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Impact of the doctrine of seed planting on the mission of the church in Kenya

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Abstract

This study sought to find out the impact of the doctrine of seed planting on the mission of the church in Kenya. The Doctrine of Seed Planting (DSP) has been overemphasised above the mission of the church in Kenya. It emerged in the New Christian Movements (NCMs) in the 1950s among PG preachers and continued to spread into other denominations, including the Mainline, Pentecostal and African Independent churches. Continued preaching of DSP has become a challenge to the mission of the church. Despite the efforts of scholars to castigate it as a ruse and faulty doctrine in the church, it is still being preached to the extent that it has been categorised as the main doctrine in PG theology. However, how it influenced the mission of the church, her core business remained un-investigated systematically. This raised a great concern that necessitated an in-depth study of this kind. The data was collected and analysed from 364 church members, 10 clergy and 12 lay leaders from different church denominations. The results show that DSP has a negative impact on the mission of the church. It benefited the clergy and led to the suffering of believers. Therefore, the study recommended that the church de-emphasise DSP and embark on pragmatic transformative activities aimed at improving people's livelihood. The study was significant in the area of sociology and psychology studies.

Key words: Church mission, Kenya, prosperity gospel, seed planting, socio-economic impact.



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INTRODUCTION

Seed planting in the modern church is the act of giving in anticipation that a believer will attract God's favour and blessings. The Doctrine of Seed Planting (DSP), which is a new doctrine in Kenya and in Africa at large, was initially preached in New Christian Movements (NCMs), particularly those who perpetuated the Prosperity Gospel (PG). The PG theology indicates that if a believer wants to acquire riches and prosper, he or she should exercise faith in God, confess his or her desires and actualise by faith through planting a seed in the church (Ehioghae & Olanrewaju, 2015). The doctrine of DSP surpasses all other doctrines in PG. This doctrine is also known as "seed faith", "seed of faith," "seed sowing," and in Kiswahili, "Panda Mbegu" (Koch, 2009; Bowler, 2010; Mwikamba & Akaranga, 2015). The preachers teach their followers to exercise faith through special giving of seed planting, and it will attract God's favour in the form of a blessing, healing or protection at the right time (Coleman, 2000). It emerged with the rise of Pentecostalism at the beginning of the 20th century and gained roots in the 1950s when PG arose (Koch, 2009). It is quite common in the church today, and some Scholars argue that it has extensively been overemphasised above 'Mission' not only in Kenya but also in other parts of Africa (Ehioghae & Olanrewaju, 2015; Koch, 2009).

Since the early twentieth century, scholars have revealed worrying statistics which show the church's mission has been under attack not only from external circles but also from the internal sphere (Schutz, 1930; Paton, 1953; Scherer, 1968; Davis, 1990). This study was justified by the realisation that DSP has had an adverse effect on the mission of the church. According to Bosch (1991), missionary crisis would be catalysed in the church if upcoming doctrines are not checked and theologised, a concern that this study sought to address. Therefore, this study investigated the DSP in the NCMs and its impact on the mission of the church in Kenya. It was carried out in mainline churches, AICs, Pentecostal churches, and NCMs that were purposively selected in different regions of Kenya.

The emergence of the DSP in the NCMs in the 1950s among PG preachers and its continued spread into other denominations, including the Mainline, Pentecostal and African Independent churches, has been a major concern

and a challenge to the mission of the church in Kenya. Despite the efforts of scholars to castigate it as a ruse and faulty doctrine in the church, preachers have continued preaching it to the extent that it has been categorised as the main doctrine in PG theology. However, how it has influenced the mission of the church, which is the core business of the church, has remained un-investigated systematically. This raised a great concern that necessitated an in-depth study of this kind. Interrogation of various domains of DSP and its impact on the mission of the church needed scholarly attention of this kind. Thus, the study examined DSP in NCMs and its impact on the mission of the church in Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Doctrine of Seed Planting and its Impact on the Mission of the Church

The church and mission are two inseparable terms because one was created for the other: The church was instituted for mission purposes (Bosch, 1991). According to Nkonge (2011), Bosch (1991) and Bowen (1996), the word 'Mission' pointed to the mission of God (Missio Dei) derived from the words of Jesus Christ in the "Great Commission" in Matthew 28:19-20. It is circumscribed to mean "sending" or "being sent."

Bosch (1991) and Nkonge (2017) are in agreement that Christians are carriers and doers of Jesus' works and teachings all over the world as His good disciples who faithfully emulated Him. This would make them real 'salt with taste' and 'light' of the world, a fulfilment of Matthew 5:13. The eminent deficiency, particularly in Africa, is an increment in conversions and church members, whereas individual life transformation is lacking. The clergy do a lot of preaching and emphasise liturgical adherence among the sick, hungry, uneducated, poor and suffering people. Nevertheless, how did DSP fondly emphasise in church change the situation? Currently, in Kenya, there are many people who go with no food, struggling with family and personal expenditures, education and medical bills, an indication that people's lives are not fully transformed. According to Nthamburi (2000), it is heretical for a church to engage in activities that do not promote the Missionary zeal in a community. He concludes that "The mission of the church if it is God's mission, would be realised in a person-to-person encounter within everyday life". This means the meaning and importance of the church

mission needed to be explored. Despite the fact that Bosch (1991), Nthamburi (2000) and Nkonge (2017) have extensively expounded on what mission is, what it means to NCMs practising DSP needs to be investigated.

Mugambi (1989) argues that the church had a major business to transact, which was being on a Mission, an argument supported by Nkonge (2011) and Bowen (1996), when they claim that “mission was the backbone of the church activities since its inception...where God called his disciples and sent them as salt and light to add flavour and shine in the world” (Matt 5:13). They, therefore, believed that the church existed for the mission, and Bosch (1991), elucidates the same idea that the church was established as an institution to carry out God’s Mission. This study, however, assessed the churches perpetuating DSP and tried to answer the question ‘whether preaching DSP was a mandate of the church’ and ‘to what extent did DSP transform believers’ lives in Kenya?’

According to Ehioghae and Olanrewaju (2015), the DSP has only managed to create a utopian image as a vehicle through which the givers in churches received whatever they wanted, which in a real sense was a trap. They perceived the perpetrators of this doctrine as glutton peddlers who had managed to worsen the situation of their acolytes both spiritually and materially. As such, they had succeeded in muzzling the church’s mission due to wrong theology and faulty hermeneutical principles. The core mandate of the church, which was the “transformation” of peoples’ lives, failed to be achieved (Nthamburi, 1991). However, Ehioghae and Olanrewaju’s (2015) study was done in Nigeria. Though Nigeria is an African country like Kenya, an assumption could not be made that what happened in Nigeria was automatically the same as in Kenya. Therefore, this study was done with the aim of finding out the impact of the DSP on the mission of the church in Kenya.

Kritzinger (2008b) describes the mission of God as ‘transformative encounters’ and coined the word ‘encounterology’ to illustrate its practical aspect. He understood the mission to be an instrument of the church operating between God and people to bring transformation. He asserts;

“Mission as praxis about concrete transformation; is specifically about transformative encounters among people and between the living God and

people, leading to people being called, sent, healed and empowered. ... it is about the reign of God that has entered into this broken world as a transformative power in Jesus that continues to be manifested transformatively in our midst by the work of the Holy Spirit, which takes hold of our lives and transforms us so that we too may encounter other people, thus creating the church as the Kingdom working for and waiting for the coming reign of God: God’s mission, the arrival of the reign about transformative encounters” (p. 52).

While addressing the evils of discrimination, ills in the political system, disease and poverty in Tshwane City, Kritzinger (2008b) suggests that the church is the living organ, an agent of God in the society which ought to be practically involved in addressing these issues to bring glory to God. He not only advocated for encountering those ‘in pain and suffering’ but proposed to the church to ensure that their lives were transformed. As expounded by Saayman (1993), the transformative mission of God has to do with addressing real issues in people’s lives: poverty, discrimination, oppression and sicknesses. However, this ideal locus of mission is hindered when DSP preachers concentrate on accruing all proceeds for self-gratification and benefit (Ehioghae & Olanrewaju, 2015). The advocates of DSP fail to present the real picture depicted in the personal life of Kritzinger as a missionary (Mashau, 2019). The study, therefore, explored the contribution of DSP to the transformation of the lives of people in the church in Kenya.

The Doctrine of Seed Planting and its Sociological Missionary Impact

According to Nyaudi (2004) and Saliba (2003), sociology deals with the relationship of people in society. The Sociologists defined it as a scientific study of human behaviour, how they relate to one another, and their interaction with society as individuals who share a geographical space and culture. As a discipline, the sociology of religion examines how religion is interwoven among the institutions of society. In the process, religious beliefs, teachings, and practices are studied. The field analysed how the lives and operations of a religious group influenced the larger fabric of society. Spiritual operations would include the religious doctrines taught by the group. In the case of this study,

the church is a complex body comprising different denominations which exhibit different social characteristics. Different denominations have different doctrines, some similar while others vary from one denomination to another. Nyaudi (2004) and Saliba (2003) did their research on the sociological perspective of NRMs in general, but this study was narrowed down to NCMs, which were the NRMs from Christian origin. Other than broadly studying all the doctrines in NCMs, the study targeted DSP with the aim of investigating its sociological implication to the mission of the church.

The DSP was more of a socio-anthropological phenomenon than it was theological. It was prevalent among people of different calibre in the church. Koch (2009) alludes that the rich and the poor embraced the doctrine. The poor would be much more willing to plant a seed to seek God for wealth and health, while the rich would plant a seed to let God sustain what they had. The preaching received support because some preachers had won their followers' conscience to believe that their wealth would be devoured if they failed to plant a seed for protection. Out of fear, church believers were forced to engage in planting of seed. While supporting this claim, Wuthnow (1994) argues that any form of religious giving, seed planting inclusive, was inseparable from believers.

The church is a living organ for the welfare of all and extends its mandate to the rest of the world in all her undertakings (Bowen, 1996). The three scholars, Koch (2009), Wuthnow (1994) and Bowen (1996), give insights into the general practice of giving, but this study was on DSP as a form of giving. Contrary to the concept of giving being inseparable from believers and for the welfare of all, DSP is seen to carry the characteristic nature of individualism. It is all about a believer and what happens to him or her. The individuals who are rich and those who are poor equally participate in SP. Nevertheless, in the church, were believers rich because they had planted a religious seed? Were the members committed to church because they were drawn by DSP? To respond to these questions, the study investigated members' socio-economic status and whether their numbers had increased in the church because of DSP. The implication of this on the mission of the church was also investigated.

The early Christian church practices that directly touched the social aspect of the people and led to missionary success were informative to this study. According to Jenkins (2002), the early Christian missionaries' success was buttressed by the psycho-social and economic support granted. The issues that directly touched the lives of people were addressed first, and then people could find a reason to accept the gospel. As it was with the ministry of Jesus Christ, apostolic missionaries healed the sick, cast out demons, and performed many other miracles that made people believe that the missionaries were sent by Jesus and were carriers of divine power. Jackson (2021), who further affirmed that the miracles led to the "amazing success" achieved in the first century, supported this assertion. Brown (1971) further espoused that the "Christian missions were successful in the first century because the missionaries revealed the bankruptcy of men's invisible enemies, the demons, through exorcisms and miracles of healing". Jenkins (2011) did not emphasise the 'planting of seed for miracles' but saw Miracles as a sign of God's power through the Holy Spirit, and thus, peoples' lives were changed lives, and this was not through any human effort. Through this study, the question about DSP, its efficacy, and how it affected the social aspect of the church and attained success in her mission was explored.

Nyaundi (2004) describes the church as *sui generis*, meaning it occupied an indisputable rightful societal position. The larger society learnt and even relied on it. However, in the church today, a lot happens and brings distrust to such a statement. The social factors that promoted missionary success in the first century are important historical lessons in the Christian church today. The new doctrines emerged and required biblical scrutiny.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed descriptive research survey design to obtain qualitative and quantitative data in three church congregations selected from four Denominations, namely, mainline churches, African Instituted churches (AICs), Pentecostal churches (PC) and NCMs in Kenya.

Target Population

This study targeted a population in Christian churches in six regions in Kenya, namely Nairobi, Nyanza, Rift Valley, Central, Eastern and Western. According to the Population and Housing Census (2019), the overall

Christian population totalled 47,213,282, but the study relied on a total population of 40,177,816 (population and Housing Census 2019) based in the mainline

churches, AICs, Pentecostals and NCMs which are the main categories of the Christian churches in Kenya as indicated on Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Population in the main categories of Churches in Kenya

Church Category	Population
Mainline (Catholics and Protestants)	25,503,642
AICs	3,292,573
NCMs	1,732,911
Pentecostal (Evangelicals)	9,648,690
Total	40,177,816

Source: Population and Housing Census (2019)

Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

The four main categories of churches in Kenya have a population of 40,177,816, as shown in Table 1. The sample size for this population was 400, derived from Yamane’s (1967) mathematical formula;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

where n = Sample size,
 N = Population of study
 e = Margin of error

At 95 per cent confidence level, the margin of error is plus or minus 5 per cent. The study employed a sample size of 40,177,816. This means the sample size (n) for this study is;

$$n = \frac{40177816}{1 + 40177816(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{40177816}{100445.54}$$

$$n = 399.996 = 400$$

The study employed four multistage sampling techniques, which were suitable for this study that involved a large population scattered over a large

geographical area. Multistage sampling was advantageous because it involved a sampling frame that was developed in partial units to select the regions, church categories, individual congregations and respondents. The sampling procedure involved first identifying the six regions which had a high probability of getting churches preaching DSP. This was in line with the arguments of Bariu (2017) that a researcher ought to select an area of study where there is a likelihood of collecting the desired characteristics. Secondly, four main church categories in Kenya were purposively selected: The Mainline churches, African Independent Churches, Pentecostal Churches, and NCMs. The other three categories of churches were selected based on their probability of being churches of influence and dominant in the areas in which they are found. The choice of these churches also depended on their likelihood of getting the required characteristics of the study. Thirdly, three churches from every category were identified, which gave a total of 12 churches. Geographically, the 12 churches were randomly picked from the six regions, two from each region. This enhanced the distribution of churches in Kenya. The summary of the population characteristics is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of Population Characteristics

Region	Church Category	Church Name	Total Questionnaires Dispatched	Number of Clergy sampled	Number of lay Church leaders sampled	Total respondents
Nairobi	African Independent Churches	Milimani	46	1	1	48

	Pentecostal	Christ Is The Anser Ministries	82	1	1	84
Eastern	Mainline	Kaaga Methodist	27	1	1	29
	New Christian Movements	Kambakia Christian Centre	23	1	1	25
Rift Valley	New Christian Movements	Kingdom Seekers Fellowship Nakuru	45	1	1	47
	African Independent Churches	African Independent Church of Africa Nakuru	17	1	1	19
Central	Mainline Church	ACK Muranga	26	1	1	28
	Mainline Church	Roman Catholic Church Nyeri	31	1	1	33
Nyanza	Pentecostal Church	PAG Nyamira	17	1	1	19
	Pentecostal Church	Deliverance Church Kisii	22	1	1	24
Western	African Independent Church	AIC Nineve	22	1	1	24
	New Christian Movements	Serve International Ministry	18	1	1	20
Total			376	12	12	400

The fourth stage encompassed purposive random selection of respondents. This is in line with Creswell's (2008) advice that the researcher ought to choose respondents based on criteria that will help to arrive at the respondents who are knowledgeable on the aspects that the study sought to investigate. From the selected churches, 376 members, 12 clergy, and 12 lay church leaders were to be interviewed. However, the study response rate was 364 members, 10 clergy, and 12 church lay leaders. Observation was done in six randomly selected churches, which is 50 per cent of the churches chosen. This is in line with Fishers et al. (1983) recommendation that in "an event where there is no

estimate available of the proportion in the target population assumed to have the characteristics of interest, 50 per cent should be used".

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Impact of DSP on the Mission of the Church in Kenya

The study sought to investigate how the DSP being preached in the church brought transformation in the lives of people and its impact on the mission of the church. The following statements helped in addressing these questions. Table 3 shows various responses.

Table 3: Impact of the Doctrine of Seed Planting on the Mission of the Church

Statement	Rate	SD	D	A	SA	Others	Total
The doctrine of seed planting has increased the rate of spreading the Gospel to the world	F	34	35	246	37	12	364
	PT	9.3	9.6	67.6	10.2	3.5	100.0
The doctrine of seed planting has improved worship to God among believers	F	40	227	62	21	14	364
	PT	11.0	62.4	17.0	5.8	3.8	100.0
The number of miracles has increased since the introduction of the doctrine of seed planting	F	57	210	49	34	14	364
	PT	15.7	57.7	13.5	9.3	3.8	100.0
The doctrine of seed planting has strengthened the faith in God among believers	F	51	229	45	25	14	364
	PT	14.0	62.9	12.4	6.9	3.8	100.0
The number of people attending church has increased because of the doctrine of seed planting	F	35	53	228	35	13	364
	PT	9.6	14.6	62.6	9.6	3.6	100.0
The doctrine of seed planting has improved the love for God and love for one another	F	81	164	71	19	29	364
	PT	22.3	45.1	19.5	5.2	8.0	100.0
The doctrine of seed planting encourages believers to walk blameless before God	F	119	110	54	27	54	364
	PT	32.7	30.2	14.8	7.4	14.8	100.0
The doctrine of seed planting has increased the number of new churches in the community	F	34	34	127	146	23	364
	PT	9.3	9.3	34.9	40.1	6.3	100.0

Key: A- Agree, D- Disagree, O- Others, SA- Strongly Agree, SD- Strongly Disagree, f- frequency, PT- percentages

Spreading the Gospel

The DSP impacted positively on the mission of the church by being an activity that facilitated the spreading of the gospel. This was explored by posing a statement to the respondents as to whether the DSP has increased the rate of spreading the gospel of Christ to the world. The respondents who agreed with the statement were 246 (67.6%), 37 (10.2%) strongly agreed, 35 (9.6%) disagreed, 34 (9.3%) strongly disagreed and 12 (3.5%) were for other views. The majority, 283 (77.8%), agreed that DSP had increased the rate of spreading the gospel. There were only 69 (18.9%) respondents who disagreed with the statement, and 12 (3.5%) were for other views. A question related to this was asked earlier on the nature of DSP, which also had the majority, 115 (31.6%), confirming that DSP is used to advance the gospel. The researchers further sought views from the interviewees to identify various indicators that show DSP has increased the rate of spreading the Gospel in Kenya. From the findings, 15 (68.18%) identified an increase in

the number of churches as one of the indicators. This is further affirmed by other scholars who have made observations regarding the upsurge and proliferation of churches in Kenya (Shorter & Njiru, 2001; Nkonge & Maina, 2014; Parsitau, 2014).

Parsitau (2014) observed that many churches, especially Neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches, had sprung up and established less than three to five Kilometres apart. This has since changed such that in some urban areas, churches are spread less than one kilometre apart (Mugambi, O.I.2022). This observation confirmed the increase in the number of churches in Kenya. Interviewee 17 (77.27%) identified a numerical increase of church members as an indicator of DSP aiding in the spread of the gospel. These indicators were supported by members' responses. The majority, 273 (74.0%), opined that DSP had led to an increase in the number of members in the church; 68 (18.6%) disagreed with the statement, and 23 (6.3%) were undecided. Initially, a

church's numerical growth was a result of evangelisation and conversion (Nyaundi, 2004; Shorter & Njiru, 2001; Roberts & Yamane, 2012). Evangelisation involves proselytisation by aggressive ministers, making people accept Christianity.

Members also move from their mother churches to other churches where they find satisfaction and fulfilment. This happens after what Roberts and Yamane (2012) call "Intensification of faith". The person does not change their religion or beliefs but gets deeper in knowing the scripture and understanding God (Roberts & Yamane, 2012). Mostly, in crusades, there is more of an intensification of faith than conversions. Numerical increase can also be as a result of brainwashing (Nyaundi, 2004; Shorter & Njiru, 2001). According to Roberts & Yamane (2012), brainwashing "is a process by which a person is involuntarily caused to adopt a belief system, a set of behaviours or a worldview". Such persons are also said to be radicalised to the extent that they refuse to listen to any new idea. This explains why, in some churches, it is not easy to help them even when their lives are endangered. It also explains why some churches have many members and sustain them only if they manage to pull them to their churches and brainwash them.

The example of the controversial Pastor Paul Makenzie represents a case of members who underwent brainwashing. In May 2023, Paul Makenzie was exposed by the media. He had lured his followers to sell everything and bring the money to him. His doctrine had advanced to become an eschatological message. The followers were to give Makenzie all that they owned, come to him for prayer and fasting and wait to meet Christ because the world was coming to an end. By the time the thesis was being written, over 400 people, including children, men and women, had lost their lives in Shakahola forest. More than 600 people were reported missing, and their kin awaited the exhuming of bodies to try and trace their loved ones. This incident made the president of Kenya, Dr. William Samoei Ruto, apologise to the citizens on 14th May 2023.

Critics of DSP are of the opinion that though the proponents of DSP are acknowledged as preachers of the gospel, behind their actions, they have shifted from transforming the society in Kenya, which is the essence of the church mission. The church mission is not

evangelism. Evangelism will have indicators of many people being converted, many churches being planted, messages being aired on TVs and radios, crusades and fellowships. However, the mission includes touching peoples' lives, their financial aid for schooling, health, food, clothing, housing, etcetera, if the gospel has to become 'good news'. This study established that proceeds from DSP are not used to cater for the less fortunate in society. Gitonga (OI 2022) attributed this failure to the type of denominations the NCMs represent;

Unstructured movements, one man (clergy) who is the founder making plans and decisions for the movement, members who are by majority visiting the church and the vision and mission of the movement that does not allow touching of the needy in society.

The DSP carries with it the characteristic value of sacrifice, faith and commitment from the believers. It is demonstrated in the church as an all-inclusive body for all who purport to be members (Wuthnow, 1994). Failure to touch the lives of the members fails NCMs' role as a living organ for the welfare of all and for all in the world (Bowen, 1996). This implies that the NCM's strategy of using DSP in church does not promote doing the mission of God.

Further, the respondents perceived the clergy who preach DSP as gluttonous individuals who do it for personal gain. In an interview with Citizen TV, Muheria (2023) described DSP preachers as "very dangerous individuals out there in sheep skin but are wolves. They posed as preachers of the Gospel, yet they are driven by greed and selfish interest". Kinoti (OI 2022) had a similar view and described these preachers as;

They are the sons of the enemy who intruded into the Christian space to plant tares in the dark. They are dangerous to the body of Christ, but it is unfortunate that they have managed to lure ignorant Christians who piously adore them. Their impact will, for a long time, be felt in the body of Christ. They use the gospel to achieve their intended end, not for the benefit of the Kingdom of God.

Mugambi (OI 2022) denounced the idea of DSP being used to spread the gospel. He opined that;

The characteristics of the true preachers of the gospel include self-denial, accepting suffering as a sign of carrying the Cross of Jesus, using

one's resources to preach and help the needy...true gospel is not getting money from the sick, the jobless, the heart-broken, the poor. It is the other way round- preachers giving money and other resources to these vulnerable individuals.

Nyarieko (OI 2022) regretted that the DSP preachers are associated with the true servants of God. As a bishop, he said, "it is shameful to take advantage of vulnerable people using the Bible". He explained that "the DSP preachers are criminals who should repent and return everything they have stolen from innocent believers like Zacchaeus, the tax collector in the NT" (Luk 19:8).

Worship, Love of God and Love of the People

The responses from members revealed that the preaching of DSP did not improve the worship of God among believers, nor did it improve the love for God and the love for one another. The majority, 267 (73.4%), disagreed with the statement that DSP has improved worship for God. Those who agreed with the statement were 83 (22.8%), while 14 (3.8%) were of other views. The 'Golden Rule' in the Bible stipulates the significance of worshipers to love God with the whole of their hearts and love one another as they love themselves (Mk 29-31). Preachers of the DSP fail to perpetuate this, yet it is a basic principle.

To be effective missionaries, people need to love and revere God as well as have love for His people. This finds expression not only in the Christian community but also in the African Traditional community. Mbiti (1969), espousing the purpose of offering and sacrifices among Africans, detailed how they managed to maintain a peaceful, coherent society. This was demonstrated through showing reverence to God, spirits and ancestors in worship and loving fellow Africans. Their giving and offering enhanced worship of God and love. The community ensured love for one another as well through mutual sharing. This is contrary in NCMs today, where the results show that DSP does not improve love for God and love for one another. The majority, 245 (67.4%), disagreed with the statement that DSP has improved the love for God and love for one another. Those who agreed with the statement were 90 (24.7%), while 29 (8.0%) had other views. The findings helped to probe further the state of DSP. Whether there was any problem if DSP did not improve worship, love for God and love for one another?

The findings show that DSP does not improve worship or love for God among believers as it is among the African community, as discussed by Mbiti (1969). In comparison, the values of Africans of worship of God's love for Him and other people are similar to those of the early church in the NT (Acts 2:42-47). The believers loved one another so much that they sold their belongings and shared with the poor. They fellowshiped, prayed and shared 'bread' together, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people". They, therefore, increased in number (Acts 2:47). This disqualifies DSPs from bearing equivalent values and purpose. Thus, DSP cannot be equated to the African way of worship, offering and sacrifice. It also deviates from the Christian values and principles. Therefore, this leads to the conclusion that the churches that promote DSP fail and lack important values that are important for effective missions.

As to whether there is a problem if DSP does not improve worship for God, love for Him and for one another in church; interviewees helped to shed a bit of light on this. According to Mugambi (OI 2022), "If a church does not worship God and aim to improve in worship, then all other efforts lead to idolatry". Mwangi (OI 2022), in her wisdom, elucidates that "worship for God, love for Him and his people brings a community of believers together who work for a common purpose". The common purpose that the church can engender is to carry out the mission to change the world for the better, and this was found lacking in NCMs preaching DSP.

As opposed to oneness enhanced by Africans and Christians, NCMs carry the characteristic of individualism in the pool of self-aggrandisement and gratification that does not have room to touch the needy in society (Mutembei O.I. 2022). This is not what missionary endeavour entails. If propagators of DSP were to succeed in transforming the world, they would be selfless, with big hearts, to love God and love the people. Why love God and the people? Naseri (2020) argues that reaching out to people in the world will always require being selfless, empathising with suffering, loving God so much, and always being driven by virtue of bringing glory to Him. From the analysed results, there is still a lot that the churches preaching on DSP have not done, and DSP lacks the efficacy to improve worship for God, love for Him and believers'

love. Hence, the mandate of the church to be involved in the mission of God is incapacitated.

Believers' Conduct

The study inquired whether DSP encouraged believers to walk blameless before God. Those who strongly disagreed with the statement were 119 (32.7%), 110 (30.2%) disagreed, 54 (14.8%) agreed, 27 (7.4%) strongly agreed, and 54 (14.8%) were of other views. The majority, 229 (62.9%), were of the view that DSP did not encourage believers to walk blameless before God, while 81 (22.2%) agreed with the statement. This indicates that DSP failed the test of 'Holiness ethics' and mission requirements. For a successful mission to be achieved, the missionaries' level of spirituality determines its effectiveness. Wonsuk and Ross (2013) elucidate that;

“There is a definite relationship between personal experience of the Spirit and commitment to the cause of Christ and His mission through the church. Such commitment arises out of a sense of belonging that develops within the individual as a result of that intense encounter with the Holy Spirit” (P.31).

The encounter with the Holy Spirit makes believers not only desire the life of Christ but also emulate Him in their conduct. The Bible contains many scriptures that define believers' conduct. God commands his followers to walk before Him and be blameless (Gen 17:1-2), and like Abraham, He will bless them. The Christian church embraces values that help them to live a blameless life that is aimed to bring 'blessings and not a curse' and will lead them to 'heaven and not to hell'. Hebrews 12:14b is clear on this that one should “live with holiness without which one will never see God”. Nevertheless, there is no degree of Holiness outside Jesus Christ. Though this study is not aimed at interrogating spirituality in detail, it is worth mentioning that the mission of God requires people who wholly embrace the *Kenosis* (self-emptying) of Jesus Christ. This involves living a life dedicated to helping others in need without counting the cost Wonsuk & Ross (2013). This involves taking a “spiritual dimension of faith that becomes a motivation for mission, moving people of faith to share good news of Jesus Christ”.

Parsitau (2014) analysed NCMs as transformative movements in society. She enlists the activities of three NCMs, namely, Maximum Miracle Centre, Jesus is

Alive Ministries and Faith Evangelistic Ministries. She argues that the preaching in NCMs leads individuals to accept Jesus Christ, upon which they are declared 'born again', hence becoming saved people. The believers in this category claim to walk in the light and avoid sin. They champion the right conduct. They stop drunkardness, harlotry, theft and all immoral conduct. The change in behaviour brings transformation, according to Parsitau (2014). However, the same 'born again' believers are asked for a seed to make them rich, wealthy, healed, and protected.

Whereas the preachers will preach about the salvation of Jesus Christ and bring change in people's lives, DSP cannot transform the spiritual lives of people. This means, therefore, a sinner can continue sinning and, when in church, plant a seed and expect blessings. Scholars like Kasera (2012) argue that most NCMs are hesitant to preach, rebuking messages that would lead anybody away from the church. This is an indication of a negative impact on the image of the church.

Faith and Miracles

The study did not delve into whether the miracles are true or not but whether the miracles have increased since the introduction of the DSP. The respondents who disagreed with the statement were 210 (57.7%), 57 (15.7%) strongly disagreed, 49 (13.5%) agreed, 34 (9.3%) strongly agreed and 14 (3.8%) had other views. The majority, 267 (73.4%), informed that miracles had not increased since the introduction of DSP. However, 83 (22.8%) were for the opinion that they had increased, while 14 (3.8%) were for other views.

Theologically, God's miracles happen to believers with faith (Mahoney, 1993). Miracles can increase a believer's faith if, indeed, they happen. If the DSP would increase the number of miracles in church, it would be automatic that peoples' faith would be strengthened. Moreover, as such, the church would be *sui generis* (occupying her rightful position). Her position would not be disputed (Nyaudi, 2004). The scholars of PG argue that preachers attribute failure to receive miracles to peoples' lack of faith (Magambo, 2016; Koch, 2009; Bowler, 2010; Mwikamba & Akaranga, 2015). This necessitated an interrogation of the believer's faith. Those who disagreed with the statement that DSP had strengthened faith in God among believers were 229 (62.9%), 51 (14.0%) strongly

disagreed, 45 (12.4%) agreed, 25 (6.9%) strongly agreed, and 14 (3.8%) had other views. The findings show that the majority of 280 (76.9%) disagreed with the statement that DSP has strengthened faith in God among believers. There were only 80 (19.3%) respondents who agreed with the statement, while 14 (3.8%) had other views. This revealed that DSP did not increase the number of miracles or strengthen the faith of believers in God. According to Ghai (2021), there are many false preachers who pretend to be prophets of God and caveat the Kenyan people about them. He says;

Now is the time to cease embracing false prophets and their theatrics. We need to open our inner eyes to the deception of many so-called men or women of God. There is Jujū, Muti, and Voodoo in church. I am not discarding the great and honest churches in our midst. But imposters like Lucy Natasha, and Joshua have inflicted every sphere of the modern cosmopolitan life, tempting people to think that by planting the seed in church, people will be immune to societal problems. They receive money from followers to enrich themselves in the name of God (Ghai, 2021).

The NT promises two things about miracles and faith: that the followers of Jesus will perform greater miracles than himself if they believe (Jn 14:12b), and if one has faith as little as a mustard seed, will tell a “mountain to move from here to there, and it will move” (Matt 17:21). This justifies the church’s advocacy for faith and miracles. This study, while affirming faith and miracles, also discovered a close connection between ‘miracles and DSP’. The DSP is preached to make believers expect miracles, and miracles are a motivating drive to make believers advocate for DSP. The two, ‘miracles and DSP, are interconnected’, one being used for the other. However, some preachers have been known to stage-manage miracles in Kenya. These pastors, bishops and also commonly branded the ‘men and women of cloth’ who play-act miracles have been branded many names like fake, rogue, conmen and conwomen, predators and wicked people using the church and the Bible to extort money from gullible followers. Some of these clergy have been exposed, yet they did not refrain from their activities.

An exposure of Pastor Kanyari by KTN in October 2014 reveals that he used potassium permanganate to deceive people that he would turn water into blood. He fixed

needles between his fingers to cheat his congregants that he had the power to remove needles from somebody’s body (Zirulnick, 2014). Parsitau (2014) claims that Pastor James Ng’ang’a was exposed for having coached people who came pretending to be crippled, insane, blind and deaf. They testified having received miracles of healing even in tears, but all were lies.

We are informed by Nthamburi (2000) that the European missionary activities of the nineteenth century brought great transformation to Africa. Although critics castigate the dark part of colonialism, there was the positive side that enhanced the mission of the church. The schools built made Africans literate, and they could read the Bible. The early literate persons got jobs as the clergy, teachers, secretaries and chiefs. The hospitals built led to improved health, reduced mortality rate and increased lifespan. The missionaries clothed the poor, built houses, and gave food and many other necessities. They touched the lives of Africans with not only the gospel but with material needs. The pragmatic missionary activities are inactive in the NCMs. Sorobi (OI 2022) associated the inactivity in NCMs with a lack of willingness on the part of the clergy to spare their fortunes from DSP and give to the needy.

Parsitau (2014) argues that the three NCMs, namely, Maximum Miracle Centre, Jesus Is Alive Ministries, and Faith Evangelistic Ministries, are actively engaged in public activities. They have built homes for street Children, they feed the hungry, they have built schools, but their roles need to be improved.

According to Mutembei (OI 2022), some churches established such facilities as children’s homes, homes for the needy, homes for the disabled and schools for the challenged to get an avenue to solicit funds from donors within and outside the country. The hidden agenda is not life transformation but another project for raising funds. The fact that NCMs put up huge tents and cathedrals, buy expensive cars, live in mansions and buy buses to ferry members to church does not touch needy, vulnerable and desperate people (Mugambi, O.I 2022). Mugambi (OI 2022) described such actions as a sign of show-off and ways of blindfolding gullible members who follow them in the hope that they will be transformed by the ‘god’ of their pastors. However, the strategy by some of these pastors is to entice members and, in a clever way, exude money from their members.

Sometimes, they pretend to be assisting the needy, especially in the media, to attract attention, sympathy and recognition. But, it is a deceptive scheme for their personal benefit. Kwateng-Yeboah (2016) opines that;

The DSP preachers' guise of presenting an economic ethos to change the socio-economic lives of the poor, but in real sense, they disempower them, depriving them of their resources, thus increasing poverty (p. 82).

Kwateng-Yeboah (2016) observes further that DSP preachers did not work to alleviate poverty. Their actions of getting money and other items from the poor led to the exploitation of the followers, but the clergy enjoyed affluence from the proceeds. He thus says that;

"In an endless mine of desperate souls in search of spiritual and material nourishment... the clergy have become 'reapers of Gold and Diamond'. ... they receive money from members. These members are encouraged to wait upon God patiently and remain faithful to God. They are supposed to give their monies faithfully" (p. 88).

The DSP has become an insidious disease affecting the church and her mission. A story in Standard newspaper on 13th March 2023 entitled; *Faithful paying for prayer: I went into debt, trying to secure a miracle*, covers a story of two believers who secured loans to have 'seed money' to take to church to get a miracle (Diseko, 2023). Evelyne Okello, a mother of four children living in slums, had gone for many months without any earnings. She consulted the pastor, who asked her for KeS 15,000 as a seed offering, which she did not have. She took a loan, gave it to the pastor and was promised to get double the money in one week's time. That did not happen. A similar case of Dennis Opiu, who was jobless for three years, shows how believers are suffering. He borrowed money from friends and cash application totalling KeS 48,000 and was promised a miracle for a job that too did not happen (Diseko, 2023). The result of such occurrences affects both the poor and the rich believers. The members' economic status gets affected when they take their money and resources to the clergy in the church, expecting that there will be multiplication. This leads to the poor becoming impoverished, and the rich may be disgruntled upon failed promises (Biznar Reporter, 2022). Ndaiga (OI, 2022) reacted to the claim that some people were being blessed while others were not after they gave their

'seed'. He wondered why believers were not realising it was a deceit. He asked,

"Why are the clergy not planting a seed of all their belongings to be the richest individuals in the world and go ahead and give to the members of their churches a portion and to the poor in the society as well? Why do they have to get the proceeds from DSP rather than getting from God Directly?"

However, the clergy who solicit the money and other materials in the name of a 'seed' are living extravagant lives. They are the ones becoming rich and extremely wealthy. That is why Muheria (OI 2023) called them 'Thieves', who stole from innocent believers. Thus, DSP impoverishes those who give out their money and property and enriches the clergy who receive it. The mission of God does not take place.

The Impact of DSP on the Mission of the Church: A Kenyan Situation

The historical development of DSP proceeds after the initial emergence. From the end of the twentieth century to crossing over the new millennium, DSP preachers continued to be more vibrant. The DSP, which was known to be a teaching of urban churches, penetrated into small towns, including the village churches (Ndaiga, O.I 2022). This section interrogated various aspects of DSP's historical development and the implications on the mission of the church.

Gitonga (OI 2022) argued that after its initial start, the DSP was so appealing to the extent that preachers in other denominations, the Mainline, the PC and AICs began adopting it. However, though it was attractive and preached, it did not enhance mission work (Kinoti, O.I. 2022). Kinoti (OI 2022) expound that,

Adopting DSP blinded the eyes of the preachers from seeing the real needs of people. Their eyes were wide open to see the content in the offertory basket, yet they could not see the wrinkles on that poor woman dropping the coin nor see the torn shoe worn by the children of the woman, great shame.

The influence of mass media played a big role in facilitating its spread. Pastors began broadcasting their sermons on TV stations, radios, magazines and newspapers; Pastor Pius Muiru had a programme known as 'Kuna Nuru Gizani' aired on KBC TV and radio. In a Radio cassette recorded on Thursday, 19th 2000, in a

lunch hour meeting, Muiru preached on a topic he called “Mtirikiko wa Baraka”, which means “overflowing blessing”. The recording was a twenty-minute Kiswahili sermon, with some parts containing prayers and others songs of worship. His song *Lango litafunguka, ni bwana yesu atafungua*, meaning “the door will be opened, the Lord Jesus will open”, was sung that day. Quoting Luke 6:38, he said,

Praise the Lord Jesus, brothers and sisters. He has revealed to me that He has good plans for you to prosper you. He will shock you with his blessings today. Knock the door of His blessings, and He will reward you. Your blessings will overflow today. Bring your ‘seed’, and you will never lack.

Bishop Muiru’s preaching on DSP got the attention of the media, the Tuko platform, and KTN News Kenya. They recorded him telling his members to plant a seed of KeS 10,000, and they will be blessed with a vehicle before the end of the year. He put a brand new car in the parking as a sign of covenant with God. To seal the covenant, they were to give their seed. When the news spread, people reacted on Tuko media and Facebook platforms, and some responses were consolidated.

Common Sensi wrote;

I wish it was a young Pastor speaking like that; we would understand it was out of ignorance. But Bishop Muiru, a long-serving Bishop? This is giving the gospel of Jesus a bad name. It is purely manipulation of those who look up to such a pastor for spiritual nourishment and guidance. The church and Christians are losing their take on society, not because of silence and criticism of those outside the church, but the silence of those who are in the church for fear of victimisation and being labelled anti-church. We give voluntarily even more, so it is not a question of giving or being against giving but soliciting money with the impression that it is part of the Christian gospel... it is petty and sad to continue misusing a sacred place of worship to further greed. Let us be informed by the scriptures in 2 Timothy 4:2-4.

Sammy Ei wrote;

Go on, Mr Muiru. Do not spare these fools. Con them as much as you can. It is not your fault that they were born foolish.

The reaction from the sampled bloggers indicated that DSP preaching was implicating negatively not only to the church but to the Gospel of Christ as well. The mixed reactions showed it was regrettable that pastors can be immature, selfish and greedy. It was disappointing because believers were being cheated and manipulated, yet some of them were aware of the deceit, and they kept quiet. They also lamented over the church losing its respect as an institution of honour.

Margaret Wanjiru of Jesus Alive Ministry was a Televangelist and had a programme known as ‘The Glory of the Lord is Here’, aired on KBC TV. Her programme was also aired on KBC radio. Her messages were also contained in ‘Faith Digest’ magazine, which was written on a monthly basis. She taught her congregation to give their money to support her in ministry, where DSP was part of her message. In one of her ‘YouTube’ (a social platform) messages uploaded on 28th August 2014, she taught her congregants on a topic entitled “anointed to prosper”. She provoked the faith of her listeners with scriptures (Isaiah 61:1) and led them to declare and decree liberation from poverty and anointing for riches. She taught the principle behind prosperity is SP. She says that;

Some of you are locked in the prison of poverty. The prison has the power to keep people in bondage. But we have the anointing of God upon us. Today, you are coming out of debt prison, poverty prison, and lack prison in Jesus’ mighty name... When He has blessed us, he expects us to give to the Kingdom. What we give is a seed for further blessings. Yesterday I gave one of you a refrigerator. I was sowing my best to get the best; I am building a new kitchen, and that seed will grow. I will get my kitchen equipped because I have a seed that is growing. That is the principle of the Kingdom. But remember, you should plant in good soil. You sow because you expect a harvest.

The congregants went on with presenting their seed as the singers sang a song that was in line with the name of the movement (I see your glory coming down, the glory of the Lord is here, we will never be the same again, we bless your name, God the father, the son and the Holy Spirit).

The researchers made an observation that some TV stations air the ‘owners’ messages for many hours

asking for money as a seed to offer prayers or prophecy. These include SASA TV, owned by James Ng'ang'a; Urejesho TV, owned by Peter Nyaga; Aviation TV, owned by Peter Manyuru; Oracle TV making, owned by Reverend Lucy Natasha; Humble Touch TV, owned by Jackson Mwololo, Destiny TV, owned by Kiogora Magambo. Today, one watching these TV screens would think the pastors are gambling like 'sports pesa' or 'Kaende Jackpot' from the way they speak on their TV stations. Propagation of DSP and its development has been transformed to include many elements both during services and TV programmes. In the TV programmes, the preacher calls on the viewer with needs to take a step of faith and send money through the Mpesa line or Till number or Pay bill number. The preacher in these TV channels asks their viewers to have items in their possession so that the preacher can bless them for their use: oil, water, salt and handkerchiefs. The items are prayed for, and they are believed to possess innate power that will facilitate a miracle. Direct prayers are also offered to the sick who touch their bodies for a miracle healing. Some preachers pray with the viewers with their hands on their TV screens or kneeling down in their houses with their hands lifted up. All these are the current developments of DSP in church.

According to Kimanzi (OI 2022), many preachers came up to preach the gospel. This was confirmed by Shorter and Njiru (2001), who observed that some preachers did not have theological training, and many of them had acclaimed themselves. The coming of many preachers was seen as an effect of the impartation of the Holy Spirit (Parsitau & Mwaura, 2010). However, according to Pentecostal theology, not all preachers championed Christ; there are those who utilised the opportunity to intrude into the church to gain money (Gathogo, 2011).

Mugambi (OI 2022) opined that many churches, movements and ministries came up, and as a result of freedom of worship, many preachers utilised the opportunity and established their premises. These premises attracted many people who got an opportunity to be preached to. However, many of these people joining movements faced challenges of exploitation and deception, and some went through abuse in the process.

Mwangi (OI 2022) argued that the historical development led to the rapid spread of NCMs, and the number of people advocating for DSP increased. The

previous focus on addressing the needs of people changed. It now became a time of addressing the needs of the clergy. Instead of a mission to the hungry, to the homeless, to the sick, to the orphans and the widows to help and support them in their needs, it became a time for the needy and the rich to carry their money and property to the clergy. The clergy live extravagant lives with expensive cars, bungalows, real estates and much wealth. Their followers meekly sit to be preached to but aching in and with their challenges.

The gap in church resources mobilisation led pastors to advocate for DSP as a strategy to raise funds (Nyarieko, OI. 2022). Many new churches hardly had enough sources of finances to cater for their needs (Gathogo, 2011). That is why this study established that the pastors had no choice but to strategise on how to raise funds (Chapter 5 Section 3). The Harambee philosophy that was common in the secular world was not applicable to these churches, who held themselves in high regard and wanted to be different from other churches (Nyarieko, OI. 2022).

In conclusion, the motivation of pastors in preaching DSP is not to do the mission of God; it is sad to note that preachers of DSP in Kenya are driven by a desire for money. As put by Ogalo (2007), "Preachers in Kenya have not been fishers of men, but instead, they have been reapers of gold and diamond in an endless mine of desperate souls in search of spiritual nourishment". The congregations are easily trapped because the preaching preceding SP appeals to both psychological and material needs (Gathogo, 2011). The DSP is presented in such a way that the "poor and the broken people discover that what they read in the bible is happening now in their lives" Jenkins (2011). This explains, in part, why people keep on giving their money and property despite all the literature and media articles.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion: In conclusion, the NCMs practising DSP do not have elaborate mission activities. They engage in evangelical missions in which they get a platform to ask for money in the form of SP. They do not carry out transformative missions involving doing activities that change both the individual's and societal lives. However, the information contained in this study was an awakening call to NCMs and other churches who are

practising DSP to change and engage in activities that transform people's lives.

Recommendation: Therefore, the study recommended that the church de-emphasise DSP and be intentional in embarking on pragmatic transformative activities that will improve the lives of people not only in the church but in the entire society. This study delved into analysing DSP in the NCMs and the impact it had on the

mission of the church in Kenya. It was established that DSP impacted negatively on the mission of the church in Kenya. The Churches practising DSP had become ineffective in the mission work since DSP contributed to such vices as corruption and theft. The individual followers suffered at the hands of preachers. The larger society began losing trust and confidence in the church.

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