to give them a job for a day and that these people refuse because they just want to keep praying for a real job (cf. App. A. no. 13).

Thus according to the data the education level has some correlation with how much a person will seek help from the church. They will go from church to church looking for help with HIV, with jobs, with healing, with deliverance and other blockages that keep them from prosperity. The reason they are in church so frequently is that they are seeking solutions with a specialist, also called a Man or Woman of God. The data show that ones with a lower education level have a greater attraction to the prosperity gospel with its promises for miracles and breakthroughs.

3.6.4 Findings related to Research Question Four

What do people believe about the rituals found in the practice of the prosperity gospel? This question was often rephrased during interviews to, “Is there anything special you or some of your friends do to gain prosperity or healing from God and why do you do that particular thing?”

On the questionnaire respondents were given the chance to tell whether or not they believed certain actions necessary to help the prosperity to come? Out of 113, there were 90 respondents (N=113). The count broke down as follows:

<u>48</u>	Yes, certain actions help bring prosperity.
<u>27</u>	Sometimes, certain actions help bring prosperity.
<u>15</u>	No, certain actions do not help bring prosperity.

Actions given by respondents to “Yes” or “Sometimes” included: “having faith in God and working hard at the same time; positive thinking plus hard work; simply hard work; buying special items; faithful in church attendance; obedience; simply having faith; obeying the prophet or the preacher; praying, believing in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior; working hard, never losing hope, having faith with action and praying always; continually believing in God; faith in God’s Word; drama and gymnastics of jumping, raising hands, thatching, drawing hands and shouting; giving or sacrificing; using certain items as symbols to represent contact points for God’s power to flow through; buying the mediums from the prosperity preacher; faith in God not pastor; first give what you have to be prayed for; and by believing and practicing biblical principles” (cf. App. B. no. 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 19, 21, 22, 23, 34, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 51, 57, 54, 59, 61, 76, 90, 98). Out of the 90 respondents, 75 (83%) believe that at least something must be done to help facilitate prosperity. The answers ranged from working hard and investing to buying particular items that a prosperity preacher

has anointed for use. This fits very well with the African worldview where the healing mediator provides something to use to either protect from evil or to cancel the evil. Oil can be smeared on the skin such as on a baby or soil can be sprinkled around a house to keep evil away or salts can be used in the bath. Whatever the object it has first been infused with power by the mediator. The prosperity preacher uses this belief to his/her advantage and can sell whatever he/she has decided to empower.

To dig deeper into the understanding of how to get prosperity another question was asked: Respondents were asked to select any of the following that work to get the prosperity. The answers that would be selected were Oil; Certain Words; Water; Soil; Shouting. For this question only 47 respondents gave answers. They could select more than one answer for the question so there was some overlapping.

This verifies what was observed in the field. One prosperity preacher interviewed actually had a bottle of olive oil on his desk. When he was asked about it, he said,

Members are taught how to use it, not just the pastors. People bring their bottles of oil, which they can get anywhere and the (head) pastor prays for it. But people learn how to use it. Such as, you put a drop on your head and pray for your headache to go away instead of taking panadol. Oil, mantle and water are for protection, favor, and healing, but mainly people use oil the most. They carry small bottles (cf. App. A. no. 4).

Another respondent who attends a large prosperity church said, "Pastor prays for oil and then assistants anoint everyone" (cf. App. A. no. 12).

The question was asked, "Do these things work?" The respondent answered, "It is not the object, it is faith. Faith comes alive. The thing does not have power. It only activates your understanding of what God can do. So for some it does not work

because they do not have faith. It is the same faith that works for prosperity, health, and favor” (cf. App. A. no. 4) When one respondent who does deliverance was asked what would happen if she didn’t anoint the person with oil after driving out demons, she did not know what to say. Finally she said, “It’s a comfort to the people to get anointed with oil” (cf. App. A. no. 35). When asked why it was a comfort, she didn’t know.

Another respondent, an evangelist had this to say about the use of water, “It just assists them to sustain their faith. For example, when you pray for someone at a distance they don’t feel prayed for unless you touch them. So I tell them to take a bottle of water. In Africa we have rituals, the prosperity gospel preachers have adopted the methods” (cf. App. A. no. 36). A respondent commenting on the question wrote this, “A friend of mine was from Israel last year. On the way back on the plane, water started dripping from the racks. When the cabin crew came to check, some people had carried water from the river Jordan with the aim of coming to dilute it so it would be enough to be in business (cf. App. B. no. 7).

Another respondent told us that you can often hear a testimony on the radio where the person will say, “I visited such and such church and was given this oil.” The person giving the testimony will tell how they got a job or got healed or something. Then she gave this story:

I have a relative who purchased oil because of hearing a testimony. She did not know Christ. The oil was to be used on everything and everyone in the home. Well, instead of bringing prosperity it brought more problems like witchcraft. It took a long time but she finally got out of that. She went to church and got saved. She has been delivered from the power of the oil and is recovering. Most people think the oil has powers. It is not from God. They are

other powers. It does work for some people. The higher the purchase price, the higher the anointing. This is an oil that the preachers package and they have their photo put on the bottle. There are declarations on the bottle that you are to pray every morning. If someone believes strongly in those things it is very difficult for you to change them. The spirit of false prophets gets into that person and they won't believe you and they need deliverance (cf. App. A. no. 8).

Another respondent had this to say, "Oil, water are anointed so they have extraordinary power. Some come from Israel. It's contagion magic from a place called the Holy Land (cf. App. A. no. 38).

Respondents in the field also talked about panda mbegu (Kiswahili for "plant a seed"). This featured frequently in conversations. Panda mbegu. Upate mavuno. (Kiswahili for "Plant a seed. Reap a harvest.") One respondent who does not attend a prosperity church said that a visiting preacher came with the prosperity gospel to their rural church. Here is the story he gave:

When this visiting pastor came to preach he scolded the people, "Is this really a Church? Why are there so many bicycles here?" There were no cars. Our church is very far out in rural and it's very hot and dry. The preacher went on, "It is shameful as a Christian to ride a bicycle! Plant a seed, panda mbegu (with him) and I guarantee that in one year you will have a car." The visiting pastor took the basket right after it had passed and put it in his car and left with it. The next Sunday at church there were very few bicycles (and of course no cars). Then when you would see a church member in town who was usually on a bicycle, they would be walking. You'd ask, "Where is your

bicycle?” I could tell that the person was now too ashamed to be seen on a bicycle (cf. App. A. no. 33).

When a respondent was asked if her pastor asked people in her church to sow a seed, she replied, “Seed is used but it’s not compulsive. I wait for the Holy Spirit to move me. God honors covenant and covenant is sacrifice...If the prosperity gospel is used in the proper way it is a covenant with God” (cf. App. A. no. 12).

Other rituals used for gaining prosperity include fasting, getting prophecy, as well as doing what the Word says, according to one prosperity preacher. “Righteous living and righteous giving has a blessing...there is the giving of the first fruits, covenant of tithing, and giving a seed, which is when you attach a problem to what you are sowing and look for a blessing (cf. App. A. no. 15). There is also the giving of what is considered a prophecy, a word of knowledge for a person. “These prophets will seem to say and do something that points to my life. They will foretell my life. They give a word of knowledge for me” (cf. App. A. no. 38).

A very serious part of the rituals for some people is deliverance. Deliverance can remove the blockage to prosperity and the words shindwa (Kiswahili meaning defeated, the evil spirit is defeated) and nakemea shefani (Kiswahili used to rebuke satan) are often used. One respondent told us what he saw when he went to a deliverance meeting. He said that the “Bishop gives special prayer, lays hand on people and they all fall down. At that point healing is experienced and then oil is given out free” (cf. App. A. no. 24). At a church that does deliverance, the church member said this about their church:

As a way of dealing with evil spirits, the pastor does exorcism through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He is able to exorcise demons, evil spirits, and witchcraft. People do not come to pastor asking for deliverance. Pastor will go

privately to the individual and tell that person that he/she has evil spirits or demons or is possessed. Then that person will pray a prayer they are told to pray and as they are saying the prayer the demon is cast out in the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. App. A. no. 31).

These services can be full of drama with a lot of shouting. Certain words are used not just for deliverance but also for other needs. One respondent said this,

Churches stress so much with a lot of noise about witchcraft. So they are still dragging people to that and then they use the Bible...They will say 'Someone has caused this problem in your life and you must rebuke them in Jesus' name.' They will say, 'I send that curse back to the sender in Jesus' name.' It seems normal because back in tradition you went to the witchdoctor or diviner to find out why you were having problems and you'd be told it was because of someone or some ancestor and given something to do. To say, 'In Jesus' name' is the magic word. It is a spell (cf. App. A. no. 11).

Other words that are supposed to help release prosperity and healing are positive confessions, saying things like 'I decree' or 'I command' or 'Fire' or 'Power,' (cf. App. A. 2, 5, 6, 11, 14, 18, 21, 33, 36). Also respondents said that quoting scripture or Bible promises is important (cf. App. B. no. 82, 92, 98). "We have negative and positive words" (cf. App. B. no. 67) and "Words are powerful" (cf. App. B. no. 26).

In looking at the data concerning the belief that oil, soil, water or certain words are helpful for prosperity, healing, and protection, the respondents who answered totaled 47 out of 113. Three variables show significance: Education, Gender, and Marital Status.

Table 3.6 shows the data for the Education Levels concerning the belief that oil, water, soil or certain words are helpful for gaining prosperity. Education Level 1

100% (1 out of 1) cannot be accurately assessed because in the entire 113 questionnaire respondents only 1 person fit in that category. Thus it is not enough of a representation of those with non-formal education. Those with primary education are a very small representation and may not be enough for a definite answer on that level either. Education Level Two (Primary) shows 75% (9 out of 12) believe that oil is helpful for prosperity. Education Level 3 (O-levels) shows a drop to 30.4% (7 out of 23) and Education Level 4 (University) shows 40.5% (30 out of 74) believe that oil, water, soil is helpful for gaining prosperity. The big difference is between Primary and O-levels or Primary and University. The reason those with less education would believe in the use of oil, water, soil is that it is consistent with the understanding in the traditional worldview that certain objects can be used that contain power. The more education a person receives, the more a person will question his/her beliefs. Though the data does not indicate it, the field interviews show that the variable of education level shows a positive correlation to attraction to the prosperity gospel.

Table 3.6. Oil, Water, Soil Assists Prosperity by Education

Column1	Agree	Disagree	Total
Non-formal	1 (100%)	0	1
Primary	9 (75%)	3 (25%)	12
O-levels	7 (30.4%)	16 (69.6%)	23
University	30 (40.5%)	44 (59.5%)	74
No variable	0	3	3
Total	47	66	113

One respondent said this about those with little education and are struggling:

Because the TV has all this stuff on it about the prosperity gospel and they hear ‘Send mpesa here for God’s word for you’. So they send the money and then they get a message to the phone saying, ‘There is a problem coming this week, so send money for prayer.’ People will mpesa. They sell oil, soils to take to ancestral land, handkerchiefs and people buy. They believe everything must have a cause. They have brought the traditional understanding of witchcraft and sorcery to the church even though these pastors tell people not to go to sorcery (cf. App. A. no. 14).

Other respondents also mentioned how those who have less education don’t understand they are being led to believe things that may be false (cf. App. A. no. 1, 5, 14, 16).

Table 3.7 Marital status data show 53.3% (32 out of 60) single and 31.2% (15 out of 48) believe that oil is helpful for prosperity. There is a 21.9% difference with the singles showing a greater receptivity to the belief that oil, water, soil, certain words are helpful in gaining prosperity. The reason that singles are more inclined to believe in oils, etc. for gaining prosperity is that they receive a lot of encouragement or feel pressure from the community to try to get a spouse or a job in order to be successful and have a family (cf. App. A. no. 7, 9, 14, 22, 28, 29).

Table 3.7. Oil, Water, Soil Assists Prosperity by Marital Status

Column1	Oil, etc.	Refrain	Total
Single	32 (53.2%)	28 (46.2%)	60
Married	15 (31.2%)	33 (68.8%)	48
No variable	0	5	5
Total	47	66	113

Several single respondents said they are drawn to their churches, which preach the prosperity gospel because there is a focus at their churches on the single people (cf. App. A. no. 20, 22). One single respondent said that especially the youth who are not married are attracted to his church, a large prosperity gospel church, because they are called to be prayed over and anointed in order to get spouses, jobs, and be able to form families (cf. App. A. no. 28).

The data for Gender on Table 3.8 show 50% (28 out of 56) female and 38% (19 out of 50) male believe that oil, water, soil, and certain words will enable one to gain prosperity. There is a 12% difference showing that gender is possibly a factor. The reason females more than males would hold this belief is the pressure that is put on a woman especially to have a family or to get married. If the woman is married she also has to care for her community and that may lead her to try whatever is necessary to help.

Table 3.8 Oil, Water, Soil Assists Prosperity by Gender

Column1	Agree	Disagree	Total
Female	28 (50%)	28 (50%)	56
Male	19 (38%)	31 (62%)	50
No variable	0	7	7
Total	47	66	113

Respondents in the field, who acknowledged that they used these things tended to be women and when a story was told about someone buying oil or water, that someone was always a woman (cf. App. A. no. 11, 12, 20, 22, 32, 37, 41). In field observation it appeared that those prosperity preachers selling or anointing the oil, etc. tended to be men more than women.

Employment status data show 47.4% (28 out of 59) not employed and 38% (19 out of 50) believe that oil and other items such as water are helpful to gain prosperity. The difference of 9.4% is not significant. The data for the Age Group 1 (ages 18-35 years) show 46.5% (27 out of 58) believe that oil is helpful for prosperity. For Age Group 2 (ages 36-49 years) 33% (15 out of 36) believe that oil is helpful to gain prosperity. For Age Group 3 (ages 50-up) 40% (6 out of 15) believe that oil is helpful to gain prosperity. The Age Group data is not significant. Thus these variables of employment and age show no significance.

The data show that people believe rituals are important for changing circumstances and that there is power in special objects, such as oil or water thus they derive something from using them. The data also showed that, women, singles, and possibly those with less education as holding stronger to the belief that oil and other items such as water, soil, or handkerchiefs can help a person gain prosperity. This gives a positive correlation to prosperity gospel teachings for those variables.

3.6.5 Findings related to Research Question Five

Research Question Five asked: What values do the prosperity gospel preachers show to their followers?

This question was asked to draw information on what attracted people to particular prosperity preachers. Respondents were also asked what title they think is appropriate for a prosperity preacher. In participant observations and non-participant observations, it was observed that the prosperity preachers tried to display a certain amount of care and compassion. They came across as caring but in control of life. They were all smartly dressed and had winsome personalities. Some would even say that they loved the congregation members.

Titles or terms of address, which people use to refer to others, reveals how they regard that person and the amount of social distance that they feel is between them. This can also reveal something of what they believe are the values or should be of the one to whom they give the title. Titles are important in the African worldview and particular behavior is accorded to those with titles and particular behavior is expected by those with titles. Some of the titles prosperity gospel preachers use are titles that they have given themselves and subsequently require people to use. Respondents were asked to answer this question: What title(s) is/are appropriate for a man or woman prosperity preacher?

- Prophet
- Apostle
- Man or Woman of God
- Bishop
- Other (if so, what?) _____.

Of the 113 respondents 16 refrained from answering the question. A total of 47 answered either Prophet, Apostle, Man or Woman of God, or Bishop or all and some included “Other”. For the “Other” title answers they included Servant of God, the Most Right Reverend or Dad. A total of 50 gave other titles or wrote “None”. This total does not include anyone who selected Prophet, Apostle, Man or Woman of God, or Bishop. The total includes those who only selected “Other” and then gave an answer as to what other title is appropriate. Moreover the other titles given, other than “None” included Servant of God, Miracle Worker, Preacher, and Teacher, on the positive side of the other titles given. On the negative side the answers given to “Other” were false preacher, conman, thief, wolves in sheep’s clothing, hirelings,

money lovers, gold diggers, imposter, a spiritual witch/sorcerer, fraudster, and Servant of Lusupha, as one respondent suggested apparently meaning Lucifer.

Of the 47 who selected Apostle, Prophet, Man or Woman of God, or Bishop as appropriate titles for prosperity preachers, the variables that did not show any significance were Age Group and Employment status. The data for the Age Group 1 (ages 18-35 years) show 46.5% (27 out of 58) selected Apostle, Prophet, Man or Woman of God, or Bishop as appropriate titles for prosperity preachers. For Age Group 2 (ages 36-49 years) 36% (13 out of 36) selected Apostle, Prophet, Man or Woman of God, or Bishop as appropriate titles for prosperity preachers. For Age Group 3 (ages 50-up) 40% (6 out of 15) selected Apostle, Prophet, Man or Woman of God, or Bishop as appropriate titles for prosperity preachers. Thus these variables are not significant.

Table 3.9 Apostle, Prophet, Man/Woman of God, Bishop by Gender shows that 31 out of 56 (55%) female and 15 out of 50 (30%) male selected Apostle, Prophet, Man or Woman of God, or Bishop as appropriate titles for prosperity preachers with a no variable of 1 out of 7. The 25% difference in genders is significant.

Table 3.9. Titles of Prosperity Preacher: Apostle, Prophet, Man/Woman of God,

Bishop by Gender

Column1	Agree	Disagree	Refrain	Total
Female	31 (55.3%)	20 (35.7%)	5 (9%)	56
Male	15 (30%)	24 (48%)	11 (22%)	50
No variable	1	0	6	7
Total	47	44	22	113

The field data also indicates that women more than men ascribe a title to prosperity preachers to indicate that they are in a position of authority and are to be seen as an example of how to live the prosperity gospel life. The reason women more than men ascribe those titles to prosperity gospel preachers is that women by gender already have the expectation that someone in an authority position will be giving them direction and showing them what is important. Also respondents in the field said that they valued morality in a preacher and an ability to inspire using the Bible and this was a draw to the particular churches the respondents attend. One female respondent and her husband left a prosperity gospel for another prosperity gospel church, though they had been members of that church for a number of years. They left because the pastor and his wife were not on very good terms at the former church. The title was there but the morality was not. This respondent said it would, “influence husbands in the church to do the same” (cf. App. A. no. 12) which demonstrates that titles carry authority and church members value not only the authority that the title itself communicates, but also the moral authority which is to be demonstrated by the preacher, the title holder.

Table 3.10 Apostle, Prophet, Man/Woman of God, Bishop by Marital Status data show 53.3% (32 out of 60) single and 31.2% (15 out of 48) married selected Apostle, Prophet, Man or Woman of God, or Bishop as appropriate titles for prosperity preachers. There is a 21.9% difference with the singles showing a greater response to ascribing titles to prosperity preachers. The reason is that singles see themselves as those needing the direction of those in authority since they have not quite reached adulthood in the African sense. This gives the single status a positive correlation to the prosperity gospel with its emphasis on titles and power.

Table 3.10. Titles of Prosperity Preacher: Apostle, Prophet, Man/Woman of God, Bishop
by Marital Status

Column1	Agree	Disagree	Refrain	Total
Single	32 (53.3%)	20 (33.3%)	8 (13.4%)	60
Married	15 (31.2%)	25 (52.9%)	8 (16.7%)	48
No variable	0	0	5 (100%)	5
Total	47	45	21	113

Several of the single respondents mentioned that they valued the emphasis at their churches on getting prayed over and anointed to find a spouse or job (cf. App. A. no. 20, 22, 28). Having this anointed and titles preacher pray for them was important, thus they would attend church where a big titled pastor was there.

For Education Levels, the same sort of data pattern is seen as in previous research questions. Once again Education Level 3 and 4 are very close in percentage but Education Level 2 shows a big discrepancy from the other two levels. Education Level 1 cannot be accurately assessed because in the entire 113 questionnaire respondents only 1 person fit in that category. Thus it is not enough of a representation of those with non-formal education. Those with primary education are a very small representation and may not be enough for a definite answer on that level either. Education Level Two (Primary) shows 75% (9 out of 12) selected Apostle, Prophet, Man or Woman of God, or Bishop as appropriate titles for prosperity preachers. Education Level 3 (O-levels) shows 39% (9 out of 23) and Education Level 4 (University) shows 37% (28 out of 74).

The big difference is once again, between Primary and O-levels, or Primary and University. The reason those with less education would select Apostle, Prophet,

Man or Woman of God, or Bishop as appropriate titles for prosperity preachers is that they are familiar with being in positions where they are under someone's authority and are required to give proper respect to such a person. Thus, the variable of education level shows a possible correlation to attraction to the prosperity gospel.

Participant observation and interviews in the field also point out that the possible correlation. At one church, the preacher started the sermon time by speaking in tongues quite emotionally. Many in the congregation responded in kind. Some people began going down to the ground when the preacher started saying, "We sense the power of redemption in this place... The Bible says Jesus took on every spirit of poverty, every illness on the cross..." Congregants were saying, "Yes! Yes!" The preacher continued, "We say, let the poor say I am rich. Let the sick say I have health...We decree today...Tell you neighbor, 'You are rich.' In the name of Jesus. We release the mercies of prosperity in the mighty name of Jesus!" It was evident by the large crowd present that people valued hearing words that would change their thinking. They wanted to think of themselves as victorious. People seemed to be energized by seeing their preacher start off the sermon time speaking in tongues and lifting hands to heaven as if to receive power from God. If only one could have discovered the education level of those who fell to the ground. Men in business suits were not doing that. This could be mimicking traditional ceremonies where the aim is remove the witchcraft affecting a community. Dancing, shouting and loud noises are one of the ways to fight death, which has taken one community member and could possibly take others if it is not dealt with through particular rituals.

During interviews, respondents were asked about their own pastor or a particular prosperity preacher and what they thought these pastors valued. Someone said this about prosperity preachers: "They portray themselves with a loving, caring

face... so followers think they are well taken care of” (cf. App. A. no.38). Another respondent said, “Majority of these preachers have big names and big churches, so people want to associate with the big names...These preachers change from the true gospel to one where everything must look good...Gold is talked about in the church. Everything must look like gold...They value money not eternal life or how to live righteous” (cf. App. A. no. 5). “Prosperity is what they value. Prosperity preachers show that God created us to drive, have houses, health and never lack” (cf. App. A. no. 38).

“In most churches, these preachers don’t preach about God. They preach about miracles. They don’t preach about forgiveness but how to be rich in an earthly way” (cf. App. A. no. 8). This was verified by a prosperity preacher’s words, when explaining what he preached:

When poverty is involved it is not of God because Jesus died and took your poverty...To guarantee the flow of prosperity you must tithe and give sacrificially...children of God don’t operate by paycheck. God sees if he can trust us. Tithe opens financial heavens. You will find your income has miraculous additions...” (App. A. no. 15).

To ask the question concerning what a preacher values may have seemed a judgmental question to some of the respondents. But from those that did answer the summary of values shown by prosperity preachers, that is, what is important to these preachers can be listed as prosperity, giving a good impression of morality and Bible teaching, being well-known, and being known and respected by the congregants for being a caring pastor.

Several single women talked of how they valued the way the man or woman of God preached. These respondents saw this value because they had grown

spiritually from hearing the way their pastors interpreted the Bible, (App. A. no. 20, 22, 25). Still others valued the preachers' abilities to heal and do miracles, (App. A. 20, 25, 26). Miracle Worker was one of the titles a respondent wrote in for "Other". One single woman wrote, "The prosperity preachers guide folk towards learning financial growth, independence and reliability, divine intervention on spiritual realms to intercede against presumed dark forces working against the person" (cf. App. B. no. 1).

The data showed that those who are women and single and possibly those with lower education are more inclined to ascribe a particular authority status to the prosperity gospel preacher and call him/her whatever title he/she may so choose. In the African worldview, which is hierarchical, a chief leads his people and may do as he pleases. His followers, especially those lower in rank and status must do as he wishes.

3.6.6 Findings related to Research Question Six

Research Question Six asked: What motivates the spread of the prosperity gospel throughout Nairobi, Kenya? To get at this question, respondents were often asked, "What makes it possible for people to hear about the prosperity gospel?" Respondents seemed very free to answer this question and did not hold back. On the questionnaire the respondents were asked to select from a list of items for the question: How do people get to hear the prosperity gospel in Nairobi?

- Radio
- TV
- Internet programs like YouTube
- like (Facebook)
- Other

Out of 113 respondents 95 answered this question. Only 18 respondents did not answer the question. This was a high response on the questionnaire. It seemed that people thought that they could quickly and easily answer the question and they wanted to answer it. Many people selected some or all of the items listed above. People wrote what they considered other sources beside “Other.” Those “Other” items included the following: crusades, friends, open-air meetings, international TV, foreign visiting ministers, newspapers, magazines, churches, international and gutter press, posters, seminars, billboards, pamphlets, one-on-one discussions, and door-to-door campaigns.

Respondents had mixed ideas about whether or not the prosperity gospel would have spread so far without the help of the various forms of media. Most people thought that media had really contributed to its spread so that even now people in the rural areas will see a preacher on the TV and then will come to Nairobi just to follow him or her (cf. App. A. no. 38; App. B. no. 11). One respondent was very positive about it and wrote this: “It’s everywhere. Friends love it. People are attending churches because they can see testimonies and people getting healed. It makes me feel that one day God will come my way and prosper me” (cf. App. B. no. 17). “It is helping people to become rich and I am also looking forward” (cf. App. B. no. 19).

Variables had no bearing on who pointed out that long before the Internet and so much widespread TV and radio, crusades brought the prosperity gospel to the country decades ago but that the spread was not so fast as it is now (cf. App. B. no. 47). Someone else commented that, “Even people who are not of the faith flock to these places in the hopes that ‘God’ will come through for them” (cf. App. B. no. 51). Another respondent commented that regardless of the prosperity gospel spreading so much because of media, “people still have the urge and the desire to accumulate” (cf.

App. B. no. 60) and the media “is neutral,” (App. B. no. 97). Despite the saturation of the airwaves with prosperity gospel teachings, one respondent wrote, “Prosperity gospel is dying down now. Some friends are steeped in it and most of us have gone through stuff” (cf. App. B. no. 97).

The data show that while the media certainly facilitates the spread at a faster rate than would be possible otherwise; there are other factors that help it to spread. Some of those other factors were suggested by respondents were friends, door-to-door campaigns. This was also mentioned by one of the preachers interviewed who said, “(Church name not given) does not rely on the media to get the message out. Volunteers go out and talk with people and pass out fliers” (cf. App. A. no. 4).

It is all about business, many respondents said not justifying but simply pointing it out. A respondent had this to say,

PG preachers have money and can pay for airtime. They have ways to reach people, such as crusades and various ways. They know how to market themselves knowing personal communication and media ways. So media has promoted it. It is business. Media houses are not Christian so they do not care (cf. App. A. no. 38).

Another respondent had much the same to say but added music to the mix, “Media is after money so they air whatever programs they want. Many pastors of big churches buy media. The music now does not tap the things of God but entertains to draw people to the prosperity gospel” (cf. App. A. no. 14). Another respondent also brought up music and movies and said:

Movies from Nigeria have helped spread the prosperity gospel because they take the mind back to the traditions. Videos, medias, preachers, the gospel singers all promote that mind. Their songs prophesy to you in their songs.

Only 1 in 10 is total worship. E.g. Gloria is a top singer. Her songs are everywhere. Sasa nangoga matokea (Kiswahili for “Now, I am waiting for the outcome”). She says ‘God you have disciplined me. I have worked for you and now I want the results.’ She’s claiming a payback. Is that how we talk to God? In another song she says ‘When God blesses you up there, the enemy does not want to see you up there’. She sings according to the people’s needs. This is what people like to hear. Africans love singing, so it really works (cf. App. A. no. 32).

The media and music is not just business; media/communication tools have become spiritual tools. One respondent said this:

The famous pastors are into media so much. TV, the way he is preaching gives morale. Pastors will tell you even you are not in the church you can hold the TV for the miracle. When you attend the church, they will get your phone number and after they send a text to you, they will tell you to pass it on so the church can grow (cf. App. A. no. 7).

Media is also doing more than promoting the prosperity gospel according to this respondent, “Media is not balanced. Some will use someone supposedly healed to entice others. Media is in a business, so they expect the prosperity preachers to share the spoils. Media is pushing atheism now” (cf. App. A. no. 35).

3.7.1 Findings related to Assumption One

Assumption One states: Health and wealth are considered part of the normal experience of an African’s life and if people are not experiencing health and wealth, there is disharmony in their world.

This assumption has been verified by the field data. To get at this assumption several types of questions were asked to elicit information, but especially the question, “What may prevent prosperity or healing from coming to you?”

On the questionnaire in the first section dealing with Research Question 1, the respondents were asked to select from a list of items that they believe might keep them from getting healed or from getting whatever they asked God to give them. The data showed that people expect prosperity and healing from God and if it does not happen then there is the possibility something is blocking the channel (see discussion under Research Question One).

First and foremost people said that sometimes it was God’s plan to withhold prosperity and healing. However, there were a total of 76 (N=113) respondents who selected a combination of the remaining answers in addition to or besides, “Sometimes it is God’s plan to withhold the healing or prosperity”. From the 76 respondents, there were a total of 40 respondents who selected “Satan is blocking it.” That indicated the main reason people gave for blockages. The remaining 36 respondents selected a variety from the list except for “Satan is blocking it.”

- Someone has cursed you.
- Sometimes it is God’s plan to withhold the healing or prosperity.
- You have not done the right steps to get healed or to get success.
- Your faith is too weak.

The analysis combined all 76 answers because each answer pointed to some kind of reason for a blockage. The data for gender, with a no-variable of 3, reveal 68% female (38 out of 56) believe and 70% male (35 out of 50) believe that, besides it being God’s plan to withhold healing or prosperity, there are other factors that include: Satan blocking it, someone has cursed you, you have not done the right steps

or your faith is weak. So the 2% difference in the variable of gender for this belief is insignificant.

Data for the variable of education show the first category of Education Level 1 at 100% (1 out of 1) and thus, it cannot be accurately assessed because in the entire 113 respondents only 1 person fit in that category. Thus it is not enough of a representation of those with non-formal education. Education Level Two (Primary) is 58% (7 out of 12) believe that besides it being God's plan to withhold healing or prosperity, there are other factors that include: Satan blocking it, someone has cursed you, you have not done the right steps or your faith is weak. Education Level Three (O-Levels) is 56% and Education Level Four (University) is at 59%. Among the education levels there is little variation thus no significance. They all believe rather equally.

The data for employment status show 77% not employed (46 out of 59) and 56% employed (28 out of 50) believe that besides it being God's plan to withhold healing or prosperity, there are other factors that include: Satan blocking it, someone has cursed you, you have not done the right steps or your faith is weak. There is a 21% difference in the variable of employment status for this belief, thus it has some significance. People without employment believe that there has to be some reason they do not have a job and that reason is generally found in factors outside oneself because they do not wish to remain in a state, which is socially unacceptable and in a state that is viewed as one being cursed. According to field interviews, it is those without jobs who are earnest about doing something to remove the blockage (cf. App. A. no. 1, 2, 5, 10, 17, 18, 31, 33, 34). One respondent said that prayers are done to remove blockages and they are told prayers will "anga yako" (Kiswahili for "your

air”) or as the respondent explained the prayers will cause cooling in their atmosphere so that prosperity can come (cf. App. A. no. 30).

Data for the age groups show Age Group 1 (ages 18-35 years) 82% (48 out of 58) believe that besides it being God’s plan to withhold healing or prosperity, there are other factors that include: Satan blocking it, someone has cursed you, you have not done the right steps or your faith is weak. For Age Group 2 (ages 36-49 years) 50% (18 out of 36) believe that besides it being God’s plan to withhold healing or prosperity, there are other factors that include: Satan blocking it, someone has cursed you, you have not done the right steps or your faith is weak. The data for Age Group 3 (ages 50-up) is 60% (9 out of 15). The two groups Age Group 2 (50%) and Age Group 3 (60%) are very close to each other in percentage but are significantly different from Age Group 1 (82%). This shows Age Group 1 has a positive correlation to attraction to the prosperity gospel because of the emphasis on defeating and rebuking Satan and having the right faith. The reason Age Group 1 would be attracted to this belief is that it gives them a reason and a way to move forward in obtaining what they desire whether that is a job or something other than a job. In participant observation, the researcher and the field assistants noticed that a large percentage of the people attending the churches were in Age Group 1 and that also was verified during interviews.

The data for marital status show Single at 80% (50 out of 62) and Married at 52% (25 out of 48) believe that besides it being God’s plan to withhold healing or prosperity, there are other factors that include: Satan blocking it, someone has cursed you, you have not done the right steps or your faith is weak. This is a significant difference between Single and Married at 28% giving a positive correlation to the Single being attracted to the prosperity gospel with its emphasis on victory and

prosperity. The reason is that the prosperity gospel holds out promises for them to find spouses and jobs. One respondent had this to say when talking about the emphasis on prosperity and how to get it, “Living the Christian life is a good and helpful way to live. People tend to not waste money on women, drink, smoke and can budget and then save for a business. It may take time but a Christian sees their life gradually getting better because they are living wisely and in a good fashion.” (cf. App. A. no. 31).

Some of the respondents in the field credited being in their prosperity gospel churches as the reason they did not make a mistake on choosing a partner and that they are now in a good position to get one since they are now attending their particular church (cf. App. A. no. 20, 22, 29). One of those respondents had this to say, “This church is attracting youth, especially those that are not married and they are called to pray and be prayed over to enable them to get jobs, pass exams, pass interviews, get spouses, and be able to form families” (cf. App. A. no. 29). He went on to say that youth join these churches with the aim to fix their problems and find answers to their questions (cf. App. A. no. 29). This shows a positive correlation between single status and belief in the prosperity gospel, which encourages people to do particular things to get health and prosperity.

The data show that many believe that God is the one who is in control of prosperity. Several respondents in the interviews said prosperity comes from God and it is not a bad thing (cf. App. A. nos. 1, 2, 8, 33, 36, 42). But it also shows people pointing to other things that could possibly be in the way of getting prosperity or healing. Overall, the variables of Age, Marital Status and Employment show significance in the belief that if you cannot get prosperity or healing then Satan is

blocking it, someone has cursed you, you have not done the right steps, or your faith is weak.

3.7.2 Findings related to Assumption Two

Assumption Two states: Those who attend prosperity gospel churches will not speak negatively about their leaders.

This assumption was confirmed by the field data collected using questions based on some real and hypothetical situations of prosperity preachers who were caught deceiving people to respondents in the field. Also, scattered throughout self-guided questionnaire were similar questions, both real and hypothetical.

During interviews the favorite word by the respondents relating to this was “judge.” Often the respondent would say that they were not in a position to judge what the prosperity preacher had done or is doing (cf. App. A. no. 4, 12, 13, 15, 17, 20, 22, 23, 28, 38). One respondent in a focus group said this about Kanyari, “He said it was not his business to preach but to make money and that was what he was doing” (cf. App. A. no. 38). Another wrote, “I cannot judge” (cf. App. B. no. 4). Still another wrote that they would be cursed if a church member spoke negatively about their church (cf. App. B. no. 113).

Others interviewed said, “It is a sin to talk ill of the Man of God” (cf. App. A. no. 25) and one said that she has been “taught not to accuse the Man of God but rather to pray for him or her” (cf. App. A. no. 21).

On the questionnaire many people avoided those questions about real and hypothetical situations of prosperity preachers who were caught deceiving people. Thus there were few who did answer those questions which made it difficult to get know what the majority of the respondents doing the questionnaires thought about prosperity preachers caught in less than pastoral behavior. However, there were a few

comments certainly worth noting. One wrote this about Kanyari, “masses rally behind him and say others are doing their best to frustrate his ministry” (cf. App. B. no. 51). Another wrote about being tricked by prosperity preachers, “It was many years before I knew what I know today” (cf. App. B. no. 80).

In one field interview, the respondent told me that he has a friend in one of the big prosperity churches who has complained to him about how much the pastor is amassing calling it “fleecing the flock and manipulation”. (cf. App. A. no. 35). So his friend complained about her pastor to him but would never say anything to people in her church about the pastor. That would amount to a negative confession. Her remarks, “And we just keep on giving” (cf. App. A. no. 35). Another respondent in the field said this: “People view leaders as if they are from God and you must accept whatever they say or do without question. This is from culture,” (App. A. no. 19). Traditionally leadership was viewed as being given by God and those under the leaders were to obey regardless.

As writes a respondent, “Prosperity preachers tell followers they are cursed or God is annoyed with them because they have not obeyed the preacher and given money” (cf. App. B. no. 14). No one likes to hear that they are cursed or that God is annoyed with them. The data supports the assumption that many of those in prosperity gospel churches will not say anything negative about prosperity preachers. This is a positive correlation between an African’s understanding of authority and his/her attraction to the prosperity gospel, which emphasizes that one is not supposed to speak ill about the Man or Woman of God or God will deal harshly with the one who does.

3.7.3 Findings related to Assumption Three

Assumption Three states: More women than men embrace the prosperity gospel, but the leaders are primarily men.

This assumption was confirmed by the field data and in observations on the field. To get at the assumption, the researcher and field assistants noted the gender composition of the congregation, who was doing the music ministry in front, who gave testimonies and asked people during interviews who they thought were more ready to accept the prosperity gospel.

The data for whether more men than women are leaders in the prosperity gospel was gathered by participant observation and by looking up the names of prosperity gospel churches in Nairobi on the Internet and seeing the pastors listed there. It was interesting how many also have branches in other countries. However, it was not the goal of this research to get an exact count of the leaders and figure out which gender was most prominent. Certainly, there are a number of women leaders of this movement. Often husband and wife teams are featured on billboards around Nairobi. But overall, it appeared that more men than women are actually at the head of these prosperity gospel churches in Nairobi.

In dealing with the topic as to who is most attracted to the prosperity gospel often people did not want to come right out and say they thought women were more inclined to it. Instead, someone might tell a story about someone they knew. For example, one respondent told about a woman he knew whose husband was not saved. She was going to one of these prosperity churches hearing about the importance of giving. The woman convinced her husband to sell their plot, house, car, everything to give to the Bishop/Prophet and God would return the investment. The children ended up having to drop out of the good schools they were attending, the family had to

move to a very small rented place somewhere, and everything about their lives changed. The husband was not happy. He was ready to leave his wife. Eventually, family members and friends helped this woman as the respondent says, “come back to her senses and the family is now out of that church and is mending” (cf. App. A. no. 38).

The questionnaire asked respondents to select the description of the kind of people who stand up most frequently to give testimonies of success. There were a total of ten respondents that did not answer anything (N=113). The following shows what was selected:

- 7 Men.
- 74 Women.
- 3 Children.
- 9 People who already have some wealth and/or health.
- 31 People who struggle every day for work.
- 18 People who are closest to the preacher.

Out of the remaining respondents (N=113) 74 answered the question by saying that women were the ones who stood up every week to give testimonies. The next favored category was “Those who struggle every day for work” with 31 respondents selecting that answer as well as, the category of women. Eighteen (18) respondents answered that those closest to the preacher stood up every week to give testimonies. Some of the respondents chose more than one answer, so some overlap did occur in regards to the total. What is important to note it that 74 out of 103 (72%) respondents selected women as those who typically go forward each week to give testimonies. That was also the observation out in the field.

To narrow the focus a very direct question was put on the questionnaire, which read: “Do you think it is easier for men or women to believe prosperity teachings? Why?” A total of 42 respondents answered that women believe the prosperity gospel more readily. Here is what a male respondent wrote; “I think it is easier for women. It is my view that the prosperity gospel is emotionally conveyed and apart from the focus on money/business it tends (especially in Kenya) to focus on women and marriage. The promise of a spouse” (cf. App. B. no. 112)

The variable for education level data (N=113) for which gender finds it easier to believe prosperity teachings indicates that education has an effect on the perception of which gender finds it easier to believe. Data for the variable of education show the first category of Education Level 1 at 0% (0 out of 1) and thus, it cannot be accurately assessed. Education Level Two (Primary) is 16% (2 out of 12). Education Level Three (O-Levels) is 26% (6 out of 23) and Education Level Four (University) is at 43% (32 out of 74) with a no variable of -2 (2 out of 7) for all levels. Thus the data show an increased awareness among the education level in the belief that women, according to the data, are more easily involved in the prosperity gospel. The reason is that more education exposes a person to what is going on in other settings. Over and over in the field interviews, the more education one has, was referred to, as something that gives people a different perspective and a critical eye (cf. App. A. 1, 5, 14, 16, 31, 33, 34).

The variable for gender to answer the question regarding which gender finds it easier to believe prosperity teachings gave the data as female 28% (16 out of 56) and male 44% (22 out of 50) with a no variable of -4 (4 out of 7). So there is a 16% difference with the male gender believing more strongly than women more than men are more likely to embrace the prosperity gospel.

Table 3.11. Women likely to join by Gender

Column1	Agree	Disagree	Total
Female	16 (28%)	40 (72%)	56
Male	22 (44%)	29 (54%)	50
No variable	4 (57%)	3 (43%)	7
Total	37	76	113

It is hard to tell if that is gender bias although on the surface it appears to be. It is interesting that Table 3.11 reveals a large percentage of women (72%) refrained from answering the question concerning which gender finds it easier to believe prosperity teachings. Regardless, of their reasons for not answering the question, the data indicate that gender is a significant factor. The reason women would be more likely to accept the prosperity gospel is that it holds out solutions for helping the family (cf. App. B. no. 14, 19, 23, 44, 50, 79, 80, 112). This data show a positive correlation between the gender of female and the prosperity gospel.

Comments concerning whether women or men were more likely to be attracted to the prosperity gospel revealed that women feel the family needs more keenly, are typically financially dependent on their husbands, often don't get enough support, carry a lot of the family burdens, and they feel deeply the need to make sure that their family is doing well (cf. App. B. no. 14, 19, 23, 44, 50, 79, 80, 112).

Here are some of the comments from female respondents: "Most of these prosperity gospel churches are full of women. Most women are desperate and are looking for someone who can listen to them" (cf. App. B. no. 14). "For women it is easier to believe for they are easily manipulated" (cf. App. B. no. 39). "It is easier for women to believe because they are generally less educated" (cf. App. B. no. 35). "Women believe easier because they always want their families and people around

them to be comfortable” (cf. App. B. no. 50). Thus there is a positive correlation between the gender of female and the prosperity gospel.

Marital status shows Single at 39% (24 out of 62) and Married 31% (15 out of 48) with a no variable of -3 (3 out of 7). Age group data show: Age Group 1 (ages 18-35 years) at 34% (20 out of 58), Age Group 2 (ages 36-49 years) at 33% (12 out of 36) and Age Group 3 (ages 50-up) at 46% (7 out of 15) with a no variable of -3 (3 out of 7). These variables show no significance.

The data for employment status show Employment status 1-not employed at 44% (26 out of 59) and Employment status 2-employed at 26% (13 out of 50). The 18% difference is significant but no comments were made during interviews to indicate why employment status had any effect on the belief that women were more likely to be attracted to the prosperity gospel. Perhaps those that are not employed and are attending the prosperity gospel churches notice that it is mainly women who are asking prayer for jobs.

3.7.4 Findings related to Assumption Four

Assumption Four states: Special objects, such as water or oil, are believed to have power instilled in them from the prosperity preacher and are given to a congregation member to use for healing or success.

This assumption was confirmed by the field data and also by participant observation. Explanation for this assumption relies heavily on the data in the discussion of Research Question Four.

During one of the worship services at a particular prosperity gospel church, congregants were asked to bring forward their driving licenses if they were trusting God to give them a car. At a larger church, the congregants were told to hold up their certificates or CVs (which they would use to get a job), driver licenses, bottles of

water, oil, whatever they had brought for anointing to get what they needed from God. After that service, all the new members were anointed with oil. One respondent was told by her pastor to bring a sample of her craft to him so he could pray over it enabling her to sell her items well (cf. App. A. no. 11). At a different church for participant observation, yet again, congregants were told to bring their driving licenses forward for special prayer, if they were asking God for their own vehicle.

While in the office of a prosperity preacher interviewing him, the researcher noticed a bottle of olive oil on his desk and asked if it was something the church used. (This was also mentioned under 3.6.4 Findings related to Research Question Four.)

The respondent gave this answer,

(Name of church omitted) uses anointing oil...In the scriptures it says that the disciples went out and came back saying they had prayed for the sick and anointed them with oil. (Church name omitted) does not sell oil. Pastors that sell oil, I can't say that they have done wrong. But we don't sell it. We only teach people the benefit. We don't make money (cf. App. A. no. 4).

Having a person in authority pray for the object empowers the object with the force necessary to bring about the desired outcome of the user.

Under Research Question Four data show 73% (65 out of 90) of the respondents affirmed that something needed to be done to bring about prosperity or healing and 27% (25 out of 90) answered nothing needed to be done. Out of the total questionnaire respondents (N=113) only 90 gave an answer either positive or negative. That left 23 respondents that did not indicate either positively or negatively. Further research into a question asking whether oil, water, soil, words or other things were necessary, data showed that 47 out of 113 respondents hold the belief in the use of oil, soil, water, or other objects assist prosperity. There were 66 respondents who

refrained from answering that question. More detailed analysis of the data is given under the discussion for Research Question Four.

To summarize the data in discussion under Research Question Four, the data for Gender show 50% (28 out of 56) female and 38% (19 out of 50) male believe that oil, water, soil, and certain words will able one to gain prosperity with a 12% difference, which is somewhat significant. The reason females more than males would hold this belief is the pressure that is put on a woman especially to have a family or to get married. If the woman is married she also has to care for her community and that may lead her to try whatever is necessary to help. This was also a comment in the field.

Marital status data show 53.3% (32 out of 60) single and 31.2% (15 out of 48) believe that oil is helpful for prosperity with a 21.9% difference showing singles with a greater receptivity to the belief that oil, water, soil, certain words are helpful in gaining prosperity. The reason that singles are more inclined to believe in oils, water, soil, and even certain words are helpful in gaining prosperity is that they receive a lot of encouragement or feel pressure from the community to try to get a spouse or a job in order to be successful and have a family.

The data for the Education Levels show Education Level 1 100% (1 out of 1) is not enough of a representation of those with non-formal education. Those with primary education are a very small representation and may not be enough for a definite answer on that level either. Education Level Two (Primary) shows 75% (9 out of 12) believe that oil is helpful for prosperity. Education Level 3 (O-levels) shows a drop to 30.4% (7 out of 23) and Education Level 4 (University) shows 40.5% (30 out of 74) believe that oil, etc. is helpful for gaining prosperity. The big difference is between Primary and O-levels or Primary and University. The reason those with

less education would believe in the use of oil, water, soil, or certain words are helpful in gaining prosperity is that it is consistent with the understanding in the traditional worldview that certain objects can be used that contain power. The more education one receives the more one questions one's beliefs.

Employment status data show 47.4% (28 out of 59) not employed and 38% (19 out of 50) believe that oil, water, soil, or certain words are helpful in gaining prosperity is helpful to gain prosperity. The difference is not significant. The data for the Age Group 1 (ages 18-35 years) show 46.5% (27 out of 58) believe that oil is helpful for prosperity, Age Group 2 (ages 36-49 years) 33% (15 out of 36) and Age Group 3 (ages 50-up) 40% (6 out of 15). The Age Group data is not significant. Thus these variables show no significance.

The data show that people believe rituals are important for changing circumstances and there is power in special objects, such as oil and they derive something from using them. The data also showed that, women, singles, and possibly those with less education as holding stronger to the belief that oil, water, soil, or certain words can help a person gain prosperity. This gives a positive correlation to prosperity gospel teachings for those variables.

According to one respondent, a former prosperity preacher:

Cleansing and protection from the oil keeps evil away. They think the power comes from the man of God. You can be anointed to pray for oil by the pastor and then you can pray for oil. The old traditional way is to scare people... put oil on your body and you will feel anointed so that nothing can attack you. I'll even touch the corners of my house (cf. App. A. no. 32).

Another respondent had this to say about oil: “Anointing oil is used while praying, for it is believed to have special healing power that if it is poured or applied to an individual, they will receive healing” (cf. App. A. no. 25).

The rituals and artifacts used in the prosperity gospel are very much a draw for women, singles and possibly those with lower levels of education. Yes, the message of the prosperity gospel has part of the attraction but as one respondents said, “The symbolic way the prosperity gospel is preached by using handkerchiefs and oil makes it attractive” (cf. App. A. no. 38). Thus, this assumption has been verified by the field data and also shown in the field data.

3.7.5 Findings related to Assumption Five

Assumption Five states: These prosperity gospel preachers are believed to have been specially contacted by God and given the job of transmitting health and wealth to people.

This assumption was confirmed by the field data in interviews and the questionnaires. Even the prosperity preachers themselves claim to have special contact from God for the purpose of helping people get prosperity.

This was observed during participant and non-participant observation, especially when the preacher claims a special relationship with God. One respondent remarked, “As long as the man holds a Bible and declares and quotes from it they respect him and obey him. If someone says, ‘I am a servant of God! Anointed!’ then people believe. So if he says ‘Jump’, they jump. If he says ‘Fall down’, they fall down,” (App. A. no. 38). At a different church, the preacher was doing just that, telling everyone there to jump and to jump higher.

One respondent showed the researcher a magazine published for a particular (unnamed) prosperity gospel ministry featuring the story of how the Reverend

founder of the ministry had received her calling. Apparently an American Bible teacher had a vision about this Reverend receiving her calling. Here are a few excerpts from that magazine:

(The American Bible teacher) saw the Glory reflecting on her face...(he) saw children, frail and sickly in appearance...They were dirty and dressed in tattered rags...this glorious light (on the Reverend's face) fell on their faces...suddenly they were transformed. Their thin and frail faces full and clean, their rags replaced with beautiful traditional African dress in a multitude of colors...(He saw a multitude of people coming)...All these people... (he heard) the voice of God tell him are the ones the Lord himself will put a burden on their hearts to support her, both spiritually and financially (Cf. App. A. no. 11)

At one particular prosperity gospel church, the pastor told new members of the church that if they would anoint themselves with the oil he was giving them all their problems would be fixed. He also claimed to be full of power from God and guaranteed them that their lives would change in three months. They were told if in three months their lives had not changed they should leave the church. The emphasis was on the guarantee that the power, at work in their particular church through the pastor, would not fail. A different respondent said, "People will not question what the man of God says. They can be very educated and they will not use reasoning in the church when they hear those preachers" (cf. App. A. no. 33). Another respondent spoke favorably and said, "Pastors are special people appointed and anointed by God, hence members of the church are encouraged to listen to them and to follow what they teach us" (cf. App. A. no. 25).

On the questionnaire respondents were asked this question: Where do these objects such as oil, water, soil, or certain words get the power to bring prosperity?

- 17 Directly from the prosperity preacher
- 14 Directly from God
- 17 From God through the prosperity preacher
- 38 Another source.

Out of 113 questionnaires 73 respondents (65%) answered the question, taking into account 13 respondents indicated more than one answer, not including “Another source”. Those that answered, “Another source” generally answered the next question on the survey that asked: If the power for the objects comes through another source, what is it? Answers for other sources included: “Satan, witchcraft, demonic influence, witchdoctors, the devil, devil worship, the dark world of Satan, psychology of the preacher, psychological mind games, realm of darkness, majini (foreign spirits, generally said to come from those practicing Islam, bought in order to empower the purchaser), another spiritual world, divination, and occult, (App. B. no. 2, 3, 7, 10, 14, 17, 19, 20, 21, 24, 27, 32, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 46, 49, 50, 51, 57, 60, 61, 70, 75, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 87, 97, 100).

One respondent wrote, “They go to South African and Nigeria to buy majini of Islamic” (cf. App. B. no. 41), which are evil spirits according to that respondent. A different respondent wrote this: “I listened to a CD of a Sheikh who got converted to Christ and he said he used to deal in majini...He used to sell to a renown preacher in Nairobi City,” (App. B. no. 83). Still other respondents had different answers for where objects might get power: “Prayer, power in the faith of a person, prosperity comes from God, the Word of God and conviction, stage management, oil has no power but is a symbol of the power of God” (cf. App. B. no. 28, 47, 54, 73, 94). (The

respondent on the questionnaire did not define Stage management. Yet because it was included in the responses and was different from all the others, it is included here.)

Furthermore regarding the source of power in an object, “God gives us power to get wealth according to His word. There are two sources of miracles—God and Satan” (cf. App. B. no. 73). “God said to have faith in Him and He did not give out oil or water to be used for prospering” (cf. App. B. no. 28). “I believe God desires success and prosperity for everyone as we obey His Word and abide in Him more” (cf. App. B. no. 55).

In looking at the data for the combined answers of 17 for “Directly from the prosperity preacher,” 14 for “Directly from God,” and 17 for “From God through the prosperity preacher,” the total is 48; however 13 overlapped thus the total respondents were 35. Thus 30% (35 out of 113) believe the objects do get power conveyed into them. This belief gives a positive correlation to belief in the prosperity gospel because of the use of such objects for obtaining the goal of prosperity or healing.

The data (N=113) for Objects get Power from God &/or Prosperity Preacher show for the variable of education with first category of Education Level 1 at 100% (1 out of 1). That level cannot be accurately assessed because in the entire 113 respondents only 1 person fit in that category. Thus it is not enough of a representation of those with non-formal education. Education Level Two (Primary) is 83% (10 out of 12). Education Level Three (O-Levels) is 34% (8 out of 23) and Education Level Four (University) is at 23% (17 out of 74). But it looks like a steady decline in the belief as education level increases.

For all the variables N=113. Gender data was female 46% (26 out of 56) and male 18% (9 out of 50) with a difference of 28% believe that either God gives power to the objects directly or to the prosperity preacher who then transfers power to the

objects. The reason women are more likely to hold those beliefs is that often they are in positions where they have to obtain favor from someone in order to accomplish something.

One woman who is married and living in a very poor area of Nairobi told us that she knows several women in her area who hold onto words that pastors give them even to the point of losing money. One pastor, she said, sells oil for Ksh 5,000. She has a friend who has very little money to help her family and yet she will find the Ksh 5,000 to buy the oil. This friend tells other people to go to that pastor, too. According to her friend, “If you put oil on your face and go looking for work you will get a job. If you pour it on the ground, you can claim that land as your own” (cf. App. A. no. 41).

Data show the other variables as follows: Marital status with Single at 35% (21 out of 60) and Married 21% (10 out of 48) with no variable of 80% (4 out of 5). That gives a 14% difference. Many of the women who either talked about using oil or had friends who used oil were in the category of Married. However, nothing was said in interviews about whether singles or marrieds were more into using oil. Nevertheless, the assumption is that the source of power for the prosperity preachers is God. Seeming Singles are more aware of that link.

The data for employment status show Employment status 1-not employed at 42% (25 out of 59) and Employment status 2-employed at 28% (14 out of 50) showing a 14% difference. There is a no variable of 25% (1 out of 4). As has been mentioned most prosperity preachers claim a special relationship with God and hold themselves up as authorities and as a source for the flow of prosperity power. Those without employment are anxious to get jobs and are very likely to listen to such an authority. This is consistent with traditional beliefs where a person would listen to the

advice of the diviner or witchdoctor, who have been granted power and authority by God.

Age group data show: Age Group 1 (ages 18-35 years) at 31% (18 out of 58), Age Group 2 (ages 36-49 years) at 25% (9 out of 36) and Age Group 3 (ages 50-up) at 35% (5 out of 14) with a no variable of 75% (3 out of 4). There is a 6% difference in Age Group 1 and Age Group 2. With Age Group 3, there is once again the possibility that it is not sufficient number-wise for an accurate comparison to the other age groups. With that in mind, the Age Group variable is not significant.

According to the data, the variables of Gender, Marital Status and Employment status show a positive correlation with the prosperity gospel with its emphasis on the authority of a Man or Woman of God and the special power given to objects. Women, singles and those not employed are more likely than others to use oil or to follow the words of the prosperity preacher in order to gain something from God. Again, this is consistent with traditional beliefs were the person of authority has this special power and authority from God used to bring power forth to benefit the community member whether it is done through objects or words.

3.7.6 Findings related to Assumption Six

Assumption Six states: Media contributes to the spread of the prosperity gospel. This assumption has been confirmed by the field data. Questions related to the spread of the prosperity gospel were very popular topic in the conversations and drew the second largest response on the questionnaires. Clearly everyone is surrounded by the prosperity gospel even if they are not trying to find it.

The prosperity gospel has fertile soil in the urban areas. Many respondents think that the media is influencing the rural areas. A respondent made this comment:

The prosperity gospel uses the urban setting for their end. People even travel from far away to meet them. And these people come from rural areas. Rural areas are very much affected by what goes on in Nairobi and the media goes out to other town centers. People can get to see everything (cf. App. A. no. 38).

Field data revealed that many people, who cannot make it to church on Sunday because of their jobs, can easily watch some program on TV. There are a plethora of programs to choose from. According to some respondents, some people are drawn to the media personalities, which these prosperity preachers present. Here is what one respondent said, “Some have their own channels. Some are on all channels 24 hours a day. Now when people are attending those churches they see on TV, they influence others to go. Some are given money to bring others,” (App. A. no. 8). “People are so busy they won’t go to church but they can hear it all through radio or TV. Rural areas are impacted and even places where there are no churches. Media is a business and they just want money not truth” (cf. App. A. no. 18).

The media has an impact and the impact cuts across all the variables. One respondent wrote this, “Some friends have fallen victim and other friends are in it as teachers. Yes, media has helped to carry it because seeing carries the whole person into thinking about an issue...it has tainted the reputation of genuine preachers,” (App. B. no. 79). No one is unaffected by the prosperity gospel in Nairobi. It is like what a medical doctor used to say as he worked to promote HIV/AIDS awareness: I am a person living with HIV. This medical doctor did not mean that he had the disease. He meant that it was all around him and that people he knew either had it or had died of it and that had impacted even his life. So according to the data, thanks in part to the media, we are all living with the prosperity gospel. In other words, the

prosperity gospel has an effect on all our lives whether positively or negatively. None of us are unaffected.

3.8 Findings related to Limitations and Scope

The data collection for this thesis took place in the city of Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya. Nairobi is the capital and the largest city in Kenya. It is the hub of East Africa with global organizations and multi-billion shilling Kenyan businesses bringing in people from all over the world and many international and national businesses or organizations have their headquarters here. Nairobi has also been a destination for tourists and other internationals, who desire to say they have been to Nairobi much like some internationals like to say they have been to London. It is a world-class city on the rise, so its influence will continue to rise as well. That also speaks for what goes on in the culture and in the Church in Kenya.

This research was limited to Nairobi. The research was purposeful in that it targeted those who were in the prosperity gospel church or who had experience with the prosperity gospel in some way. Churches were selected by their reputation for being prosperity churches and then by referral. Respondents for interviews came mainly from those churches and then by referral. The self-guided questionnaires were distributed in different parts of Nairobi by the researcher, field assistants and friends. Oddly enough, with the distribution of the questionnaires the gender of respondents was almost evenly split with 56 female and 50 male. A total of 7 respondents did not indicate their gender. The total of respondents came to 113. In the field interviews, the gender distribution was almost even with 19 female and 17 male. The interview total was 37 individuals plus five focus group interviews making an overall total of 42 interviews.

Originally the data was going to be collected from only three specific prosperity gospel churches and only from their congregants. Because that was not possible due to the difficulty in securing permission from those churches to do that, another collection method was employed. Churches were selected as were recommended by Kenyan friends and connections were made that enabled the collection of data from other churches and members of churches besides the churches, which the researcher and field assistants were able to attend. While this limitation may have brought some discouragement, it also meant that the audience from which the collection was taken was at a wider scale through Nairobi though it was still limited to those who had some experience or knowledge of the prosperity gospel churches.

The scope has been multi-ethnic but mainly Kenyans living in Nairobi. Other Africans, such as Nigerians, Congolese, Cameroonians, living in Nairobi have participated in interviews and the questionnaires. African women and men from age 18 and up were the informants. Besides gender, the data scope included the variables of age, education, marital status and employment status. The scope of this thesis covered churches in Nairobi that have been around for a few years teaching the prosperity gospel. All of the churches for this research do not use Kiswahili exclusively for their services and much of their services are in English.

The research revealed that the respondents were very familiar with the prosperity gospel and many of them had particular opinions and experiences concerning the prosperity gospel. Most people were open to discussion, however some who were deeper into the teachings of the prosperity gospel were more reticent to discuss what seemed very private to them.

Chapter Four

Literature Review

4.0 Introduction

This chapter is a description of the professional literature related to the topic of the prosperity gospel, especially in the African setting. This review includes books, journal articles, online documents, as well as descriptions of adverts and flyers obtained in the field. The material is presented as it relates to the Thesis Topic; Problem Statement; Hypothesis; Significance of the Thesis; six Research Questions; six Research Assumptions; and Limitations and Scope.

The phenomenon of the prosperity gospel has captured the attention of the world increasingly over the last three decades. Perhaps it was thought that it would be a passing fad. However, as the movement has gained in strength and numbers, so have the critiques. Plenty are concerned about the impact the prosperity gospel will have on the real Gospel and many theologians have taken up the task, in the West and other parts of the globe, in analyzing it and then giving instructions to Christians about it. However, the prosperity gospel continues its worldwide spread. The focus of this literature review is on the prosperity gospel movement as it relates to the African worldview to discover what is being said regarding the beliefs, values, and motivations in the African worldview that may be influencing attraction to the prosperity gospel preaching churches.

4.1 Literature related to the Thesis Topic

The Thesis Topic, the Prosperity Gospel and its attraction, has been receiving greater and greater attention as the movement continues to grow. In relation to the Thesis Topic, Asamoah-Gyadu (2014) writes,

What has come to be known as the prosperity gospel is mainly associated with contemporary Pentecostal teachings...Today many other churches also preach

variations of material prosperity, especially in Africa... The dynamism of new evangelical movements such as contemporary Pentecostalism have attracted a significant following in Africa. This means generations of young Christians are growing up with a prosperity mindset that suggests that we can bypass the challenges of everyday life if we apply principles of prosperity (p.4).

The prosperity gospel has brought many questions and situations into the Protestant and Catholic Church as a whole, especially as their numbers move into Pentecostalism. The focus in this literature is more exclusively upon the Protestant Church, though the Lausanne Movement, an ecumenical organization begun in 1974 to connect the global Church to work together on issues facing the Church throughout the world. The Lausanne Movement has been looking at the topic of the prosperity gospel and has published a number of articles on the topic. Here is a short summary from the African Chapter of the Lausanne Theology Working Group as the group researched the prosperity gospel:

We do not wish to be exclusively negative, and we recognize the appalling social realities within which this teaching flourishes and the measure of hope it holds out to desperate people. However, while acknowledging such positive features, it is our overall view that the teachings of those who most vigorously promote the 'prosperity gospel' are false and gravely distorting of the Bible, that their practice is often unethical and unChristlike, and that the impact on many churches is pastorally damaging, spiritually unhealthy, and not only offers no lasting hope, but may even deflect people from the message and means of eternal salvation. In such dimensions, it can be soberly described as a false gospel. We call for further reflection on these matters within the Christian Church, and request the Lausanne movement to be willing to make a very clear statement rejecting the excesses of prosperity teaching as incompatible with evangelical biblical Christianity, (p. 99)

African scholars, not just Western scholars writing on the African scene, have been taking up the charge to reflect upon and to address the phenomenon on the African continent. The concern is to understand the issues surrounding the prosperity gospel. Asamoah-Gyadu (2010) is one of the African theologians who has been writing on the topic for some time. In an earlier article on the prosperity gospel he wrote,

In the African context within which I work, renewal movements have been described as movements of reformation in their own right, but they have developed a certain penchant and proclivity for things that reflect glory and power including seeing material things as reflective of God's favor. (p.2)

He points out not only the power connection with what he calls renewal movements, he also makes a statement later in the article to reveal that some of the prosperity preachers pushing deliverance and prosperity actually push a denial of being African. This is what he said,

In the process of 'healing and deliverance' aimed at releasing people from blockages to success and prosperity, individuals have also been encouraged to change their traditional African names because those names, it has often been discerned, carry negative connotations that follow people through life. (p. 6).

On the other hand, however, Asamoah-Gyadu (2009) also makes the case that the African worldview accommodates the prosperity gospel. He writes, "The prosperity movement also taps into deep roots in traditional African religions...The prosperity message resonates with African religious ideas because of the traditional belief in mystical causality" (p. 6). So whether or not the one who embraces the prosperity gospel changes their traditional African name, the belief still remains that someone or something is responsible for whatever setback or lack of prosperity or health. This goes well with the prosperity gospel teachings.

Another scholar, Akoko (2007) also takes up the topic. He gives two factors that he asserts have influenced the spread of the prosperity gospel in his home country of Cameroon. One factor influencing the spread is the prosperity gospel preachers themselves, and the other factor that influences the spread of the prosperity gospel is the economic state of the country (p. 73-80). The first factor, the prosperity gospel preachers themselves, Akoko says not only influence the spread of the prosperity gospel through their preaching but also by flooding the country with their writings. He names Richard Bonnke as one of the main Western prosperity preachers who has facilitated the spread of prosperity gospel teachings in Cameroon through his crusades beginning in the late 1970s (p. 73). Not only was Bonnke spreading the prosperity gospel through his pamphlets and crusades, he also developed two other methods to his influence. Akoko writes,

Besides these public rallies, or in conjunction with them, Bonnke has developed two other means of spreading his influence. One is 'Fire Conferences', which are special teaching seminars for all, and the other is 'Pastors Workshops', which take place during every crusade and are normally meant for pastors of the churches involved in the crusade. He takes these seriously because he understands pastors are very instrumental in spreading his theology. In a bid to spread his theology of prosperity and also to become materially prosperous, around the edges of every crusade ground are his numerous stalls for selling Christian literature, tapes, CFAN T-shirts, bags and hats. These wares are often touted (sometimes at bargain rates) from the platform; even Bonnke himself during sermons will sometimes advertise his own books and cassettes. In some of his sermons, Bonnke does not belabor the prosperity gospel but uses expressions such as 'God will make you prosper', 'in the name of Jesus, I break the cycle of poverty', 'we open our purses and pockets right now and give; we shall cause you (God) to open your blessings on us' (p. 73-74).

Emerging from all of this were people like Benson Idahosa of Nigeria, whom Akoko says was seen on the platform preaching not only in Nigeria and other places in Africa but also in Europe and in the United States and accompanying Bonnke on his visits to Cameroon (p. 74). According to Akoko, Idahosa founded the, “‘Miracle Center’ in Benin City, Nigeria, where thousands of ‘believers’ go every week to ‘seek their own personal miracles’” (p. 74).

Another African mentioned by Akoko who helped spread the prosperity gospel was the Reverend Dr. Billy Lubansa of the Democratic Republic of Congo known as “Super Papa Billy,” founder of the Flaming Fire of God Ministries International (p. 75). Lubansa has given credit for his calling to his “‘spiritual mentors’ Ray McCauley, Reinhardt Bonnke, Kenneth Copeland and Kenneth Hagen,” all Western prosperity gospel preachers (p. 75).

But Akoko’s list does not end there. He mentions Reverend Dr. Tunde Joda of Nigeria, founder of Christ Chapel International Churches as one who has also impacted Cameroon in spreading the prosperity gospel. Also mentioned is one of his own countrymen, Zacharias Fomum, who founded his own church, Christian Missionary Fellowship International (p. 77). All of these prosperity preachers have used not only crusades but also other methods such as promoting their own literature in an effort to propagate their doctrines of heavenly banking, or whatever they choose to call it (p. 78).

LOCALLY: Looking at the Thesis Topic in relation to Kenya, Gathogo (2011) in his detailed analysis of the role of money and wealth in Pentecostal churches in East Africa, particularly in Nairobi writes, “Characteristically thus, the emphasis on the gospel of prosperity has become the backbone of Pentecostal theology in Kenya” (p. 8). He documents these prosperity teachings that have been embraced especially in the urban areas

(p. 10-14). These teachings emphasize giving to the representative of God in order to get from God.

Godwin I. Akper (2007) in investigating the situation in Benu State, North-Central Nigeria writes how the understanding of who Jesus is and how a person views prosperity were related (p.42). Of course, this is the Nigerian context and not the Kenyan context. Nevertheless, it shows the concern African scholars have to understand the attraction to the prosperity gospel.

Literature indicates that the Thesis Topic: the Prosperity Gospel and its attraction command the attention and research focus of a number of African scholars and theologians.

4.2 Literature related to the Problem Statement

The Problem Statement is as follows: An interesting phenomenon is occurring in Kenya—the rapid growth and proliferation of churches that are heralding what is being called the prosperity gospel but disagreement exists as to what are the motivations, values, and beliefs behind the African's attraction to the prosperity gospel churches.

Locally: In connection with the Problem Statement are contributions from Mwikamba and Ifedha (2015) in their on-line article, Blessed Are the Rich and Prosperous For Theirs Is the Kingdom of the World: The Kenyan Challenge. They write,

The Christian church is large and too important to ignore, this is why what happens in the church affects many people across the world. The church has been at the forefront of revolution and development throughout the ages. This is why, in Africa the contemporary research on Christianity focuses on mainly inculturation and Prosperity Gospel. It is essential that Christians need to understand and minimize the controversies that this subject arouses... The typical spiritual aspects of the Prosperity Gospel are not significant to the followers. There is least emphasis on

the biblical teaching of suffering; instead, emphasis is laid on health and wealth acquisition (p. 138, 140).

The on-line article gives a brief overview of the movement's history before explaining the findings of their research. Though their findings did not indicate that there was much in the way of financial gain for congregation members of prosperity gospel churches, at least 67.5% of those questioned reported that they had a better self-image because of the teachings (p. 140). The researchers also discovered that many similarities in preaching and worship style exist throughout Nairobi in these churches and that most of these churches are involved in their own business endeavors of some sort (p. 140).

Gathogo (2011) researched several churches in Kenya to examine the money factor of the church's relevance and success, particularly in regard to these prosperity gospel churches and writes that while, "modern churches need money as to forge ahead successfully, they however need to appreciate that there are also wayward brothers and/or sisters who pose as genuine church leaders—but whose aim is to exploit the poor" (p. 17)

He points out that the coming of Pentecostalism to Kenya is historically tied to the East African Revival, which spread from Rwanda and Uganda with Pentecostal churches becoming a greater presence in the 1960s, especially after Billy Graham's crusade in 1960 and also pointed out that TL Osborn, an evangelist, held a crusade in Mombasa, Kenya in 1957 (p. 5). Gathogo says that there is also the belief that Pentecostalism dates back to 1938 in Kenya and that "crusades by Osborn and others could have catalyzed its growth and not necessarily its birth" (p. 6). In other words, some aspect of the prosperity gospel existed early on but that it only needed some watering to bring it forth.

He goes on to explain that prosperity theology has become the foundation of much Pentecostalism (p. 8) and quotes Margaret Wanjiru of Jesus is Alive Ministries, "The Calvary package not only included our salvation but also included the prosperity and the

inheritance of our hands and feet” (p. 9). Gathogo asserts that this theology has had a positive effect on many of the poor in East Africa helping them to higher levels of achievement (p.9). Nevertheless it leaves people with the question is: Who is getting higher?

An interesting feature in the article is Gathogo’s section: The Move into Politics, detailing some well-known and well-situated preachers who aspired to gain political positions in 2006 (p.14-16). Effectively, all Pentecostal preachers got lumped into the same bunch as those heralding the prosperity gospel and seeking political office. The media and the general public were quite critical of those religious political aspirants, but it only served to advance the power and affluence of these prosperity preachers, (p.16).

Literature demonstrates that the phenomenon has captured the interest of many and researchers are looking at the phenomenon through a variety of angles including an analysis of its business working and effect, like that of Gathogo’s article.

4.3 Literature related to the Hypothesis

The Hypothesis is the attraction to churches preaching the prosperity gospel is that those teachings resonate, subconsciously or informally, with the motivations, values, and beliefs of the African understanding of evil and in the centrality of God as the source of all blessings in daily life. Several African scholars have made this assertion.

Related to the Hypothesis, Chilenje (2014) writes in In Search of Health and Wealth, edited by Kroesbergen, “People are also attracted to the prosperity gospel because it reflects the traditional African concept of blessedness...in terms of biological and material, not just the religious/spiritual aspects” (p.11). Here we understand that there is something in the teaching of the prosperity gospel that resonates with the African understanding of “blessedness,” as Chilenje points out. All the good things, which come

from God for a person to live a whole and integrated life, have always been considered blessings from God.

Rev. Dr. Emmanuel K. Anim (2010) argues in The Prosperity Gospel in Ghana and Primal Imagination that though much has been asserted concerning the influence of the American neo-Pentecostalism of the prosperity gospel on the African church, the real influence lies behind the African in their worldview. He states that the understanding of the prosperity gospel in Ghana is seen, “more importantly in terms of the pre-existing thought patterns and values, which underpin African traditional religions and cosmology” (p. 67-68). In order to make that argument in his article he uses Akan songs, proverbs and prayers to demonstrate that the emphasis on prosperity was already there in the Ghanaian worldview (p. 68). Anim points to how breaches in community harmony (causing problems or misfortune) were traditionally settled by erecting cultic shrines, and though the presence of cultic shrines has diminished in current times, the concept has been picked up by the prosperity gospel preachers who offer new modern alternatives in their huge churches (p. 69).

Furthermore, Anim summarizes the way that the current trend of the prosperity gospel in Ghana uses the African traditional practices in more up-to-date fashion. He says that while the prosperity gospel pushes against the traditional beliefs by denouncing them to give people a sense of individual responsibility, the consequences bring a negative impact on “kinship obligations and the values of the family” and, as he states in a later paragraph, the result is that it works in “creating new economic individualism” (p.71). So while it is true that the concept of prosperity has its roots in the African traditional worldview, the influences of prosperity gospel theology in these neo-Pentecostal churches are producing a new kind of African, according to Anim.

Agazue (2013) gives an interesting label for the prosperity gospel preachers. He calls them “religio-commercial pastors” even using that very term in the title of his book, The Role of a Culture of Superstition in the Proliferation of Religio-commercial Pastors in Nigeria. He uses that term to present his arguments and to distinguish between Pentecostal churches and those “whose doctrines are, as we shall see, centred on exploitation” (p.1) He goes on in his introduction to make a qualification,

Sometimes, there may be an overlap between religio-commercial Pentecostal churches but, despite all the sub-categories, all of them do have one thing in common: the harvesting of their congregants’ money with vague promises (and often guarantees) that God will pay them back abundantly—all that is required is faith (p. 17).

Earlier in his introduction, Agazue sets up the point he expounds in his book by stating, “The business of religion has become one of the most successful in the country...this success is at least in part due to the indigenous religions which have resulted in a culture of superstition in Nigerian society” (p. 3). The rest of the introduction gives summary details of points explained in the chapters of his book as he uses interviews, case studies and observation plus his background in psychology and criminology to assess the inner workings of the prosperity gospel in the Nigerian society.

His aim in the book is to demonstrate how a “deeply embedded culture of superstition has enabled the rapid increase of Pentecostal churches” as it “promotes the quest for spiritual explanations” (p. 222). The result is many “turn to pastors for divine protection in the same way that the African Traditional religious worshippers turn to their shrine priest” (p. 223). Agazue says that people who are taken in by this and the newer superstitions from these religio-commercial churches “live in spiritual panic” (p. 223). Clearly this book shows what we would call the seamy side of the prosperity gospel using a

plethora of data collected to illustrate the harsh realities on the ground in Nigeria in these religio-commercial churches and how they, not their parishioners, are so successful. His use of the words “culture of superstition” as that which leads his fellow Nigerians to embrace the prosperity gospel is something of a distraction from the heavy field-based research that he collected in which he interacted closely with those in the prosperity gospel movement.

Most African writers do assert that the African worldview is in some way behind the embracing of the prosperity gospel. However, a contrary view can be found in the article, Africa's Poverty and its Neo-Pentecostal “Liberators”: An Ecotheological Assessment of Africa's Prosperity Gospellers. Golo (2013) makes the case that “prosperity gossellers,” (as he refers to prosperity gospel preachers, borrowing from Ogbu Kalu), have taken to themselves the role of liberators as they believe they are the ones to herald the message to bring people out of poverty (p. 368, 372). But these liberators, as Golo tells the reader, ignore the understanding of earth as sacred and thereby betray their own African worldview when he states,

Here one would expect that Africa's prosperity gossellers would incorporate the redemption of the harmony of the cosmos into it theology to fashion a holistic theology of salvation that offers redemption into abundant life. Their refusal to do this betrays their unwillingness to engage their own African worldviews (p.383).

It is for this reason that Golo does not foster the argument that the African worldview is what is behind the emergence of the prosperity gospel phenomenon in Africa but rather that instead it is a “mimicking” of the West (p.384). So the question remains as to whether or not these prosperity gossellers, as Golo calls them, are aware of their failure to engage their own African worldview as they call others to follow them in the pursuit of prosperity. Is it a deliberate attempt to run away from the African worldview? If their teaching is against an

African's understanding and does not in some way fit into the understanding of the African's worldview, then why would the congregants listen in the first place?

4.4 Literature related to the Significance of the Thesis

The significance of this research is that it is a field-based data thesis using an anthropological approach, rather than one with a historical or theological approach, in seeking to answer the phenomenon of the attraction of the prosperity gospel in the urban setting of Nairobi, Kenya. It is a theological issue to be sure and many theologians are writing on the topic as the literature review demonstrates. This research has importance because it addresses contemporary challenges and a contemporary phenomenon facing African Christians, an issue that literature reveals as something controversial yet also as something that must be addressed. Moreover, it not merely an issue Nairobi, Kenya is facing, but is far reaching throughout the continent and the globe. Nairobi does have an impact on what goes on in other African countries and in the church worldwide. The literature shows a heavy emphasis on the theological aspect of the issue and while there is certainly literature that questions some of the practices within the movement, questioning of more detailed aspects of the practices involved in the prosperity gospel movement are somewhat lacking though not completely absent.

Kasera, in his unpublished thesis, takes an in-depth focused look at the biblical and theological foundations of the prosperity gospel as it relates to his home country, Namibia. He gives a history of its beginnings in Namibia to place it in its historical context and then he examines the practice and implications of the prosperity gospel in Namibia. In the Namibian context, it became popular in the 1990s especially through the work of Haruna B. Goroh, the founder of Greater Love Faith Convention (p. 2). With the help of North Americans, they also used media (radio, TV) to help advance their teachings and used the

production of CDs and DVDs to flood the country with their teachings (p. 3). The poor in Namibia have seen the message as a ray of hope. Kasera says that,

However, it is also relevant that PT (prosperity theology) in Namibia may (sic) should be placed in its own category – mainly as a response to social injustice and especially rampant poverty. Perhaps what we need to concern ourselves with then is whether this response to poverty is biblically and theologically correct (p. 4).

While he demonstrates that it is important for Christians to help the poor and to help the poor to better help themselves, he also shows that helping the poor does not have to be related to the prosperity gospel, which is generally given by those who are not theologically trained (p. 165). Kasera states that the prosperity gospel's presence in the Church is a wake-up call challenging the church to take its responsibility more seriously to address the social ill of poverty (p. 166). His treatment is a theological and biblical analysis of the prosperity gospel and the message it is communicating. He has concerns about the effects of the prosperity gospel in his home country, Namibia.

Chilenje (2014) writing about the Reformed Church in Zambia in In Search of Health and Wealth edited by Kroesbergen also has concerns about the prosperity gospel in his country of Zambia. He states,

The Church in Africa is at a cross roads, not knowing how to choose between the teachings of the Reformed churches and the wealth and material blessings promised by the prosperity gospel as a sign of the faithfulness and righteousness of the recipients. The sad truth is that in Africa health and wealth are not equitably distributed in the church and the society. People found in impoverished urban and rural areas are attracted to the prosperity gospel message they hear on television or other media or during visits to churches (p. 4-5).

Thus in Chilenje's context, questions surround the prosperity gospel and its impact on the church in Zambia. Zulu (2014) in the same book writes, "The advent of tele-preachers in Zambia and the growth of Pentecostal churches have changed perceptions about prosperity in our country and there is a steady following of prosperity theology" (p. 21) thus he calls attention to the "need to critically analyze prosperity in a holistic manner so that the physical and spiritual dimensions of prosperity are adequately addressed" (p. 22).

Locally: Ongong'a and Akaranga (2015) researched the impact of the prosperity gospel in the urban setting of Nairobi, Kenya. They focused on whether or not the prosperity gospel teaches true Christian doctrine as well as whether the lives of the adherents improved. According to their findings, many of those attending those prosperity churches come from lower income urban areas with the majority of the members of the churches under scrutiny for their research being women (p. 203, 204). Moreover, their data revealed that 40% of those attendees go for some kind of healing but in reality it is the prosperity preachers themselves who are benefitting (p. 205, 207). The focus of the research was not so much on the worldview of those involved in the prosperity gospel as it was on what the social and economic impact of the movement is.

To support the significance of a thesis like this one, which focuses on grounded theory, Wuaka (2012) has this to say,

I propose that the indigenous religious landscapes of African communities are replete with paradigms from which local people draw in engaging and evaluating new religious experiences. Yet, in seeking analytical frames to locate our explorations of local religious experiences, the tendency has been for us, both local African scholars as well as Western Africanists, to overlook local understandings and to look to Western-originated intellectual paradigms for leads. Even though we tend to be dismissive of them as superstitions, unscientific, or untested, even

parochial, folk theories are “theories” too, in so far as they function as analytical tools for their authors, unveiling insights into the nature of their experiences...These local conceptual schemes must be the first building blocks upon which to base future analysis (p. 240).

Literature shows there is a place for a research that seeks to understand the worldview of those involved in the prosperity gospel movement.

4.5.1 Literature related to Research Question One

Research Question One reads: What are some of the intrinsic African traditional beliefs that lend acceptance to the prosperity gospel?

In connection with Research Question One, many scholars have made the comment that the African worldview and the prosperity gospel fit together in some way. Isichei (1995) writes, “The ‘Gospel of Prosperity’ promises a miraculous escape from unemployment and poverty... It fits in well, too, with the values of traditional cultures, where religious rituals ensure health and prosperity and protection against the forces of evil” (p. 336). Maintaining harmony is done through particular rituals that will either keep evil from working or will promote the acquisition of whatever is necessary to live well. Magesa (1997) writes,

The relationship between God and creation—specifically humanity—is one of solicitude on the part of God. To associate God with anything that is not good, pure, just, honourable is ridiculous. The expression “It is God’s will,” uttered when Africans experience difficulties from which they cannot escape, delineates this belief. People know that misfortune can and does happen, but they believe that it is always with the knowledge or the permission of God... God is never blamed for this; instead the ultimate source of misfortune and suffering is to be found in the created order (p. 46)

While it was possible to experience hardship and suffering, rituals were there to assist the one suffering to get back to a state of harmony.

Asamoah-Gyadu (2009) gives examples of some of the beliefs in the African world view that go hand and hand with the prosperity gospel. He writes:

The prosperity movement also taps into deep roots in traditional African religions. The prayer vigils and healing camps are the Christian equivalent of traditional shrines where people go to have their destinies revealed and spiritual problems solved. The prosperity message resonates with African religious ideas because of the traditional belief in mystical causality. Tithes, like prayers, are ritual actions that are supposed to make things happen.

African traditions strongly believe in the existence of invisible forces, especially malevolent powers, and in the efficacy of ritual action to fight the forces of evil. When prosperity is lacking, African church leaders most commonly explain it by pointing to demonic forces, curses, and witchcraft rather than to an individual's sin. Churches offer "anointing for vengeance" to help dismantle spiritual traps set by envious family members and relations. Many charismatic church services include prayers of imprecation of sometimes alarming vengefulness. During one church service, after pronouncing curses on family members responsible for their "lack of progress in life," worshipers were asked to move their right leg forward, stamp the floor, and shout, "From today I step out of poverty in the name of Jesus." Charismatic African Christians did not necessarily set out to create a contextualized "African Christianity." But the ritualized exchange of tithes and blessings is markedly similar to the orientation of traditional African religious sacrifices (p. 2)

Asamoah-Gyadu mentioned the belief in mystical causality or the belief that things do not just happen but instead there is someone or something behind the mishap or bad event. That

belief would lead a person to question what was or was not done to bring about the unwanted happening. Asamoah-Gyadu says that the prosperity gospel taps into that belief, which people may or may not openly acknowledge. Their actions, the taking up of suggested rituals in the prosperity gospel shows they have this belief.

Gbote and Kgatla (2014) make this remark about how the prosperity gospel preachers contextualize: “In order to gain the hearts and minds of the African society... It tends to contextualize its message to suit the African audiences and in so doing, it integrates some elements of the African traditional religion” (p. 4). The literature demonstrates in regard to Research Question One that the question has value in researching the topic.

Another important idea that runs through the literature is that people are drawn to the charismatic leaders of the prosperity movement. Kibicho (2006) explains that in the African worldview, particularly in relation to the Gikuyu that it was understood that God would reveal himself through specialists. He writes, “Another very important way God used to reveal the secrets of his nature and will, as well as the secrets of other mysteries of his creation to the Gikuyu people, was the special inspiration of prophets or seers and medicine-men or diviners” (p. 22).

4.5.2 Literature related to Research Question Two

Research Question Two asked: What motivates prosperity gospel preachers to take up their role as leaders and what motivates people to follow them?

In connection with Research Question Two, Adeleye (2011) writes about the celebrity status of these prosperity preachers after mentioning how they “get richer and fatter, while the flock is kept happy with new slogans and gimmicks” (p. 42-43). He goes on to write,

The prosperity preachers are “men of God” and they insist you know it. The lengthy sing-song way they are introduced in churches and meetings reminds one

of how television celebrities and boxing champions are introduced... Many “men of God” are ushered into meetings with loud ovation and musical crescendo...By this time the audience is already clapping rhythmically and drums are rolling (p. 43).

These preachers focus on miracles and signs. They want to draw the crowds and thus their money (p. 48-49). Adeleye states that these preachers “have a noisy presence but not a transforming one that can challenge or hinder the corruption of public or private life” (p. 49). He further gives examples of those with such noisy presence, without naming particular prosperity preachers, who have abandoned their wives or committed fraud and he speaks of the thirst for material wealth and possessions that drive such preachers (p. 49, 86).

Adeleye does not only talk about the messengers. He also gives the historical background of the spread of the prosperity gospel into the African Continent, focusing particularly on Nigeria, and following that with a concise and thorough theological critique of its movement in West Africa and later other places. He refers to influence of the charismatic renewal, which “began as a separatist movement...by the 1980s was embraced by many mainline denominations” (pp.33-34).

That influence brought ideas into churches that later were part of the foundation for the prosperity gospel. Just to mention a few ideas was the emphasis on visible gifts of the Holy Spirit and identifying the roles of pastor, evangelist, prophet, or/or teacher with titles, “not necessarily backed up by any formal qualifications” (p. 35). The acceptance of all things American was also part of the equation. “Thus the prosperity gospel emerging out of the North American social-economic cultural context and empowered by the medium of television should not be seen as anything less than materialism become a dragon...” (p. 80).

Adeleye refers to the departure of these churches from teaching fundamentals of Christian faith to “a theology of prosperity...that wealth is a sign of God’s favour and

blessing” (p. 37). Many ideas are brought out concerning the social and economic impact of these teachings. People who had lost hope in governmental promises turned to the church (p. 89). But the impact has not been so positive. He writes, “Many who do go to church expecting that personal miracle feel a sense of abandonment” (p. 105). Adeleye writes his book to expose the misconceptions many have about God because of such teachings. His method is to focus on the Biblical understanding of God and how the prosperity gospel goes against the teachings (p.108). In his understanding, the preachers of the movement are drawn to the wealth that they can gain from people who need hope and motivation that life can. People think these preachers always bring something good for them if only they listen to them and get the keys to unlock the treasure storehouse.

Togarasei (2014) gives an interesting cultural analysis in the book, In Search of Health and Wealth edited by Kroesbergen. First he acknowledges his colleague who drew his attention to the term “gospeneurship,” which was used as a negative term in a Zimbabwean newspaper to insult the working of prosperity gospel preachers in Zimbabwe who were “amassing of wealth for themselves through encouraging their followers to give in order to be blessed by God. Thus, the prosperity gospel becomes some form of entrepreneurship for these pastors.” (p. 121). However, he has a more positive view and goes on to make the point that there are prosperity gospel churches that do teach skills so that their parishioners can start their own businesses (p. 121-123). He has a more positive view of prosperity preachers based on his experience in Zimbabwe where churches are trying to help people cope with the country’s severe economic problems. That would put the prosperity preachers in Zimbabwe at more of a disadvantage than those in Kenya who may be considered to have more access to funds even in their low-income bracket.

Bishau (2013) says that prosperity gospel preachers create an attitude of dependency in their followers. He comments, “(T)hese Prosperity Gospel preachers often

interpret the Bible in such a way that the theology drawn from it creates a ‘parent ego’ in the prosperity Gospel preacher and a ‘child ego’ in the devotee with the result that the latter feels totally dependent upon the former (p. 11).

Locally: Mwikamba and Ifedha (2015) had this to say about the Nairobi setting in which they did their research:

Prosperity Gospel teaches people to focus on getting, not giving...Preachers even boast about how much they spent on buying their suits, shoes, necklaces and watches. To them, spirituality is measured by whether they have a big house or first-class ticket. But, when greed is preached from the pulpit, it spreads like a cancer in God’s house. It is this voracious atmosphere in prosperity churches that has produced a crude style of leadership where these clergy plant churches, not to receive lost souls but, to reap from their adherents. The successful prosperity preacher is most dangerous because, he or she can convince the unsuspecting congregation that, Jesus died to give you and me a Lexus (p. 139).

The literature indicates that for some of these prosperity gospel preachers fame and fortune and even power are the motivation. Those who follow these preachers are also motivated by acquiring health and wealth though for many of the poor followers it has more to do with getting what will assist in the day to day survival and perhaps bring a little more than that.

Globally: If we take a look at some of the critiques concerning the prosperity gospel in the West, you will find many of the same complaints. In an on-line video entitled Millionaire Pastor Said Jesus Doesn’t Want You To Know How Much Money He Has, a young American prosperity gospel preacher was quoted as saying,

To go on record and say, ‘Here’s how much money we’re given and here’s what we do with our finances, to me, that would be the most arrogant thing I could do

and it would rob me of the blessing of what Jesus said which is that when you give, you don't get up and tell everyone how much you've given (The Young Turks, 2015).

If you go to the website of a prosperity gospel church called Elevation Church you are met with a video thanking you for joining them today and how much they would like to hear your story of how God has used their ministry to touch your life. Of course, they go on to stress that if God has used them in your life then, “we want to encourage you to partner with us financially. Help us continue delivering God’s word to the world” (Elevation Church 2016). The question is: What word are they referring to as being “God’s word”?

So what really does motivate these prosperity gospel preachers globally and locally? What motivates people to follow these rich prosperity gospel preachers?

4.5.3 Literature related to Research Question Three

Research Question Three asked: What values do people hold that draw them to accepting prosperity gospel teachings? What are those things that have great importance and are held in high honor that would make the prosperity gospel teachings attractive?

In regards to Research Question Three, Azumah (2015) has this to say about African people,

The Bible has a very different status in African societies. Where Christianity has become dominant in the last century, the Bible remains a sacred text, relevant and living. The Bible is more than a compilation of historical documents. It is, in very significant ways, an African Testament. For large segments of African Christian societies, the world of the Bible is contemporary. Old and New Testament narratives of sacrifice, polygamy, plague, agriculture, dancing, shepherds, tensions between nomadic pastoralism and peasant dwellers, epidemics, and war have immediate relevance (p. 6).

Though Azumah is writing specifically in dealing with the push for the acceptance of homosexuality worldwide, he makes the statement to show what he believes underscores much of what Africans practice that go along with a biblical world view and that despite many changes that the African culture has gone through, the “importance of traditional conceptions of family and morality” have remained strong (p. 6, 7).

Furthermore in regards to African values and their importance, Azumah says:

African societies also have a strong communal dimension. Sin is not an individual, private, or merely interior reality. Life is communal and holistic, natural and supernatural, and so sin has social, political, environmental, and even cosmic consequences. This sense of the wholeness and interconnectedness of life means individuals are accountable to one another... (p. 7).

Many African scholars have pointed out how the Bible is used to back up the claims the prosperity preachers make of how a child of God is supposed to be rich as a child of the King and that all that is necessary is to sow a little seed. Since for the African the Bible is of high value and in fact, sacred, then the way that it is used in the prosperity gospel teaching draws the African to listen and to take heed. And if the prosperity gospel can guarantee wholeness for the community in terms of prosperity and healing, then it makes is acceptable and worth following.

Awoniyi writes about specific African cultural values in order to link the past with the present modern culture for the African. He writes, “In African society, there are a set of values that guide the behavior of every member. Specific mention could be made of values such as hospitality, chastity before marriage, truth, respect for old age, covenant keeping, hard work and good character” (p. 5). Along with the values, which focus upon one’s relationships in community and individual responsibility, Awoniyi brings out the value of

symbols for the African. He cites from Nabofa's Symbolism in African Traditional Religion while writing this:

(A)nother eminent example of African cultural value is on the use of symbols. Symbols are objects, acts, relationships or linguistic formation that stands ambiguous for multiplicity of meanings...found spontaneous expressions in several religious and secular processes among many different people of Africa. These expressions could be seen in religious emblems, ideograms, icons, rituals, songs, prayers, myths, incantations, vows, customary behaviour and personifications (Nabofa 1994:4)...In traditional Africa, symbols served several vital purposes. Apart from the obvious fact that they evoke in human beings deep emotions and easily spur and motivate them into taking definite actions... (Nabofa 1994:13), (p. 8).

Values of community, hospitality, marriage, family, individual responsibility and hard work are just a few values, all of which can be supposedly enhanced by the prosperity gospel while the value of symbolism is also easily found in prosperity teaching.

Other values are mentioned by Okolo (2012) in his research on the impact of urbanization and African cultural values. Included in those values are large families, the extended family including ancestors and the living dead, the whole of creation, and now education and money (74-77, 81, 82). Asamoah-Gyadu (2009) makes the comment that "For Africans, viable religion has always meant that which leads to power, strength, vitality, and abundance" (p. 3). Consequently, these things then are valued in the African's life.

Banda (2014) gives another important value of Africans when he writes In Search of Health and Wealth, edited by Kroesbergen,

African cultures always value the role of healing mediation. In many African cultures, people seek mediation of counselors (ankhoswe) in marriage as a form of preventive cure of possible future brokenness. Further, the services of the medicine wo/man (sing'anga) when life is threatened. Or even of ancestors for general wellbeing, form an inseparable aspect of African life (p. 55).

Banda goes on to stress, in regard to the sing'anga, that they are seen as a "healing figure," who is able to bring about restoration in the relationship "between the living and the invisible realities" (p. 55). He further adds that, "What is of importance is that the healing figure seems to discharge functions from some power source beyond" (p. 55) Another interesting point he makes it that, "We see that in Africa there are many forms of overnight healing vigils" (p. 55). This value of a healing mediator can be a draw to some of the teachings in the prosperity gospel movement as well as the values of community in which prosperity is seen and experienced in the African, and other values that are emphasized in the prosperity gospel. Literature on the topic has addressed something of Research Question Three.

4.5.4 Literature related to Research Question Four

Research Question Four asked: What do people believe about the rituals found in the practice of the prosperity gospel? This question sought to discover the beliefs behind the rituals found in the prosperity gospel.

In conjunction with Research Question Four, Bishau (2013) makes a statement that reveals adherents to the prosperity gospel believe that there is some special wisdom or power behind those with money and to rub shoulders with such people brings a benefit. He writes,

From the point of view of sociology it is known that wealth and success in general contribute towards a high social status. An analysis of group dynamics also shows

that people in general tend to listen more to, and tend to congregate more around, the affluent than ordinary lowly members of society (p. 7).

This dynamic is found in prosperity gospel churches where people want to associate with those that have, or at least look like they can associate with those that have, rather than be viewed as a have-not. That would lead an adherent to follow the rituals prescribed to them in the prosperity gospel by those who have power to get prosperity. Chitando (2013) writes this about the prosperity gospel in Zimbabwe,

Poor people are ignored at church and the high places are reserved for the rich people, many of whom are not even fully committed to the faith. Pastors only want to preach in the Diaspora. Thus, “Vapfana, vhangeri riya ropisa somoto! Iye zvino ndonoparidza kuAmerica, nekuEngland nedzimwe nyika dzakadero” (Young people, the gospel is now burning hot like fire! Now I preach in America, England and such-like places). They shun the rural areas as these do not bring any financial benefits to them (p. 106).

Congregants would not want to be seen as poor as they would not appear favored of God. To associate with the prosperous would give the appearance that they also had money.

Moreover Gbote and Kgatla (2014) have this to say about what is behind people’s practices of the rituals in the prosperity gospel,

These religious practices pinned the blessing on humankind from the ‘Supreme Being’ in the performance of religious rites and choices. Humanity can only be blessed based on the merits of its actions of choices. An open invitation is extended daily to Africans to bring their fear and anxieties about witches, sorcerers, bad luck, poverty, illness and all kinds of misfortunes to the ‘Supreme Being’ (Mbiti 1975:55-56). These problems can only be solved if the believer performs the prescribed rites of either ‘sowing seed’ or offering sacrifice to the ancestors.

According to the prosperity gospel Christians who decide to give are sure of God's blessings or happiness. Giving is depicted as a means of enjoying happiness. The merging or reconciliatory effect between these religions provides for the rapid growth of the prosperity gospel within the African context (p. 5).

They also mentioned how "in African traditional religion, to appease the wrath of the 'Supreme Being' or cleanse the person from evil attacks, an offering is required" (p. 5). This indicates what people probably think about the act of seed sowing that is stressed in the prosperity gospel.

Gbote and Kgatla also mention how the Bible is considered a "sacred object with inherent power that can defeat evil power" (p. 5). One can see that adherents to the prosperity gospel would see the positive confession, (that is, speaking words, especially Scripture, to bring forth whatever good you want in your life) which is used in the prosperity gospel as something that has power in it. According to Togarasei (2011), the gospel of prosperity works because people who used to spend money on witchdoctors and charms no longer spend their time or money doing those things, plus they tend to stop using alcohol, cigarettes and engaging in adulterous affairs (p.348). This brings a full-orbed prosperity that includes not only money but also health and family and education. He also notes that the prosperity gospel emphasizes positive confession and he gives this quote from a prosperity preacher, "Your destiny is in your mouth!" (p. 341). People are encouraged to believe that there is power released when one follows what is prescribed in the prosperity gospel.

In looking at the global scene, the on-line media is one of the best places to get words right out of the mouths of these prosperity preachers. There is much talk about words but also about objects and declarations. Paula White reveals what people believe about anointed objects when she gave her fresh revelation knowledge around the time most

Christians celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday. Here is what she said,

It's not often that I ask very specifically but God has instructed me and I want you to hear, this isn't for everyone but this is for someone. When you sow that \$1,144 dollars based on John 11:44, I believe for resurrection life... and when you do there are prayer cloths that we have anointed...they are going to be a point of contact (Now the Time Begins 2016).

This popular belief in the prosperity gospel teaches that faith has to have some kind of conduit in order to be actualized. Here was what Oral Roberts (1969) wrote about points of contact,

Use a point of contact for release of your faith. God is a Spirit and sometimes we are confused because He is not directly before us in a human body... How, then, can we reach Him? By establishing a point of contact.

A point of contact is the means of sending your faith to God. A point of contact is something tangible, something you do, and when you do it you release your faith toward God (p. 8).

On the global scene positive confessions and declarations permeate the prosperity gospel teachings. You can even find someone on an Internet video to help you go through declarations for prosperity and deliverance. Funny enough, Paula White helps people to go through a list of declarations with her name as a focal point. This is one of the declarations she will help you to pray: "Let all attempts of the enemy to deceive me and every gathering of networks to plan mischief and do evil against me, Pastor Paula...be overturned and destroyed by the blood of Jesus" (Paula White 2016). Do these prosperity gospel rituals sync with rituals in the African worldview? Chapter Five synthesizes those findings and the literature to answers those questions.

4.5.5 Literature related to Research Question Five

Research Question Five asked: What values do the prosperity gospel preachers show to their followers?

In connection with Research Question Five, Togarasei (2011) takes a look at the prosperity gospel preachers through the context of poverty in Africa. First he defines poverty as the state of lacking those things a person must have not only to survive, for example, food and water, but also lacking those things one needs in order to live as humans ought to live, for example, with housing, education and health care. He notes that because of droughts and wars on the continent, much poverty can be found resulting in an opportunity for the prosperity gospel to do some kind of work (p. 336). Previous studies found the prosperity gospel was bringing some alleviation to those suffering poverty but some have also been criticized “this gospel as an impetus for delusion” (p.337). The author draws from his own case studies to examine poverty reduction and the preaching of the prosperity gospel. He discusses the “paradox of the attraction of the gospel of prosperity and the reality of poverty in Africa” (p.337).

The prosperity preachers have emphasized from the start of the prosperity gospel and they continue to emphasize riches and good health as by-product of faith in Jesus and that poverty and illness are a work of the devil (p.339). Obtaining the prosperity, of course, comes through “positive confession and sowing seeds of prosperity” (p.339). He says that it is paradoxical that a prosperity gospel has such influence in countries that have such desperate poverty (Togarasei gives the UN statics on poverty in Africa on p.342).

In his findings, he sees the prosperity gospel as something that has helped encourage people to be entrepreneurs as these Pentecostal churches emphasis on being an employer rather than an employee (p.346). So in this case, prosperity preachers would be encouraging entrepreneurship or personal responsibility. Togarasei does mention however,

prosperity gospel churches are often criticized for not helping the poor. But he goes on to say; “The most important contribution to poverty alleviation made by the gospel of prosperity is the positive mindset it gives to believers” (p.347) He goes on to quote Kwabena Asamoah-Gyaduh, “African Pentecostalism has initiated a move from Afro-pessimism to Afro-optimism and hope” (p.347). The prosperity preachers then would be heralds of hope and would give their followers inspiration to trust God and sow a seed.

Jenkins (2011) sees the movement as having a positive effect on Christianity,

... most prosperity churches also contribute to improving the material lot of their flocks...Most prosperity churches not only condemn poverty but teach invaluable ways of avoiding it, like actually saving up in order to buy material goods. Debt is a demon to be defeated (p.45).

If prosperity preachers and their churches are teaching people to save up to buy goods and to avoid debt, and if their churches are really helping the poor, then why is there such emphasis on sowing a seed to the Man of God?

Asamoah-Gyadu (2005) says, “The lifestyle of founders, pastors and leaders of various CMs (charismatic ministries) are the most cogent reflection of the philosophy that informs the message of prosperity” (p. 208). It is the way these preachers live and promote material wealth that draws many to follow them. Asamoah-Gyadu goes on to say, “Charismatic church leaders therefore present themselves and are so seen as the benchmark of God’s prosperity” (p. 208). Gathogo (2011) has this to say,

In March 2011 Mrs Kathy Kiuna’s Mercedes Benz was featured in the Kenyan media as one of the most expensive and luxurious cars in Kenya. While the reason for featuring Mrs Kiuna's car in the media could have been meant to portray the church leaders in a negative way, the reverse is more obvious – as Christians would also want to see their leaders leading stable lives (p. 10).

Literature presents the value shown by the prosperity preachers to their followers as material wealth and the followers are comfortable with that.

Globally it is easy to find millionaire prosperity preachers. In 2007 US, several came under investigation by the Federal Government. As mentioned in a blog post those prosperity gospel preachers included Paula White, Kenneth Copeland, Creel Dollar, Eddie Long, Binny Hinn, and Joyce Meyers (My Footsteps in the River of Time 2007). What does this say about the values these prosperity preachers both globally and locally hold?

4.5.6 Literature related to Research Question Six

Research Question Six asked: What motivates the spread of the prosperity gospel throughout Nairobi, Kenya?

Chitando writing in *Prophets, Profits and the Bible in Zimbabwe* says that one of the ways the prosperity gospel has spread in his country is through music. He says,

The theme of prosperity features prominently in gospel music produced by the Pentecostal stable, which also happens to dominate the gospel music scene in Zimbabwe. Various artists have echoed the declarations by the prophets that those who give generously will be rewarded by God (p. 102).

Togarasei (2011) writing on the topic also mentions music. He writes,

Thus according to this gospel, getting rich is seen as God's will and an outward manifestation of his blessings. One only needs to have faith in God through Jesus and blessings will follow. The doctrine is aptly captured by the Nigeria singer, Uche, in a song which has come to be popularly known as 'Double, double'. According to the lyrics of the song, God is a good God who, when you believe in him, doubles your money, houses, cars and everything you have (p. 339).

Music as a very important activity in African society can foster the spread of the prosperity gospel. Chapter Five discusses this more in-depth.

Another feature of the prosperity gospel, which is also said to promote its teachings, are testimonies. Gbote and Kgatla (2014) write this crediting Moyo,

Testimony is another feature in which believers testify to the manifestation of God's power...Some testified of being healed, or findings a husband, or getting a better job, new houses, and so on. These blessing are attributed to the fact that the prophets prophesied during previous services for a successful material and spiritual life, and for complying with the prophet's call to sow a faithful seed (Moyo 2012)(p. 7).

Asamoah-Gyadu (2009) states this in his article on media and religion,

(I)t is worthy of note that the charismatic ministries, as they are popularly called in Ghana, have completely transformed the African religious landscape partly through their innovative appropriation of modern media technologies and forms. For both the producers and consumers of these media materials, they possess a certain sacramental value in which physical things are conduits for ontological graces... they innovatively utilise new media in fascinating ways, to mediate the "anointing" of the Holy Spirit. Words, texts and images of the anointed of God, when reduced to print or captured on various audiovisual storage systems, are believed to possess the same powers that inspired their initial oral delivery (p. 132-133).

Not only is the media in its various forms helping the spread of the prosperity gospel, but also people have come to see power is associated with hearing certain teachings and that by such they will be empowered. Parsitau (2008) made the case for transformational role that Gospel music has had on the Kenyan culture. She writes,

Gospel music has flourished in a dominant Christian environment to make a mark in the country's public space. It has also invaded homes, market-stalls, offices and public transport as gospel music is heard playing in most of these places. It has

grown in popularity and significance and is played on radio, television, on the streets, churches, shops and even bars at ear-deafening levels thanks to modern technology (p. 67).

Parsitau deals particularly with the impact of Gospel music in politics and as a social transformational tool in the article, but as Gathogo's article (2011) noted, prosperity gospel preachers have moved into that political arena. They will use whatever they can to influence their followers or to gain more. Why not use Gospel music with its heavy emotional and spiritual impact on its listeners?

4.6.1 Literature related to Assumption One

Assumption One states: Health and wealth are considered part of the normal experience of an African's life and if they are not experiencing such, there is disharmony in their world.

In connection with Assumption One, the expectation in life for the African is prosperity or fortune. To experience otherwise is an indication of an invisible problem that has made itself visibly felt. Magesa (1998) points that out when he notes, "For African Religion, therefore, misfortune or affliction point to the presence of anger somewhere in the visible or invisible world. The purpose of divination is to establish and identify the source of the anger and why it has come about" (p.210). Mwikamba and Ifedha (2015) state,

In the traditional African society, Gbote et al, (2014) reckons that, an individual or community that pleases the 'Supreme Being' is assured of wealth, happiness, health and general progress in the society. But, there are dire consequences if religious people or the entire community goes against the will of the supernatural (p. 140).

A core belief is that good comes from God as long as there is harmony in the cosmos. Adeyemo (1979) says, "It emerges clearly that for African peoples, this is a religious universe. Nature in the broadest sense of the word is not an empty impersonal object or phenomenon; rather it is filled with religious significance" (p. 22).

Harries (2013) makes the case that African religion as a whole is pragmatic (p. 4). Because part of religion is that of acquiring blessing—prosperity and health, it is not helpful to try to counter the prosperity gospel by simply exposing its teachings (p. 10). While he does not think positively about the prosperity gospel, he holds that “it is almost an inevitable outcome of the interaction between Africans and Western Christians” (p. 11). For the African there can be no relationship with God without His care and provision and blessings. The African lives in a spiritual universe of which God is the author and sustainer and the African seeks to stay connected to God and his goodness.

Silvanus Oluoch (2012) makes a statement concerning prosperity providing insight into what many African theologians want Africans to understand. He states, “I believe in prosperity as a teaching within the body of the wider Christian teachings, but not as an independent gospel solely based on faith” (p.38).

M. Asamoah (2013) makes reference to Larbi while pointing out that prosperity is a divine blessing in traditional understanding. He writes,

In many parts of Africa, there is still the strong belief that material prosperity or curses are etiologically supernatural, that is, material prosperity is a divine blessing which results from obedience to God, faithful payment of tithes, giving to the poor, working hard, walking in humility, being a responsible family person and so on and so forth (Larbi 2001), (p. 199).

He also notes from his research done in Ghana that his “findings also revealed that participants attribute their material prosperity to God. This means etiologically, God is the originator, the maker and the distributor of good wealth, material blessing to His people” (p. 203). As long as one does his/her part, then the normal flow of things is prosperity in the traditional understanding of how life works.

But what if there is something bad at work? Asamoah-Gyadu (2005) states, “Humankind not only stands in need of the powers and blessings from benevolent beings, but may actually appropriate their protection from evil spiritual forces through covenant relationships with the transcendent benevolent helpers” (p. 17). Mbiti (1969) tells how the help was sought: “Divination links together in its own way, the physical and the spiritual worlds, making it a religious activity. The diviner fulfills an intermediary function ... between the human and the spiritual (p.178).

Literature indicates that Africans do expect health and prosperity as good gifts from God and if they are not experiencing it, then something is blocking it.

Globally, the prosperity gospel movement emphasizes heavily that the Christian should be experiencing only health and prosperity. People are told that is the normal state for the lives of Christians. This teaching is presented over and over by people like Copeland (1974) who wrote; “You must realize that prosperity is the will of God for you. Knowledge of His will brings results. Once you know for sure that something is God’s will, you should not be without it any longer ” (p. 46).

4.6.2 Literature related to Assumption Two

Assumption Two states: Those who attend prosperity gospel churches will not speak negatively about their leaders.

In relation to Assumption Two, Harrison (2005) writes about the Word of Faith movement in contemporary African American religion as an insider having begun his Christian life in a Word of Faith Church. He expands his own experience with in-depth interviews with people, mainly in the movement, but also gives a few people who are no longer in the movement, a voice. The history of the movement in this book expands to include Reverend Ike, Elder Michaux, and Johnnie Coleman, all African Americans, in the 1900s, who started their own movements that were built on the same kind of teachings

Kenyon and Hagin pushed (p. 134-136). Chapter four gives an analysis of respondents experiences which Harrison calls “negotiating the demands” (p. 107). Though he writes this book from a sociological perspective and does not intend to critique the movement, this chapter exposes some harder aspects that members bear.

For example, in writing about the way members of these churches make decisions of how to live their lives he states,

A significant part of what you “know” the Bible teaches is shaped by the present state of revelation from God through the pastor to the congregation. What you “know” the Bible teaches, then, might be subject to change as the pastor’s revelation develops and changes over time. (p. 111)

Reliance upon the pastor’s authority leads people to “continually plant seed, unquestioningly obeying God (through the pastor’s lips)” (p.112). One of his respondents told how she had given \$1000 in order to get a return of \$10,000 but she never received anything back. She blamed herself saying, “Well, maybe it’s because I don’t pay my tithes consistently, you know?” (p. 72).

Because the church members are taught not to give negative confession, people develop a way to find out if they can speak freely with another member. Harrison writes, “There are various ways venting networks emerge ... to determine whether they can trust each other with disclosure of their true feelings” (p. 117). One way he mentioned is by checking a person’s reaction to whether or not the other person did not attend a church meeting because attendance at every meeting is expected (p. 117-118). Another way is by a church member saying to another, “You don’t have to use positive confession with me, you can speak freely” (p. 118).

He concludes his book by calling the Word of Faith movement a “type of ‘poor people’s movement’” (p. 148). This was not written to justify the movement. Harrison

points out that its founders were generally poor with little education and they desired more than what they could get from their situations in life (p. 148). The message of the movement is one that says no matter who you are you are entitled to be rich and healthy and it gives them a faith formula to try and get whatever they want (p.148-149). It liberates, according to Harrison.

Bishau (2013) writes of his findings, “prosperity teachers cultivate authoritarian organizations and that leaders attempt to control the lives of adherents by claiming divinely bestowed authority” (p. 9). Because the followers would not want to be disrespectful or evidencing a lack of faith, the followers would not speak in a negative way or question the prosperity preacher. Mwikamba and Ifedha (2015) write this about the prosperity gospel in Nairobi, “Most believers would like their preachers to live well, yet they silently criticize how they are exploited by being expected to offer generous donations” (p. 139). Literature does indicate that people are hesitant to speak against a prosperity preacher and may or may not necessarily approve of all the wealth the preachers are displaying to their congregants.

4.6.3 Literature related to Assumption Three

Assumption Three states: More women than men embrace the prosperity gospel, but the leaders are mainly men.

Not much literature focused on this assumption as to whether or not more women than men are embracing the prosperity gospel. However, in connection with Assumption Three, Ongong’ a and Akaranga (2015) show that according to their findings, many of those attending those prosperity churches come from lower income urban areas with the majority of the members of the churches under scrutiny for their research being women (p. 203, 204). Parsitau and Mwaura (2010) highlight two big name Kenyan women ministers in their chapter entitled “Gender Dynamics” in Religion Crossing Borders but Parsitau and Mwaura are not necessarily dealing with the whether or not more women than men

embrace the prosperity gospel (p. 196-202). Their main focus in the chapter according to them was as they write, “A significant characteristic of Kenyan Neo-Pentecostalism is the number of women who are increasingly assuming roles as founders of ministries and churches both locally and in the diaspora” (p. 205).

4.6.4 Literature related to Assumption Four

Assumption Four states: Special objects, such as water or oil, are believed to have power instilled in them from the prosperity preacher and are given to a congregation member to use for healing or success.

Relating to Assumption Four, Mbiti (1969) writes, “According to African peoples, humanity lives in a religious universe, so that natural phenomena and objects are intimately associated with God... African ontology is firmly anthropocentric; and this makes humanity look at God and nature from the point of his relationship with them” (p. 48). Because of the association with God and prosperity gospel preachers claiming a special anointing from God, the objects they bless are therefore empowered and useful for the followers.

Asamoah-Gyadu states, “Mature Christians, it is thought, can deliver themselves through what is expressed as ‘self-ministration’, a process that includes denouncing the demon through prayer and anointing oneself with olive oil. Most people, however, need to see an expert” (p. 187). He tells the story of a couple who suspected that evil spirits were keeping customers away from their business. They contacted a pastor “who, after ‘deliverance prayer’, anointed the premises with olive oil. Hours after this ritual, it is claimed, potential tenants came rushing, some even offering to pay more than the asking price” (p. 168-169).

Because objects are thought to possess special power from the Man or Woman of God, people will go where they can either buy or are given the objects. Journalist Wafawarova (2015) has this to say,

Some pastors and prophets now pour libations on the ground as a way of enhancing church growth, and bottles of oil, sand, water and other such substances are given to believers as tools for bringing the much sought after blessing. In Zimbabwe some of this oil has been sold as church merchandise, alongside hand bangles, handkerchiefs and similar objects. The followers of the charlatans merchandising God's blessing are always reminded that their promised windfall will not materialise unless they continue to give money to the church (p. 1).

In a 2010 article in the Daily Nation, Brisk Business for Cash-for-Prayers Churches, this story is given:

For the five months and three weeks that she was a member of the church, Ms Karani spent Sh17,000 on anointing oil, Sh5,000 on prayers for a husband, and Sh14,000 for prayers for a job. She also spent about Sh18,000 to buy 'fortune soaps', 'miracle fruits', and 'white divine clothing'.

"Before I realised that I was being taken for a ride, I had paid more than Sh50,000 in less than six months. A small hotel I had tried to start after losing my job collapsed because I used all the profit to pay for prayers.

But nothing changed in my life. I never got a man to marry me and I am still jobless" (p. 3).

If these objects were not believed to have real power in them, then people would not have been tempted to buy them.

It is not a new phenomenon to ascribe power to objects. Rosenblatt writing about the American prosperity gospel in The Agony of Deceit, edited by Horton, has this to say

about those objects found in the American prosperity gospel context: “It is quite possible that the magical powers attributed to the purchase of relics (a martyr’s tooth, a piece of a cross, a patch of cloth from Jesus’ robe) is parallel to the offering of modern day prayer cloths, ‘holy oil’ and similar gimmicks” (p.110) Literature verifies the assumption that people believe prosperity preachers can transfer power to objects. The prosperity preachers themselves claim that ability following Oral Roberts (1969) who claimed:

I know that my hands cannot heal. Only the hands of God can do that. But my hands serve as a point of contact for releasing my faith for the healing of the people... The moment another – child of God lays hands upon you and anoints you with oil, release your faith. It is a point of contact (p. 10).

Literature verifies that Assumption Four regarding the transfer of power to objects is alive and well in the African Worldview and in prosperity gospel teachings.

4.6.5 Literature related to Assumption Five

Assumption Five states: These prosperity gospel preachers are believed to have been specially contacted by God and given the job of transmitting health and wealth to people.

In relation to Assumption Five, Samen (2014) reveals that people believe prosperity preachers have been given special power to bring forth wealth, and states “Pastors (are) substituted for fetishes and traditional practitioners” (p. 2). In his article Prosperity Gospel and Africa, Samen briefly relates the history of the movement from the 1970’s Charismatic renewal. He mentions the Brenton Woods Institution structural re-adjustments of the 1990s, which did not work to help the poor despite that being its objective. Consequently, people became disillusioned with the way economies were working.

Revivalist churches mainly from Pentecostal backgrounds sprang up in large numbers (p.2). According to the author it is difficult to tell how many members are in a particular church at any time because there is so much movement from one church to

another in search of blessings (p. 2). He notes that these churches transitioned from being a-political to having visions that included being involved in the government and now politicians know they can count on a large percentage of members to vote their way (p. 3). In that sense, people could see prosperity preachers as some sort of liberator from their political or governmental stresses.

The strategies such churches employ, according to Samen, include giving the members a sense that they are chosen by God for positions of special influence in the world, in society around them, and in their community (p.4). These preachers using Bible verses to back up their ideas tell the congregants they will have no end of wealth and power to overcome anything. Of course, the followers are told they must claim their power using the right words (p. 4). The members are also given a sense that they are entitled to wealth and that “the overcoming of disease and occult forces (mystical power)” is part of their day-to-day living (p. 4). People then would have to believe that prosperity preachers are heralds of truth and hope.

At one point he states, “The aim of the ‘theologians’ of prosperity is disassociating man from sin. He does not deal with his own sin but that of Satan” (p. 6). Instead of getting people to deal with their own problems, they must trust the words of the prosperity gospel preacher to set them free. Samen laments, “These cults, by capturing African intellectual potential, have placed in hibernation most African academics and researchers. They have become puppets in the hands of gurus” (p.7). His concern is to expose what he believes are damaging ways of thinking that keep people down. In this sense people believe these prosperity preachers have a special task and because of that people are led into prosperity gospel teachings.

Recent adverts given out to residents in Nairobi announced, a “Covenant Day of Financial Fortune Service” with the byline that “God will be terminating all Financial

Crisis, Discomforts, Bankruptcy (sic), Dryness, Lacks, Poverty & Disappointment.” Those who would attend were told to bring their cheque books, ATM cards, business cards, CVs and other such items. Those items would get the anointing necessary to “terminate” all problems. Secondly another advert announced a “Special Prophetic Invasion to Nairobi.” This “prophetic empowerment summit” as it was called had the theme: “Faith Works Wonders” with a little line saying, “we earnestly (sic) expect you and believe a Life transforming encounter awaits you.” What is important in these events is the prophet of God who will anoint whatever is needed for you to have your prosperity flow and your life transformation.

In watching an on-line church service it was evident that people were serious about the bishop’s words as they were frantically taking notes during the sermon. The house was packed. The people were quick to follow the instructions of the bishop whether it was to shout or declare, to stamp or to sit on the enemies. People were raising their hands and saying, “Yes! Yes!” as the bishop preached. In another on-line church service at the close of the service the bishop shouted, “Rise up and receive your blessing for the week. Say, ‘Lord, load me with benefits all this week.’” He goes on and shouts, “In Jesus’ name I declare this week blessed for you. Wherever your enemies are gathered God will frustrate all their plans. I declare supernatural supply for you. I prophetically release money into your bank account. The days of hospital stay are short for you. Everyone barren in nine months time will have a child.” People have their hands raised as if to receive the words.

The bishop shouts louder, “I bless you in the name of the Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. I bless you in the name of my father Bishop Oyedepo. Whatever you do this week will prosper in the name of Jesus.” He continues for about ten minutes more before the offering is given.

The literature and the media show that there is a belief that power comes from the anointed man or woman of God. Globally, prosperity gospel preachers actually claim to have this power from God. Furtick, a young prosperity preacher had this to say one Sunday morning as he was starting to preach: “This will be the most helpful thing I will say this decade. Wow! This better be good Lord” (Pastor Steven Furtick 2016). This indicated that he had just received a revelation and he was telling God that the revelation had “better be good”. This kind of display of confidence convinces those hearing that the man or woman of God has a direct and open line to God.

4.6.6 Literature related to Assumption Six

Assumption Six states: Media contributes to the spread of the prosperity gospel. What are included in this assumption are all forms of media that aid in communication.

Abioje (2011) takes a look at the role of media in his article, A Critique of Commercialisation of Religion in Nigeria. He uses a comparative study to look at the effect of the media in African Traditional Religion, Christianity, and Islam. He concludes that the media has helped to commercialize religion because of the way media is able to present as he says, “gimmicks and manipulations as reality...particularly in film and television choreography” (p. 71) and he goes on to point out that many of those commercializing religion do not address issues of poverty or political or social issues (p.72).

The flip side to the influence of the media in helping to peddle their religious wares is that media can also be an avenue of exposure (p.73). He comments in the article, “This study discovered that successful merchants of religion do not have to indulge in armed-robbery” (p.64) but instead have the tools of media, “the television in particular” (p.64). Furthermore, no religion in Nigeria is “immune to commercialization” (p.65). Abioje ends the article encouraging Nigerians to be watchful and discerning concerning the commercialization of religion in Nigeria (p.74).

Soko (2014) in In Search of Health and Wealth, edited by Kroesbergen, writes, Since electronic churches use the radio, television, Internet and open crusade revivals, their influence is great in our society. Whilst we can claim to be poor in our definition of poverty, ironically everyone has access to the media. In urban areas nearly every Christian has a radio, a television set, a cell phone, and likely even Internet access, all of which are direct tools that electronic churches use to reach out to their audiences...

These factors, and certainly others as well, provide the backdrop to the emerging prosperity gospel across Africa (p. 93-94).

Bishau references Coleman in his comment on the way the prosperity gospel has spread. He writes,

Coleman examines the process by which Charismatic Christianity turned the Christian movement into a globalised faith through electronic media such as television, videos and the Internet. These media were incorporated into Christian worship and that made services lively. During these live services the prosperity gospel was preached and the more popular the services became the more rapidly the Prosperity Gospel was spread (p. 4).

Gbote and Kgatla (2014) say this, "Moreover, to interact and integrate its belief amongst the people the contemporary media are used as a mode of communication" (p. 5). From the beginning of its inception, whatever media was available, the prosperity gospel teachers took advantage of using that media form.

Mwikamba and Ifehda in researching the prosperity gospel in Nairobi write this:

There is hardly any prosperity church that is without a formidable presence in the media...It is also reckoned that all leading Bishops are televangelists who compete for space and membership in the open arena for airwave subscription. The

Prosperity Gospel churches have penetrated far and deep establishing branches and creating networks even in the most remote areas of the country and overseas (p. 141).

The literature indicates that media has helped spread the prosperity gospel, even in Nairobi. When you look at some of these on-line videos and check how many people have viewed the prosperity preacher the count can be hundreds or thousands of viewers. This verifies that Assumption Six is valid.

4.7 Literature related to Limitations and Scope

This research was limited to Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya. The research was purposeful in that it aimed to target those who were in the prosperity gospel church or who had experience with the prosperity gospel in some way.

The scope has been multi-ethnic but mainly Kenyans living in Nairobi. Other Africans have participated in interviews and the questionnaires. African women and men from age 18 and up were the informants. The data scope includes besides gender, the variables of age, education, marital status and employment status. The scope of this thesis covered churches in Nairobi that have been around for a few years teaching the prosperity gospel. All of the churches do not use Kiswahili exclusively for their services and much of their services are in English.

Locally, in the literature available, regarding the scope and limitations of this thesis, there are three articles focusing on the prosperity gospel written by scholars living and working in Nairobi. Those articles include: Ongong'a and Akaranga's (2015) treatment on the topic entitled: Prosperity Gospel in Kenyan Urban Centres: Come, See, Pay and Receive your Miracles and Healing; Mwikamba and Ifedha's (2015) article entitled, Blessed Are the Rich and Prosperous For Theirs Is the Kingdom of the World: The Kenyan Challenge; and Gathogo's (2011) article entitled, The Challenge of Money and Wealth in

Some Pentecostal Churches in East Africa. Other Kenyan scholars such as Parsitau and Mwaura who have written on various aspects of Kenyan Christianity which shed light on the Kenyan practice of the prosperity gospel in some fashion. Along with the contributions from these and other Kenyan scholars focusing on Nairobi are news articles found in Daily Nation or other newspapers that serve Kenya.

Two Kenyan pastors, Michael Otieno Maura and Ken Mbugua and one American, John Piper (2012) teamed up to write Gaining the World: Losing the Soul. This book addresses many of the teachings that are presented in prosperity preaching churches and makes an appeal to Christians not to be taken in by what the writers call "false teaching". Mbugua calls the prosperity gospel a "dangerous message" (p.10) because it pretends to have good news but is what he calls a "false gospel" (p. 10). Maura shares that while he was pastoring a church in rural Kenya, a friend from college came to visit him. After hearing him preach his friend told him that he would never be rich (31). When Maura asked him why, his friend replied, "You are still applying homiletics principles in your preaching. Drop that and start taking one verse, repeating it over and over again and then directing people to give (p. 30).

Literature demonstrates that the Limitations and Scope are of interest to others in Nairobi and that Kenyan scholars have made contributions in exploring the phenomenon. Furthermore, literature indicates the validity of the Thesis Topic; Problem Statement; Hypothesis; Significance of the Thesis; six Research Questions and Assumptions. The literature validates what the thesis argues, which is, that because there is an African Worldview operating in the hearts and lives of selected people in Nairobi, Kenya, they find the prosperity gospel attractive, are either part of churches that teach the prosperity gospel or they have had experience in such churches. Chapter Five synthesizes data and literature and then presents recommendations for consideration.

Chapter Five

Discussion

5.0 Introduction

[T]he fastest growing movement within Pentecostalism has been called the Prosperity Gospel or health and wealth churches. Sometimes this emphasis has permeated churches associated with one of the classical Pentecostal denominations, but most often it is characteristic of independent churches and indigenous denominations (Miller 2007, p. 29).

This chapter synthesizes the field research data in Chapter 3 and the literature reviewed in Chapter 4 and presents the synthesis in discussion form. It explains the beliefs, motivations, and values in the African worldview that link to the prosperity gospel teachings and reveals how those beliefs, motivations, and values facilitate an attraction to the churches in Nairobi that are teaching the prosperity gospel. It brings to a close the argument that the African Worldview and the prosperity gospel converge and this is demonstrated by the phenomenon of the attraction to the prosperity gospel churches. If it were not for an operant African Worldview, the prosperity gospel would not find a home here in Nairobi, Kenya.

The discussion takes structure by looking at the implications and interpretations of those findings in light of the Thesis Topic, Problem Statement, Hypothesis and Significance mentioned in Chapter 1. Then the discussion focuses on each Research Question and Assumption, and Limitations and Scope from Chapter 3 and 4. The synthesis of the research findings and the literature reviewed will note ideas in which there is agreement and areas where there is a gap not addressed in the literature.

Also included in the discussion are the researcher's own ideas regarding the various points of the discussion. Lastly this chapter includes the sections Conclusion; Summary; Recommendations; Recommendations for the Reader; and finally Recommendations for Further Study.

The field data analysis showed that the idea of an African worldview facilitating an attraction to the prosperity gospel was understood by almost everyone who took part in the research. In brief, the all-encompassing belief found in the African worldview is that of a Good God who gives good things to His children and makes it possible through a mediator or a medium to grant power for a full life. That is accommodated by the prosperity gospel, which teaches that God must give health and wealth to His children richly in material fashion because of Jesus' death on the cross. While there are differences as are noted in the discussion, the broad idea of a Good God giving good things is the first step in the attraction.

Motivations, though many, can be categorized as mainly focusing upon community, either how to live in community in a way that elicits respect or how to live in community in a way that demonstrates God's presence. Values also center around community—a good marriage, family including extended family, job that makes full provisions, and the health with which to accomplish all these things. The prosperity gospel churches in some way provide an avenue for the fulfillment of these desires/motivations and values.

Locally, Mwikamba and Ifedha (2015) make a powerful statement, which needs to be heeded, regarding the situation in the African church and the importance in addressing the prosperity gospel. They write,

The Christian church is large and too important to ignore, this is why what happens in the church affects many people across the world. The church has

been at the forefront of revolution and development throughout the ages. This is why, in Africa the contemporary research on Christianity focuses on mainly inculturation and Prosperity Gospel. It is essential that Christians need to understand and minimize the controversies that this subject arouses... The typical spiritual aspects of the Prosperity Gospel are not significant to the followers. There is least emphasis on the biblical teaching of suffering; instead, emphasis is laid on health and wealth acquisition (p. 138, 140).

Note the statement, “The typical spiritual aspects of the Prosperity Gospel are not significant to the followers” (p. 140). As this discussion suggests more has been written regarding the theological side of the prosperity gospel in Africa and less on the anthropological side. It makes sense, as the prosperity gospel is a theological issue. But as Mwikamba and Ifedha point out it is not the theology that draws people. That has been the concern of this thesis—the African worldview behind the attraction to the prosperity gospel. The research findings, both in the field and the literature, thus revealed that the African worldview has a strong influence on the attraction to the prosperity gospel. The research attempted to cover five variables in looking at the thesis but was unable to really dig into the understanding of those who have only a Non-formal education and the Age Group 3 population was smaller than anticipated for the purposes of the study.

5.1 Implication and Interpretations of the Thesis Topic as garnered from the Results and Literature Review

The Thesis Topic, the Prosperity Gospel and its attraction, interested people in the field and appears an increasingly popular topic with scholars. For most scholars though, the focus is more on what is going on in the prosperity gospel, such as exploitation of the poor, than what are the beliefs behind the attraction. This thesis

topic concerning the prosperity gospel explored the beliefs, values, and motivations in the African Worldview that are behind the attraction to the prosperity gospel among people in Nairobi.

The definition for the prosperity gospel in this thesis is the teaching that Jesus Christ's death on the cross secures health and wealth for Christians and such a life is the normal state. The prosperity gospel itself has as its first and really primary aim, prosperity and healing, and not salvation for one's soul. Such teaching include however, that it is essential that you acknowledge faith in Jesus Christ before you can get all the riches He has acquired by dying on the cross.

The phenomenon of the prosperity gospel has stirred both Catholics and Protestants to examine what is happening to their churches as many of their members are leaving for greener pastures. The Lausanne Movement (2010), an ecumenical organization started decades ago enlisted its African Chapter of the Lausanne Theology Working Group to assess it and issue statements regarding the phenomenon. The Group has even published statements on it (p.1).

People in Kenya enjoy talking about God, which made it easy to discuss the thesis topic at points. Everyone had something to say about the topic because it is so much in the culture here. You cannot move around in the city without reminders that there is somewhere where you can meet with God and have a visitation for your miracle.

The literature and the field research data confirmed that it is an important, though controversial topic. Some Kenyans scholars are taking up the task more recently, such as Ongong'a and Akaranga (2015); Mwikamba and Ifedha (2015); and Gathogo (2011), Parsitau and Mwaura (2010). West Africans scholars, Asamoah-Gyadu (2009, 2010, 2014), Akoko (2007), Akper (2007) have been looking at the

specific topic of the prosperity gospel much longer and thus have produced more literature on the topic.

This thesis brings the focus of the prosperity gospel in Kenya upon the beliefs, motivations, and values behind its attraction to people living in Nairobi. Concern exists among many pastors in the Nairobi community regarding the spread of the prosperity gospel (Rev. Wellington Mutiso, the general secretary of the Evangelical Alliance of Kenya, and Dr. David Githii, the moderator of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, for example as noted in the Daily Nation article by Some and Muiruri). Some literature has been written seeking to expose the theological dangers of the movement. However, it does not appear that the effort has been made to understand the mind of the congregant who is attracted to the prosperity gospel. This is taking into account the worldview of the congregant but also the personality of the congregant. There is need for that. While this research does not focus on the psychology of those involved in the prosperity gospel, it does take into account that the respondents are individuals within community with each personality responding to or determining his her own actions. In African Psychology in Historical Perspective (1996) Akbar writes,

African psychology views personality as purposeful in its emergence, harmonious with its ecology and consistent with the laws of life. The human being is neither a passive agent shaped by his environment totally, nor is he an exalted isolated god with goalless freedom (p. 30).

This thesis is arguing that the African Worldview resonates in some way with the prosperity gospel and that can be discovered by looking at the beliefs, values, and motivations found in individual Africans.

5.2 Implication and Interpretations of the Problem Statement as garnered from the Results and Literature Review

Problem Statement: An interesting phenomenon is occurring in Kenya—the rapid growth and proliferation of churches that are heralding what is being called the prosperity gospel, but disagreement exists as to what are the motivations, values, and beliefs behind the African's attraction to the prosperity gospel churches.

Literature available from Kenyan scholars Gathogo (2011), Mwikamba and Ifedha (2015), and Ongong'a and Akaranga (2015) Parsitau and Mwaura (2010) demonstrated that the phenomenon has captured the interest of researchers who are looking at the phenomenon through a variety of angles. The focus of those articles was not on the motivations, values and beliefs behind the attraction to the prosperity gospel. Rather, the articles offered important information on what the phenomenon looks like in the Nairobi urban setting and something of its historical background in Kenya and in the case of Parsitau and Mwaura gender issues were at the forefront.

The field research data confirmed that many people are attracted to these prosperity gospel churches but they gave differing reasons for their attraction to these churches. Some people said the attraction was because of poverty, some because of the media influence, others because of dynamic personalities, and some because of the African worldview and the way the prosperity gospel uses symbols similar to what is in traditional practices. However the analyzed data uncovered particular ideas regarding beliefs, motivations and values behind the attraction. The first in regard to beliefs: There is the overarching belief that God is good and that God's goodness is experienced through prosperity and health. God gives power to people so that they might live a prosperous life but God also gives power to special people who can then transfer power to objects for people to use for experiencing prosperity and health. The

data revealed an underlying theory that power makes prosperity possible. Power, which originates from God, is mediated through specific people and specific objects, in order to effect prosperity by promoting good forces while blocking evil forces. Power is for assisting human beings to actualize their purposes, which include prosperity not impoverishment. Thus power and mediation are an integral part of the belief. The prosperity gospel offers a similar framework.

In regard to values revealed in the analyzed data: Fulfilling one's part in the community, living an upright life that affirms community values, and for other members in the community to see the blessing of God on one's life are essential. In a way, the prosperity gospel offers guidelines for the working out of those values.

Regarding motivations besides the desire for riches that was said to be the basic behind many going to these prosperity gospel churches, other motivations that appeared were the desire to keep harmony in the community; the desire to do what is expected in responsibility to the community; the desire to move up the social ladder; and the desire for respect in the eyes of the community. The prosperity gospel offers avenues and guidelines to fulfill those motivations.

5.3 Implication and Interpretations of the Hypothesis as garnered from the Results and Literature Review

The basic hypothesis is the attraction to churches preaching the prosperity gospel arises because those teachings resonate, subconsciously or informally, with the motivations, values, and beliefs of the African understanding of evil and in the centrality of God as the source of all blessings in daily life.

Both the field research data and the literature strongly confirm this hypothesis. Respondents were quite vocal about it even saying things like "Prosperity gospel appeals to African spirituality. We give to the god to obtain favor. That is why it is

prevalent” (cf. App. B. no. 44). No one in the field would argue that there was no relationship between the African worldview and the prosperity gospel teachings. To them it seemed very obvious. Respondents would say that when they were born they were born into an African home thereby the African worldview is operational from the beginning. This way of thinking was formed from the cultural upbringing even if it was often not specifically discussed. It was caught more than taught, as the saying goes. Ideas are often transferred in a culture by events or by the use of life’s situations.

Anim (2010) pointed out that the prosperity gospel in Ghana is seen, “more importantly in terms of the pre-existing thought patterns and values, which underpin African traditional religions and cosmology” (p. 67-68). He is not alone in pointing to the understandings behind the African worldview. Other West Africans in particular such as, Agazue (2013), Asamoah-Gyadu (2010), Wuaku (2012) and others make the point. In regard to the literature available for East African, the emphasis was not so much on the belief system behind the attraction as it was on the phenomenon itself.

5.4 Implication and Interpretations of the Significance as garnered from the Results and Literature Review

This thesis will be significant in its contribution to literature with its field-based approach rather than a historical or theological approach. The phenomenon of the prosperity gospel has brought challenges to the contemporary setting African Christians and the Church are facing. Nairobi holds an important place in the global Christian movement (Shaw, 2010, p. 180). Perhaps that fact has not been recognized by scholars and theologians, as it needs to be though there are certainly scholars watching the theological development in Nairobi or the secularization as Shaw points to the 1997 study of Shorter and Onyanha

The analyzed data revealed beliefs, motivations, and values in the African worldview that find a resting place in the prosperity gospel. This should be of interest to local pastors who are trying to reach their congregants with the Gospel of Jesus Christ that says Jesus died on the cross to save sinners that they might live for God. This thesis can help local pastors to compassionately understand why their congregants may be drawn to the prosperity gospel and then seek ways to help these congregants understand what the Gospel of Christ means for them.

The significance of this thesis will also be in the contribution it makes to further field based research being done specifically in the Kenyan setting. The importance of the African voice in this cannot be ignored. The field is speaking. Not the researcher. A Kenyan researcher will not have the handicap this researcher had of being a foreigner. There were times, due to being a foreigner, I was not welcomed into the church to do any kind of study despite the necessary permissions and allowing the pastor to see the questions that would be asked of the participants. Hopefully other researchers will seek to remove different barriers that might exist despite their being Kenyan, barriers like a social or educational status. If people are made to feel inferior, they will not talk regardless of nationality or religious affiliation.

Mugambi (2001) says it well if we are considering what being an African, a Christian and the attraction to the prosperity gospel means:

Christianity understood as Gospel, Good News, is not an ideology. In other words, it can enrich all culture, all ideologies, all social structures. At the same time, it can purify all, as salt, light, fire. Africans, therefore, do not have to choose between being Christian and being African. They can be both Christian and African at the same time (p. 22).

5.5.1 Implications and Interpretations of the Research Question One as garnered from the Results and Literature Review

Research Question One asked: What are some of the intrinsic African traditional beliefs that lend acceptance to the prosperity gospel?

The findings derived from the field research data revealed that Africans living in Nairobi hold very strongly to the foundational belief in a Good God who is all-powerful and who only does good for his creation. The good that is normally experienced by his children includes health and prosperity. Furthermore, part of that foundational belief is the understanding that God gives power in order for health and prosperity to be experienced. That power can be obtained by doing the right things or avoiding the wrong things. That power can also be obtained from a special person who has been given the ability to impart power to other people or to objects. Figure D1 shows the general process (cf. App. D. no.1). If for any reason, a person is not experiencing health and prosperity, then there is a way to detect the cause and remove it. Removing it involves employing those with knowledge and power. This points to the need for a mediator, or an empowered medium, especially during times of difficulty. The literature also confirmed this foundational African belief.

The field research data confirmed that there are deep-rooted African traditional beliefs that accommodate the prosperity gospel. Africans are very religious and their lives are lives of spirituality. The data revealed that Africans, especially in the Nairobi setting, are deeply spiritual. For that reason, being part of a church, where one can worship corporately, takes priority. That is seen by the number of people in churches on Sundays, and even other days of the week. Worship needs to be experienced along with other community members demonstrating the need to connect with the community in regard to the outward practice of belief in and worship of God.

That does not mean individuals do not have their own personal times of worshipping God. With so much time spent in church and so much focus on the event, an opportunity exists for church leaders to influence these congregants in whatever way they may decide. One non-prosperity gospel preacher tells people not to go to just any church when they move to a new area because they may be exposed to prosperity gospel teaching unknowingly (cf. App. A. no. 5).

According to the findings, Africans in Nairobi hold very closely to an understanding of God as good and above reproach and that as Creator He only desires to see good happen in the lives of those He has created. This belief was unaffected by age, gender, education level, marital status, or employment. This belief opens the door for an attraction to the prosperity gospel because of the emphasis in the prosperity gospel that Jesus died to give God's children health and wealth with certain people called to bring the ability to get wealth and health to others.

Stemming from the belief in a Creator who always cares for humanity is also the affirmation that when a person does not experience good, such as health and prosperity, God has allowed the blockage for some reason. Though a high percentage of Africans living in Nairobi believe God allows the blockage of health and wealth for his reasons, data showed that in the population surveyed, women and those without employment are less likely to affirm that it is God's will for them to be experiencing a lack of health and prosperity as shown in Chapter 3, Tables 3.1 and 3.3. Women feel the responsibility to help their family members enjoy and experience a comfortable life. Those without employment are motivated to look for work because they do not believe they can remain in such a state, where there is no respect, as part of God's will.

Women and the unemployed thus are more likely to be drawn to the prosperity

gospel teaching, which emphasizes doing certain things in order to get guaranteed blessings from God. In prosperity gospel teaching, giving money is crucial if one is to obtain blessings of health and prosperity. Yes, prayers and other rituals are involved but money is central to facilitate the rituals. If someone is not employed, then it will be harder to find money in which to put the power in motion for the blessing. Women may also have greater difficulty finding money if they are dependent upon their husbands or other family members. There is a strong emphasis on money as the catalyst in the prosperity gospel teaching ensuring the blessing of health or wealth, though the claim is that it is faith that brings it about. Faith is supposed to be the medium to bring about the solution. The money given is considered proof of the faith necessary to get the goods. Essentially then, without money there is no faith. And in a way, money is power. The giver gives up the little bit of power he/she has to gain more power. Those without work and women, many of whom are dependent upon others for financial means, somehow manage to find a little money to prove their faith. Sadly, they generally find they have to repeat the process, as the first time the money (faith) did not work.

Marital status and age were not determiners of whether one would find the prosperity gospel teaching attractive. Initially the prosperity gospel is attractive to any age, gender, or status due to the heavy emphasis upon a Good God who gives health and prosperity to his children, which is a core tenant of the African worldview. However, while the prosperity gospel says health and wealth are always to be experienced because Jesus died on the cross for that reason, the African worldview leaves room for suffering and difficulty as being allowed by God.

At this point in the belief, there is a divergence where women and those who are not employed are less likely to believe a lack of health or wealth has been allowed

by God, than are men; the employed; any age group; any marital status; and any education level. This makes them more attracted than the other variable categories to the prosperity gospel teachings that guarantee that if you do certain things (and money must be involved) then you will get what you want from God. Regarding Education Level, though the data collected from the questionnaires was not enough to verify it, many people in the field commented that education level has an impact on what people believe with those with less education less likely to believe that a lack of health or wealth has been allowed by God. This would be an area of further research, particularly in the rural areas where there are more people with in-formal or primary education only. Data confirmed, however that women and those without work are the likely ones to embrace prosperity gospel teachings that give their followers rituals and practices with an assurance to obtain their goals of health and wealth.

Moreover, it is not out of accord with deep-seated African beliefs that particular rituals will assist them with obtaining power in order to live a life of harmony. The question comes in as to when a person is to do those rituals. If the other population categories are accepting difficulties as part of God's will, they will be less likely to move toward finding a solution in rituals prescribed by the prosperity gospel or even in traditional culture. Generally speaking in traditional culture, a solution is sought first before declaring the difficulty to be the will of God. In the context of the prosperity gospel, there is never such a declaration as one is immediately encouraged to sow a seed, that is, give some money, with the aim to get a guaranteed solution to a problem while at the same time prosperity gospel preachers will issue a warning to their followers to stay away from traditional solutions.

Additionally, the specialist or the one who has the solution to the problem has been replaced in the prosperity gospel here in Nairobi by the prosperity preacher who

claims his/her role as dispenser of blessings. Women and those who are not employed are more likely to believe someone in a position of authority due to their socialization to honor those socially above them. For women, this is often the husband and for those without employment, it is those who have work or a title. It is very easy then for women and the unemployed to rely upon the authority of a prosperity preacher, even if that preacher is a woman. Believing that those above you have knowledge and power would help facilitate a person in following the instructions of their superiors, especially if some benefit is supposed to come out of it. Panda mbegu, or plant the seed, is generally the phrase used.

The available literature also confirmed that the prosperity gospel fits very well with some core beliefs in the African worldview and that the rituals involved in the practice of the prosperity gospel either mimic or have similarities to rituals in African Traditional Religion (Isichei, 1995; Magesa, 1997; Asamoah-Gyadu, 2009; Gbote & Kgatla, 2014). But the literature concerning Kenya did not specifically elaborate on those beliefs. Several scholars who are looking at the prosperity gospel and Africa have asserted the idea that the underlying African worldview is behind Africans finding themselves attracted to the prosperity gospel. While there does not seem to be much disagreement that the African worldview makes a way for accepting the prosperity gospel, the exact details of that have not been explored in-depth in the available literature with a few exceptions coming more from West African scholars.

There are those scholars who give specific details of how it looks in their particular context, such as Asamoah-Gyadu (2005, 2009, 2010) who writes concerning Ghana and other West Africans writing about their context. Much of the history in West Africa is said to go back to the 1970s Charismatic movement. In Kenya, that which was laying the groundwork for the spread of the prosperity gospel

was the East African Revival making its impact in the late 1930s and opening the way with Osborn's crusades in the 1950s. Some information on the historical roots of the prosperity gospel in Kenya has been presented in articles while generally scholars address the theological, economical or even social implications of the prosperity gospel to some degree. On the specific focus of this thesis—the African beliefs, motivations and values behind the attraction to the prosperity gospel—not as much has been written. While the overall literature does attest to deeply held African beliefs as part of the attraction, more specifics on exactly how those beliefs held by Africans living in Nairobi are coalescing with the prosperity gospel being taught in the churches here are a bit lacking.

It comes out very strongly in the literature that Africans believe in mystical causality, as Asamoah-Gyadu (2009) calls it, (p. 6) and in the invisible world of power and spirits as well as in the importance in maintaining harmony. Scholars, such as Gbote and Kgatla (2014) have pointed out that prosperity gospel preachers will capitalize on those beliefs and have contextualized the prosperity gospel in a way that makes it very easy for an African to embrace it (p. 4). More literature exists on the West African context and the prosperity gospel than on the Kenyan or East African context in regard to the beliefs behind embracing it. Nevertheless, both the field research data and the literature attest to the foundational African belief in a Good God who is all-powerful, who gives His children health and prosperity as part of the way He cares for them. Furthermore, God gives power in order for health and prosperity to be experienced and that power is obtained by keeping morality as it is understood in the African context and/or when necessary power is obtained through a specialist. Yet more needs to be written specifically on the Kenyan context in regard to those beliefs. This thesis adds something in that regard to the information available. These are also

core emphases in the prosperity gospel teaching that have similarities to the African worldview with the exception that a lack of health and prosperity is easily remedied by faith through sowing a seed. While the African worldview allows for a specialist, it does not generally teach that there is no room for God's will to be done in the context of suffering and disappointment.

5.5.2 Implication and Interpretations of the Research Question Two as garnered from the Results and Literature Review

Research Question Two asked: What motivates prosperity gospel preachers to take up their role as leaders and what motivates people to follow them?

When one moves around in places where the prosperity gospel is being preached and takes a good look at the congregation and the leaders in the movement, it is obvious that those who are following the prosperity gospel teachings have a particular awe for their leaders. The leaders play into the emotional makeup of their followers by encouraging congregants to call them, "Daddy" or "Papa" or "Mama" or "Mother". Certainly that brings into a person's mind a familial type of devotion to the leader. This is an idea that Bishau (2013) presents where he says the prosperity preacher has a "parent ego" and the follower a "child ego" (p. 11). Can anyone ever criticize one's parents? It is a difficult thing, especially in the African setting. By appealing to the emotional side of a person, then a charismatic leader, whether a prosperity preacher or not, is able to endear followers to him/herself and that will bring a loyalty that can at times defy reasoning. It certainly makes it harder to look at the whole picture.

The image presented by the expensive dress of these prosperity preachers and their entrance into the pulpit when it is time to preach indicates status, rank, and authority. What people see in the pulpit is prosperity clothed. They see that the

anointing the prosperity preacher has received is working and is active. The words spoken may not be as important as the image presented, at least initially. First, image captures. Then, titles capture. Finally, words come into play once the emotions and an attitude of respect are put into action in the life of the follower. Yes, now the words spoken will be followed because of the image presented by the authority figure and the respect given to the authority figure. Miller (2007) writes that, “founding pastors of these churches tend to personally enjoy the Prosperity Gospel, sometimes at the expense of the churches’ impoverished members” (p. 29).

In dealing with the question that was asked in the field regarding the motivation of these prosperity preachers to take up their role, the researcher anticipated reluctance from those who are deeply into the prosperity gospel to answer the question. So the original question was not asked and instead it was changed to something like, “Why did your pastor take up the call to become a minister?” That allowed the respondent to relax but some were still hesitant and suspicious. All one needs to do is listen to the many sermons available on-line of the prosperity preachers or to livestream one of their church services to hear the veiled threats to the congregation coming out in a spiritualized form reminding members they are not to touch the Lord’s anointed one. Furthermore, the idea of anointing is prominent in prosperity gospel teaching and is considered the proof of the calling of the prosperity preacher. Nevertheless, the flow of prosperity from God through the anointed prosperity preacher can be blocked if the preacher is also not following God’s principles. Even Oyedepo made the comment in introducing Kenneth Copeland at an event, I’ve kept faith with the things you teach and with the things God reveals to you and it’s working” (The Faith 2016, 2016). This reveals people are anxious to follow

those prosperity preachers whom are seen as actually having prosperity flowing into their lives.

The field data revealed that about half the respondents do believe prosperity gospel preachers are anointed by God and about half of the respondents do not believe these preachers receive any such anointing from God. In exploring that understanding a little further, the field research examined whether or not people believed that these anointed preachers could pass on the anointing in order to help their followers get health and wealth. In looking at the population, the variable, which showed any significance with the belief that these anointed prosperity preachers could pass on that anointing in words or to objects, was education level as shown in Chapter 3, Table 3.4. None of the other variables showed any real significance.

It makes sense that the higher the education level the less likely one is to believe that a prosperity preacher can transfer power to objects. Those with less education would find the idea quite appealing because it is similar to their own understanding of the flow of power and it would be a familiar idea. People generally accept the familiar without much questioning. The further one goes in education, the more one doubts the familiar. Many respondents in the field think that those with lower education levels are more easily taken in by prosperity preachers than those with more education. The problem comes in that once people are following the prosperity gospel, they are involved emotionally and psychologically so trying to teach them how the teachings are failing them will cause an emotional reaction that may be quite strong. Perhaps this was why pastors in the past used to warn people not to allow a false teacher into their homes or to listen to them.

The literature strongly attests to deception being used by prosperity preachers. Adeleye (2011) gives the history of how the prosperity gospel crept into the church,

especially from the influence of American prosperity preachers, during a vulnerable time socially and economically for many Christians. He makes the case for how these prosperity preachers are drawn to the money they can get from their followers by offering them hope and assurance with which their followers can unlock the treasures of heaven with their help (p. 49, 86). To Adeleye the motivation of the prosperity preacher is material gain not some kind of divine inspiration to help people.

Togarasei in In Search of Health and Wealth edited by Kroesbergen (2014) uses the “gospeneurship,” a negative term in a Zimbabwean newspaper to prosperity gospel preachers in Zimbabwe who were “amassing of wealth for themselves through encouraging their followers to give in order to be blessed by God” (p. 121). Although Togarasei, himself is against the abuses in the prosperity gospel where he sees the prosperity preacher enriching him/herself, he finds that it inspires many poor people to get up and do something rather than wringing their hands powerlessly. He also says that many of these prosperity gospel churches are reaching out to the poor with various programs, such as teaching church members entrepreneurship and even how to run businesses (p. 121-123). He thus is not as quick to declare prosperity preachers greedy for material gain.

Locally, Mwikamba and Ifedha (2015) on the other hand in looking at the Nairobi setting are not afraid to warn people about falling into the teachings of the prosperity gospel. It is rather comical, but sad, as they write, “The successful prosperity preacher is most dangerous because, he or she can convince the unsuspecting congregation that, Jesus died to give you and me a Lexus” (p. 139).

The field data and the literature confirm that prosperity preachers have a reputation for pursuing selfish goals of fame and material gain with a disregard for those they are leading. Field data also indicated that those with lower education levels

are more likely to think that a prosperity preacher is anointed by God and thus they would be more likely to follow his/her instructions in how to get prosperity including buying the more expensive bottle of water or oil to use in gaining prosperity.

This research data and literature revealed the possible motivation of prosperity preachers to be material gain and greed; however, the literature did not emphasize the effect of education level on the way people view prosperity gospel preachers. The field research did reveal how those with less education tend to view prosperity preachers more positively and as specialists anointed by God for the special task of helping people get prosperity. However, more needs to be written on the effect of educational level and adherence to the prosperity gospel. Another area that could use further exploration is the emotional and psychological attraction to the prosperity gospel for people living in the urban setting where these churches are flourishing and growing. This thesis has not focused on the emotional side of the prosperity gospel attraction but the field research indicated that the emotional manipulation exists and that it brings entrapment.

5.5.3 Implication and Interpretations of the Research Question Three as garnered from the Results and Literature Review

Research Question Three asked: What values do people hold that draw them to accepting prosperity gospel teachings? What are those things that have great importance and are held in high honor that would make the prosperity gospel teachings attractive?

This thesis sought to examine what the beliefs, motivations, and values in the African worldview might make embracing the prosperity gospel possible. The prosperity gospel teaches that it is God's will for those who believe in Him to be healthy and wealthy always and it bases that teaching on Jesus' crucifixion, which

was supposedly for the purpose of bringing wealth and health to all who believe in Jesus' death. To experience other than that is not to be experiencing kingdom living, according to the prosperity gospel teachers. For the African the seen and the unseen are not different worlds and the symbols of wealth and health mean that God is manifesting Himself in their lives in the ways He intended.

In examining the thesis the first research question focused on the overarching belief that undergirds the African worldview, which has similarities to the prosperity gospel. The second question examined the motivations behind the leaders in the movement while at the same time looking at the motivations of the followers. This third research question focused on the values people hold that might make the prosperity gospel more attractive. Generally respondents were asked what attracted them to their church or what they saw attracted other people to their church or to prosperity gospel churches. The beliefs, values, and motivations have revealed the African worldview behind the attraction to the prosperity gospel. If the prosperity gospel did not in some way tap into those beliefs, there would be no attraction to prosperity gospel churches.

The field research data showed that most people are regularly in church. Church provides people with an avenue for the outward expression of their spirituality. It is a social setting where people can experience culturally what it means to be a Christian. People go to church for answers to everyday problems and for encouragement. If they do not find solutions in one church, they will move on to another church in the hopes that there they will get help. It is a pragmatic approach to church attendance. However, there are those that will stick with a church out of a sense of duty or responsibility or even fear. Some of these prosperity gospel preachers indicate that to be outside of their particular church is to be less than a Christian or

even to be unsaved. A prosperity gospel preacher may tell people that if they do not experience a change in their lives after three months in his church that he will quit preaching, but the reality is that no one would dare confront such a preacher about a lack of change in one's own life.

People value community where they can feel a part and where they can get help. People value respect from members of a community and will follow what is necessary to do in order to get that respect. Poverty was mentioned as something that drives people to the prosperity gospel churches yet some of the respondents said that you do not really see the truly poor in these big prosperity gospel churches as they do not feel welcome (cf. App. A. no. 11). The flip side to poverty is a living wage. Of course people are going to value a living wage but this would not be the reason people are attracted to prosperity gospel churches. These churches offer more than hope for a living wage. Table 3.5 of Chapter 3 shows that the more education one receives the less frequently one is in church. (People in Nairobi were still very regular in church despite education level.) The other variables were not significant plus the sample for education may not be sufficient for a definitive answer. However, the comments in the field were constantly taking the idea of attraction back to those of lower educational level.

In the church setting people can find an identity. There is value in a good identity. If you are identified with those who are prospering and successful, then you can gain some self-respect and even motivation from that. Respondents revealed that they valued healing or success, which they were able to get at these prosperity gospel churches (cf. App. B. no. 16, 19, 21, 22, 28). Why are healing and success important? The reason is that it gives the person an identity as a respectable member of community as someone God smiles upon.

In this way, those with lower education levels would be more attracted to the prosperity gospel teachings because those teachings, in a sense, are levelers or equalizers. It puts everyone in the same category on the same level and it makes healing and prosperity equally available. Of course the size of the seed also determines the size of the miracle according to prosperity gospel teaching. But no one needs to know what size seed you sowed when you reaped a particular miracle.

Some scholars mentioned several values that may find resonance in prosperity gospel teaching. One value is the Bible, according to Azumah (2015). It is considered a sacred book and one that has important teachings to be followed. Because it is considered sacred, the way the prosperity gospel teachers use it has a strong impact on the listeners. Banda in the book In Search of Health and Wealth, edited by Kroesbergen (2014), says that, “African cultures always value the role of healing mediation.” Here the prosperity gospel plays a role in that it brings Jesus to the forefront as the one to bring prosperity and healing. He is the mediator of riches and a good life.

Awoniyi (2015) brings out a number of other values such as hard work, responsibility, chastity before marriage and anything that contributes to community (p.5) and Okolo (2012) adds to that list: large families, the extended family including ancestors and the living dead, the whole of creation, and in contemporary culture, education and money (74-77, 81, 82). The literature speaks of these values but not extensively in regard to the prosperity gospel. The field research data showed that people value family, marriage, good jobs, and education because this is what they seek assistance with when they attend prosperity gospel churches. People ask for miracles in order to bear children or to get healed from disease, which is preventing prosperity. People ask for deliverance from ancestral curses so they can get married or

have success. The literature and the field research data confirm that people's values take them to prosperity gospel churches where they can actualize their goals. More discussion for the Kenya context would be beneficial in helping those in ministry understand what is happening to the church in Kenya. This thesis adds something to that discussion.

5.5.4 Implication and Interpretations of the Research Question Four as garnered from the Results and Literature Review

Research Question Four asked: What do people believe about the rituals found in the practice of the prosperity gospel? This question was often rephrased during interviews to, "Is there anything special you or some of your friends do to gain prosperity or healing from God and why do you do that particular thing?"

One of the components of the African understanding of God-given power necessary for His blessings is that often a contact point is needed. Certain symbols can represent contact points for God's power to flow through, such as initiation rites or childbirth. Initiation brings power to move on to adulthood. Childbirth brings the community in touch with the living dead and the ancestors. In the prosperity gospel, symbols also exist that are considered points of contact for God's power to flow through. Things like oil and water are very popular. But other items can fit into the category as a prosperity preacher make links to things in the Bible.

One respondent told how congregants of a large prosperity gospel church in one of the informal settlements were told to immediately after the service take their 20 shillings and buy a bag of the sugar cane from the truck parked outside. After they bought it, they were not to talk to anyone but to go straight home and eat it quickly once inside. Then their lives would receive sweetness that week. Turns out that the

owner of the truck and the sugar cane was the prosperity preacher (cf. App. A. no. 11).

What little the people had in their pockets was taken for a false promise of sweetness. How can someone define a life being sweetened? This was taken from the Scripture where Jesus told his disciples to go and not greet anyone along the way. Of course, Jesus was not talking about pursuing a sweetening of life. The prosperity preacher only needed was a little bit of a verse to push an idea on the congregants. If your definition of sweetness does not match the prosperity preacher's definition, who is right? Is it not the one who has authority? Prosperity preachers, by using the Bible, have used very creative ways to expand their kingdom.

The field research data revealed that people see the need to do something to help facilitate the gaining for prosperity. In the population surveyed, single people and women held more closely to the belief that power can be obtained from an object such as oil, water, handkerchief, soil or any other object that has been anointed by a prosperity preacher as shown on Tables 3.7 and 3.8. Single people feel the pressure from the community to get married or to get a good job to help the community. Many of these prosperity gospel churches advertise how they are successful in helping people find jobs and spouses. Of course, it is not just by praying for the single person that the church helps. Panda mbegu (plant a seed) always applies. Women are more likely to practice this part of the prosperity gospel because it gives them a sense of being in control. Women often feel that other people are in control of their lives and over what they can do. By using these objects, women can have some control over their own lives or at least feel like they have some control. In that way it can give women a sense of empowerment.

Gbote and Kgatla (2014) bring out how the prosperity gospel fits into the African understanding and how people are invited to bring their concerns about evil and witchcraft to the preacher and told to overcome it by performing certain rituals. They write, “These problems can only be solved if the believer performs the prescribed rites of either ‘sowing seed’ or offering sacrifice to the ancestors (p. 5). Before any of the objects are effective, the seed has to be sown. In a sense the person is purchasing power, a power guaranteed by the prosperity preacher’s anointing. Togarasei (2011) also mentions along with these rituals, there is the ritual of positive confession and quotes a prosperity preacher who said, “Your destiny is in your mouth!” (p. 341). While literature does give some discussion about the use of particular rituals in the prosperity gospel and their similarity to rituals in African traditional culture, it seems that more discussion needs to come to the forefront especially in the East African setting. Again it seems that more is written from the West African context or even the Southern African context than from the East African context. Perhaps this thesis makes something of a contribution for the Nairobi context.

Power is an important aspect of life and is necessary for an individual to fulfill personal responsibilities and goals. For those that feel they lack power and the necessary resources to succeed in their endeavor to live as a respectful, contributing member of community, such as women and some single people as indicated by the research, then the promises held out in the prosperity gospel teachings—if you use this special oil or water or sprinkle this soil around your home or wipe your face with this handkerchief, then you will have power to come out a winner—are alluring. The prosperity gospel recognizes the felt need to gain power in order to realize God’s

blessings of prosperity. Because the world is unpredictable, power can be sought and used to control that world or to give the sense of being in control.

5.5.5 Implication and Interpretations of the Research Question Five as garnered from the Results and Literature Review

Research Question Five asked: What values do the prosperity gospel preachers show to their followers? This question was asked to draw information on what attracted people to particular prosperity preachers. Respondents were also asked what titles they think is appropriate for a prosperity preacher.

The previous research questions examined some of the beliefs, values, and motivations in the African worldview and compared them to the prosperity gospel teachings. Field data and literature available are in agreement on the questions but the field research expands on exactly how it looks in the Nairobi setting. God's power, power of the anointed prosperity preacher, power of the anointed objects come out clearly as a vital essence of the African worldview which is joining hands with the prosperity gospel. Moving on with the discussion, this research question dug a bit deeper into what people really thought about prosperity preachers.

The field data clearly showed that along with the importance of power there was lurking in the background a more negative motivator. The two concepts fear and power, according to one respondent cannot be separated in the African's mind and that also brings in the need for protection (cf. App. C. no. 56). That would explain the quest for power. Power not only enables one to move forward in life but it also protects one from any kind of evil. That evil is often considered the first cause of any situation that stands in the way of health and prosperity. This works well with the prosperity gospel teachings and makes people more likely to find a home in a prosperity gospel church.

This idea of “Touch not the Lord’s Anointed,” (while found in the Bible, yes) has been used by American prosperity preachers to keep people from examining their extravagant or immoral lifestyles and their heretical teachings. Yet it came out clearly in the field research that plenty of people in Nairobi have that same attitude toward these prosperity preachers. The idea that association with those who have this anointing goes hand in hand with the idea of a contagion kind of magic. Power or magic can be transferred to me in a negative way if I do the wrong thing. Power is in and of itself neutral. It is important then to stay on the good side of the anointed one in order to receive power for good not for evil. So while the reluctance to not judge the man or woman of God may come across as trying to be obedient to God’s Word, in reality what is behind it is more of a fear of the power of that so-called anointed one of the Lord. This idea came out strongly in the field research but has not been fully explored in the available literature.

5.5.6 Implication and Interpretations of the Research Question Six as garnered from the Results and Literature Review

Research Question Six asked: What motivates the spread of the prosperity gospel throughout Nairobi, Kenya? To get at this question, respondents were often asked, “What makes it possible for people to hear or learn about the prosperity gospel?”

The literature and the field research data clearly show that media has been recognized as a channel for spreading the prosperity gospel. Media includes TV, radio, Internet, Facebook, Twitter, newspapers, magazines and all forms of media material that are aimed at mass communication. Media does not include face-to-face contact or use of the phone though such are methods of communication. Asamoah-Gyadu (2009) writes of how these ministries “have completely transformed the African religious landscape partly through their innovative appropriation of modern

media technologies and forms” (p. 132-133). So the creativity that these prosperity preachers use in the pulpits is also used to get their message out in whatever modern form has become popular. This is clever business acumen.

Literature and field research also showed that along with media use, the prosperity gospel has been advancing because of crusades (going back decades), the use of testimonies, and door-to-door canvassing. People get inspiration from the success stories of other people, who may have experienced problems similar to what they are presently experiencing. Another idea that came out strongly in the field research but is not really mentioned in the available literature is that people love the drama of these prosperity gospel churches. They love to hear the stories and experience all the noise and to see people get delivered or experience a miracle. One respondent spoke about the influence of Nigerian movies and songs, which promote the prosperity gospel (cf. App. A. no. 32). This demonstrated the emotional appeal of the prosperity gospel or even the psychological draw that it has on people’s minds. This thesis has uncovered those aspects of the prosperity gospel, that of emotional or psychological appeal, but it has not explored them in depth.

Because TV and radio are generally available to everyone even if a person lives in an informal settlement, the impact of those two media avenues is significant. It is while listening to the radio in a matatu (public bus) that a person can hear ushuhuda (a testimony) and where to send 310 for the miracle. It is while watching TV that a person can see a deliverance and be drawn to the church the following Sunday where that person will find he/she cannot leave unless he/she panda mbegu (sow a seed) in order for God to release blessings.

Media is business and it takes money to get programs aired. The prosperity gospel markets itself well and pays for itself through the many seeds that are sown for

the miracles. In that way, those who are championing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as the One who died on the cross for sinners to enable them to live a life for God, cannot compete. While the prosperity gospel elicits money from people with assurances that they can now get God to do their bidding, the Gospel of Jesus is not for sale. Such a ministry cannot sell Jesus for miracles thereby paying for advertising or for the media program. Instead, those that are presenting the Gospel of Christ have to trust that somehow people will be moved out of gratitude for salvation full and free and will give an offering in order to see the Gospel of Jesus Christ go forward. The prosperity gospel then has the upper hand and is unmoved. Besides prosperity preachers do at times talk about Jesus Christ. It is just that for them Jesus Christ is a means to actualize the self in terms of health and wealth and to make one more divinized and powerful. The draw of power once again shows itself in the way the prosperity gospel operates and in the way it draws people to itself.

Both literature and the analyzed data show the impact of media in promoting the prosperity gospel in Africa. This thesis has added to the literature available on the Nairobi context concerning media use in Nairobi.

5.6.1 Implication and Interpretations of the Assumption One as garnered from the Results and Literature Review

Assumption One stated: Health and wealth are considered part of the normal experience of an African's life and if they are not experiencing such, there is disharmony in their world.

The available literature and the field research data confirmed this assumption to be accurate. Over sixty percent of the sample population believe that sometimes God withholds wealth and health for His own reason. But along with God withholding health and wealth, others things can block the flow. Disharmony

resulting in the blockage can come from Satan, someone cursing you, a lack of faith or a failure to take the right steps. This gives people an option if they are not experiencing health and wealth other than the option to resign themselves to a particular unchangeable situation. People without work, singles, and those who are in the Age Group 18-35yrs are likely to try to change their situations. This makes the prosperity gospel very attractive to them because there are formulas and rituals that are done to bring about solutions.

But they will not just try anything. What they do has to be something recommended by a specialist. From the time of childhood Africans are socialized to take instructions from a respected person, an uncle, auntie, or elder of the community. The respected person gives the advice and the one seeking the advice takes responsibility upon his/herself to follow the advice. The respected person does not stand over the individual and make sure the advice is followed. Whether or not you have listened to instruction will be demonstrated by evidence of God's favor, that is, the success of the matter. The prosperity gospel fits into this way of working. The prosperity preacher is recognized as a respected member of community, an authority. Whatever he/she advises the people is up to the listener to follow. The results are given in testimonies in church, which prove that the prosperity preacher is indeed empowered by God.

The prosperity preacher is given respect not just because he/she is seen to have power that works on behalf of the listener although this is a major reason for the respect. The prosperity preacher also touts all the ways that he/she is working hard for the Lord and for the congregants. Hard work is a prime feature in the life of any respected individual and it is considered one of the ways to keep harmony within the community and with God. The prosperity preacher will tell the congregants that

he/she has been on a prayer and fasting journey for three weeks just so he/she can provide the word or power that God wants them to have for a breakthrough. Or the prosperity preacher will tell how many hours a week he/she spends in prayer and in studying the Bible just to help the congregants. Of course this enhances the respectability of the prosperity preacher in the eyes of the listener.

Many scholars such as Mwikamba and Ifedha (2015), Harries (2013), Oluoch, (2012), and M. Asamoah (2013) have mentioned how prosperity is considered a blessing from God and that God is happy to bless. If there is something bad at work Asamoah-Gyadu (2005) says that a relationship with “transcendent benevolent helpers” brings protection and help (p. 17). Thus once again power and a mediator is tied together. When power flows from God and is seen in the form of blessings of health and wealth, those benevolent helpers are not necessarily in view or even acknowledged. But if something goes wrong, then help from the specialist is sought to restore that harmony (cf. App. D. Figure D1).

The prosperity gospel harmonizes with this idea. The specialist replaces the diviner. In the prosperity gospel worldview the same principle is operating. God is the originator and dispenser of health and wealth but certain things have to be in place for harmony to occur and in order to release the flow. God has certain expectations of people and if those expectations are met, then God is obligated to give health and wealth. The death of Jesus Christ on the cross, according to prosperity gospel teaching, obligates God to give health and wealth to those who are sowing the correct seed or putting on anointed oil or using positive confession.

The literature available showed that scholars, particularly theologians, are concerned about the impact that the prosperity gospel is having on the church as a whole. They have mentioned that God is the giving of health and wealth, yes, but it is

not possible to make demands of God. Much of this literature has a theological critic as its goal, which is very important for those who are involved in theological work or in ministry. One problem, which was mentioned by at least one respondent, is that once people are deeply involved in the teaching of the prosperity gospel, they will not listen to theological arguments as to why they should not follow it (cf. App. C. no. 58). All one has to do to see that reality is to look at what happened when Kanyari was presented on the KTN program revealing the tricks he used to make people believe a miracle had happened. According to one respondent who filled in the self-guided questionnaire, some people left Kanyari's church over that but more people started attending it as a result (cf. App. B. no. 51). The respondent went on to say that the church members were quite defensive of their pastor claiming that evil people were trying to interfere with God's work (cf. App. B. no. 51).

The literature and the field research data confirmed that people expect health and wealth from God and that this expectation can lead some to find the prosperity gospel teachings attractive because of the guarantee of health and wealth. The problem comes when the experience of health and wealth is lacking and the church is not seeking to help people find a solution to their problems. Because the practice of Christianity has to be practical for the African, he/she will find a church that will help find a solution in order to obtain God's blessings once again and that is where the prosperity gospel churches are in the forefront. The question is how do ministers deal with the problem of people going to the prosperity gospel churches. The literature has not really touched on a strategy other than saying what is wrong with the prosperity gospel. This thesis is not a theological critique but what it does provide are the data concerning the beliefs, motivations, and values behind the attraction to the prosperity gospel in the Nairobi setting.

5.6.2 Implication and Interpretations of the Assumption Two as garnered from the Results and Literature Review

Assumption Two stated: Those who attend prosperity gospel churches will not speak negatively about their leaders.

The field data strongly confirmed this assumption to be correct. Respondents who held to prosperity gospel teachings were very careful how they spoke about their pastors. The prosperity gospel preachers interviewed were also very careful not to pass judgment, they would say, on what someone else is doing who is led by God. As was mentioned earlier, the concept of power residing in an individual who has been anointed by God for a particular role plays a big part in the follower not speaking ill of God's anointed. Yet it has more to do with fear of the person empowered than it does with obeying God. The power possessed by the individual is considered to almost have a mind of its own and can get released from the anointed one without his/her knowing as in the case if one speaks ill of the man or woman of God. How in the world would that man or woman of God know you spoke ill of them? Generally people are not running to the man of God and saying, "My neighbor said such and such about you!" No, people assume that power emerges in some way that will work to defend that man or woman of God.

This fits very well with the concept of the evil eye or the evil tongue as found in African traditional culture because it is dealing with power leaving an individual whether the person knows it or not. The difference is the person possessing this power ends up doing destructive things to innocent people and sometimes a person can be afflicted with evil eye or evil tongue and not mean to be such a vessel. In such situations, there are ways for that person to avoid inflicting harm on others unintentionally. No one wants to be associated with an evil tongue or evil eye. In the

prosperity gospel the negative tongue has replaced the evil tongue/eye concept. Whereas in the prosperity gospel beliefs, power can go out from the Man or Woman of God if someone speaks negatively about him or her. In a sense the power of the Man/Woman of God trumps the power from the words of the prosperity gospel adherent. Much emphasis on speech exists in the prosperity gospel thanks to Kenyon the father of the Word of Faith Movement (McConnell 2004, p. 3-45). Positive speech or confession releases power for good things to happen while negative tongue, speech or confession will affect the release of power for something bad to happen. “It’s not just your time but your tongue,” as one choir of a large prosperity gospel church sang in the worship service on a Sunday morning (cf. App. C. no. 27).

In the literature available, scholars point out that prosperity preachers are often manipulating the masses. Bishau (2013) stated “prosperity teachers cultivate authoritarian organizations” ... “to control the lives of adherents by claiming divinely bestowed authority” (p. 9). Harrison (2005) pointed out the same thing happening in the practice of the prosperity gospel in America that people are afraid to say anything negative about their pastor (p. 107). Even in the Nairobi setting as Mwikamba and Ifedha (2015) have pointed out that if the people do criticize it, it is done quietly without wanting anyone to notice (p. 139). This is an area where the literature has definitely brought into view the way prosperity preachers have sought to control their followers, but there remains a need for more literature investigating the hold prosperity preachers have on the tongues, that is speech, of adherents to the prosperity gospel teachings.

5.6.3 Implication and Interpretations of the Assumption Three as garnered from the Results and Literature Review

Assumption Three states: More women than men embrace the prosperity gospel, but the leaders are mainly men.

The field research data confirmed this assumption. One way of measuring this was to find out who were giving the testimonies or miracles, deliverance or breakthroughs in the churches. Out of 113 respondents, 74 said women were the main people who stood up to give testimonies. However, when asked directly if women or men are more attracted to the prosperity gospel, less than a third of the female respondents will assent to that while a little less than half of the male respondents replied affirmatively that women more than men are attracted to the prosperity gospel.

It was apparent doing observation that women were dominating the services not only in attendance but also in things like the choirs or praise and worship teams. It seems likely that women either were unaware of the dominance of women in these churches or they were unwilling to make what they would consider a negative evaluation of their own gender.

People in the field who thought women were more likely than men to be attracted to the prosperity gospel gave reasons such as women being responsible to help the family be happy and comfortable and that they have a lot of pressure put on them by the community and not so much support from their husbands or community members (cf. App. B. no. 14, 19, 23, 44, 50, 79, 80, 112). The position a woman occupies in community brings much responsibility and the executing of those responsibilities in making the community happy determine what kind of respect and standing she will have in the community. As I mentioned earlier under 5.5.4 Implication and Interpretations of the Research Question Four, it seems that the

prosperity gospel gives the woman a sense of empowerment and control, something she may not be experiencing at home. The practical application of belief in this instance and having needs met, whether emotional or psychological, has tremendous value for the woman and the prosperity gospel seems to offer that to her.

The available literature does not discuss the gender make-up of the prosperity gospel to a large degree. However, locally, Ongong'a and Akaranga (2015) did show in their research that the majority of congregants in the churches they surveyed were women (p. 203, 204). This is an area where further research can be done. Literature can look at the phenomenon of why women are attracted to the prosperity gospel. This thesis brings out that in the Nairobi setting women more than men appear to embrace the prosperity gospel.

5.6.4 Implication and Interpretations of the Assumption Four as garnered from the Results and Literature Review

Assumption Four states: Special objects, such as water or oil, are believed to have power instilled in them from the prosperity preacher and are given to a congregation member to use for healing or success.

Available literature and field research data clearly affirmed this assumption. According to the analyzed field data, women and single people showed the greatest tendency to believe that anointed objects such as oil or water can help a person to get healing or prosperity than any other population. The prosperity gospel is presented in a symbolic way with its emphasis on sowing a seed and on anointing people or objects. This makes it a draw to those wanting power. These objects provide the contact points for the flow of power. This prosperity gospel teaching goes along well with the African understanding of the flow of power. Power is neutral and it originates from God for the purpose of helping people to fulfill their purposes in life.

Sometimes the flow of power is blocked and new contact points must be made or used to get the flow going again. A specialist knows exactly how that power needs to flow and can also transfer power to objects to assist in the power transaction.

In the practice of the prosperity gospel, many objects serve as conduits for power. Not only are oil and water among the objects, but in Nairobi people use handkerchiefs (helpful in wiping away evil from an evil eye), brooms to sweep away evil spirits, soil to claim your own property, honey and sugar cane to sweeten the life, candles to chase away evil spirits, special white clothing for praying, things to wear on the wrists or around the neck, and whatever object a prosperity preacher has somehow tied to a Scripture verse. Signs and symbols serve as connectors between the physical world and the spiritual world. As long as the sign or symbol in the form of an object has been specifically authorized to deliver power, it can function as a connector, a medium, or the point of contact for power.

Objects also provide a strong emotional link. One of the respondents mentioned that having the anointing oil was not so much to give the person power as to give the person the presence of the man of God (cf. App. A. no. 20). Whether people recognize the link or not, the attachment can be seen when you ask that person not to use or wear the item. Attachment to the object generally indicates there is emotion involved. When it comes to emotional attachment or even psychological attachment most of that can occur informally like in the use of the objects for the prosperity gospel. Culture can shape what attachments occur by delegating what objects have value and for what purpose.

Gestures are also part of the power transfer. In the prosperity gospel some gestures have the ability to push Satan down or to swipe away evil spirits coming at you. Sitting on your enemies is also very popular as is trampling them under your

feet. Depending on your situation, one power ritual over another might be preferable. The prosperity preacher guarantees that these things will work when done in faith, of course, with proving the faith by panda mbegu (play a seed). Without money, there is no faith.

The literature available on this aspect of the prosperity gospel is generally from the West African context except when it comes to newspaper articles. The Daily Nation or The Standard definitely run their share of articles on the prosperity gospel generally giving details of some sad story of disillusioned followers or some expose of misdoing by a prosperity preacher. This thesis gives data on the beliefs that people have in the Nairobi setting regarding objects used in the prosperity gospel and what is the attraction behind those objects. However, more can certainly be written exploring belief and practice pertaining to power objects used in the movement.

5.6.5 Implication and Interpretations of the Assumption Five as garnered from the Results and Literature Review

Assumption Five states: These prosperity gospel preachers are believed to have been specially contacted by God and given the job of transmitting health and wealth to people.

The field research data and the literature both confirmed that people believe prosperity gospel preachers can transfer power into objects. Women were more likely to believe that than were men. In observing what is going on in Nairobi, the ones doing the most marketing of objects are men. All the stories related in the field on the topic were stories about women buying certain objects and using the objects. Some had very bad experiences with the power-infused objects and later became Christians after experiencing deliverance (cf. App. A. no. 8).

When the mediator has anointed an object, then the object has a certain role to play and is itself a medium. Titles and offices indicate the holder has some kind of power thereby they are in that role to serve as an authority. Many of these prosperity preachers give themselves titles even claiming the title, Doctor, without having gone through any kind of academic rigor. For example, Victor Kanyari took the title of Doctor for himself. When he was asked about it in the documentary, Prayer Predators, he explained that since he heals people he should be called “Doctor”. He understands well that in the African culture titles have weight. Titles determine how a person is to be treated by those beneath him or her. The fact that the person has a title of authority already conveys the idea that the person has some kind of power. In the case of the prosperity gospel preachers, add the wonder-working and the confident declarations that he or she is God’s prophet specially chosen by God for the task to empower people to get riches and you get a double-whammy of power in the person. Such a person is now in the role of mediator, the one to bridge the gap between God and man.

Samen (2014) is one of the voices saying, “Pastors (are) substituted for fetishes and traditional practitioners” (p. 2). This does come up in the available literature often from those writing about the theological framework of the prosperity gospel in either West or Southern Africa. Not as much has been written for the East African context.

The field data showed that women were the ones who were more ready to ascribe power to a man or woman of God. They believe that such a person could then transfer the power to objects for the benefit of the purchaser. Women are often in positions where they have to obtain favor from someone in order to accomplish something and they understand well what it means to acknowledge authority.

However, when a woman is able to obtain an object to use to help her with her quest for prosperity or health, she now has power in her own hands, so to speak. She has gained her own position of authority even if she is never acknowledged by anyone else as having that authority. In her own mind she knows she has power at her disposal that no one can take from her. It is all hers to use for her own purpose of obtaining whatever she wants from God.

The exploration of what the prosperity gospel means for the woman in terms of empowerment is a topic for further exploration. This thesis uncovered how women are attracted to the prosperity gospel because of its use of objects. Literature has not explored that topic.

5.6.6 Implication and Interpretations of the Assumption Six as garnered from the Results and Literature Review

Assumption Six states: Media contributes to the spread of the prosperity gospel. What are included in this assumption are all forms of media that aid in communication.

The field research data and the literature strongly indicated that media has played and continues to play a huge role in the spread of the prosperity gospel. The data showed that people living in Nairobi attend church frequently and regularly and if people cannot be in church for one reason or another there are a plethora of church programs available to watch on the TV or listen to on the radio. According to respondents, because the prosperity gospel ministries have plenty of money coming in for the miracles, they have income enough to broadcast their teachings and essentially advertise their churches.

Some of the non-prosperity gospel preachers interviewed voiced concern about the dominance of the prosperity gospel ministries on the TV and radio. That is because the prosperity gospel ministries pull in the money from advertising miracles

or answered prayers. The media is generally not in the business to propagate anything in particular. Media is in business to make money and at this point it is the prosperity gospel that is selling. This is not justification, only observation.

No matter who the preacher may be, it is unlikely that any preacher would want the government to tell the preacher what could or could not be preached on the TV or the radio. While those wanting to get the Gospel of Jesus Christ out to the masses are not able to do what they want on TV or radio due to financial constraints, there are other creative ways to fulfill their mission of reaching people with the Gospel. Creativity is not only the possession of the prosperity preachers who invent clever ways to build their churches or pad their pockets. In the face of competition, it is possible to find a way that speaks to the people in the communities. This thesis was not about giving ideas on how to compete with the prosperity gospel as it uses the media extensively and successfully. Rather the analyzed data in this thesis exposed the reality of the prosperity gospel's media use and the effectiveness. If pastors are willing, they can creatively find a way to bring the Gospel of Christ before the people.

5.7 Implication and Interpretations of the Limitations and Scope as garnered from the

Results and Literature Review

This research was limited to Nairobi, Nairobi County, Kenya. The research was purposeful. It targeted those who were in the prosperity gospel churches or who had experience with the prosperity gospel in some way.

The scope was multi-ethnic, mainly Kenyans living in Nairobi with African informants from age 18 and up. The data scope included gender, age, education, marital status and employment status. The analyzed data showed that it was not as easy to find people in the targeted churches and in Nairobi who have a non-formal education level or only a primary education level, as it was to find those who have

done O-levels or University. The scope of this thesis covered churches in Nairobi that have been around for a few years teaching the prosperity gospel and do not use Kiswahili exclusively for their services.

In the literature available, regarding the scope and limitations of this thesis, least three articles were available: Ongong'a and Akaranga (2015); Mwikamba and Ifedha (2015); and Gathogo (2011). As was mentioned earlier there are certain newspapers in Kenya that tend to carry stories about the prosperity gospel and its heralds. There are some Kenyan pastors, such as Maura and Mbugua (2012), who have been writing on the topic from a theological standpoint and they are among those who issue warnings about it in the pulpit. At the close of the service in a prosperity gospel church, the preacher will tell the people something like, "You will go forward this week and your enemies will see it." One does not hear the typical pastoral direction to the congregants to "Go forward in love and good deeds." People leaving the prosperity gospel churches have been empowered to fight and to win against the forces of evil and the enemies that do not want them to have their prosperity.

5.8 Conclusions

In concluding allow me to narrate a typical prosperity gospel service that is experienced in many of the churches in Nairobi. People calmly, but typically chatting with others, entered the worship service. The first part of the service, lasting anywhere from half an hour to even two hours, is the Prayer and Praise segment. During this time, the music will start off gently while people are still filling the church. After some time, the choir director will either start leading the congregation in prayer or will say, "As we go to God now in prayer, humble yourselves and let God know your heart."

Prayer time is then punctuated with the choir singing so there is a back and forth of prayer and singing. The songs get more dramatic. If people had not been praying in tongues before now, it is at this point the tongues will start. This ritual prepares the way for the man or woman of God, the prosperity preacher to make his/her entrance into the church. The prosperity preacher comes forward sometimes uttering tongues and going back and forth between tongues and “Thank you Jesus. Praise the Lord.” Finally the preacher will declare a Bible verse telling the congregants that he/she has a word for them today. People will sit down feverishly taking notes of what the preacher says.

The sermon includes declarations of how God will work for the people this week. The preacher says something like, “Tell your neighbor, just as God got Joseph out of prison, God is going to get you out of your prison this week. Whatever it is. Is it debt? Is it a bad marriage? Is it bad health? Tell your neighbor, ‘God is going to release you from your prison’”. People clap and cheer because they want to experience release from any evil disturbing their lives. The preacher gives plenty of declarations for people to grab during the preaching. At the end people are told to prepare their tithes while the preacher gives a mini-sermon on the importance of bringing the money to God in faith if one is serious about His blessings.

People want to run away from evil or avoid it; consequently being empowered by specialists gives them inspiration to tackle life’s issues. Rituals are a necessary part of that. Evil is to be avoided at all costs. Evil prevents the community from experiencing blessing not just the individual. The prosperity gospel recognizes the felt need of the African to gain power in order to have a full life and to do God’s will. The prosperity gospel seems to give people an alternative to resigning themselves to their circumstances. However, the prosperity gospel offers a false solution and many

people, especially those who are in the most desperate situations find themselves poorer or more entrapped than ever before.

The prosperity gospel uses the African worldview for its own purposes. The thoughts may lead a person to embrace the prosperity gospel but then the emotions become involved. Emotions are powerful and are dangerous. Sometimes we are able to talk to ourselves to bring our emotions into line. But other times our emotions and the attachment we have to something can be so strong that we do not realize we have become imprisoned in a world not exactly fitting for us. When emotions are involved it goes deep into a person's psyche.

Many people are not imbibing all the prosperity gospel teaching from the West. They may use some of the symbols and verses in similar fashion. But the prosperity gospel presented here is selective, appeals to emotions and most importantly, fits sub-consciously or informally into the African paradigm for living a successful life pleasing to God.

In the past, the failure to acknowledge the African's belief system while exposing them to the Gospel of Christ did not allow African Christians in some instances to evaluate their own beliefs in light of the Gospel. However, despite the failures of many missionaries bringing the Gospel with their own cultural interpretation, many Africans were able to sort through it all and come out as integrated Christians. Many of those Africans went on to become theologians, church leaders, and missionaries themselves. In closing allow me to end with African theologian and scholar, Bediako's (2004) statement from his book Jesus and the Gospel in Africa, "We need to meet God in the Lord Jesus Christ speaking immediately to us in our particular circumstances, in a way that assures us that we can be authentic Africans and true Christians" (p. 23).

5.9 Summary

In summary findings both in the field and in the literature revealed that some beliefs in the African worldview have a strong influence on the attraction to the prosperity gospel. Similarities and differences were noted in regard to those beliefs. Regarding the attraction as it applies to the Nairobi context certain populations were drawn to particular aspects of the prosperity gospel.

The belief found in the African worldview of a God who gives only good things to His children and also makes it possible through a mediator or a medium to grant power for His children to live full life is accommodated by the prosperity gospel which teaches that God must give health and wealth to His children richly in material fashion because of Jesus' death on the cross. The African belief allows room for God to have the final say without any kind of judgment being placed on Him. The prosperity gospel however demands that God must do His part in giving the riches that Christ has earned for those who believe. One is an attitude of respect, while the other is an attitude of a boss demanding the servant to act according to his will.

Motivations were seen by certain populations' attraction to particular aspects of the prosperity gospel. Women, singles and those without work were more vulnerable to embracing practices in the prosperity gospel because it gave them opportunity to work towards looking responsible and respected. These motivations focused on the community not merely the individual. The desire to be seen as someone who had the presence of God demonstrated by His blessings in the life is a significant motivation. Values again tended to focus on community, things like family, and good health to be able to work hard, and having plenty of provisions for living. While all of these motivations and desires are admirable, these very things are used by prosperity gospel teachings to lure people into their sphere of influence. The

prosperity gospel has marketed itself well and they have shared their spoils with the media rather than with the Body of Christ. There is a framework in the African Worldview that allows the prosperity gospel to find a home and because of this African prosperity gospel preachers benefit in more ways than one.

5.10.0 Recommendations

- 1) A theological critique of the prosperity gospel in Kenya has an important role in the on-going discussion regarding what it is all about in essence and what it is doing in Kenya. Theologians and Bible scholars, especially those who have researched the topic, should make themselves available to pastors and church leaders throughout Nairobi that are a little unsure what to make of the phenomenon of the prosperity gospel. Are not the theologians, Bible scholars and the clergy the gate keepers and those that have been charged with watching over the flock?
- 2) Involvement in the prosperity gospel is more than a theological matter. It is a deeply personal matter and those involved in it can feel threatened if people are only coming at them with ideas. Many friends and family who are involved in the movement may find themselves at a place where their manipulations are no longer working and they will be at a loss to know what to do. It is here that people who know the Gospel of Christ can lend the compassionate ear and do whatever they can to show the love of Christ.
- 3) Pastors who are concerned about the prosperity gospel's influence in the media can also be creative in finding ways to get the Gospel of Jesus Christ out to the people. Creativity is not only in the hands of these prosperity preachers. Non-prosperity gospel preachers can also come up with strategies to spread the Gospel by working together or by mobilizing their church members.

4) Obviously people are experiencing many needs and troubles and are finding it hard to cope at times. Instead of churches encouraging people to just praise the Lord, the leadership of the church might try seeking to understand the troubles their members are facing and do whatever is in their power to help. Why wait until a funeral to bring everyone together to support a family?

5) Ethical matters are at issue as well. Back in 2007, the US Federal Government investigated six prosperity gospel preachers, whose lifestyles and possessions including million dollar mansions, caught the attention of the Internal Revenue Service. These prosperity gospel ministries claim tax-exemption due to charity status. On one video cited in the Chapter 4 section 4.5.2 Literature related to Research Question Two, the reporters were quite critical of this prosperity gospel church for taking in \$38 million and donating \$3.8 million to other causes. The response of the reporter was “Oh well, I guess the church did TITHE what it took in” (The Young Turks 2015). Is the Kenyan church following the example of the American prosperity gospel church or are church leaders willing to stand up and look into the power and money games of their churches?

5.10.1 Recommendations for the Reader

If you are reading this for your own interest, then you probably already have some idea of the discussions and controversies surrounding the prosperity gospel. It is possible that you can do your own research and attempt to find your place in the solution. But you must know your own faith very well and do what you can to keep from being drawn into something that is alluring for anyone whether African or non-African.

A very helpful book for anyone reading this and those pastors reading this who want to do a little more reading on the topic is a lengthy, informative report

published in a book entitled Faith, Health and Prosperity edited by Perriman (2003).

Reverend Joel Edwards, himself a Pentecostal preacher writes this in the forward:

Issues of faith, health and prosperity have a resonance for me which is autobiographical as well as theological [raised by a single mother, an immigrant from Jamaica]...Through it all, however, we were supported, encouraged and inspired by the fellowship of our local Pentecostal church...[regarding this book] I am pleased to say that our theological commission has taken due account of the many nuances, gradation and qualifications which must attend serious treatment of [the prosperity gospel]... I commend [this book] as a first-rate resource not only to the evangelical community, but to the Christian Church as a whole (p. vii-viii).

5.10.2 Recommendations for Further study

- 1) This same study can be applied to various areas in Kenya and even to other African countries. It would be interesting to do the same study in Ndola, Zambia or Kigali, Rwanda where the prosperity gospel is also flourishing. Then a comparison could be done of the studies. Another study for the Nairobi context can be done in one or two of the informal settlements exclusively focusing only on those prosperity gospel churches inside those areas.
- 2) For the Nairobi context, a study can be done focusing on women and their adherence to the prosperity gospel. The exploration of what the prosperity gospel means for the woman in terms of empowerment is a topic for further exploration.
- 3) Another area that could use further exploration is the emotional and psychological attraction to the prosperity gospel for people living in the urban setting where these churches are flourishing and growing.

- 4) More can certainly be done exploring belief and practice pertaining to power objects used in the movement. The result of this focused study could very well put prosperity gospel preachers out of business when people realize what is really going on.
- 5) For the rural context of Kenya, a study can be done using the variable of education and age to see what the particulars are in those variables in the rural setting that draw them to the prosperity gospel. The prosperity gospel reaches the rural areas now through the media.
- 6) The exploration of what the prosperity gospel means for the woman in terms of empowerment is a topic for further exploration. This thesis uncovered how women are attracted to the prosperity gospel because of its use of objects. Literature has not explored that topic.
- 7) It is good that Kenyan scholars continue to dig into the practices and teachings of the prosperity gospel even naming names and naming churches. When things are brought into the light, then there is more possibility of change. When things remain covered, darkness reigns. In a sense it is the duty of the Church to examine the teachings that are going on which seem to be exploiting the poor while holding out a hope to them. Is the Church willing or brave enough to see the money and power at the top, which is claimed in Jesus' name but used in ways that belie the Gospel of Jesus Christ and bring shame upon Jesus' name? This is a study only a Kenyan would be able to do. A Kenyan would have the freedom to examine those areas, whereas a foreigner would be regarded as possibly having with a particular agenda and might be viewed with suspicion.

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Appendix A

List of Informants

1. February 22, 2016.	Nairobi, East.	Married man.
2. February 25, 2016.	Nairobi, South.	Married woman.
3. February 26, 2016.	Nairobi, South.	Married man.
4. March 1, 2016.	Nairobi, South.	Married man.
5. March 3, 2016.	Nairobi, Southeast.	Married man.
6. March 6, 2016	Nairobi, East.	Married man.
7. March 6, 2016.	Nairobi, East.	Single woman.
8. March 6, 2016.	Nairobi, East.	Married woman.
9. March 6, 2016.	Nairobi, East.	Single man.
10. March 6, 2016.	Nairobi, East.	Single woman.
11. March 7, 2016.	Nairobi, Central.	Single woman.
12. March 8, 2016	Nairobi, Southwest.	Married woman.
13. March 9, 2016.	Nairobi, Southwest.	Married woman.
14. March 9, 2016.	Nairobi, South.	Married man.
15. March 10, 2016.	Nairobi, Central.	Married man.
16. March 12, 2016.	Nairobi, Southeast.	Married man.
17. March 14, 2016.	Nairobi, South.	Single woman.
18. March 15, 2016.	Nairobi, Central.	Married woman.
19. March 17, 2016.	Nairobi, West.	Married man.
20. March 17, 2016.	Nairobi, Central.	Single woman.
21. March 18, 2016.	Nairobi, Central.	Married woman.
22. March 21, 2016.	Nairobi, Central.	Single woman.
23. March 23, 2016.	Nairobi, South.	Married woman.

24. March 23, 2016.	Nairobi, Central.	Single man.
25. March 29, 2016.	Nairobi, Central.	Single woman.
26. March 31, 2016.	Nairobi, Central.	Single woman.
27. April 3, 2016	Nairobi, South.	Married man.
28. April 3, 2016.	Nairobi, South.	Single man.
29. April 10, 2016.	Nairobi, South.	Single man.
30 . April 10, 2016.	Nairobi, South.	Single woman.
31. April 11, 2016.	Nairobi, West.	Married man.
32. April 13, 2016	Nairobi, East.	Married woman.
33. April 14, 2016	Nairobi, Southwest.	Single man.
34. April 21, 2016.	Nairobi, Central.	Single woman.
35. April 26, 2016.	Nairobi, Southwest.	Married man.
36. April 27, 2016.	Nairobi, Southwest.	Married man.
37. April 28, 2016.	Nairobi, South.	Single woman
Focus Groups:		
38. March 4, 2016	Nairobi, South.	3 women , 4 men.
39. March 6, 2016.	Nairobi, East.	2 women, 1 man.
40. March 18, 2016.	Nairobi, South.	3 women, 3 men.
41. March 20, 2016.	Nairobi, Central.	3 women, 2 men.
42. April 3, 2016.	Nairobi, Southwest.	5 women, 1 man.

Appendix B

Questions for Self-administered Questionnaires as well as in In-depth Interviews

Code Explanation: R=research question #, A=assumption #, D=descriptive question, F=Function question, S=structural question, C=Contrast question, H=hypothetical question, I=illustration or story question, P=personal question.

1. D1R1A1. Place a ✓ beside the following statements you believe:
 - God is good and always does good for His people.
 - Everyone who has faith in God can be wealthy and healthy sometimes.
 - Everyone who has faith in God should be wealthy and healthy always.
 - Evil keeps a person from getting wealthy or being healthy.
 - Faith in Jesus is necessary to get prosperity from God.
 - People can get prosperity through evil methods that go against God.

2. F1R1A1. Place a ✓ beside any of the following you believe might keep you from getting healed or from getting whatever you ask God for:
 - Someone has cursed you.
 - Satan is blocking it.
 - Sometimes it is God's plan to withhold the healing or prosperity.
 - You have not done the right steps to get healed or to get success.
 - Your faith is too weak.

3. S1R1A1. Place a ✓ beside the following statements you believe:
 - When you have faith in Jesus you always get healed.
 - When you have faith in Jesus you sometimes get healed.
 - Faith in Jesus is not necessary to get healed.
 - When you have faith in Jesus you get whatever you ask God for.
 - When you have faith in Jesus you sometimes get what you ask God for.
 - Faith in Jesus is not necessary to get what you ask God for.

4. C1R1A1. Please write in the space below why you think it is easier to believe for a prosperity breakthrough if you have a job or if you do not have a job and why.

5. H1R1A1. Say there is someone in your community, a Christian, who has lost job after job and suddenly that person is having lots of success once they start attending a church known for preaching the prosperity gospel. Do you think that person has started following the prosperity gospel and that is why they are now having success? Why or why not?

6. I1R1A1. Are you familiar with the story KTN broke in November 2014 about Victor Kanyari and the Salvation Healing Ministries? Do you think it is easier for people to believe in the prosperity gospel after that program was aired or do you think it makes it harder for people to believe in it? Why or why not?

7. P1R1A1. Explain how you feel when faith works for you and when it doesn't work for you?

8. D2R2A2. Do prosperity preachers have a special anointing from God? Place a ✓ .
 - Yes.
 - No.
 - Sometimes.

9. F2R2A2. Place a ✓ beside any of the following you think about any prosperity teachers you know about.

- They are chosen by God.
- They have special power.
- They get extra blessings from God.
- Their names have power.
- None of the above.

10. S2R2A2. Place a ✓ beside what prosperity preachers are able to do.

- God tells them what people in the congregation say about them.
- They can give their power to special objects such as oil, water, soil.
- They can perform miracles of any kind except raise the dead.
- They can also raise the dead.

11. C2A2R2: How do the leaders or the members of your church view someone from the slums who is not employed and someone from Westlands who has a very good job, both of whom attend the same prosperity preaching church? Please explain your answer.

12. H2A2R2: What would you think if your favorite prosperity preacher admitted that he or she deliberately pressurizes congregants to buy his/her special materials not because he or she believes the materials will be helpful but just because he or she knows that this is business?

13. I2A2R2: A friend told me about a young woman who needed 1000 shillings to pay rent and only had 100. She was told to put the 100 shillings in the offering and then God would provide the 1000 shillings she needed to pay the rent. Unfortunately that did not happen and she got locked out of her house for non-payment. What are your thoughts about that story?

14. P2A2R2: Have you felt under pressure at your church to give your money away with a promise of getting more in return? Please explain.

15. D3R3A3. Describe the people that come to your church on a Sunday morning.

16. F3R3A3. Place a ✓ beside the kind of people who stand up most frequently to give testimonies of success.

- Men.
- Women.
- Children.
- People who already have some wealth and/or health.
- People who struggle every day for work.
- People who are closest to the preacher.

17. S3R3A3. How often do you go to church? Place a ✓ beside your answer.

- Every week.
- More than once a week.
- Once a month.
- Twice a month.
- Just when I feel like it.

18. C3R3A3. Do you think it is easier for men or women to believe prosperity teachings? Why?

19. H3R3A3. If a prosperity teacher suddenly loses his ability to help people to get breakthroughs and success, what would be the explanation?

20. I3R3A3. There was a prosperity preacher who was recently caught telling a woman who had come to him for healing and who was not healed that the reason she was not healed was that she did not have enough faith. What do you think about that?

21. P3R3A3. Have you ever received healing from a prosperity preacher? If so, how?

22. D4R4A4. Are certain actions necessary to help the prosperity to come? Place a ✓ beside your answer. If 'Yes' or 'Sometimes', then please write what action is needed.

Yes.

No.

Sometimes.

23. F4R4A4. Place a ✓ beside any of the following that work to get the prosperity:

Water?

Oil?

Soil?

Certain words?

Shouting?

24. S4R4A4. If words are necessary, what words are used? Write your answer below.

25. C4A4R4: Do words spoken as curses by a prosperity preacher work they same way as the words spoken by a neglected grandmother in the village? Explain.

26. H4A4R4: What if the Kenyan government banned churches from using any kind of oil or water for prosperity teachings? Explain what you think would happen.

27. I4A4R4: Reports have come out that some of these prosperity preachers are not really going to the Holy Land to get oil but are using the cheapest local options they can find. What do you think about that?

28. P4R4A4. Have you used mpesa to get a blessing from a prosperity preacher? Place a ✓ beside your answer.

Yes.

No.

No answer.

29. D5R5A5. What title(s) is appropriate for a man or woman prosperity preacher? Place a ✓ beside your answer.

Prophet

Apostle

Man or Woman of God

Bishop

Other (if so, what? _____)

30. F5R5A5. Where do these objects such as oil, water, etc. get the power to bring prosperity? Place a ✓ beside your answer.

Directly from the prosperity preacher

- Directly from God
- From God through the prosperity preacher
- Another source

31. S5R5A5. If the power for the objects comes through another source, what is it? Write your answer below.

32. C5R5A5. What difference is there between a prosperity preacher and diviner/seer?

33. H5R5A5. What would happen if a church member spoke negatively about his or her church leader? Place a ✓ beside your answer.

- Nothing.
- Their prayers would be blocked until they confessed.
- They would be cursed.

34. I5R5A5. There was a story about a prosperity preacher who said that along with faith there has to be a confessing of sins if one is to get prosperity. Explain what you think about that.

35. P5R5A5. Is there something you do every day or frequently that your church said to do to get success?

36. D6R6A6. How do people get to hear the prosperity gospel in Nairobi? Place a ✓ beside all that apply.

- Radio
- TV
- Internet programs like YouTube
- Social media like (Facebook)
- Other

37. F6A6R6: Tell me what you know about the spread of the prosperity teaching in Nairobi?

38. S6R6A6. How do your friends find about these breakthrough teachings and preaching? Write your answer below.

39. C6A6R6: Do you mainly get your encouragement for breakthroughs in prosperity faith by watching TV or listening to the radio or attending church? Explain.

40. H6A6R6: If for some strange reason no one could use the television, internet or any means to communicate other than by word of mouth, would people become less interested in the prosperity gospel? Explain why or why not.

41. I6A6R6: Remember when KTN came out with that expose' on Victor Kanyari and his church called Salvation Healing Ministry? What was the result of the media coverage he received?

42. P6A6R6: How has your life been impacted by the spread of the prosperity teachings throughout Nairobi?

Please feel free to write anything in the space below that has come to your mind while answering this questionnaire but no questions addressed it.

This is the end of the survey. Thank you for your participation.

Questions used for In-depth Interviews and Focused group Interviews

1. What beliefs in the African worldview lend acceptance to the prosperity teachings? Why do you think people are attracted to this church?
2. What motivates prosperity gospel preachers to take up their role as leaders and what motivates people to follow them? Why did your pastor go into ministry?
3. What values do people hold that draw them to accepting prosperity gospel teachings? What are people looking for in life and from the church?
4. What do people believe about the rituals found in the practice of the prosperity gospel? Why do people use oil or water?
5. What values do the prosperity gospel preachers show to their followers? What do people see in leaders' lives that appeals to them?
6. What motivates the spread of the prosperity gospel throughout Nairobi, Kenya? How does it get the message out to people?

Appendix C

Field Research Summary

N.B. Due to the nature of this research, names of churches and individuals are not given. To keep further discretion, areas where the research was conducted are broadly named.

1) Nairobi, Langata area. November 1, 2015. Attended a large church known for its prosperity teaching with approx 1500 people of all ages. Most were dressed well. We sat in the very last row on the left side where there were probably about twenty vacant chairs. But as the service went on the chairs all filled up.

The sermon had already started by the time we arrived. Apparently, the man preaching was not a regular but filling the pulpit while the main preacher was away. He preached in English, which was translated into Kiswahili. Interestingly, the topic was on Spiritual parents and how submitting to their authority brings blessings. He did tie it in with the commandment to honor your father and mother, a commandment with a promise. The Bible stories he told were not accurately given and he skipped around in the Old Testament to talk about Jacob, Hagar, or Abraham. He used Hagar as an example to tell people that sometimes they may be in situations where they are mistreated. They should not run away but return and submit to the one in authority over them.

It became clear why he was preaching on spiritual parenting when they announced from the pulpit that their “spiritual mother” would be returning next week after being abroad. Guest The preacher at various points in his sermon would tell the people, “God bless you and provide what you need.” People would hold up their hands when he would speak like that as if they were receiving from God.

2) Nairobi, Langatta. November 15, 2016. Attended a large traditional denominational church not known for prosperity gospel. The preacher gave a forty-five minutes sermon taken directly from a website of someone who had worked for Kenneth Copeland. The sermon was about

claiming from God. People that I talked to after the service were suspicious about the sermon because it did not seem to fit the way the man usually preaches. But they were unaware that the preacher was using Copeland.

3) Kibera, Nairobi. December 30, 2015. Attended a Pastor's empowerment conference in response to an invitation from a woman who had been a prosperity preacher in the past but has given up the practice. An American prosperity gospel preacher led this conference. He provided books, booklets and writing materials to all who attended. He emphasized that the people in attendance do not need to really study the Bible. In fact, he held up the Bible and said, "You see this Word of God? You don't need this." He then threw it on a chair after which he said, "What you need is a word from God. God's word just for you." He spoke about how God would speak a personal word to the individual's spirit. It was like some sort of spirit-word because that word spoken to the individual had a power in and of itself. So all these pastors in attendance needed was a word from God, not in reference to the Bible. The preacher said that God speaks the word to people. They were then told to hold onto their word from God and not let anyone take it away from them as that word is their destiny. According to the preacher, others will try to prevent these people who have received their "word from God" from living the word God gave to them. To help themselves, they were to surround themselves with people who also are receiving their own word from God. People were encouraged to be suspicious of others who were not spiritual.

4) Nairobi, Ngong. February 11, 2016. Visited a large prosperity gospel church to request an appointment with the pastoral team of a large prosperity gospel church. Had audience with youth pastor who received us well and promised to talk to senior pastor. She told us that she needed to talk to the senior pastor about our research. I left a letter of introduction with her. Time went by and she was not returning our phone calls. February 23, 2016 she called to say that we are not welcome in the church to talk to anyone.

- 5) Nairobi, Balozi area. February 22, 2016. Visited a large prosperity gospel church to request an appointment with the pastor of this large prosperity gospel church. Did not get to meet anyone that day. There was a Bible Institute going on that week and the pastors were very involved in teaching, so they were not available.
- 6) Nairobi, Huruma area. February 22, 2016. Met with a bishop referred to us. We met at his church, which is on the top and fourth floor of building in a market area. The building contains a bar and other shops on the lower floors. He welcomed us very warmly though we were late getting there due to the traffic jam-up. He explained their church's position on the prosperity gospel and why people are drawn to it. He welcomed us to come to his church on the following Sunday and to talk with any congregants.
- 7) Nairobi, Karen area. February 23, 2016. Visited a church to request an appointment with the pastoral team at a large church that possibly teaches the prosperity gospel. Met with a young man, an assistant pastor who said he will get back to us. March 9, 2016 the assistant pastor informed us that the senior pastor said that he did not want us to come to the church. The security guard did not understand why the pastoral staff were not willing to talk with us, so he gave us the names and phone numbers for two preachers that he said would be willing to talk with us. We followed up on the names and were able to meet with these men at later dates.
- 8) Nairobi, Langata area. February 23, 2016. Visited a large prosperity gospel church to request an appointment with pastoral team. No one was at the church but we were given the name of a church member and made contact with her. She was willing to meet with us at a later date.
- 9) Nairobi, Langata area. February 25, 2016. Purpose: Stream of consciousness interview without taking notes. Met with the church member from one of the large prosperity gospel preaching churches in the area. This church member was not willing to admit that her church preaches the prosperity gospel. The church member interviewed said if you are applying God's principles to your life, they have to work because they are from God. When asked if her church

teaches about finances, she replied that it did and she emphasized that her church is involved in helping the poor.

10) Nairobi, Karen area. February 26, 2016. Stream of consciousness interview without taking notes. Met with a business man who has preached the prosperity gospel in some different informal settings. This business man had received some Bible training overseas when he was earning his business degree. He said that he listens to several Word of Faith preachers, like Kenneth Copeland on the internet. He also has read several of their books saying they were solid Christian books. He did not seem to know that Copeland is considered heretical by most US evangelical churches.

11) Nairobi, Huruma area. February 28, 2016. Attended the bishop's church service from early in the morning until mid-afternoon. He welcomed us warmly and invited the congregation to please answer any questions we ask. He invited us to return the next week to have time to ask people questions.

12) Nairobi, South. March 1, 2016. Met with one of the pastors at a prosperity gospel church with over 500 members. The church considers itself a Charismatic church rather than Pentecostal church. The interview lasted for an hour and we were allowed to take notes and ask questions. The pastor affirmed the church's commitment to preaching prosperity, saying people who want it find their way to his church.

13) Nairobi. March 2, 2016. Met with the leadership at a Christian college and see if they would be able to assist us in data collection and discussed the topic of the prosperity gospel with the principal and academic dean. We were introduced to some students and that made it possible for other contacts.

14) On-line media. March 2, 2016. Watched 1 ½ hour service of large prosperity gospel church in Nairobi on-line. This church was started by a woman "prophet". During the service were references to her as "our mother" and "the prophet of God". After about half an hour of singing,

the “prophet” came forward speaking very emotionally in tongues lifting her hands to heaven. The congregation responds the same way. This continued for about twenty minutes with people falling to the ground. Others knelt. Music was quietly playing on the keyboard, no set song, just notes wandering around the keyboard. Finally the prophet says, “We sense the power of revival is in the house. We sense the power of redemption is in the house.” More tongues and people walking around praying. Some people are pushing their hands upward and praying. The prophet speaks again saying, “This is the beginning. We declare this is the beginning in our lives in the name of Jesus... Today every illness, spirit of poverty and everything Jesus took on the cross. We decree today, we say, let the poor say I am rich. Let the sick say I have health...” All the while people are saying, “Yes! Yes! Yes!” and holding up their hands as to receive the declarations. Lots of movement through the service. The church also has branches in the US.

15) Nairobi, Kikuyu area. March 3, 2016. Met with a former member of a prosperity gospel church who later became a pastor himself with the goal to warn others about the dangers of the prosperity gospel. He and his family almost suffered financial ruin because of being members of a prosperity gospel church. It took that, however, he says, to wake him to what was happening. He gave his car and so much to the Bishop and never got anything in return except financial difficulties.

16) Nairobi, South. March 4, 2016 Purpose: Focused Group Meeting. Group was evenly divided male and female pastor students at a Christian college. Something of a divided opinion existed in the group regarding the prosperity gospel. Some hold to it. One man said, “The Bible promises if you ask, you will receive.” Some pointed out that in African Traditional Religion there is a “utilitarian God”, that is God gives something and so people are happy. The group members went on to say that the prosperity gospel has exploited that belief and that as long as people get something they will continue to follow it. They also mentioned that people are drawn

to the prosperity gospel because of the symbolic way it is presented using handkerchiefs, oil, water, etc.

17) On-line media. March 5, 2016. Watched slightly over an hour program of a so-called male prophet/doctor who mainly spoke in Swahili and was interpreted. It looked as if there were maybe three or four hundred with many older looking women in his audience. Most people dressed as if they were not well off. There was very little English used except when he would say “In Jesus’ name” or other common phrases used in these prosperity gospel churches like “Declare” or “Release”. Lots of people moving with loud praying in tongues and falling about with emotional displays like crying and wailing. When the prophet declared things people would raise their hands as if to receive the declarations.

18) On-line media. March 5, 2016. Watched a two-hour program of a large prosperity gospel church in Nairobi. This place was very large and looked to hold over a thousand people. The head pastor is a woman in her late thirties to early forties who dressed very expensively and fashionably. She used English almost exclusively. Her sermon was mainly motivational, power-thinking talking points with Scripture to back up her point while also using catch phrases that are used in American prosperity gospel preaching such as “Reach out and get your blessing” or “God will perform all things for me.”

She told the congregants, “God has given me a prophetic word for you. Let’s read Proverbs 23:15-19 together with gusto and power...The Word of God is alive this morning. Whatever you have been hoping for this is your time.” People are frantically taking notes as she speaks. She tells people to sit down saying, “Now sit on your enemies!” Then she tells them, “Say, ‘It’s already under the blood.’” While she is telling them that she pulls out red handkerchief and waves it about. People are shouting, clapping and cheering.

19) Nairobi, Huruma area. March 6, 2016. Attended a small gospel church. The service started early around 8AM and went until 1PM. The pastor allowed church members to be interviewed

during the course of the service. The problem was the volume of the music made it difficult to talk to people. Regardless, one focus group took place and then five one-on-one interviews took place.

20) Nairobi, Huruma area. March 6, 2016. Small focus group interview, which included one man and one woman at a Pentecostal church. They both emphasized that the prosperity gospel was dangerous and that their pastor teaches them how to avoid it. They said that many people go to these churches looking for miracles and if their prayers are not answered they will change churches.

21) Nairobi, Huruma area. March 6, 2016. In-depth interview with a single woman at a Pentecostal church. She stressed that people do not want to strain for answers that they instead will believe someone who tells them to give 20 or 30 bob. She thinks it is because they do not really know God but are instead led by the needs they have and so they trust in people. She said that she goes to God and He uplifts her.

22) Nairobi, Huruma area. March 6, 2016. In-depth interview with a married woman at a Pentecostal church. She said that the Blood of Christ is what draws people to Christianity so now people go to church and do not worship idols. According to her, these prosperity preachers use things that people think will get them quick answers, like anointed objects and sending a weird amount of money for a miracle like 310 or 710. When these prosperity gospel preachers do cursing they are honoring an altar that empowers their words and it does not have a foundation in Christ.

23) Nairobi, Huruma area. March 6, 2016. In-depth interview with a single man at a Pentecostal church. He thinks that people want life quick and they want prosperity quick so they go to prosperity gospel churches where their minds are captured. Those churches want to make money not redeem people. It's "Bring this and you'll get this!" The prosperity gospel spreads because people are not so educated and they have lots of problems. They feel hopeless. Also

their culture is so near to the prosperity gospel. Prosperity gospel preachers value wealth and fame. People are confused and can't see that their leaders are making wealth off of them.

24) Nairobi, Huruma area. March 6, 2016. In-depth interview with a single woman at a Pentecostal church. She thinks that most people want to get rich very fast and that the media helps spread the prosperity gospel.

25) Nairobi. March 7, 2016. Private home. Purpose: To interview a woman who used to be a prosperity gospel preacher. She thinks that these prosperity preachers understand their people very well and are purposely taking them back to the traditional mindset in order to control the people with fear.

She also said that to say "In Jesus' name" is the magic formula. It is a spell. "They don't talk about Jesus wanting you to believe in him as the most high God and as the one who decides what you will have in life. You will see people fighting in Jesus' name". She also stressed that people will say, "I declare in Jesus name. . . I send that curse back to my enemies". From what she can see there is no concept of forgiveness and that people are perishing for a lack of knowledge.

26) On-line media. March 7, 2016. Watched recorded church service in Nairobi on March 6 . The Choir sings probably 40 minutes. Finally one preacher (man) begins in tongues and then begins the service by saying, "Your name is awesome. . . in the mighty name of Jesus." He goes on, "Take your neighbor's hand and pray that the Lord will perform that miracle over your neighbor."

At that point the choir leader says: "We speak breakthroughs in the Name of Jesus. We release the mercies of prosperity. I speak peace over all the markets. We recover everything we have lost in the name of Jesus."

The preacher says loudly: "Ask God in confidence to do that thing for you. Tell him what you want!" The choir walking around and pointing while talking to themselves. Maybe

they are praying while walking. Lots of hand motions. Finally at the end of the sermon the preacher says: “Appreciate the Lord in the house. How many tithers are in the house? Prepare your sacrifices. Prepare your tithes.”

27) On-line media. March 7, 2016. To watch a featured service posted on the church website. It's a large talented choir that begins. They are singing a song which repeats, “It's not just your time but your tongue.” After plenty of singing the Bishop comes to preach. He shouts most of the time and gets louder at the end. People put hands up at times and are crying out different things.

Toward the end he shouts, “No wonder the Bible tells us ‘you are gods’. It is in the Word of God that this divine nature resides in. Divine nature gives you victory over sin.” Then he talks about a member of the church who would not open her home for a cell group. He said that she was a woman with demons. The proof of love is in giving. At the end of the story the woman had acknowledged her sin and gotten rid of her demons and was hosting a cell group in her home.

28) Nairobi, Karen area. March 8, 2016. Interviewed a young business woman who is a member of a large prosperity gospel church in Karen area. She believes that God gives grace to the pastor which flows to faithful members who give and attend church. Incentive to follow a church if the pastor looks prosperous. “Follow the grace” —grace flows from God to the leader to you if you submit to him. If pastor blessed and preaching makes sense then grace is flowing.

29) Nairobi, Langata area. March 9, 2016. Interviewed a business woman in her late thirties who attends a large prosperity gospel church. She is a longtime a member.

30) Nairobi, Langata area. March 9, 2016. Interviewed a pastor of a small Pentecostal church. He does not preach the prosperity gospel but instead warns his church members about some of the tactics in the prosperity gospel. People are drawn to these miracle-producing churches, he says.

31) Nairobi, Bomb Blast Park. March 10, 2016. Interviewed a prosperity gospel preacher whose church is on the East side of Nairobi with over 500 members. He gave us an extensive lesson in how to get prosperity and hardly allowed us to interrupt with questions.

32) Nairobi, Kawangware. March 11, 2016. Attended the morning prayer service at a very small prosperity gospel church in one of the informal settlements with about 40 people in attendance. The pastor told them how to pray and then took the people through about ten topics such as, “pray that our enemies will not prosper in their evil” or “children will be successful in their academics”. After each topic, the pastor hits the pulpit and creates a loud noise. Everyone falls to the ground and begins praying. He then rings a bell and they stop praying. He concludes each time with “In Jesus’ name. Amen.” After the prayer time, his wife, the prophetess begins to prophesy, saying, “God showed me a vision of the man in the white shirt buying the pastor a suit and he will come and dress him.” Before the people left water was brought in and the pastor prayed over it. The members were told to take some of the water home and use it there. It didn’t seem like they were to pay for it.

33) On-line media. March 13, 2016. 2016. Watched on-line service of a large prosperity gospel church in Nairobi. Watched a three hour service which consisted of over 2/3 praise and prayer.

34) Nairobi, Karen area. March 14, 2016. Interviewed a widow who was once a member of a prosperity gospel church. She thinks that education has an influence on whether people believe it or not. She knows lots of women who are not very educated that attend these churches and are always inviting her to come along.

35) Nairobi, Wayaki Way. March 15, 2016. Interviewed a young married woman about her belief in the prosperity gospel. She is not in a prosperity gospel church at this point in her life. She is clear on salvation and believes that many people don’t understand that salvation is about Jesus dying for your sins not for you to get rich.

She has seen people use candles of different colors, which stand for different angels. After these people pray for you, you will pay and then you will take the candle home. Water also used. On TV the preacher will tell you to put water in a glass and then he/she will pray for it. If you drink it supposedly you'll be healed.

36) Nairobi, Langata area. March 16, 2016. Interviewed a pastor of a non-traditional church that does deliverance. People come to him that are actually involved in other large churches. He does not charge them any money. This pastor has a team who will pray for people as needed. But otherwise, the sessions are confidential. Some cases have involved drug abuse or other things that have opened the door for demonic activity.

37) Nairobi, Langata area. March 16, 2016. Attended a deliverance service in a Catholic church. There was not the noise and commotion that are typical in other deliverance services. If a person fell and started to make noise, the priest would say a prayer and blessing over the person and they would quietly get up and walk back to their seat.

38) Nairobi, Kikuyu. March 17, 2016. Interviewed a pastor in charge of a pastor's seminar that is held once a month. Some of the pastors do preach the prosperity gospel but many of them have not learned anything else. This pastor is trying to help these pastors to know how to teach the Bible faithfully.

39) Nairobi, Town Center. March 17, 2016. Interviewed female member of a large prosperity gospel church. She attends the church because of the way the Woman of God uses the Bible and says she has grown spiritually since joining the church. She her church uses anointing oil and said that she doesn't really believe in it but that tithing is important. If you tithe you will be blessed.

40) Nairobi, Kikuyu. March 18, 2016. Interviewed a group of pastors some of whom preach the prosperity gospel. Some believe that it is valid for God's children to want to have health and

wealth and that God gives those things to them. Others see it as a distraction from the true Gospel concerning Jesus dying on the cross for our sins.

41) Nairobi, Town Center. March 18, 2016. Interviewed female member of a large prosperity gospel church. This respondent said that she has been taught not to question or find fault with the man of God. God blesses those who give to the church and to the work of the man of God. She was delivered from the bondage of ancestral sins and is free from that torment. Someone cannot prosper who is into dark ways.

42) Rongata-Rongai. March 20, 2016. Attended a small Pentecostal church.

The Sunday school topic was a continuation of the topic: The Five-fold ministry: Apostle, teacher, prophet, evangelist, pastor. The sermon was on Sons and Servants and was taken from Philippians 2:19-23. Everyone was looking at their Bibles. The pastor pointed out that people are in ministry but not for Christ. A hired man is only there to get paid. A son is there regardless.

43) Rongata-Rongai. March 20, 2016. Interviewed members in a focus group who don't like the prosperity gospel and think people don't want to believe in Jesus but they want to believe in mortal man and not hear that Jesus died for them.

44) Nairobi Town Center. March 21, 2016. Interviewed a member of a large prosperity gospel church. Affirmed importance of the leader. The presence of the Man or Woman of God in order to get power is sought through using certain items.

45) Nairobi, Dagoretti. March 23, 2016. Interviewed a woman who has been a member of several prosperity gospel churches over the last fifteen years and loves it.

46) Nairobi, Central. March 23, 2016. Interviewed a young man in a Pentecostal church. He said people believe in the prosperity gospel because they believe that the pastors can meet their needs. Because of poor spiritual formation they have incorrect faith and they desire to acquire

wealth. Poverty is another contribution that has led people to in the prosperity gospel. For those who have heard testimonies are curious so go hear in that church, hence they get trapped.

47) On-line media. March 27, 2016. Watched the service of a large prosperity gospel church in town. Singing for 40 minutes then moved into prayer. Everyone praying at once, much in tongues. Finally the preacher goes up front and begins to pray loudly in tongues interspersed with, “Abba Father, Hallelujah” repeatedly. Then she says things like: “Prophesy into your neighbor’s life, your spouse’s life... Speak it out. Speak mercies from the throne of God, from the mercy seat... May all the wicked people begin to confess that you are blessed... Nothing can destroy us as we are candidates for mercy.” People raised their hands and shouted to receive the mercy. She says, “Today may the mercy for your promotion come on your life. Tell your neighbor, ‘It’s a process not a destruction.’”

Then she issues this warning, “Mercy is where God’s manifestation of the glory of the Most High God demonstrates his power on your behalf. That is why it is dangerous to think that one can condemn a man or woman of God or a child of God.”

48) Nairobi, Central. March 29, 2016 In-depth interview with a young single woman who is a member of a large prosperity gospel church. At times she said it was a personal matter. Oil was definitely something she found valuable to use in her practice of the prosperity gospel. Her church does healing and miracles. The pastors are special people anointed by God; congregation told to follow what pastors teach.

49. Nairobi, Kikuyu. March 29, 2016. Visited a church known for deliverance and set up a time to talk with the pastor. They were welcoming. Invited us Sunday, April 3.

49) Nairobi, Kikuyu. April 3, 2016. Interviewed the pastor of a church known for deliverance. He said church preach about the abundant life in Christ not prosperity.

50) Nairobi, Kikuyu. April 3, 2016. Attended a church known for deliverance with approximately 150 in attendance almost evenly split between men and women. Lots of songs were in Kiswahili and the words were put on a screen.

Banner in front of sanctuary said: THE YEAR OF GREAT OVERFLOW

During the sermon the pastor did not talk about finances but that there are times in life when toughness won't get you going so you need the grace of God not trickery. Life is full of all kinds of problems. Winners don't quit. You don't blame people or curse people, you need God's grace to go on.

51) Nairobi, Kikuyu. April 3, 2016. Interviewed a small group of members of a church known for deliverance

52) Nairobi, West. April 10, 2016. Visited a very large prosperity gospel church. It was almost impossible not to leave this church without being "born-again". Emphasis on "born-again" was so that you could get prosperity. It was very difficult to leave and almost cult-like. At the end of the service, people rushed down to the altar when the man of God was to try and get a touch of the altar. The people closest to the man of God touched his feet and from there the touching extended to people touching the railing.

53) Nairobi, Langatta. April 10, 2016. Interviewed a young man who is a member of a prosperity gospel church. He does not say his church preaches the prosperity gospel. Instead he thinks people are moving from mainstream churches to these churches because they are seductive to the eye, something new. There can be healing in those places but its not because of faith but manipulation of peoples with fake deeds and seduction through miracles. Others go to a church because of friends, groups such as home groups, or merry-go-round. These pastors are selling their businesses. They get olive oil and water from the supermarket and put their own labels on it and sell at a high price. If it's expensive people buy because they do not like cheap things.

54) Nairobi, Rongai. April 11, 2016. Interviewed a pastor and a married church staff member of an African initiated church. They believe that their pastors are guided by the Holy Spirit in their ministry. No mention of the Trinity or Jesus. What is considered evil in one denomination may not be such in another. E.g mainstream churches polygamy is not ok, but they tolerate it in their church. They believe that the Holy Spirit guides the people on the offering. No one is forced.

To deal with evil spirits, the pastor does exorcism through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He can exorcise demons and witchcraft, too. People do not come to pastor asking for deliverance. Pastor will go privately to the individual and tell them that they have evil spirits or demons or are possessed. First prayer then they cast evil out in the power of the Holy Spirit.

They believe that a pastor who does exorcism derives his power from God and supernatural world where his manifestation is in the creation.

55) Nairobi, Karen. April 13, 2016. Interviewed a young married woman who lives in an informal settlement and has lots of friends in the PG churches. She said that a preacher tells people that it is shameful for a Christian to bring coins for the offering. They first call the people with more than Ksh 5,000 forward for offering. Lastly “Ok, now those of you who have 50 shilling can bring it but no coins.”

56) April 14, 2016 Langatta. Interviewed a young pastor with a Pentecostal background now in a traditional church. He believes fear and power are the paradigm of appeal to prosperity gospel. The two cannot be separated in the African’s mind. African lives in fear so they need protection. Things in African traditional way have been replaced by prosperity gospel preachers.

He stressed that the supernatural part of the African understanding must be touched upon in reaching people with the Gospel. A pastor, who is grounded in Bible training must show biblically that the authority he or any Christian has comes through the Gospel of Christ. He also said he wished people didn’t use the term ‘prosperity gospel’ as it is a misnomer and that it is just a false gospel.

57) Nairobi, Langatta. April 17, 2016. Attended a Women's conference at a church known to do deliverance. Music was loud as well as the preaching. Stress was on how to be a woman of vision and action and that such women bring life and redemption. Don't harbor bitterness. Be careful with your words and attitudes.

58) Nairobi, Karen. April 21, 2016. Interviewed an HIV+ widow once a follower of the prosperity gospel. She stressed that pastors tell people not to come to church without something in their hands. Also people in the slums tend to go from one place to another and "they never really work".

59) Nairobi, Karinde. April 26, 2016. Interviewed an Evangelist. He stressed that prosperity gospel preachers know the minds of Africans and know which way to have their teachings take root. This "panda mbegu" makes sure the poor give the little they have. Pastors not merciful. They tell people God is a business person.

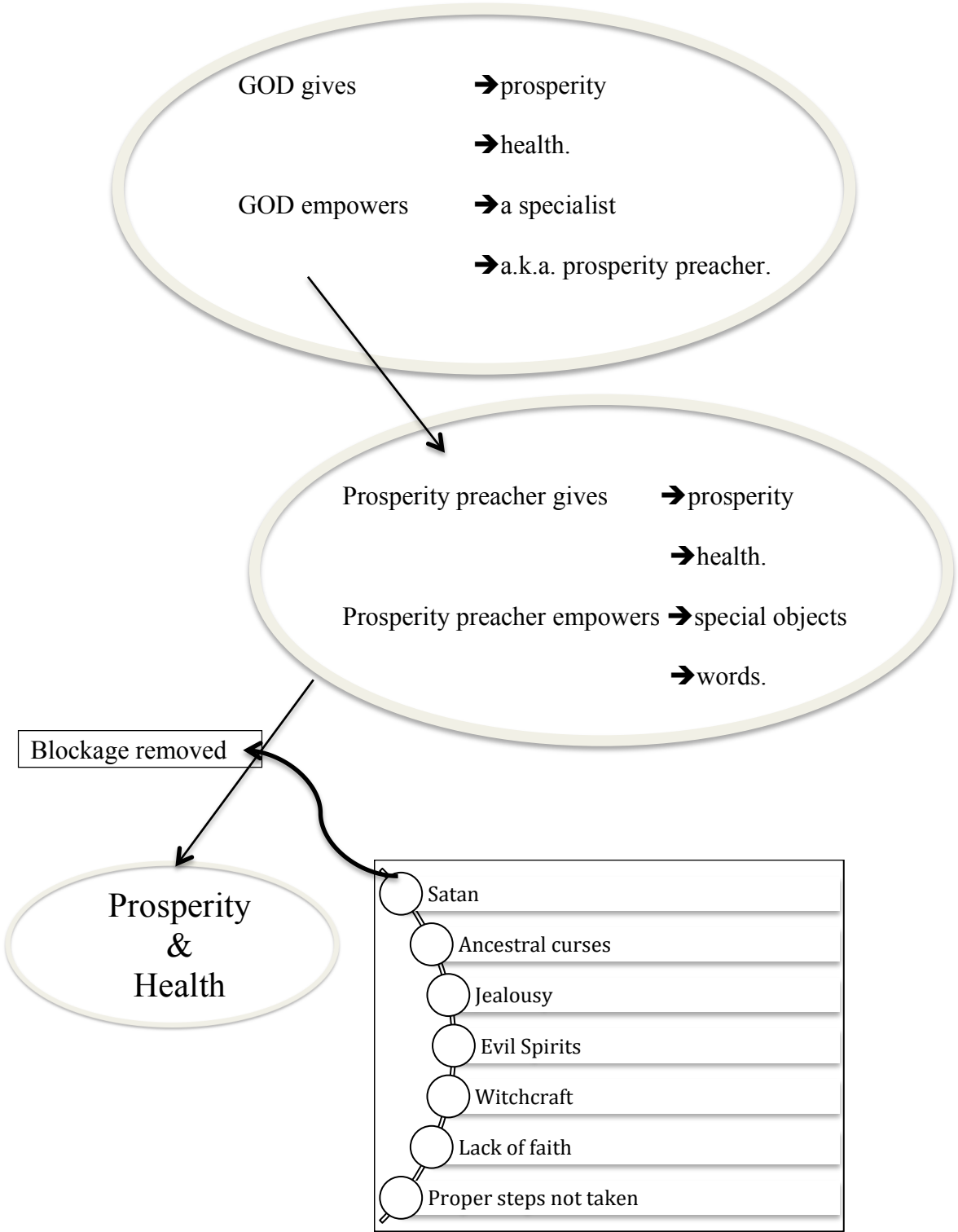
According to him, "Poverty has made the prosperity gospel marketable in Africa." The other area is insecurity independent from poverty. Insecurity says the cause of every problem is witchcraft. He does counseling. Most connect their problems with witchcraft. When the prosperity gospel came in it was embraced because of the security issue. "When you are in Christ no witch can harm you."


60) Nairobi, Westlands. April 27, 2016. Interviewed a congregation member who also does some teaching and preaching. His pastor calls the prosperity gospel witchcraft as its manipulative. God cannot be bribed and my giving cannot bribe God. I don't do it to get favor. God wants me to give, so I do. Don't give to get.

He holds that "God's economy is such that He blesses and protects in many ways, not all monetary. He gives peace. If there is 'iniquity in the heart,' then one is living in sin."

Appendix D

Figure D1. Power flow and Blockage Removal






WINNERS' CHAPEL
INTERNATIONAL NAIROBI

New Auditorium Likoni Road
Off Mombasa Road Behind
Airtel Building
(Parkside towers)

Presents

**Covenant Day of
Financial
Fortune
Service**

Date Sunday **28th** Feb 2015
Time **9:00** Am



Pastor Joseph Ikechukwu
& other anointed men of God.

Come along with:
Cheque books, ATM cards /Business/
Complimentary Cards
Cvs / Application Letters
Business Proposals
ID Cards etc for a Divine intervention
through Prophetic declaration

God will be terminating all Financial Crisis,
Discomforts, Bankrupsy, Dryness, Lacks
Poverty & Disappointment!

For Further Enquiry and Prayers:
+254 721 379 386, +254 724 447 158
+254 736 882 192, +254 701 906 792

Jesus is Lord!

Special prophetic
INVASION
to NAIROBI



Theme: Faith Works
WONDERS

12TH -13TH APRIL 2016
TUESDAY - 6:00 PM | WEDNESDAY - 6:00 PM
(Encounter Night)

Ministers Conference
WEDNESDAY 10:00 AM

Bishop
David O. Oyedepo
A prophetic
Empowerment
Summit
2016



Host
Pastor Joseph Ikechukwu

*We earnestly expect you and believe a
Life transforming encounter awaits you.*

VENUE: Winners' Chapel Int'l Nairobi
New Auditorium Likoni Road Off Mombasa Road Behind Airtel Building (Parkside towers)

For Further Enquiry and Prayers: +254739655277/+254 721 379386/+254736882192/+254786643937