

THE HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF SEED PLANTING IN CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN KENYA

Authors

Purity Kananu Mwongera⁽¹⁾ 

Author Email: puritykananu77@yahoo.com

(1) Chuka University, Kenya

Cite this article in APA

Mwongera, P. K. (2025). The history of the doctrine of seed planting in Christian churches in Kenya. *Journal of philosophy and religion*, 4(1), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.51317/jpr.v4i1.725>



A publication of Editon Consortium Publishing (online)

Article history

Received: 26.02.2025

Accepted: 27.03.2025

Published: 26.04.2025

Scan this QR to read the paper online



Copyright: ©2025 by the author(s). This article is an open access article distributed under the license of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY NC SA) and their terms and conditions.



Abstract

The study seeks to document the historical development of the doctrine of seed planting and examine the pivotal role of pastors in promoting and institutionalising the practice within Christian churches in Kenya. Influenced by global prosperity gospel preachers, the doctrine has been shaped and disseminated by local church leaders who have positioned it as a pathway to spiritual and material blessings. The doctrine derived from biblical scriptures has been contested as to whether it is a legitimate development of Christian doctrine or it is a deviation from biblical principles of giving. In addition, scholarly research on how it evolved in the late 20th century in the Kenyan religious landscape lacked clear documentation. Thus, the paper traced the development of the doctrine from its foreign theological origins to its localised expression, highlighting how pastors have used sermons, media, and church structures to cultivate a culture of sacrificial giving among congregants. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. Data was collected from 10 church clergy, 10 church leaders, and 150 church members and analysed using narrative descriptions. Using Newman's theory of developing Christian doctrines (1845), the study established that the doctrine reinterpreted historic Christian teaching on generosity, simplicity, and sacrifice in giving. It, therefore, recommended a historically grounded and ethically informed approach to Christian giving in the Kenyan context. The work contributed to the growing body of African theological scholarship by documenting a distinctly African experience of Christian doctrine. It enriches the discourse around how African Christianity continues to evolve and respond to emerging challenges.

Key terms: Church, doctrine, new Christian movements, prosperity gospel, seed planting.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The doctrine of seed planting (DSP), which teaches that financial or material giving to the church will result in many blessings or material returns from God, has become increasingly popular in many Christian churches across the Kenyan religious landscape. Often associated with prosperity gospel (PG) teachings, the doctrine has significantly influenced the theology and practice of giving within numerous congregations. However, its historical roots and alignment with traditional biblical teachings remain highly contested. Despite its widespread acceptance and promotion by influential religious leaders, there is a notable lack of scholarly research on how the doctrine evolved and the context in which it was shaped by external influences, particularly from Western charismatic movements. In addition, there is a question as to whether the doctrine represents a legitimate development of Christian doctrine or whether it is a deviation from biblical principles of giving. The research sought to address this gap by tracing the historical development of the DSP in the Christian churches in Kenya with a focus on the contribution of prominent preachers to its emergence, propagation, growth, and spread.

The development of DSP can be traced to the history of Pentecostalism, which began in the early 1900s in the United States (US). The movement gave birth to New Christian Movements (NCMs) in the 1950s, and these movements began spreading the prosperity gospel (PG). The primary doctrine of prosperity theology was 'seed planting,' alongside exercising faith, positive confession, and assurances of health and wealth (Mwongera et al., 2023). Followers of these movements were encouraged to believe in the power of seed planting as a conduit to receive favour from God (Mwongera et al., 2023). The doctrine was later adopted by other Pentecostal preachers in the US, from where it spread to different parts of the world, including Africa and eventually Kenya.

The doctrine was pioneered by Televangelist Oral Roberts in the United States, who began preaching PG in 1947 and claimed that God had revealed to him that tithing had been replaced by seed planting (SP) (Bowler, 2010; Coleman, 2000; Ehioghae & Olanrewaju, 2015; Gbote & Kgatla, 2014; Gifford, 2005; Heuser, 1975; Kitause & Achanuke, 2013; Koch, 2009). According to Harrell (1975), the members would receive a reward from God if they 'planted a seed' in Roberts's ministry. Later on, his ideas were borrowed by many prominent international preachers like Kenneth Copeland (Coleman, 2004; Copeland, 1974), T. L. Osborn (Harrell, 1975), E.W. Kenyon (Bowler, 2010), A.A. Allen, and Robert Tilton (Robins, 2010), Joel Osteen and Creflo Dollar (Chu & Van, 2006), Reverend Ike (Harrell, 1975), Kenneth Hagin (Brown, 2011), Charles Capps, Benny Hinn, Lester Sumrall, T.D. Jakes, Moris Cerullo and Reinhard Bonke (Nkonge & Nyambwari, 2014).

Zoll (2011) identifies six televangelism ministries in the US that promoted DSP in 2007. These include Kenneth Copeland Ministries, Creflo Dollar Ministries, Benny Hinn Ministries, Bishop Eddie Long Ministries, Joyce Meyer Ministries, and Paula White Ministries. These ministries were investigated by Senator Chuck Grassley. In 2011, the investigations concluded, calling for the self-regulation of religious organisations because the government was dissatisfied with their operations. This dissatisfaction stemmed from the leaders of the movement not accounting for the proceeds from their collections. Consequently, they were accused of corrupt activities.

The DSP spread rapidly throughout North America and to other continents as evangelists embarked on revival movements (Nkonge & Nyambwari, 2014). For example, in Southern England, Mathew Ashimolowo, the founder of Kingsway International Christian Centre, preached DSP (Booth, 2017). Booth (2017)

observed that this preacher garnered a large following who believed in DSP and gave a lot of money to his church.

Unlike in America, where we can distinctly identify the rise of Pentecostalism in 1900 and the Prosperity Gospel in the 1950s, Africa experienced both movements simultaneously (Gbote & Kgatla, 2014). The DSP emerged from the PG, which originated with Pentecostal preachers (Heuser, 2015). Its spread across the continent occurred almost simultaneously in various regions, including West, Central, South, and East Africa (Nkonge & Nyambwari, 2014). The doctrine reached Kenya through contact with preachers from North America, Europe, and West Africa. Since then, the practice of seed planting became common during NCMs' worship services and later escalated to the extent that worshippers hardly attended services without a "seed substance." According to Mwikamba and Akaranga (2015) and Williams (2017), the DSP has spread and is currently present not only in NCMs but also in other churches: the African independent churches, Pentecostal churches, and mainline churches.

However, critics of the doctrine condemned it, describing it as a "ruse, another clever ploy deployed by preachers to take advantage of the gullibility of religious people" (Ehioghae & Olanrewaju, 2015). Brockway and Rajashekar (1987) and Kalu (2000) indicated that, in communities living below the poverty line, when the preaching of the gospel is skewed to emphasise the greed of others, prosperity messages become a lure. It becomes "easy to gloss over the deceitfulness of the riches, to enjoy the comforts that material possessions confer." Such preachers' actions had transcended the characteristics of Pentecostalism, which involved speaking in tongues, healing miracles, and prophetic messages that were embraced since 1901 during the period of Charles Parham and 1906 with William Seymour (Gifford, 2006). They had further separated Christianity from its original nature of evangelism, as depicted by the early apostles and subsequent missionaries, who sought to spread the love of the risen Christ for the sake of the kingdom of God (Makori, 2014). Aside from PG preachers promising believers the power of the Holy Spirit and, knowledge of the resurrected Christ, and the love of God shown through Him, an essential aspect of Christian mission, they had gradually diverted focus and overemphasised a doctrine that directed people towards materialism.

Secondly, Adamo (2021) based his argument on the African worldview and attributed it to the tendency of Africans to embrace the DSP. He likened DSP to the African belief in offerings and sacrifices to God and ancestors for obtaining blessings, protection, healing, and the well-being of both individuals and society. Since DSP shared similar teachings, he suggested that Africans are particularly susceptible to it in the modern churches. Despite the rapid proliferation of the doctrine in Kenyan churches and its impact on the mission of the church, its historical development remained undocumented. Thus, the study delved into analysing the emergence and spread of DSP in Christian churches in Kenya.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents the reviewed work of various scholars on the origin and historical development of DSP. The considered geo-historical aspect laid the foundation for the study to trace and document the history of DSP after it emerged in America and illustrated how it arrived in Kenya.

The DSP has its origin and development in the history of Pentecostalism and the rise of NCMs which spread the PG in the twentieth century. The Word of Faith Movement in America initially preached the

gospel. It was later adopted by Pentecostal preachers and later charismatic preachers in the United States of America, from where it spread to other parts of the world, including Africa.

According to Bowler (2010), Coleman (2000), Ehioghae and Olanrewaju (2015), Gbote and Kgatla (2014), Gifford (2005), Heuser (1975), Kitause and Achanuke (2013) and Koch, (2009), the DSP was pioneered by a televangelist, Oral Roberts, who began preaching PG in 1947 and claimed that God had revealed to him that DSP had replaced tithing. He is credited with laying the foundation for inventing DSP in America. He preached that God is good and He wills His children to prosper (Roberts, 1989). He explained the laws of faith as a "blessing pack" in which God returned donations 'seven-fold. By the 1970s, Roberts taught that the 'blessing pact would be received as a result of planting a 'seed faith' which would grow in value and be returned to the giver in multiples. This means that making financial contributions as 'seed' to the ministry produced financial blessings for donors or givers. According to Harrel (1975), the members would be rewarded by God if they planted a seed in Roberts's ministry. Those who accepted this teaching were said to have been influenced by the New Thought Movement philosophy, which postulated the ability to actualise one's beliefs and dreams through positive thinking and confession. This concept augured well with the New Thought Movement idea of positive thinking that had prevailed in America since 1855, and that was probably the reason it had gained acceptance (Bowler, 2010). However, Kenya's socio-cultural and Theo-political environments were not entirely similar to the American setup. Kenya, like many African countries, was a developing country experiencing social change as a result of globalisation, western religions, western education, and modernisation, among others. The repercussions of all these effects influenced religious and social spheres in Kenya in varied ways as compared to the American setup where the New Thought movement philosophy influenced religious thought. This study focused on the documentation of the history of DSP that is currently rampant in Kenya, and preserved the knowledge for not only scholarly interest but for ecclesiological purposes.

According to Robins (2010), A.A. Allen, an American preacher who preached in the 1950s, claimed that God could miraculously solve financial problems by planting a 'seed' of faith. Robins (2010) expounded that Allen (1953) 'promoted merchandise such as 'Miracle tent savings' and 'prayer cloths' anointed with 'miracle oil.' Allen (1953) went on to preach that he had a religious experience where God supernaturally changed one-dollar bills into twenty-dollar bills to allow him to pay his debts (Harrell, 1975). Allen's (1953) teachings are contrary to Piper's (2007) opinion on how to practice and promote the Gospel of Christ. According to Piper (2007), the Gospel of Christ ought not to be a commodity of merchandise. Allen (1953)'s means of raising money to clear his debts were not different from what Piper (2007), was cautioning. The practice of DSP in Kenya was investigated against Allen's claims and aimed to find out the extent to which DSP could be used for financial miracles and its efficacy. How Allen's arguments compared to Kenyan preachers' messages on DSP were critical to this study.

Cerullo (1977) opines that the seeds planted by believers were helpful for Kingdom expansion. He denotes that "the only people that God can use to finance the end-time harvest were his children, His chosen vehicle of financial blessings." In his perspective, believers were obliged to plant seeds in the church, and God would reward them in multiples; they would prosper, and at the same time, the kingdom of God would expand. According to this belief, it took one's thought and choice to be blessed or to prosper, an idea that emphasised material prosperity (Bowler, 2010). Though the paper presents a historical discourse, the concept of kingdom expansion from the proceeds of DSP is deemed significant in Kenyan churches

since it was one of the elements emphasised and thus closely related. Hence, a cross-examination of how DSP spread in Kenya and the possibilities of preachers exhibiting Cerullo's traits was considered.

Bowler (2010), writing on the reason for the rise of DSP in America, argued that New Thought Movement was responsible for perpetuating the belief in the power of the mind to achieve prosperity. He claimed that by the 20th century, the New Thought concepts had been spread in many parts of America, and quite a large number of people had embraced them as taught by prominent people like Charles Fillmore. It is in this atmosphere that proponents of the DSP emerged. He claimed that DSP began with the preachers combining prosperity teachings with revivalism and faith healing. The preachers taught their followers to ask in faith, and they would receive blessings from God. As a law of reciprocity, they were supposed to give, and it would be given back to them in good measure, as taught by Jesus Christ during the sermon on the plain in Luke 6:38 (Robins, 2010). This idea was similar to that of Ehioghae and Olanrewaju (2015), who observed that the growth of Pentecostalism, in general, was a result of its connection to the American Capitalistic mentality and "success through positive mental attitude was the rule" and Pentecostalism was getting tied to growth-oriented American commercialism. The idea of wealth acquisition had gained roots even among the Pentecostals. As such, propelling the members to plant a seed to attain this wealth and prosper was palatable. However, in Africa, and particularly in Kenya, Christianity historically encouraged reliance on God. The significant shift toward adopting DSP in churches to receive blessings was an emerging concept. This study explored the various worldviews that influenced the rapid geographical spread of DSP. The extent to which worldviews, such as the New Thought Movement ideas and the capitalistic mentality articulated by Bowler (2010) and Ehioghae and Olanrewaju (2015), respectively, influenced the development of DSP among Kenyan Christians warranted this kind of study.

Osteen (2004) is another prominent American pastor who propagated PG by planting the seed of faith in the church. He wrote that God was willing to increase believers' financial status. God would bless them if the believers dared to test Him with their seed, as recorded in Malachi 3:10. Osteen (2004) indicates that;

If you dare to take a step of faith and start honouring God in your finances, He'll increase your supply in supernatural ways. God will take that 90 per cent you have left over and cause it to go further than the 100 per cent with which you started. The scripture says that when we tithe, God not only opens up the windows of heaven, but He will rebuke the devourer for your sake. That means He'll keep the enemy off your money, off your crop, off your children, and away from your home. He'll make sure you get promoted. He'll cause you to get the best deals in life. Sometimes, he'll keep you from sickness, accidents, and harm that might cause other unnecessary expenses. All kinds of blessings come your way when you honour God in the area of your finances (p. 256).

Osteen (2004) discussed the inner desires of believers' hearts. Any normal human being would wish to be free from disaster, destruction, diseases, losses, accidents, and attacks of any kind. Faithful Christians are always ready to obey the scriptures, which promise provision and protection, such as Malachi 3:10. However, other issues surrounding the practice of DSP warranted this kind of study to investigate, first, whether believers in need of God's protection could achieve it solely through planting a seed. Secondly, the issue of testing God also raised a theological question: Can 'man' test God with a 'religious seed'? Do those who practice SP do so out of faith, or are they compelled by a religious obligation? Is it out of doubt in God's power that they try Him to see what He can do? In Deuteronomy 6:16, Moses warns the Israelites against testing God when he tells them, "Do not test the Lord your God as you did at Massah." King Ahaz,

in Isaiah 7:12, declared he would not test the Lord God. When Jesus was tempted by Satan to throw himself down from the highest point of the Jerusalem Temple, he declined the temptation and stated that nobody was allowed to test God: "Do not put the Lord your God to test" (Luke 4:12). The Kenyan church, faced with this discourse, required a research study to document the unfolding history of DSP. The study focused on examining how the backgrounds of preachers like Osteen (2004) compared to Kenya's context. Are the preachers' reasons in other parts of the world the same as those in Kenya?

The history of the development of DSP had a record of some preachers who were accused of mismanagement of funds and corruption accrued from the proceeds of DSP in the church. Booth (2017), affirming this claim, cited the founder of Kingsway International Christian Centre in Southern England, Mathew Ashimolowo, who preached SP in the year 2005 and was ordered by the Charity Commission to pay the money he had appropriated for his personal use from the church. Booth (2017) observed that the aforementioned preacher garnered a large following that believed in DSP and gave a lot of money. However, he was accused of corruption and mismanagement because he lavishly spent \$120000 for his birthday party and to purchase a luxurious Mercedes car, an argument supported by (Gbote & Kgatla, 2014). Nevertheless, the Kenyan church had a lot yet to be researched pertaining to DSP development and its spread in the church.

The emergence and spread of DSP went hand in hand with the wave of Pentecostalism in Africa (Gifford, 2005; Gbote & Kgatla, 2014), as earlier alluded to. This is because the Pentecostal preaching bore the PG, which led to preachers advancing it to DSP (Heuser, 2015). The DSP import to Africa took place almost simultaneously in different parts: West, Central, South, and East Africa (Nkonge & Nyambwari, 2014). Benson Andrew Idahosa, a Nigerian PG preacher, was the earliest preacher of DSP in Africa (Anderson, 2014; Kwanteng-Yeboah, 2017). He was a disciple of American DSP preacher Kenneth Haggin, who established his church, called 'church of God Mission International' (Adamo, 2021). He influenced Ghanaian Archbishop Nicholas Duncan Williams, the founder of Action Chapel International Ministry in Accra City (Anderson, 2014). Idahosa influenced another Nigerian preacher, David Olaniyi Oyedepo, who founded the Winners Chapel in Lagos in 1983 (Ademiluka, 2022). His charisma and message of divine provision based on 2 Corinthians 8:9 led to the rapid spread of his ministry in the neighbouring West African countries, and he also became the leading DSP preacher in the region (Nkonge & Nyambwari, 2014; Adamo, 2021). How DSP spread in Kenya after her interaction with these international preachers had to be investigated. Thus, this study contains documentation showing this important historical development and spread of DSP in the Kenyan churches.

Gifford (2005) identified Pastor Otabil of International Central Gospel Church in Ghana as a pastor fond of DSP. Otabil submitted that planting a seed in the church was a prerequisite for keeping the "cycle of Prosperity running." Gifford (2005) identified one of the strengths of Otabil's biblical prosperity series as the radical insistence on a loving God. Despite peoples' problems, Otabil was certain that God would remember them after they met their church support obligation, which in this case was planting a seed of faith. Ikuna (2020) claimed that Otabil's preaching of DSP was borrowed by Reverend Funke Adejumo, who asked his members to sow a seed of one Million Naira to have stupendous wealth. Otabil's claims depicted a resemblance with Robins' (2010) teachings on DSP, who claimed that pastors adored DSP above everything else for blessings to occur. How this teaching penetrated Kenyan churches was worth documenting through this study to establish the initial preachers of DSP and how it spread to different denominations.

A research study conducted by Mwongera (2023) entitled *Doctrine of Seed Planting and its Impact on the mission of the church in Kenya* showed that many Kenyan preachers had adopted DSP. Analysing her data from various sources: Interviews, questionnaires, observation, social media, Television shows, and secondary sources, it was evident that Kenyan preachers promoted the doctrine. Although the doctrine was found to have infiltrated all churches in Kenya, it was more rampant in the NCMs with charismatic preachers, especially Televangelists such as Pius Muiru, Victor Kanyari, Margeret Wanjiru, Teresia Wairimu, James Maina Ngángá, Wilfred Lai, Kiogora Magambo and Lucy Natasha. The preachers propagated the doctrine and influenced many Christian believers through their preaching in social media, electronic, and print media. Though the preachers had become well-known televangelists, an analysis and documentation had not been carried out through research of this nature. Therefore, the study located the origin of DSP from when the first preachers adopted it and its eventual spread in the Kenyan religious landscape.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive research design to document the history and development of the doctrine of seed planting in Kenyan churches. It was conducted across 5 counties, which is 10 per cent of 47 counties in Kenya, as recommended by Creswell (2008). From every County, one church was purposively selected from the four main categories of church denominations in Kenya. This gave a total of 20 churches derived from NCMs, African Independent churches, Pentecostal, and Mainline Churches. From these churches, a total of 170 respondents were randomly selected, comprising 10 clergy, 10 church leaders, and 150 church members. Qualitative data was collected through interviews and observation between November 2022 and April 2023. Additionally, electronic media sources were used to enrich the findings. The collected data was analysed and presented through narrative descriptions.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

History of DSP in Kenya

The historical development of DSP in Kenya was traced from the original roots in America. Using interviews, media sources and secondary data, historical narratives were systematically documented and they revealed a pathway of its development and spread in Kenyan churches.

Scholars in NCMs such as Bowler, 2010; Coleman, 2000; Ehioghae & Olanrewaju, 2015; Gbote & Kgatla, 2014; Gifford, 2005; Heuser, 1975; Kitause & Achanuke, 2013 and Koch, 2009 posit that DSP was coined in 1947 by Oral Roberts, an American preacher. It was propagated through PG and spread to African countries where the American Missionaries traversed the African continent, preaching it in crusades, imparting it not only to the congregants but also to the preachers who were inspired by them. For example, Billy Graham held several crusades; in the 1960s, he visited Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Congo, Egypt, and South Africa. T. L. Osborn held the first crusade in Kenya in 1957 in Mombasa and 1978 in Nakuru, followed by others in Kisumu and Nairobi. In Uganda, he visited in 1961, 1985, and 1991. Oral Roberts held crusades in South Africa in 1955 and Mombasa in 1967 (Kitause & Achunike, 2013).

As early as the 1980s, the doctrine had been fired up when Reinherd Bonke, a German Televangelist, held a conference in Harare, Zimbabwe, from 21st-27th March in 1986. The conference had a theme, 'Fire conference,' which was graced by Kenneth Copeland, who spoke to 4000 delegates from 41 African countries on a theme he called 'Gospel and Prosperity' as found in the work of Kitause & Achunike (2013), and Mashau & Kgatle (2019). They argued that the impartation led to the emergence of African preachers

who began their movements and perpetuated the DSP. For example, Benson Andrew Idahosa, the pioneer DSP preacher in Nigeria, founded the church of God International in 1968. He mentored other Pastors like Nicholus Duncan Williams of Christ Action Faith Ministries from Ghana, Charles Argin Asare of World of Miracles Bible church from Ghana, Temitope Balogun Joshua of Synagogue Church of All Nations (SCOAN) of Nigeria, and David Olaniyi Oyiedepo of Living Faith Church of Nigeria. In South Africa, prominent pastors emerged, for example, Chris Oyakhilome of Christ Embassy, Paseka Motsoeneng (Mboro) of Incredible Happenings church, and South African-based Malawi Prophet Shepherd Bushiri of Enlightened Christ Gathering. In Ghana, there is the example of Dag Heward Mills of Lighthouse Chapel International, Mensa Otabil of International Central Gospel Church, and Sam Korankye Ankrah of Royal House Chapel International.

The contact between African preachers and those from other countries and the influence of mass media and Televangelism became the pathways through which DSP found its way into Kenya. Informed by the work of Mwongera (2023), the doctrine had been in existence since the 1960s when American preachers like Billy Graham, T. L. Osborn, and Oral Roberts began holding crusades in Cities and towns. However, in the 1960s to 1990, the doctrine was not conspicuous. The Kenyans were still in the process of adapting to the new preaching, which included receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This encapsulated accepting salvation and declaring the state of being 'Born again' and being ushered to prosperity through naming and claiming what they needed. It is within this backdrop that the teachings about 'receiving by faith and planting a 'seed' to actualise their blessings emerged.

Evidence from scholars' work and interviewees showed that the actual outburst about DSP in Kenya was caused by the equivocal and emphatic preaching of Pius Muiru of Maximum Miracle Centre, founded in 1990 (Parsitau, 2014). He spread DSP through Maximum Miracle magazine and preaching that took place at the Odeon Cinema, Nairobi where services were held. In 1995, he began Radio and TV programmes named '*Kuna Nuru Gizani*, 'meaning 'there is light in Darkness.' In these programs, he emphasised DSP. He was the first preacher to name SP in Kiswahili as '*panda mbegu na utabarikiwa*, 'which means, 'if you plant a seed, you will be blessed.' He exhibited creativity in adopting the Kiswahili word. Kenyans understood it in their context (Kiswahili being a language of Kenyan origin).

Kinoti (OI. 2022) avers that Bishop Muiru asked members to use handkerchiefs that would carry power after prayers to be used at a later time. The seed planted was believed to cause God to transmit His power to the people present and the items they carried. Prayers for instant miracles were made (Mwongera et al., 2023). Those who did not receive miracles immediately were encouraged to continue believing, for they would receive miracles later. Bishop Muiru was of the opinion that people choose to be poor because riches are easy to get; through planting a seed, they would never be poor again. He implored his congregants to try God, and they will receive miracles. He taught them to be like the poor woman in the bible who gave all that she had. Parsitau (2014), quoting Muiru's message on the topic, 'Poor by choice says that;

When believers turn to God in obedience, His blessings come upon them Job 36:11-16. The scripture makes it clear that a believer chooses his or her lot in life. When one responds to God in obedience, God grants wealth, health, and riches. He remains true to His word; He does not discriminate against anyone. He is a faithful God. Whoever obeys him and gives a seed offering, God will lift him or her from poverty and bring prosperity. It is a matter of one's choice, riches or poverty (p. 165).

After Bishop Muiro promoted DSP, it became a nationwide doctrine in NCMs (Thuranira, OI. 2022). The preachers began spending more time teaching about DSP than other Christian doctrines. It was a sin for a Pentecostal to go to church without a seed offering (Solobi, O.I. 2022). The preachers in urban areas and those in the village alike preached the doctrine (Thuranira, O.I. 2022). Muiro's preaching acted as a centrifugal force that dispersed the tenets of the doctrine to all churches in different parts of the country. The historical movement of DSP in Kenya can be likened to sun rays divergence. They originate from a central position and spread in all directions to different parts of the world; from Nairobi, where major crusades were held and the place where Muiro had meetings and sermons delivered, there was no NCM in an urban area that was left out without preaching the DSP (Mugambi, O.I. 2022). There are more examples of these NCMs discussed in this study.

The second outspoken preacher who taught DSP was Margaret Wanjiru of Jesus is Alive Ministries. Informed by Gifford (2009), the preacher confessed salvation in a crusade where Emanuel Eni, a Nigerian preacher, was preaching. The crusade was held at Uhuru Park on 18th March 1990, where she denounced the use of witchcraft and accepted to be a Christian. Wanjiru's background resembled that of Emanuel Eni in two ways; both had grown in humble backgrounds, Wanjiru as a street girl where she confesses "she had neither education nor skills. She was a poor girl" (Parsitau, 2014) while Eni was an orphan. The two had practised black magic. Eni's confession was made in His Book *Delivered from the powers of darkness*, and his preaching augered well with Wanjiru's life. During the crusade, He preached on deliverance from Satanism, and many people, including Wanjiru, were delivered (Parsitau, 2014). After she confessed salvation in 1990, she began her ministry in 1993 and continued in church preaching, and on 28th June 1997, she was ordained as a pastor by Bishop Arthur Gitonga, the founder of Redeemed Gospel church in Kenya. She later became a Bishop on 5th October 2005. As a proponent of DSP, she taught her congregants that they would be blessed and receive breakthroughs if they planted a seed in the church. Anderson (2001) records Wanjiru's testimony of how she lost utensils through breakages until she learned to plant a seed to preserve them. Referring to Wanjiru, he says that;

Today, I want to teach you about the secrets of prospering as a believer. Some things may seem simple but they mean something. Seed planting to God makes you blessed in every way. But before I knew this, I had suffered a lot. My utensils; cups and plates kept on breaking. A Thermos could crash with tea on the table. I had to keep buying now and then. I went before God and prayed against it, I gave my seed of faith and by faith I declared my utensils will never break again. (p.46).

Another early proponent of DSP in Kenyan history was Teresia Wairimu Kinyanjui of Faith Evangelistic Ministries. Through the work of Parsitau (2014) and Mugambi (2022), in an oral interview, it was established that the preacher started her ministry earlier than Pius Muiro and Margaret Wanjiru in 1989. She was a disciple of a Germany Televangelist, Reinhard Bonke who was an advocate of DSP. Parsitau (2014), records her testimony saying how she acquired a visa after planting seed faith money. Mugambi (O.I. 2022) remembers her message during one of her crusades. He said Wairimu was emphatic that planting a seed for the work of God unleashes the hidden treasures of God. In reference to Numbers 6:24-26, Wairimu preached that;

When you honour God with your tithe and seed money, this will be a covenant made that can never be broken. He will keep you and bless you in all ways. The Lord will make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord will lift His countenance upon you and give you peace.

James Maina Ng'ang'a, the founder of Neno Evangelism, also preached DSP. Informed by Iragaba (2022), the preacher opened his ministry in 1992 after he was released from prison, where he spent twenty years jailed for robbery with violence. He began preaching in Mombasa where he did his small businesses and later relocated to Nairobi. He preached DSP for blessings, and he was one of the richest pastors in Kenya, with a net worth of over 55 million Kenya shillings (Iragaba, 2022). Bishop Ng'ang'a managed to mobilise a large following and was not hesitant to demand from the congregants and the TV viewers to give money to his ministry. He operated Sasa TV, although it was denied a permit in December 2021. He shifted to a different Channel, ETV, powered by Signet Frequency Media. On 16th July 2022, he spent two hours on ETV telling people that God needed their money. He said that;

The monies you give will open the heavens and all sicknesses will be healed, curses will be broken, evils of witchcraft thwarted in your lives. Your children will perform in school, the husbands who are drunkards will come back home and be saved. The seed will perform unimaginable miracles. (Mpesa line and Till numbers were displayed on the TV screen where the money was to be sent).

Another 1990s preacher of DSP is Pastor Wilfred Lai of Jesus Celebration Centre (JCC) in Bamburi, Mombasa. According to Gitonga (O.I. 2 022), the pastor served as an assistant pastor with Redeemed Gospel church before founding JCC. Pastor Lai, as a Televangelist, had his first program aired in 1992 by Kenya Broadcasting Corporation and later on Kenya Television Network in 1995. One of the pillars of JCC was giving. This was confirmed in a sermon uploaded on YouTube on the subject the pastor called 'The grace of giving'. He said that;

I preach prosperity to believers because the message was revealed to me by Jesus Himself after I fasted for 21 days. I never heard it from American Evangelists. God spoke to me and said, Wilfred you are the reason why people are poor in the church. You have failed to teach them my formula. I came to set them free from all bondage, sickness, poverty, infirmities, and oppression of every kind. What they need to know is the formula to achieve their freedom. This is by coming up with a substance that will unlock every barrier. God wants his people to be lenders and not borrowers. The spirit of poverty was destroyed 2000 years ago. I have come here to destroy it. No one in this congregation will be poor. When you are poor, and you are a believer, you represent a God who is unfair. In heaven, the roads are made of gold. When you accept Christ, you enter the kingdom. You should be enjoying the riches in the kingdom. Bring your seed substance to the house of God, not a request, if you are my member. I have to prove to you that this is the will of God for you to prosper, and my will, too. Demonstrate your faith and obey me as the servant of God and God's word, and Plant a seed of faith today.

After the turn of 2000 AD, more pastors came up adopting the preaching on DSP. Pastor Victor Kanyari, who has since changed his name to Bishop Maina, began preaching in 2001. According to Magare and Ngigi (2022), the preacher was the founder of the Salvation Healing Ministry and Shifu TV. In 2014, he was exposed by Mohamed Ali and John Allan Namu of KTN, who revealed that Victor Kanyari staged fake miracles, yet, he demanded KES 310 to have miracles of healing. He aired the message of 'Panda Mbegu ya 310', meaning 'Plant a seed on 310' and 'You will receive a Miracle' (Magare & Ngigi, 2022). Currently,

Kanyari is preaching about miracle money. The researcher observed on 2nd September 2022 on Shifu TV, they spent a whole afternoon imploring people to send him KES 500, and they would receive back KES 30,000. After hours on the TV, he reduced the amount to KES 100. Those who would send KES 100 would receive KES 10,000.

Bishop Kiogora Magambo of Jesus House of Praise in Meru town was a close associate of Pastor Lai. He began his ministry in 2007 after defecting from the Methodist church in Kenya. As an advocate of DSP, he had written a book titled *Kingdom Covenant Giving: The Giving Encyclopedia*, which explains more about it. And like Kanyari, he spends a lot of time on Destiny TV urging viewers to send money in denominations, and they will be blessed. The researcher observed that Pastor Magambo took time on the TV screen to call the names of all those who sent money to him, and he gave them prophetic messages. In his sermon on 14th December 2022, he said;

Giving is a covenant you make with your maker. When you give, God sees it and acts upon it according to His word. The word of God says, bring your offerings and Tithes in my storehouse and see if I will not destroy the devourer on your behalf. Every giving from a believer becomes a seed planted that germinates and grows and produces many more. If you want to be surprised today, send your KES 1000 to the numbers you see on your screen, and the Lord will bless you. I prophesy to you woman, the Lord has seen your tears, He says my daughter cry no more I will heal you. The Lord wants to bless you right now in Jesus' name. You are there and suffering of cancer and the doctors have said it is stage four, don't lose hope. The Lord has a word, He wants you healed, send whatever you have and you will not die, but you will live to praise God for healing....

Reverend Lucy Natasha was also a DSP preacher who was the senior pastor at Empowerment Christian church in Nairobi and an affiliate of Prophetic Latter Glory Ministries International in Kenya. She was an eloquent preacher ordained in 2011. On 29th December 2021, she was recorded preaching on DSP. She told her members to "Sow a seed of KES 12,670, and a seed sown by the church members is a covenant between them and God". She said that;

Today, make a covenant with your maker through your seed money of KES 12,670. He has promised, and He is faithful. The Lord is the blesser. He will make you a victor and not a victim; you will be the head and not the tail. The blessings of Abraham will be your portion in your generation and the generation to come. You will lend and not borrow. Release what is in your hand so that God can release what is in His hand. If you are there and you want to go to abroad (meaning outside the country) plant a seed today. There are 27 people that God is targeting today; the Lord has shown me these people will be the first to receive a special miracle. Sow your seed and make a covenant...

According to Mugambi (O.I. 2022), many preachers who began their ministries in the 1990s were influenced to preach DSP. As an emerging doctrine, preachers in NCMs took it to be the vogue doctrine of the time. He notes that though many may fail to have been recorded, there were many preachers who were influenced to advocate for DSP. Only that they did not air their messages on TVs or radios for them to be known. Those who conspicuously got recognition were the televangelists. Many more preachers advocated for DSP.

The study probed the churches that originally preached DSP in Kenya and the time when other churches began preaching about it. Many scholars argued that DSP was a product of NCMs who preached the prosperity Gospel (Ehioghae & Olanrewaju, 2015; Gifford, 2006; Koch, 2009). This is in contrast to Akabike et al. (2021) claim that DSP started among Pentecostal churches before creeping into the mainline churches. They fail to acknowledge the development of PG preachers among the Pentecostal churches who played a major role in founding and spreading DSP. According to Mugambi (2009), the Kenyan case of DSP differed from the American rise of DSP in Pentecostalism. The impact of the rise of DSP was carried over and above by the mushrooming NCMs in the 1990s. The original American Pentecostalism got camouflaged and acquired a new shape in Kenya. The preaching of DSP overshadowed the Pentecostal message of Jesus' manifestation through the power of the Holy Spirit. NCMs short-changed the idea to include a more pragmatic element of experiencing the blessings through SP (Mugambi, O.I. 2022).

As to when DSP entered in other churches other than Pentecostal churches and NCMs, different opinions were given. Mutembei (O.I. 2022), a Methodist Superintendent Minister, confirmed that in his church, he preached that 'the members' giving is a seed that God will reward. 'He played an audio message he had preached on 12th June 2022 in a service, and indeed, the researcher noted that the minister preached like any other NCM Pastor:

My dear brothers and sisters, the words of the scriptures guiding us today are Malachi 3:1-10, Luke 6:38, and Acts 9:38-42. The theme of our sermon today is 'Giving in the kingdom. 'When you give, your giving becomes a seed that will reproduce at the right time. Dorcas' good works of making robes became the 'Seed' that made other widows to cry and their tears were wiped when the disciples raised her from death. When you plant a seed God protects you from the destroyer... give it will be given to you in good in measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over...

Mwangi (O.I. 2022), an ACK clergy, confirmed that the message of giving in the church as a seed for God to bless and multiply has entered many people, and it is inevitable for preachers to avoid. However, she noted that the mainline churches and the AICs are cautious and choosy with their words. They fear being mistaken with PG preachers who have already defamed themselves with the idea of selling the gospel.

Mwongera et al. (2023) alluded to the fact that DSP had become a reality in the Christian church. They claimed it was an invention and a strategy to raise church funds. Though the clergy barked their messages with scriptures so as to support them, these scholars were emphatic that the doctrine was a hindrance to the true gospel of Christ. Evaluated through Newman's theory of the development of Christian doctrines, DSP was an invention that required correction. According to this theory, DSP failed to preserve the original purpose of giving; a demonstration of gratitude to God. Instead, the attention was refocused from God the 'blesser' to the material given. The doctrine failed to maintain the meaning of giving continuity, and thus, it required an urgent correction.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion: The DSP began in America in 1947, pioneered by Oral Roberts. It was adopted in Kenya in 1990 and was popularised on TV, radio, in magazines, and in newspapers. Bishop Pius Muiru was the earliest preacher in Kenya who pioneered it through his program "*Kuna Nuru Gizani*." Many other preachers borrowed and followed the teachings and have since entered all other churches. The NCMs preachers in Kenya were the earliest to adopt the DSP. They made it more Kenyan by referring to it as

'panda mbegu' in Kiswahili and inventing different ways of doing it. However, though it had become a vogue teaching, it failed to satisfy the requirement for a true doctrine in the church. Something needed to be done; the churches perpetuating the doctrine had an obligation to uphold the truth and confess that DSP is a strategy they invented to raise funds for their benefit.

Recommendations: The study recommended that the clergy uphold theological integrity, maintain pastoral accountability, and provide sound doctrine to the Christian church. Ultimately, the study calls for a historically grounded and ethically informed approach to Christian giving within the Kenyan context. The clergy, presumed to be the mouthpiece of God, ought to discern where, when, and how to develop their teachings for the edification of the body of Christ.

6.0 REFERENCES

1. Adamo, H. (2021). Distinctive African readings of the Old Testament: A review of DT Adamo's publications in Old Testament essays 2003-2020. *Old Testament Essays*, 34(2), 370–384.
2. Ademiluka, S. O. (2022). The Prince and the Judge ask for a Bribe (mic 7:3): Interpreting the OT Prophets on Bribery in Light of the Encounter Motorists and Law Enforcement agents on Nigerian Highways. *Verbum et Ecclesia* 43(1). <https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v43i1.2288>
3. Ademiluka, S. O. (2023). Assessing the quest for miracles in Nigeria from the economic perspective. *Theologia Viatorum* 47(1).
4. Akabike, G. N., Ngwoke, P. N., & Chukwuma, O. G. (2021). A Critical Analysis of Tithe and Seed Sowing on Contemporary Christianity in Nigeria. *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* 77(1). a6485.<https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v7i1.6485>
5. Allen, A. A. (1953). *The secret to Scriptural Financial success*. Allen
6. Anderson, A. (2001). *African Reformation: African Initiated Christianity in the Twentieth Century*. African World Press.
7. Booth, R. (2017). Police Investigate Alleged Fraud Involving Former Footballer. Evangelical Christianity. Retrieved from *The Guardian News Website of the Year* www.theguardian.com
8. Bowler, C. (2010). *Blessed: A History of the American PG*. Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate Program in Religion in the Graduate School of Duke University.
9. Brockway, A. R., & Rajashekar, J. P. (1987). *New Religious Movement and the Churches*. W.C.C Publications.
10. Brown, C. G. (2011). *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing*. Oxford University Press.
11. Cerullo, M. (1977). *A Guide to Total Health and Prosperity*. World Evangelism Inc.
12. Chu, J., & Van, B. D. (2006). Does God Want You to Be Rich? Accessed 14th December 2021.
13. Coleman, S. (2000). *The Globalisation of Charismatic Christianity: Spreading the Gospel of Prosperity*. Cambridge University Press.
14. Coleman, S. (2004). "The Charismatic Gift". *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 10. 421–444.
15. Copeland, K. (1974). *The Laws of Prosperity*. Kenneth Copeland Publications.
16. Creswell, J. (2008). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches (2nd ed)*. Sage
17. Ehioghae, E. M. & Olanrewaju J. A. (2015). A theological evaluation of the utopian image of PG and the African dilemma. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 20(8).
18. Gbote, E. Z. M. & Kgatla, S. T. (2014). 'Prosperity gospel: A missiological assessment,' *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies*, 70 (1).
19. Gifford, P. (2005). African charismatics. *Journal of Religion in Africa*.

20. Gifford, P. (2006). "Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalising African Economy," *The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*. Nova Religio 9(3).
21. Gifford, P. (2009). *Prosperity: A New and Foreign Element in African Christianity*. Religion, 20.
22. Gitonga, G. (2022). Interviewed on 16th November 2022 by the Author at Kerith Church in Meru
23. Harrell, D. E. (1975). *All Things are Possible: The Healing and Charismatic Revivals in Modern America*. Indiana University Press.
24. Heuser, A. (2015) 2nd ed. *Pastures of Plenty: Tracing Religio-Scapes of Prosperity Gospel in Africa and Beyond*. Peter Lang.
25. Ikuna, J. (2020). Pastor Angers Faithfuls by Buying Range Rover. The Demand the Refund. Crazy Monday Article in Nigeria. PLC Accessed on 22nd January 2022 standardmedia.co.ke.
26. Iragaba, A. (2022). Eight Things you did not know about Pastor Ng'ang'a. *Hard Rock Media*. Retrieved from <https://hardrockmedia.org>> Blog
27. Kalu, O.U. (2000). *Power, Poverty and Prayer: The Challenges of Poverty and Pluralism in African Christianity*. Peter Lang.
28. Kanyari, V. (2021). Shifu TV 3rd July, 2021
29. Kanyari, V. (2022). Shifu TV 2nd September 2022
30. Kinoti, D. (2022). Interviewed on 14th November 2022 by the Author at Kerith Church, Meru
31. Kitause, R. H., & Achunike, H. C. (2013). A historical discourse on tithing and seed sowing in some Nigerian Pentecostal Churches. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 18(3), 7-19.
32. Koch, B. A. (2009). *The PG and Economic Prosperity: Race, Class, Giving and Voting*. Doctoral Dissertation, Indiana University. Indiana-polis.
33. Kwateng-Yeboah, J. (2016). *'I Wish you Prosperity!' Analysing the Social Effect of the PG on Poverty Alleviation in Neo-Pentecostal Accra, Ghana*. MA Thesis. University of Oslo
34. Magambo, K. (2016). *Kingdom Covenant Giving: The Giving Encyclopaedia*. Nairobi: Illustria Books
35. Magambo, K. (2020). Destiny TV Programme on 31st January 2020
36. Magare, N. & Ngigi, E. (2022). Pastor Kanyari Defends his Miracle Money Scheme. Mpasho Kenya. Retrieved from Mpasho.kenyawebiste
37. Makori, S. (2014). A strategy to integrate new members into the life of the local church in Nyamira Conference.
38. Mashau, T. D. (2019). Standing where God stands: JNJ Kritzingner as an encountering missionary and Missiologist. *Missionalia Journals*. 107832/46-1-278
39. Mugambi, J. (2009). *Five decades of God's Faithfulness: The Amazing Story of Christ is the Answer Ministries*. Evangel.
40. Mugambi, J. (2022). Interviewed on 11th December 2022 by the Author at CITAM Valley Road Nairobi.
41. Mutembe, D. (2022). Interviewed on 8th November 2022 by the Author at Methodist Church in Kenya, Meru.
42. Mwangi, J. (2022). Interviewed on 21st November 2022 by the Author at ACK Murang'a.
43. Mwikamba, C. & Akaranga, S. I. (2015). Blessed are the rich and prosperous for theirs is the Kingdom of this World: The Kenyan challenge. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 5(14).
44. Mwongera, P. K. (2023). The Doctrine of Seed Planting in New Christian Movements and its Impact on the Mission of Church in Kenya. Chuka University Library Repository
45. Mwongera, P. K., Kagema, D. N., Nyaga, D. B. (2023). Impact of the doctrine of seed planting on the mission of the church in Kenya. *Editon Consortium Journal of Philosophy, Religion and Theological Studies* 3(1). 173-192. <https://doi.org/10.51317/ecjprts.v3i1.419>

46. Mwongera, P. K., Kagema, D. N., Nyaga, D. B. (2023). Nature and usage of the doctrine of seed planting in the modern church. A case of New Christian Movements in Kenya. *Journal of Pastoral and Practical Theology* 2(1). 99-121 <https://doi.org/10.51317/jppt,v2i1.408>
47. Newman, J. H. (1845). *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. James Toovey.
48. Nkonge, D. N. & Nyambwari, B. (2014). Charismatic Pentecostal Churches in Kenya: Growth, Culture and Orality. *International Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education*. 1(3), 27-33.
49. Osteen, J. (2004). *Your Best Life Now: Seven Steps to Living at Your Full Potential*. Faith Words.
50. Parsitau, D. S. (2014). *The Civic and Public Role of Neo-Pentecostal Churches in Kenya (1970- 2010)*. Kenyatta University Doctorate Thesis.
51. Piper, J. (2007). Prosperity Preaching: Deceitful and Deadly. Retrieved from www.desiringGod.org 2023-08026
52. Robert, O. (1989). *How I Learned Jesus was not poor*. Creation House.
53. Robins, R. G. (2010). Pentecostalism in America. ABC-CLIO (eds), *Christianity in Africa in the 1990s*. University of Edinburgh Centre of African Studies.
54. Sorobi, C.N. (2022). Interviewed on 17th November 2022 by the Author
55. Thurania, J. (2022). Interviewed on 3rd December 2022 by the Author at Serve International Church, Kakamega
56. Williams, G. (2017). *The Prosperity Gospel's Effect in Missions: An African Perspective*. ResearchGate
57. Zoll, R. (2011). Televangelists Escape Penalty in Senate Inquiry. *The Associated Press*. Retrieved from www.abcnews.com