

**THE IMPACT OF PROSPERITY GOSPEL TEACHING ON WHOLE-LIFE
STEWARDSHIP: A CASE OF AFRICA GOSPEL CHURCH IN KAMPALA,
UGANDA**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the
degree of Doctor of Ministry in the department of Religion and the School of
Religion and Christian Ministry of Africa Nazarene University**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis and the research that it describes are my original work and that they have not been presented in any other university for academic work.

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This research was conducted under our supervision and is submitted with our approval as university supervisors.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my wife, Caroline Adhiambo Ouma, who for 19 years has filled my life with immeasurable love and joy. From Kenya to Uganda, you have been a friend, confidant, and relentless supporter. You have created a warm and loving environment with enthusiasm and devotion to me and to our beloved children, Merlin B. Ouma, Joshua E. Ouma, and Sue D. Ouma. Thank you for always being there.

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenal rise of the Prosperity Gospel Teaching (PGT) continues to mushroom in Christian circles and has an influence on the whole-life stewardship. The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of *prosperity gospel teaching* (PGT) on whole-life stewardship in AGC in the Kampala area, Uganda. The conceptual framework for the whole-life stewardship has three independent variables as *popular prosperity gospel teaching*, *biblical theology of material prosperity*, and *cultural concepts of material prosperity in Africa*. Two intervening variables include current discipleship methods in AGC, and economic levels of AGC members. The study was informed by the following hypotheses: PGT has not significantly imbibed the whole-life stewardship of AGC members in Kampala Area, Uganda, there is no effect of biblical theology on whole-life stewardship among AGC members in the Kampala area, and there is no statistically significant consequence of African culture on whole-life stewardship in AGC, Kampala area. The rationale for the research was to provide insights for shaping the spiritual lives of AGC leadership and congregants. The research would also be used in Christian Biblical/Theological institutions to sensitize the Church on the dangers of PGT and be published online for scholarly purposes. The study used a cross-sectional survey research design. The design employed quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data from respondents. Two hundred and seventy seven AGC respondents were selected using a purposive sampling approach. Data was analyzed using statistical package for social scientists (SPSS). In addition, popular gospel teaching, and cultural teachings that accommodate PGT had significant relationships with whole-life stewardship (with P-value=0.00) while the biblical theology of material prosperity did not have any effect on whole-life stewardship ($P > 0.05$). The study recommends that AGC should develop a formal tool/manual on whole-life stewardship to mitigate the dangers of PGT. It should also conduct periodic workshops and conferences on whole-life stewardship. The churches should encourage and support church leaders to attend formal biblical/theological training to avoid misinterpreting the Bible. Lastly, AGCs should avoid their cultural practices that contravene N.T. principles on whole-life stewardship. The study recommends future research on the factors that contributed to AGC members leaving PGT churches, and how small Christian communities could work together to improve their economic wellbeing.

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OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Biblical Theology on material Prosperity: An understanding of what the Bible and biblical scholars teach on acquisition and use of much wealth in material and financial matters

Blessings: Refers to material resources and much money beyond what one needs

Cultural Concepts: African beliefs that govern the acquisition and management of material resources

Kampala Area: The seven selected AGCs in Uganda. The five churches are located within the capital city of Uganda and its suburbs while two were in two of main urban settings (Jinja and Bugiri towns in Uganda).

Lay Leaders: This refers to committed local church leaders of AGC who did not serve in the ministry as fulltime ministers.

Lay Members: Committed Christians who had been in church for a period of at least three years

Popular Prosperity Gospel Teaching: Trendy teaching that emphasises that God rewards faithful Christians with many material blessings

Poverty: A state of not having enough material and financial wealth for one's needs

Prosperity: Acquisition of much wealth in material and financial matters

Prosperity Gospel Teaching: This is the doctrine that God wants all Christians to be excessively wealthy in material possessions because of the redemptive work of Christ.

Wealth: Abundance of assets such as money, real estates, personal property, expensive vehicles, and business, among others

Whole-life Stewardship: Christian discipleship that embraces kingdom principles related to economics, material possessions, time, gifts, and abilities

ABBREVIATIONS /ACRONYMS

AGC: Africa Gospel Church

ANU: Africa Nazarene University

ATR: African Traditional Religion

FGD: Focus Group Discussion

KEST: Kampala Evangelical School of Theology

KOG: Kingdom of God

MP: Material Prosperity

MCK: Methodist Church of Kenya

MRSM: Multiple Regressions Statistical Model

NEGST: Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (now AIU – Africa International University)

NIV: New International Version

N.T.: New Testament

O.T.: Old Testament

PG: Prosperity Gospel

PGT: Prosperity Gospel Teachings

SPSS: Statistical packages for Social Scientists

USA: United States of America

WCC: World Council of Churches

WGM: World Gospel Mission

Books of the Bible**Old Testament**

Ge.	Genesis
Ex.	Exodus
Lev.	Leviticus
Nu.	Numbers
Dt.	Deuteronomy
Jdg.	Judges
1-2 Sa.	1-2 Samuel
1-2 Ki.	Kings
Job.	Job
Ps/Pss.	Psalms/Psalms
Pr.	Proverbs
Ecc.	Ecclesiastes
Isa.	Isaiah
Jer.	Jeremiah
Mic.	Micah
Mal.	Malachi

New Testament

Mat.	Matthew
Mk.	Mark
Lk.	Luke
Jn.	John
Ac.	Acts
Ro.	Romans
1-2 Co.	Corinthians
Eph.	Ephesians
Phil.	Philippians
Col.	Colossians
1-2 Th.	1-2 Thessalonians
1-2 Ti.	1-2 Timothy
Heb.	Hebrews
Jas.	James
1-2 Pe.	1-2 Peter
1-2-3 Jn.	1-2-3 John

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study, the research questions, the hypotheses, and the significance of the study. The chapter also focuses on the scope of the study, the delimitations, and limitations of the study, assumptions and the construction of both the theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

1.2 The Background of the Study

Prosperity Gospel Teaching (PGT) whose tenet starts from the premise that God desires all faithful Christians to prosper materially has mushroomed and embraced the global landscape.¹ The World Council of Churches (WCC) noted that the Prosperity Gospel (PG) movement has witnessed astonishing growth, accounting to nearly one-quarter of the global Christian community.² The empirical survey by PEW Research Centre reveals that more than half of African Christians in the sub-Sahara region adhere to Prosperity theology. Eric Gbotoe mentions a figure of PGT as high as 62% in his

¹ Andreas Heuser, ed., "Religio-scapes of the Prosperity Gospel: An Introduction, Pastures of plenty," *Africa and beyond* (Peter Lang: Frankfurt, 2015): 15-17.

² Rimamsikwe Habila Kitause, and Hilary Chukwuka, "The Future Prosperity Gospel in Nigeria," *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science*, Vol. 3, no. 7 (2015): 25.

research.³ PGT insinuates, “God will grant wealth and good health to people who have faith in Christ Jesus.”⁴

PGT attaches the value of the Christian faith to wealth acquisition. Castor Goliama avers that PGT followers consider material riches as a favour from God and compensation for prayers. Goliama asserts that advocates of Prosperity tenet employ the “seed-faith” catchphrase for inspiring their followers to provide funds in anticipation for material advancement.⁵ The followers declare whatever miracles they desire from God. PGT proponents contend that the Bible contains the Abrahamic covenant, which promises both material and spiritual blessings for Christians. Nevertheless, many evangelical scholars have not welcomed the theology of PG and they allege that the phenomenon is heretical. The prosperity tenet undervalues the discipline of holiness and heart transformation, which are the essence of the Christian faith. Hence, consideration for illumination on the authentic Christian concept on whole-life stewardship underpinned the study.

The genesis of PGT is a blur although Ogbu Kalu traces its origin from the United States of America (USA) under the auspice of W. Kenyon (1867-1948).⁶ Paul Gifford

³Eric Gbotoe Z.M., “Commercialized Gospel: a missiological assessment of Prosperity Gospel” (M.A. Diss., University of Pretoria, 2013): 206-207 <http://www.repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/40347>, 2013 (Retrieved from Worldwide Web on 16/03/2019)

⁴ PEW Research Centre *Tolerance and tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa*, *Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life*, <http://www.pewforum.org/2010/04/15/executive-summary-islam-and-christianity-in-sub-saharan-africa/> (Retrieved from Worldwide Web on 16/03/2019).

⁵ Castor Michael Goliama, “The Gospel of Prosperity in African Pentecostalism: A Theological and Pastoral Challenge to the Catholic Church – With Reference to the Archdiocese of Songea, Tanzania” *Dissertation, Doctor of Theology*. University of Wien (Wien, 2013), 3.

⁶ David Jones and Russell Woodbridge S., 2011. *Health, Wealth & Happiness: Has the Prosperity Gospel Overshadowed the Gospel of Christ?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2011), 494 Kindle Location.

posits that in the late 1940s, PGT began to spread across the USA and other parts of the world under Oral Roberts, Kenneth Hagin, and others.⁷ PGT reached the African continent in the 1960s but gained popularity in the 1980s. David Jones and Russell claim that the mushrooming influence of PGT manifests in national TV evangelists such as Benny Hinn, T. D. Jakes, Bishop Long, Paula White, Creflo Dollar, and Joyce Meyer among others.⁸ As a result, the doctrine is becoming popular and impacting masses in the African urban contexts. AGCs are finding themselves in such contexts and are accepting PGT messages, which consequently are influencing the lives of many church members.

According to Paul Gifford, PGT was welcomed in Uganda around 1970s. Its spread is attributed to a notable preacher, Simeon Kayiwa, a Pentecostal pastor who began Namirembe Christian Fellowship in 1977 in Kampala.”⁹ Gifford indicates that later in October 1989, a Canadian pastor, Handel Leslie also started the Abundant Life Church in Kampala with PGT stance. Besides, in the 1970s, a Ghanaian prophet John Obiri Yeboah began the Holy Church of Christ and became a famous PG advocate. In 2016, he started an association of Pentecostal churches called the National Fellowship of Born Again Churches, and United Reformed Council. Because of his affluence, his disciples Dickson Lubega, Joshua Lwere, and others believed PGT and became its apostles. Lwere stresses that poverty is a curse and therefore indecorous to be identified with God.¹⁰ The

⁷Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role in Uganda and other Countries* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1999), 39.

⁸ Jones and Woodbridge 559, Kindle Location.

⁹ Ibid., 104. Pastor Simeon Kayiwa’s followers venerate him as “a mighty man of God, with an overflowing anointing.

¹⁰ Ibid., 104-113.

knowledge of a curse in an African context depicts failure and misfortune. Those who deem themselves cursed turn to advocates of PGT for hope and a future.

Today, in Uganda, popular PG preachers such as, Jackson Senyonga, Robert Kayanja, and others attract large congregations that desire to escape from poverty and attain an upper-class-lifestyle. For instance, in his Miracle Centre Cathedral, Kayanja has over ten thousand congregation members whom he promises wealth if they follow his teachings on PGT. “Kayanja encourages his followers to achieve wealth and serve their personal interests.”¹¹ He has helped to plant over a thousand churches with nametags of “miracle centre” with PGT outlook.¹² Many people in Uganda respect these preachers and churches consult them as keynote speakers in conferences, seminars, and churches for inspiration and hope. The upsurge of PGT in Uganda has continued to escalate under Pastor Robert Kayanja of Miracle Centre cathedral.¹³ “At Miracle Centre, opulence, abundance and accumulation function as a striking representation of the central principles of the church.”¹⁴ The perspective of PGT as advanced by Kayanja is that when congregants have faith, they manifest material increase and consumptions. Many evangelical scholars and church leaders consider PGT a heresy from the true biblical doctrine on whole-life stewardship.

AGC in Uganda began in 1992 under World Gospel Missionaries (WGM) from the USA who found themselves in the contexts of PGT. Over the years, the

¹¹ Wikipedia <http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert-kayanja>.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Caroline valois, “Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity, Sexuality and National Building in the Ugandan Public Sphere” (PhD. The University of Edinburg, 2014), 114.

¹⁴ Ibid., 114.

denomination has grown to more than 150 congregations with an approximate population of over 9,000 members.¹⁵ These congregations are in different parts of the country with large congregations being in urban areas of Kampala. Those churches in Kampala area are seven with an average total population of around 923.¹⁶ These urban AGCs are Kisugu, Katale, Nakyigalala, Banda, Bukasa, Masese, and Bugubo and were relevant for the study.

AGC's doctrine emphasizes salvation from sins in Christ and a life of sanctification and holiness through the work of the Holy Spirit. "We believe the Bible teaches that after we have repented of our sins, received God's forgiveness and are saved, we need to go on to receive a second work of grace in our hearts and lives."¹⁷ AGC believes that sanctification and holiness entail the surrender of a Christian's life and all the gifts God has entrusted to him/her to the Lordship of Christ. Jesus and the church leadership expect AGC to demonstrate a life of fruitfulness in the area of whole-life stewardship.

However, over the years, AGC leadership has had concerns regarding Whole-life stewardship in their congregations. Whole-life stewardship is operationalized to refer to Christian discipleship that embraces kingdom principles related to economics, material prosperity, time, gifts, and abilities. Discipleship is a Christian discipline that empowers believers from the allurements of possessions and reminds them that a believer's first

¹⁵ No official statistics of all the church members in AGC Uganda has been done. The estimate number was provided by the General Secretary of AGC, Uganda. Rev. David Dhikusooka who is also a pastor in one of the town churches in Uganda.

¹⁶ AGC Kampala Area superintendent (overseer) Pastor Miria Abuzeki . No official statistics are available.

¹⁷ *Church Discipleship Manual of Africa Gospel Church*, 2nd ed. (Unpublished, 2016), 109.

allegiance is to the Lord Jesus. Allan Coppedge avers that discipleship is a “commitment to which Jesus desires to draw believers in order to make them disciplined followers.”¹⁸ A disciplined life by AGC members would provide the efficiency needed to demonstrate a ministry of whole-life stewardship.

Holmes Rolston demonstrates that the Biblical expression of stewardship considers God as the Creator and humankind as the custodian of his world. “The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it, the world and those who live in it” (Ps. 24:1).¹⁹ This has an implication for how AGC Christians should express stewardship in its contemporary context to reveal their unique relationship with Christ. In light of the above statement, the Church must be faithful to Scriptures on whole-life stewardship, which addresses the concerns that PGT presents amidst the economic, social, spiritual and cultural aspirations. It should engage the difficult questions confronting the congregants in AGCs and the Church at large.

Scholars are apprehensive about PGT, which reflects distortion on Biblical teachings on whole-life stewardship. Kenneth Mbugua affirms, “To preach that temporary and material blessings are the purpose of our salvation turns Christianity into idolatry and trades in the glory of God for a cheap substitute.”²⁰ Therefore, AGC must intentionally offer teachings that will bring authentic stewardship knowledge that embodies commitment and surrender to the Lordship of Christ.

¹⁸ Allan Coppedge, *The Biblical Principles of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, Chicago: Francis Asbury, 1989), 71.

¹⁹ Holmes Rolston, *Stewardship in the New Testament Church: A Study in the teaching of Saint Paul Concerning Christian Stewardship* (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1959), 18.

²⁰ Kenneth Mbugua, “A False Gospel” in *Prosperity? Seeking the True Gospel* (Plateau, Nigeria: Africa Christian Textbooks, 2015), 5.

Furthermore, PGT interpretation of the Bible is disturbing to several Christian scholars and church leaders. The teaching contends that the gospel of Jesus Christ primarily deals with poverty and temporal sufferings. Femi Adeleye, in quoting John 3:16 asserts that the mission of Jesus on earth was to save the world from sin. “Whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”²¹ PG, therefore, offers a limited understanding of the Christian faith that fails to address the need for a deeper heart transformation and renewal of mind in relation to whole-life stewardship.

In addition, PGT compromises the centrality of the gospel to suit their gullible audiences. It offers to its audience messages that promise good jobs and promotion at workplaces, and solutions to earthly sufferings. Mbugua states, “Prosperity preaching swaps the power of the gospel for a powerless message.”²² While nothing is intrinsically sinful in such promises, the worry is that the suffering and the glory of God are compromised in the process. Peter Oyugi notes, “Prosperity teaching drives people to seek solutions that eventually lead them into error.”²³ AGC must rethink its mission of winning souls and discipling its members to incarnate whole-life stewardship that seeks to investigate the penetration of PG and its impact. Drawing from the above inferences, it is evident that an investigation on the impact of PGT on whole-life stewardship in AGC warrants the study.

²¹ Femi Adeleye Femi Adeleye, *Preachers of a Different Gospel* (Grand Rapids Michigan: Hippo Books, 2011), 133.

²² Mbugua 8.

²³ Peter Mbede Oyugi, “Why Prosperity Gospel Preachers Are Prospering While Most of their Members are Suffering” in *Christianity and Suffering: Christian Perspectives*, Rodney L. Reed, (Ed). (Langham: Global Library, 2017), 173.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The church, like any other institution, grows and transforms over a span of time. Jacob Olupona underlines that African religiosity and spirituality have absorbed numerous competing and conflicting ‘gospel’ messages spreading in the global landscape.²⁴ One of such mushrooming doctrines in the world is PGT that promotes wealth as a component of the Christian theology on stewardship. From the scholarly perspective, the doctrine has attracted numerous critics as unorthodoxy, particularly from the Evangelical circles. Andrew Wildsmith also avers that prosperity teaching has “infiltrated more or less deeply into African society and has negatively impacted the country of Uganda.”²⁵ Olupona, commenting about PGT, underscores the fact that some preachers are taking advantage of unfavourable economic circumstances of Christians to convince them that if they surrendered their wealth to them, they would prosper materially. Consequently, the gullible seekers after wealth get confused and disappointed with God.²⁶ Christine Kimuya asserts that the doctrine of Jesus Christ disconcerts PG because PG manifests selfishness and promotes the dangers of the futility of reasoning, ignorance, and indifference among the needy.²⁷ Therefore, allowing PG message to continue contravening the biblical life of whole-life stewardship in AGC will hinder

²⁴ Jacob K. Olupona, *African Religions: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: University Press, 2014), 120.

²⁵ Andrew G. Wildsmith, “The Ideal Life, Jesus, and prosperity Theology,” *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology*, 33, no. 2 (2014): 147.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 121.

²⁷ Christine Mwende Kimuya, “And all these Things will be Provided unto You: An Examination of Matthew 6:33 and its Implication for the Church in Africa (Un Published Thess. M.A. in Religion, Africa Nazarene University, 2018), 89.

discipleship of its members from excelling in a deeper experience of commitment to whole-life stewardship.

AGC has endeavoured to mitigate PGT concerns by holding seminars and offering Bible lessons to pastors and church leaders on the threat of prosperity messages. However, the church has not registered any improvement. Instead, PGT continues to thrive in AGC.

The urgency of this study emerged from the concern that if PGT trend on whole-life stewardship continues escalating in AGCs, the members will appreciate the teaching as orthodoxy. This will eventually obliterate the values and the blessings that come with a proper Christian understanding of stewardship. The statement of the problem was to investigate the factor(s) in PGT that are impacting AGC members in the Kampala area on whole-life stewardship.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the research was to investigate the impact of prosperity gospel teaching on whole-life stewardship in AGC in Kampala, Uganda.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The following objectives guided the study:

1. To explore the degree to which members of AGC have imbibed the popular claim of prosperity Gospel;
2. To examine the biblical theology of material prosperity in relation to whole-life stewardship; and

3. To determine how African cultural concepts of material prosperity accommodate prosperity teaching in AGC.

1.6 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what degree has the members of AGC imbibed the popular claims of the prosperity gospel?
2. What is the biblical theology of material prosperity in relation to whole-life stewardship?
3. How do African cultural concepts of material prosperity accommodate prosperity teaching in AGC?

1.7 Hypothesis

The hypothesis is an educational guess about the research outcome and is capable of being tested by scientific methods that relate an independent variable to some dependent variables.²⁸

The study was informed by the following null hypotheses:

H₀₁: PGT has not significantly imbibed the whole-life stewardship of AGC members in Kampala Area, Uganda.

H₀₂: There is no effect of biblical theology on whole-life stewardship among AGC members in the Kampala area.

H₀₃: There is no statistically significant consequence of African culture on whole-life stewardship in AGC, Kampala area.

²⁸ C. R. Kothari, *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*, 2nd Edition (New Delhi: New Age International, 2004), 184-185.

1.8 Significance of the Study

Justification for the study establishes the rationale and the importance of conducting the study.²⁹ The study would promote Christian knowledge on whole-life stewardship in AGC. AGC leadership engaged in administration and discipleship would use the knowledge for helping their churches to excel in stewardship. In addition, the findings will further enlighten Christian training institutions to educate church leaders on authentic biblical stewardship. Furthermore, the large body of Christians will become more conscious about the need for proper biblical hermeneutics. It will also inform both the national and international audiences on the dangers of PGT. In addition, it will arouse the need for wisdom and discernment that would enhance whole-life stewardship. Lastly, the researcher will post this study online and publish it to allow scholars to access it.

1.9 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study delineates the study perimeters and makes it focused and manageable by considering the research period, location, size, and level of details.³⁰ The study was conducted to investigate the impact of PGT on whole-life stewardship in AGC Kampala, Uganda between 2017 and 2018. The research was conducted in Kampala area (defined by the researcher to refer to seven AGCs; five churches in Kampala, one in Jinja town, and one in Bugiri). The aspects examined were popular PGT, biblical theology on material prosperity, cultural concepts that accommodate popular PGT in Uganda, and whole-life stewardship.

²⁹ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approach*, 2ed (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2003), 84.

³⁰ Nicholas Walliman, *Your Undergraduate Dissertation: The Essential Guide for Success* (Washington, DC: SAGE, 2011), 26-27.

1.10 Delimitation of the Study

Delimitation enables the researcher to demarcate areas of the study by considering the questions who, when, where, what, how, and why about the project challenges.³¹ Although AGC exists in the other East African countries, the study considered only the churches in the Kampala area.³² The rationale behind the choice was due to PGT's greatest impact in the major urban areas. The researcher dealt with the communication language barriers by involving four trained field assistants who helped to provide translations and points of contacts during the data collection process.

1.11 Limitations of the Study

Limitations of the study help readers to judge the extent to which one should or should not generalize the study to other people and situations.³³ The study was limited to three research objectives by Makerere University School of Social Science Research Ethics Committee. The Committee advised the researcher to drop the fourth objective from the thesis proposal as approved by Africa Nazarene University (Refer to Appendix 9). Due to time and budget constraints, this study was limited to AGCs in the Kampala area. The subject of stewardship and prosperity had some spiritual and social dynamics, which were complex to quantify.

³¹ Isaac Kingatiira, *Postgraduate Research Guidelines* (Nairobi: Africa Nazarene University Unpublished Material, 2014), 2.

³² Kampala Area – This refers to the seven selected Africa Gospel Churches in Uganda. Five churches were located within the capital city of Kampala while two were in two other urban settings (Jinja and Bugiri towns).

³³ John Creswell W., *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2002), 253.

1.12 Assumptions of the Study

Assumptions are acts that a researcher considers without actually proving them.³⁴

The following were assumptions for this study:

1. All the respondents had a fundamental understanding of the biblical teaching on whole-life stewardship.
2. The sample size represented the opinions of AGC both nationally and internationally.
3. All the participants were able to respond appropriately and genuinely to questions and comments in the research instruments.
4. The researcher received unimpeded access to all the targeted research sites.

1.13 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is a structure, the scaffolding, and the frame of a study on the research topic, derived from the literature search.³⁵ This study adapted the theory of “A Biblical Philosophy of Stewardship” as cited by Justine Tilghman. The theory states that:

A steward is someone who has been entrusted with the care of resources on behalf of another. According to the Judeo-Christian worldview, every individual on this planet is a steward; our Creator has entrusted us all with various resources that we must manage on His behalf (life, time, money, environment, etc).³⁶

³⁴ Mugenda and Mugenda, 28.

³⁵ S. B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education* (San Francis: Josses- Brass Publishers, 1998), 45.

³⁶ Justine G. Tilghman, “Philosophy of Stewardship”
https://www.academia.edu/34194664/A_biblical_philosophy_of_stewardship (Retrieved on 03/06/2019).

This philosophy of stewardship encompasses every aspect of a Christian's life, which includes time, finances, gifts, material resources, and abilities. This has an implication on how people exploit the gifts in light of their cultures, faith and daily practices. Scholars have applied the theory and proved its effectiveness in dealing with stewardship. The theory is adapted because it is capable of exposing the attitude, concepts, and practices of AGCs in Kampala area on prosperity doctrine towards stewardship.

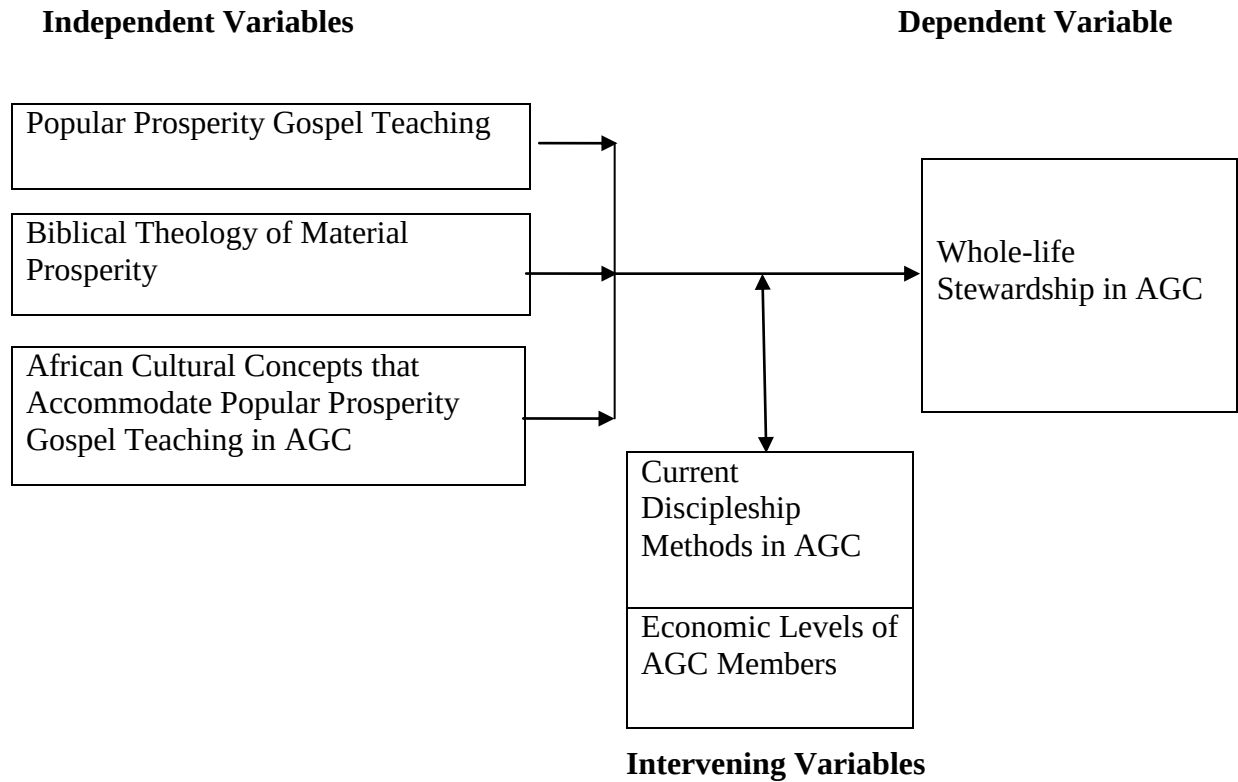
The theory juxtaposes with the sermons of John Wesley on stewardship. He ministered at a time when the church needed to understand salvation and the change it brings and its impact on the lives of believers. One of the areas Wesley taught was on how to handle wealth, time, gifts and abilities that God had given to his people. His sermons have continued to transform the lives of those who inculcate his doctrine on possessions. He taught that material blessings were good and needed proper management for the glory of God. He averred that if the gifts were misappropriated, they could become dangerous and lead one to eternal damnation. His distinctive slogan message on prosperity is; *gain all you can, save all you can, and give all you can. By Gain all you can*, Wesley meant honest wisdom and diligence; *save all you can* means that money was not to be used selfishly for lust, greed, fame or power; and *give all you can* points to using wealth to meet self, family, and societal needs. According to Wesley, whole-life stewardship entails money, time, gifts and abilities for the welfare of others to honour God.³⁷ These aspects of stewardship relate to what the study seeks to undertake in AGC.

³⁷ Kenneth J., Collins and Jason E. Vickers, eds., *The Sermons of John Wesley: A Collection for the Christian Journey* (Nashville: Abington Press, 2013), 302-245.

1.14 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework “allows the researcher to construct a general facet of his/her study from subsequent scholarly findings.”³⁸ The following independent variables informed the study: “popular prosperity gospel teaching,” “biblical theology of material prosperity,” and “cultural concepts that accommodate popular PGT.” The intervening variables were the economic levels of AGC members, and current discipleship methods of teachings in AGC. The levels of income can have a bearing on one’s response to PGT and hence influence stewardship. For instance, if someone is desperate for funds to meet a need, the temptation to trust preachers who promise financial miracles through giving offerings can be tempting and may lead to violation of whole-life stewardship. Likewise, bad or good discipleship of AGC members by church leaders can affect congregants’ response towards PGT and whole-life stewardship.

³⁸ Kenneth Borden S., *Research Design and Methods: A Process Approach*, 8th ed., (New York: McGraw Hill, 2008), 65.

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework for Whole-life Stewardship in AGC

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The phenomenal rise of the Prosperity Gospel Teaching (PGT) continues to mushroom in Christian circles and has an influence on the whole-life stewardship. PGT is the doctrine that God wants all Christians to be excessively wealthy in material possessions because of the redemptive work of Christ. Whole-life stewardship refers to Christian discipleship that embraces kingdom principles related to economics, material possessions, time, gifts, and abilities. This chapter focuses the study on the research objectives which were as follows: to explore what literature reveals on the popular prosperity gospel teaching on whole-life stewardship; survey the biblical theology on material prosperity on whole-life stewardship, and to determine how cultural concepts in Africa accommodate the material prosperity teaching on whole-life stewardship in AGC Kampala, Uganda. This chapter also comprises of interaction with various scholars on the research objectives and thereby identified research gaps and constructed a bridge.

2.2 Popular Prosperity Gospel Teaching

PGT champions the Biblical promises of material success. Gifford and others attribute its success to changes in the social lives of its members as opposed to spiritual development.³⁹ PGT amalgamates with “the survival, jobs, health, schooling, prospects,

³⁹ Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role in Uganda and other African Countries* (Kampala, Uganda: Fountain Publishers, 1999), 99. See also, Randall Stephens, J. “Understanding the Prosperity Gospel” In *Fides et Historia* 47:2 Summer/Fall (2015), 55-59.

travel, and advancement in life.⁴⁰ This perspective leans much on being self-centred rather than being selfless with God's resources. Nimi Wariboko also affirms that PGT's distinctiveness is "transformative in nature, adapting to contexts and travelling through history: its pathways are winding through local and transnational networks of churches and individuals."⁴¹ This explains why many who seek to improve their social lives are inclined to PGT.

Lin notes that the global expansion of PGT is steadily replacing traditional religious ideas.⁴² The surveys from the majority of African countries recorded their orthodox evangelical Christians as influenced by the prosperity teaching.⁴³ The subsequent discussion articulates the main aspects of PGT. It also examines factors influencing masses in Africa to flock PG churches and its implication on whole-life stewardship. Therefore, this has an implication on how AGC Christians will respond to PGT and whole-life stewardship.

2.2.1 PGT Concept of Material Success

According to Gifford, the recurring motif of the covenant as a means to acquire wealth spawns from Ga. 3:14. "He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus so that by faith we might

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹ Nimi Wariboko, Reviewed "Pastures of Plenty: Tracing Religio-scapes of Prosperity Gospel in Africa and Beyond", Andreas Hauser ed., *Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity*, vol. 16 (2017): 383.

⁴² T. T. Lin, "Prosperity Gospel: There is Hope in Africa," <http://iascculture.org/THR/channels/THR/tag/prosperity-gospel/> 2015, (Retrieved on 27/02/2019).

⁴³ David Jones and Russell S. Woodbridge, *Health, Wealth & Happiness: Has the Prosperity Gospel Overshadowed the Gospel of Christ?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2011), 128.

receive the promise of the Spirit.” He further notes that PG stresses the “covenant promises, pledges, and commitments between God and his children as an endorsement for material wealth.”⁴⁴ He also notes that prosperity advocates further perceive the Bible as a “contemporary document.”⁴⁵ David Oyedepo of Winners Chapel, in his book *Success Buttons*, portrays the covenant as a promise of prosperity by God to all Christians in the books he wrote.⁴⁶ To claim that one has to appropriate the promise of material prosperity based on salvation in Christ and funding the PG ministries and their leaders is quite strange. The biblical teaching commands believers to give to the Lord and not to people to live affluently.

How do masses imbibe Material Prosperity (MP)? According to Gifford, MP comes through the “anointed man of God” who acts as God’s divine vicar.”⁴⁷ The proponents of PGT allege to own power from the Lord to prosper their congregants who pay allegiance to them. Furthermore, preachers of PGT encourage their followers to confess victories for whatever they anticipate. Jude Ongong’ and Stephen Akaranga assert, “In confessing these promises to be true as perceived acts of faith, God will honour them.”⁴⁸ However, the Lausanne Theology Working Group (2010) notes that

⁴⁴ Paul Gifford, “Expecting Miracles: The Prosperity Gospel in Africa,” *The Christian Century*, July 10, 2007, 20. <https://books.google.com/books?isbn=0802864481> (Retrieved on 23/09/ 2016).

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Oyedepo, *Success Button* (20015), 17. *Success Buttons* asserts that “success is your covenant right”; He uses Gal. 3:13-14 to assert to his readers that, “You must be redeemed by Christ in order to connect to the material blessings God promised Abraham.” Another notable book is *Winning the War against Poverty*. He devotes a chapter to building a “covenant platform” on wealth.

⁴⁷ Paul Gifford, “Trajectories in African Christianity”. In: *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, Vol 8, no. 4 (2008), 285.

⁴⁸ Jude J. Ongonga and Stephene I. Akarang, “Prosperity Gospel in Kenya Urban Centres: Come, See, Pay, and Receive your Miracle and Healing”, *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences* www.iiste.org ISSN (Paper) 2224-5766 ISSN (Online) 2225-0484 (Online) Vol.5, no.10 (2015): 200.

PGT movement claims that through positive confessions of faith their followers can become wealthy. The principle of positive confession emanates from Mk. 11:22-24, which states:

‘Have faith in God,’ Jesus answered. I tell you the truth if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen; it will be done for him. Therefore, I tell you whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.⁴⁹

In the above verses, Jesus gave an exhortation to his disciples to enable them to have confidence and faith in their prayers towards God’s assignments. Christians must be importunate and persevere in prayers in what God promises. The verses do not encourage selfish petitions and therefore fails to justify the acquisition of material wealth as avowed by PGT.

Benson Idahosa through his messages encourages PGT followers to exercise a positive mental attitude towards receiving God’s blessings as the “anointed man of God” instructs. According to him, the Scriptural references for the declarations of securing MP base on Genesis 1:1 and John 1 where the potent Word of God brought about creation.⁵⁰ Kate Bowler emphasizes that in PGT, the theological terminologies and confessions are demonstrations of a triumphant faith affirmation of material reality and are the

⁴⁹ Lausanne Theology Working Group, 2010, “A statement on the prosperity gospel” <https://www.lausanne.org/content/a-statement-on-the-prosperity-gospel> (Retrieved from Worldwide web on 25/07/ 2017).

⁵⁰ Benson Idahosa, *Choose to Change: The Scriptural Way to Success and Prosperity* (Crowborough: Highland Books, 1987), 21-22. . In prayers, seekers are encouraged to “name it and claim it”, “believe it and receive it” and to trust that, “what you say is what you get.” This principle of claiming blessings gives Christians power, which is comparable to that of God.

measurement for righteousness and faithfulness of a believer.⁵¹ This is strange teaching from PGT because Christians receive their righteousness through a relationship with Christ and not human effort. Hence, resorting to such unnecessary chances of confession of words and mental attitude cannot advance the Christian discipline of stewardship that encourages hard work and proper management of God's resources. However, even if Christians mastered the right words and acquired possessions, what matters most before God is whether Christians are faithful enough in their use of resources and that they can honour him in their lives. The need for wisdom, knowledge, and counsel from the Bible on how Christians should adhere to whole-life stewardship is imperative for all AGC members.

In addition to having faith, some advocates of the prosperity teaching encourage honest and hard work among their members to attain prosperity. According to Joe Kapolyo, the African concept of life-related to work is about creation for his people's welfare. "God provides the environmental and spiritual life-force for humanities' productive and reproductive well-being."⁵² Lamin Sanneh reveals that PGT also promotes successful entrepreneurship to attain great potential in this life.⁵³ The discipline of hard work, persistence, and fortitude to surmount life phenomenon as advanced by PG champions perpetuate optimism for escaping from the financially precarious state. Diligent work is commendable and has its benefits whether applied through PGT or in

⁵¹ Kate Bowler, *Blessed: A History of the American Prosperity Gospel* (Oxford: University Press, 2013), 7.

⁵² Joe M. Kapolyo, *The Human Condition: Christian Perspective through African Eyes* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity press, 2005), 80.

⁵³ Lamin Sanneh and Joel A. Carpenter, *The Changing Face of Christianity: Africa, the West, and the World* (Oxford: University, 2015), 17.

any other faith. Diligence should emanate from the inner drive to please God and not to merely make wealth for one's personal gratification as it is in PGT. The PG adherents in their quest to accumulate possessions fail to develop the character that Christians from other evangelical contexts can emulate as biblical and authentic. This perspective fails to reflect whole-life stewardship that encourages Christians to work hard and share with the needy. For AGCs to avoid the quandary of PGT on possessions, it will need the N.T. understanding of whole-life stewardship, which is the motivation of the study.

Subsequently, those who promote PG claim that the doctrine inculcates societal transformative values that make concrete differences in the lives of its followers. Its supporters admire and regard the teaching as valid because it promotes a framework of economic, social, and political development that promise to improve the lives of the destitute. The African continent identifies with poverty as Peter Oyugi rightly states, "Poverty is a reality in Africa and cannot be dismissed because it affects our day-to-day Christianity."⁵⁴ Thus, when the PG purports to offer spiritual and social solutions to the social and economic predicaments of its people, many Africans become gullible. Ludovic Lado concurs with Oyugi that PGT "meets pragmatic needs—helping African believers to 'scratch where Africa is itching most.'"⁵⁵ This implies that the temptation to turn to PGT during an economic crisis for quick miracles can be very attractive. This may explain why many believers in the context of Africa where the majority are poor resort to PG churches. However, the alluring conjecture by PGT on faith and wealth do not

⁵⁴ Oyugi, 170.

⁵⁵ Ludovic Lado, *Catholic Pentecostalism and the Paradoxes of Africanization* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 82.

promote the kingdom values of love, selflessness, and compassionate attitude that AGC needs to influence its context holistically. Adeleye rightly asserts that PGT is not interested in mind and heart transformation that can shape society.⁵⁶

Those who feel the sting of injustice and experience oppression in the society and traditional churches embrace the teaching as the source of hope from God. According to research carried by Ongonga and Akarang in urban areas of Kenya, the findings indicate that various injustices and marginalization imposed on African women lead them to flock in PGT churches in search of hope.⁵⁷ Experiences of women range from severe hardships to taboos that restrict their identity as noble people, thereby causing them to seek their wholeness in the PG churches. This, therefore, means that the women will seek for a church that “embodies God’s presence in such a way that people discover new meaning in life.”⁵⁸ It is inevitable that those who feel oppressed would resort to PGT as a beacon of hope. Goliama in his research carried out in Songea, Tanzania also acknowledged that most African women go to PGT to escape social injustices that the traditional customs inflict on them.⁵⁹ The voice of Mercy Amba Oduyoye, the champion of women liberation theology also asserts that the church has not empowered women in the African context. Despite their involvement in the life of the church, it has not appreciated them with

⁵⁶ Adeleye, 117-126

⁵⁷ Ongonga and Akarang, 200.

⁵⁸ Emmanuel Katongole, ed. *African Theology Today: Africa Theology Today Series Volume 1*. (Scranton: The University of Scranton Press, 2002), 238.

⁵⁹ Castor Michael Goliama, “The Gospel of Prosperity in African Pentecostalism: A Theological and Pastoral Challenge to the Catholic Church – With Reference to the Archdiocese of Songea, Tanzania” (Doctor of Theology Diss., University of Wien, 2013), 312.

leadership.⁶⁰ AGC needs to provide space that will incorporate gifts, time and resources from all believers to promote whole-life stewardship to assist their members from the PG fraud.

Goliama further notes that African societies normally accuse women of witchcraft involvement and this renders them susceptible to social estrangement and maltreatment.⁶¹ He acknowledges that women are equally talented and gifted as men, and they seek for space to put their skills to work and become income-earners.⁶² This means that traditional churches should reconsider how it can embrace all congregants as family members equal in dignity and empowerment from the Holy Spirit to mitigate their migration to PGT. Orobator Agbonkhianmeghe contends that women should not be “treated as second-class members of the church and as inferior helpers to church leaders.”⁶³ Consequently, those who feel disinherited by the church choose the PG churches as a favourable option to circumvent frequent constraints and discomfiture of aggression.

The PG quest springs from the social and economic cry for the emancipation of women and youths from the patriarchal hierarchy. Mercy Oduyoye, a Christian feminist, calls the church to allow its structures to accommodate women because they also have gifts and divine call to develop holistically.⁶⁴ Christopher Byaruhanga claims that due to women oppression in Uganda, many have conceded to PGT. Many single mothers or

⁶⁰ Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Hearing and Knowing: Theological Reflections on Christianity in Africa* (Nairobi: Action Publishers, 2000), 124.

⁶¹ Goliama, 120.

⁶² Ibid., 53.

⁶³ Orobator Agbonkhianmeghe E., *Theology Brewed in an African Pot* (New York, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2008), 89.

⁶⁴ Oduyoye, 124-125.

widows particularly those muddled with challenges in their debilitating circumstances are often attracted to the gospel for social support.⁶⁵ Golima affirms that apostles of the prosperity promise their members concrete material support and consolation in moments of necessities, and this caused PG churches to mushroom.⁶⁶ Besides catering for the unfortunate in the church and society, PG churches have ministry structures that allow women to assume some level of authority and leadership in their church milieu without stigmatization. Lauterbach concurs with Golima to applaud PGT for providing jobs and promoting social blessings in some parts of Africa.⁶⁷ These activities are commendable particularly when the vulnerable in the society are touched and transformed.

Adherents of the prosperity teaching consider the PG message as contextual, and holistic in its orientation. Therefore, it is able to liberate Africans from unfavourable circumstances. Sylward Shorter gives insight on the concrete realities Africans face. These include human poverty, oppression, diseases, and spiritual powers.⁶⁸ Therefore, by implementing the PGT message, adherents hope to deal with life misfortunes. The danger is that the goal of whole-life stewardship is compromised when its focus is turned from spiritual transformation to alleviation of material lack and improvement of the standards of the needy.

⁶⁵ Christopher Byaruhanga, *The History and Theology of the Ecumenical Movement in East Africa* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2015), 265.

⁶⁶ Golima, 93.

⁶⁷ K. Lauterbach, "Religious entrepreneurs in Ghana", in *Cultural entrepreneurship in Africa*. Rösenthaller and D.Schulz, eds., (Rutledge: New York, 2016), 19.

⁶⁸ Sylward Shorter, *African Christian Spirituality* (Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania: Geoffrey Chapman, 1980), 104.

Despite the positive outlook of the prosperity gospel message among many people in Africa, it has attracted serious criticism from several evangelical scholars and church leaders. Those who are sceptical have stressed that the attitude of the advocates of PG is inconsistent with the traditional teachings of evangelicals on stewardship and faith. Biblical and theological scholars such as John Piper, Ruben Kigame besides others have condemned the unscriptural and unethical trends and methods PGT encourages to accumulate wealth for their enjoyment.⁶⁹ In addition, the Institute for Global Engagement notes with concern that the PG advances destructive tendencies of consumerism, materialism, and capitalism of the Western societies.⁷⁰ Critics judge PG as having an oppressive propensity upon its members. Randall Stephen notes, “There is also evidence of an oppressive potential” and “Inequitable power relations allow leaders, whether intentionally or not, to coerce prayer recipients to respond to initiatives in particular ways.”⁷¹ Stephen is among those who are raising their voices and creating awareness of how PGT is abusing the Scriptures.

The prosperity doctrine further finds itself in contrast to the traditional theological reflections of many evangelical orthodox churches that often portray suffering and poverty for Christ as permissible by God. “Christianity taught people, and usually the most disadvantaged people, to accept and endure rather than to fight and reform the

⁶⁹ John Piper, “Prosperity preaching: deceitful and deadly”. www.desiring God.org. (Retrieved on 24/ 03/2019).

⁷⁰Institute for Global Engagement, “Exporting a God of prosperity”, 2007 <https://globalchristian.org> (Retrieved on 12/12/2018).

⁷¹ Randall J. Stephen, “Understanding the Prosperity Gospel,” In *Fides et Historia* 47:2 (Summer/Fall 2015): 55-59.

oppressive situations to which they were subject.”⁷² This understanding is unfortunate. Christians should fight oppressive systems because injustice is not God’s will for his people. Hence, if they encounter repression and persecution, they should seek the wisdom and direction of God. While it is always hard to comprehend why the innocent suffers, Warren Wiersbe referring to Christ affirms that pain is part of God’s plan to purify his children and to demonstrate his gracious presence. “Suffering only shows us how the love of God can take the curse and turn it into a blessing.”⁷³ The theological scrutiny among many evangelical critics does not relate wealth to the evidence of God’s favour, faith and grace as evident in the N.T. doctrine. In fact, Christian traditional thinking tends to equate suffering for righteousness to eternal rewards.

According to critics, the effectiveness of PGT as an authentic biblical doctrine is disputable. Harries identifies that the phenomenal quantitative growth of the Church in Africa does not match its qualitative expansion as evident by its lack of maturity.⁷⁴ The 21st century Christians in Africa, from all walks of life, are attracted to the gospel for life security purposes. Landa Cope presented statistical data of the challenges Africa is still facing despite PGT. The study in Africa reveals that the majority of its people struggle with social injustices, poverty, diseases, insecurity, and unemployment. God expects Christians to deal with these issues through the Spirit’s empowerment as the Scriptures stipulate and not through dubious means. Christian leaders should demonstrate a life of

⁷² Warren W. Wiersbe, *Classic Sermons on Suffering* (Grand Rapids, Michigan. Kregel Publication, 1984), 63-70.

⁷³ Ibid, 64.

⁷⁴ J. Harries, “Magical Worldview in the African Church: What is Going On?” in *Missiology: An International Review*, Vol. 24, No.4, (October 2000): 1- 33.

honesty and integrity besides compassion towards the weak.⁷⁵ Regrettably, as Clifton Clarke notes, the poor who turn to the PG apostles for protection and security are often duped and disappointed. Because the gullible seekers are ignorant of what the Bible stipulates when they are asked to make due payment through ‘seed sowing’, those who are eager for financial and health breakthroughs willingly donate funds in exchange for ‘miracles’ from God.⁷⁶ In his book, *Preachers of a Different Gospel*, Adeleye challenges PGT and implores Christians with anxieties to trust in God and uphold integrity no matter the cost.⁷⁷ The PG implies that Christians earn God’s gifts and serve him through human efforts. This contravenes God’s enablement that ensues from his love and grace and revealed in self-denial and absolute obedience to him. If AGC continued to follow PGT, it would put its affection on worldly gains and disappoint God.

On the same vein, Lausanne Theological Working group notes the lack of transformation among PGT followers. During its 2010 Cape Town consortium it asserted, “While the teaching is increasing, the economic, social and political landscape of Africa has not improved. The continent continues to languish in poverty, diseases, and poor economic and political governance.”⁷⁸ In addition, research conducted by Andreas Heuser shows that, with a few exceptions, the teaching has not influenced sizable socioeconomic structural perimeters of the African continent.⁷⁹ Eric Gbotoe concurs that

⁷⁵ Landa Cope, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Template: Rediscovering God’s Principle for Discipling Nations* (E-book, 2011): 32.

⁷⁶ David Ogunbale, “African Pentecostalism and the Prosperity Gospel” in *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*, Clifton R. Clarke, ed., (Oregon: Pickwick Publication, 2014), 45.

⁷⁷ Adeleye, 137.

⁷⁸ Lausanne Theology Working Group, 2010.

⁷⁹ Heuser, ed., 15-17.

PG has offered very little positive effect in Africa, “with more and more people being deceived and poverty increasing.” He argued that the core value of PGT is materialism though its advocates disguise it as spirituality, faithfulness, and blessings from God.⁸⁰ Paul Gifford further noted that though PGT is proliferating in Africa, the economic and ethical paradigm it claims to be changing has had a very limited positive impact.⁸¹ The confusion that arises with PGT is that it assumes that self-interest and MP are synonymous to faith and favour from God. The uncertainty that PGT poses and the promises it offers to their followers require considerations on whole-life stewardship.

On the same note, Debra Mumford asserts that PGT champions promote a corrupt and a lavish lifestyle as revealed in their classic symbols of affluence such as expensive motorcars, homes, and private jets while their parishioners wallow in poverty.⁸² According to Adeleye, the benefits of PG are not for the corporate Christian church, rather, it is a gross excess to those seeking greener pastures and exorbitant wealth.⁸³ Stephen Hunt urges Christians to reject PGT because it reflects the Western economic free market advanced by the “faith movement” and not an orthodox doctrine suitable for global consumption.⁸⁴ Paul Fresto agrees with Hunt that PG theology lacks the “classic

⁸⁰ Eric Gbotoe Z. M., “Commercialized Gospel: a missiological assessment of Prosperity Gospel”, (M.A. Theology Diss., University of Pretoria, Pretoria, 2013), 85.
<http://www.repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/40347> (Retrieved from the Worldwide web on 28/03/2018).

⁸¹ Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalising African Economy* (London: Hurst, 2004), 14.

⁸² Debra Mumford J., “Rich and Equal in the Eyes of Almighty God! Creflo Dollar and the Gospel of Racial Reconciliation,” *Pneuma* 33 (201): 233.

⁸³ Adeleye, 68-69.

⁸⁴ Stephen Hunt, “Winning Ways': Globalisation and the Impact of the Health and Wealth Gospel,” *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 15, no. 3 (2000): 332.

Protestant work ethics and frugal consumption patterns.”⁸⁵ This means that the doctrine has the potential to restrain whole-life stewardship among AGC members.

Though PGT is implausible among some evangelical scholars because its main interest is to promote the doctrine of social transformation and empowerment of its advocates, some scholars think to the contrary. Paul Gifford argues that for the proponents to continue in their affluence, they have to advance the hermeneutics of discipline and hard work under the guise of spirituality.⁸⁶ Scholars have criticized PG ministers for lack of proper financial accountability, which mirrors poor stewardship. A survey on South African urban and rural small Pentecostal churches presented by the Johannesburg-based Centre for Development and Enterprise, noted the dubious financial accountability and lamented the attitude of pastors. Clarke is succinct in his observation that some of the entrepreneurial pastors in the churches were becoming wealthy at the expense of their devout but naïve followers.⁸⁷

While one admires PG advocates for their social involvement, it goes without questioning their motive whether it is based on piety or on mere ostentation. How can someone claim to love and offer services while at the same time live a life of moral inconsistency and incongruity? Whole-life stewardship is a whole-heart matter surrendered to the Lord, and not a pursuit of wealth as a safeguard for material pleasures

⁸⁵ Paul Fresto, “Gathering: Prosperity Theology: A (Largely) Sociological Assessment 2014 Prosperity Theology” <https://www.lausanne.org/content/prosperity-theology-a-largely-sociological-assessment> Accessed 2014.

⁸⁶ Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity, Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), 20.

⁸⁷ Clarke, (Kindle Location). 3592.

and temporal desires. PGT presents a dearth and a disturbing phenomenon that AGC cannot ignore.

Orthodox scholars repudiate the notion that ingenuity of the prosperity theology gives hope to those who seek rest for their souls and body. Landa Cope argues that, given the dwindling economic, social, and political state of the veritable African continent, where two-thirds of the poorest forty nations in the world are Africans, PG is primed to flourish because it provides phoney hope.⁸⁸ She further raises a concern about the movement when she questions, “Why is Africa not transforming if PGT is contextual?” Cope insists that the continent provides a strong dispute that PGT is not transforming the lives of the poor masses. She further noted the apparent desire of African church audiences to earn prosperity and righteousness as impressive particularly to those situated in a poor milieu.⁸⁹ By following PGT, pleasure and greed will supplant God at the centre of the lives of Christians.

Generally, evangelical scholars consider the prosperity doctrine as heretical. Gifford’s narrative illuminates PG’s theological limitation on fundamental teaching of the cross, which is the central Christian faith. He visited some of the mega-PG churches of Oyedepo, and he regretted that few of those churches preach against sin and Christian suffering. Gifford, while at Winners’ Chapel in Nairobi was surprised that, despite being Easter, no one referred to the affliction of Christ. David Oyedepo denounces suffering on believers because to him, God desires and empowers his people in Africa to prosper

⁸⁸ Landa Cope, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Template: Rediscovering God’s Principle for Discipling Nations* (2014) in E-book.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

based on Deuteronomy 8:18, “But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.”⁹⁰ This perception has triggered teachings on miracles, signs, and wonders centred on the role of the “anointed man of God,” at the expense of a relationship with God and heart transformation. Adeleye insinuates that many people refuse conversion to genuine saving faith, but pursue “what satisfies the whims and caprices of some individuals.”⁹¹ Apostle Samuel Yaw Antwi, the General Secretary of the Ghana Charismatic and Pentecostal Council notes PGT limitations and decries to Christians. “The problem we have in this country is the types of Christianity people are practicing whereby, instead of seeking to know God through his work and a relationship with the Holy Spirit which is assured to every Christian, they follow miracles.”⁹²

Thomas Mboya recounts that pride and covetousness often define many PG leaders who have bigger churches, much money, and large membership.⁹³ David Oyedepo of *Winners’ Chapel* in Nigeria (and a famous prosperity advocate) testifies, “I am redeemed to be enriched. Therefore, I will be an abuse to redemption if I do not actualize that dimension of my redemption. Jesus came to lift me up.” He concludes, “Friends you are saved to display His wealth.”⁹⁴ He stresses that when Christians are

⁹⁰ Paul Gifford, “Trajectories in African Christianity. In: *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, Volume 8, no. 4. (2008): 285.

⁹¹ Adeleye, 69.

⁹² Nicola Menzie, “South African Pastor Calls Prosperity Gospel damaging, asks 'Where Are We Heading to?'” *Christian Post Reporter* | Thursday, July 11, 2013.

⁹³ Thomas Mboya, “Gift Challenges and Transforms: Prosperity Gospel,” *African Ecclesial Review*, Vol. 58, nos. 1 & 2 (2016): 37.

⁹⁴ David Oyedepo O., *Understanding Financial Prosperity* (Logos: Dominion Publishing House, 2005), 38.

faithful, they will “rise from a dunghill to the palace.”⁹⁵ Hence, the accumulation of wealth, by these leaders, takes precedence as their followers embrace the doctrine of prosperity as a right for all faithful Christians. Clark, commenting on the life of PGT preachers instructs, “Thus their live testimonies create an aura of mystery, honour, respect, and dignity for which their audiences treat them as they would the sacred specialists in African indigenous religious traditions.”⁹⁶ Such an extravagant lifestyle disregards the Christian virtues of self-denial, patience, and love that defines God’s faithful children (Gal. 5:21-23). Such profligate means of life further defies the true devotion to God and the compassion believers should demonstrate to the underprivileged. The Scriptures articulate that if a brother or sister lacks daily necessities and a Christian who has material possessions does nothing about the need, the love of God is not in that person (Jas. 2:15-17).

The affluent life of PG apostles serves as an advertisement and attraction to masses to follow the doctrine on the material possessions (MP). To the evangelicals, this kind of lifestyle displays deficient hermeneutical interpretation of how the Bible instructs God’s people to live. Then why do most people still follow PGT? Paul Fresto points to the ambiguous nature of its theology and the shrewdness of the apostles who propagate it. In periods of plenty, they can explain why life is good. However, in distressing moments, they cannot explain or offer a solution to suffering such as the Ebola virus or the cyclone that recently struck Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. Whereas some believers take

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Clifton R. Clark, ed., *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*. (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 42.

prosperity theology as a mandate for hard work, others perceive it as a call to live “by faith” beyond their means, in constant indebtedness.”⁹⁷ Speaking during a public debate at the Mount Kenya University (MKU), Barack Muruka comments, “the church is now propagating the gospel of wealth” and “the church should interrogate itself and come to terms with the nude reality.”⁹⁸ The attitude of seeking wealth is a wrong aspiration which neither Christ nor his apostles bequeathed the church with. For PG preachers to use wealth to incorporate faith is quite disturbing.

2.2.2 Methods of Acquiring Prosperity in PGT

The prosperity advocates use several methods to encourage their adherents to give their resources to the church and to PG ministers to actualize material blessings. According to Isaac Ayegboyin, faithful tithing, giving different special offerings designated “sowing of seeds” or “covenant giving”, and making financial vows determine the degree of faith one has to receive from God.⁹⁹ The “sowing of seed” is a misused Biblical concept to inspire hopeful investment in PG church with the expectation of a supernatural return on the investment. Andrew Wommack insinuates, “God wants to bless you financially but you have to plant a seed. So, start giving, and watch for God’s supernatural flow to increase your finances and cause you to prosper in every area of

⁹⁷ Fresto, 80.

⁹⁸ Barack Muruka, “Scholar Decries the Preaching of Prosperity Gospel.” in *Kiambu News Chat* <https://kiambunewschatt.wordpress.com/2017/05/27/scholar-decries-the-preaching-of-prosperity-gospel/> (Retrieved on 18/03/2019).

⁹⁹ Isaac Deji Ayegboyin, “A Rethinking of Prosperity Teaching in the New Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria,” *Black Theology: An International Journal* 4, no.1 (2006): 73-78.

your life.”¹⁰⁰ PG message suggests that much faith ignites material prosperity and provides enormous blessings for a believer. According to this line of reasoning, the possession of wealth is reciprocal to faith and how much one gives to God. To maximize on this view of giving, PG church promotes the commercialization of the gospel through the sale of handkerchiefs called mantles, anointing oil, and books. The apostles of PG expect their followers to honour their instructions and give without questioning.¹⁰¹ This ameliorates the spirit of love and servanthood that defines those who are good stewards.

Besides giving tithes and offerings, the prosperity teachers inspire confidence to the masses by encouraging them to listen to testimonies of those who are wealthy to believe in the authenticity of PGT. Consequently, Bruce Barron asserts that PGT adherents, who are convinced, pursue the principles of “sowing” in anticipation for material success. The ‘sowing of much seed’ is often accompanied by prophecies “of a hundred-fold-return” and positive confessions, and *revelation knowledge*¹⁰² from the “anointed man of God.”¹⁰³ Followers, therefore, continue to give more in anticipation of divine miracles and breakthroughs in their everyday engagements.

PGT emphasises that its apostles have divine enablement to discern the oppressive spiritual forces influencing the material success of their followers. Joseph

¹⁰⁰ Andrew Wommack, *Financial Stewardship* (Walsall: Zondervan Publishing House, 2014), 167. Wommack is the author and Bible teacher through the Daily Gospel Truth, radio and television broadcasts and Charis Bible College.

¹⁰¹ Ayegboyin, 78.

¹⁰² Asamoah-Gyadu J., “Of Faith and Visual Alertness: The Message of “Mediateized” Religion in an African Pentecostal Context” *Material Religion in Volume 1*, 3 (2004): 342.

Revelation knowledge – this refers to the supernatural abilities the Spirit of God gives to the “anointed men of God” to discern problems and offer solutions to those who need exorcism.

¹⁰³ Bruce Barron, *The Health and Wealth Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1987), 93.

Quayesi-Amakye claims that PG promotes the notion that a prophet has insights that reveal the purposes of God in a person's situation of destitution.¹⁰⁴ Asamoah-Gyadu also highlights that the prophets recognize the capricious forces of success (the devil and the evil spirits, witchcraft, ghosts, and other enemies) and declare victories and protection in the victim's life.¹⁰⁵ Generally, Africans believe that the misfortunes, which befall people, have some spiritual explanation and must engage prophetic negotiations. Benezet Bujo suggests that leaders need to understand the interplay between the visible and the invisible to be effective in the church ministry.¹⁰⁶ Goliama highlights that this prophetic negotiation thrives on the idea of spiritual warfare, which connotes that life's battles involve alien enemies of physical and impersonal forces. These include systemic oppressions and suppressions besides other spiritual forces of witchcraft, occult, and magic.¹⁰⁷ While this observation is plausible, it is strange how far PGT exaggerates the spiritual powers to the natural experiences of their members. Those who overstretch the spiritual phenomenon as a means for material acquisition attract many people from African cultural contexts vulnerable to PGT.

PGT connects the 'sowing of seeds' to "deliverance ministry" or exorcism. Those members who believe that witchcraft, demon, and capricious spirits have powers to cause poverty and evil in the lives of God's people seek for deliverance. Olupona notes that

¹⁰⁴ Joseph Quayesi-Amakye, "Prosperity and Prophecy in African Pentecostalism," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 20 (2011): 300.

¹⁰⁵ Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, J. "Of Faith and Visual Alertness: The Message of "Mediateized" Religion in an African Pentecostal Context" In *Material Religion in Volume 1, Issue 3*, (2004) pp. 342.

¹⁰⁶ Benezet Bujo, *African Theology: In its Social Context* (Eugene, Oregon: Orbis Books, 1992).

¹⁰⁷ Goliama, 58.

only an “anointed man of God” is capable of casting out these powers.¹⁰⁸ PG public worship services profoundly constitute the act of exorcism. Cabrita Joel highlights the famous churches known for an exorcism. These churches are Mountains of Fire, and Miracles Ministries headquartered in Lagos, Nigeria. Their founder and “overseer,” Daniel Okukoya, promises to “destroy satanic military technology” by “preparing an army of aggressive prayer warriors and intercessors”.¹⁰⁹ Those who seek wealth, protection and all manner of blessings from God find the ministry of deliverance appealing.

The rapidly escalating PGT is on the increase despite the need to embrace the centrality of the cross of Christ that entails suffering and trials. To Adeleye, discipleship in Christ involves the cross; self-denial, sacrifice and total commitment to the Lord out of love.¹¹⁰ The competing allegiance to follow either wealth or Christ is a fundamental issue that Christians face. The biblical trajectory clearly indicates that the pursuit of worldly possessions for personal selfish aggrandizement will lead to an endless circle of emptiness and vanity, and in the end, eternal damnation (Lk. 8:14; 12:16-21). Of essential importance is Jesus’ statement that life does not consist of one’s possessions (Lk. 15:12). It is, therefore, ludicrous to attach prosperity as a measure of one’s faith. Glenn Saul affirms, “Personal worth and success are not to be measured in terms of material wealth

¹⁰⁸ Jacob K. Olupona, *African Religions: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: University Press, 2014), 53.

¹⁰⁹ Joel Cabrita, “Historiography and Methods, Religious History,” Online Publication Date: Jan 2018DOI: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.302 <http://oxfordre.com/africanhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.001.0001/acrefore-9780190277734-e-302>, (Retrieved on 28/03/2019).

¹¹⁰ Adeleye, 22-28.

or possessions.”¹¹¹ Therefore, Christians should be concerned about diligence and faithfulness to God regarding stewardship.

Staunch Christians throughout the history of the church relentlessly addressed the issues of material prosperity. They advocated for the biblical stewardship of possessions, which entails proper management of wealth as a mandate from God and offering service to his people.¹¹² The Christian tradition once considered charity as legal payment of the debt, as noted by the writings of the 6th century Pope St. Gregory. China Scherz reiterates, “When we attend to the needs of those in want, we give them what is theirs, not ours. More than performing works of mercy, we are paying a debt of justice.”¹¹³ Throughout church history, from the church Fathers to the Reformers and the Revivalists, the leaders have remained convinced that the acquisition of personal possessions was to bless the poor. Micael Grenholm contends that material possessions belong to God and they are for sharing with the needy. By doing that, one is storing up treasures in heaven, not on earth. Prosperity poses a potential danger to one’s soul and those who have wealth need counselling.¹¹⁴ This means that wealth is intrinsically good. However, believers are encouraged to live a simple and generous life. For example, Chrysostom’s words as reported by Paul Fresto are instructive:

¹¹¹ Glenn Saul, in *Holman Bible Dictionary*, Trent C. Butler, ed., (Holman Bible Publishers: Nashville Tennessee, 1991), 1401.

¹¹² Grenholm Micael, “God vs Wealth, part 4: The Church fathers,” <https://charismactivism.com/2013/01/07/god-vs-wealth-part-4-the-church-fathers/> Retrieved on 05/04/2019.

¹¹³ China Scherz, “The Ethics of Inequality: Charity, sustainable Development, and the Problem of Dependence in Central Uganda” (Doctor of Philosophy in Medical Anthropology, Diss., University of California, San Francisco, 2010), 86.

¹¹⁴ Micael Grenholm, “God vs Wealth”, part 4: *The Church fathers* (2013) <https://charismactivism.com/2013/01/07/god-vs-wealth-part-4-the-church-fathers/> Retrieved on 05/04/2019 (Retrieved on 18/03/2019).

‘Give to God’ did not mean ‘give to the church’ or “give to me, the preacher’. It meant, ‘give to the needy’. And not to give was stealing from the poor, not from the church or the preacher. So we have here a very different prosperity theology, one in which the reward mechanism that we are familiar with is to obtain great plenty because the Almighty is bound to us.¹¹⁵

Conversely, those who imbibe the philosophy of the PG and consider faith as a means and a signature to ascend to the economic ladder would find great biblical and theological resistance from principles and values gleaned in monographs of such church traditions.

2.2.3 Scriptures used by Adherents of Prosperity Gospel

Advocates of the PG utilize many texts to justify the prosperity theology.¹¹⁶ God is a rich God, so those who share in his prosperity must obey and support those who propagate PGT. Several religious scholars consider PGT’s use of the Scriptures as a distortion of God’s message for Christians. Southall and Rule assert that the passages have a wider application than mere dealing with poverty and bringing about economic advancement.¹¹⁷ Much of PGT texts emanate from the O.T., especially where God promised to bless Abraham and his descendants (in Ge. 13:2 and 3:6-9). PGT argument is that God blessed Abraham with immense material wealth for his faith. Therefore, all believers who identify with him by faith have entitlement to both spiritual and material wellbeing. Warren Wiersbe contends that Paul brings Abraham to the picture as a

¹¹⁵ Paul Fresto, “prosperity Theology: A (largely) Sociological Assessment” <https://www.lausanne.org/content/prosperity-theology-a-largely-sociological-assessment> (Retrieved on 24/04/2019).

¹¹⁶ The following are some invariable texts which are preferable applications from both the O.T. and the N.T. on wealth acquisition and its enjoyment: Dt. 8:18; Psa. 8:5; Isa. 45:3; 53:5; Jer. 50:37; 51:13; 53:5; Mal. 3:8-11; Mt. 11:12; Mk. 10:29-30; Mk 11:23; Lk. 4:18; 6:38; 2Pet. 1:3; Jn. 16:24; 3Jn. 2; and Phil. 4:19.

¹¹⁷ R. Southall and Rule S. eds., “Faith on the move: Pentecostalism and its potential contribution to development,” Centre for Development and Enterprise, Johannesburg, South Africa (2008), www.cde.org.za (Retrieved from Worldwide Web on 17/05/2018).

prototype of Christ. Paul's central message in Galatians 3:6 is about faith and grace, which justifies those who trust in God through Christ Jesus.¹¹⁸ The verse addresses salvation and not a worldly success as espoused by PGT.

Furthermore, PGT applies Dt. 8:18, "You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day," as justification for all faithful believers to acquire material prosperity. However, Bible scholars fail to equate faithfulness to the wealth in the context of the above passage. What it means is that God's people should acknowledge that wealth is a gift from God and that the rich should avoid self-glorifying attitude and pride.¹¹⁹

Another passage normally preferred by PG teachers is Isa. 45:3, "I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places, that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who call you by your name." The proponents of PG perceive this as God's endorsement for material treasures on earth. On the contrary, Tremper Longman and David Garland contend that the prophecy relates to Cyrus and not to Christians.¹²⁰ On the same note, John Walwood and Roy Zuck report that God's word was fulfilled when Cyrus conquered various nations and looted their hidden treasures, including that of Babylon (Jer. 50:37; 51:13). John Walvoord and Roy Zuck, claim that

¹¹⁸ Warren W. Wiersbe, ed., *The Bible Exposition Commentary: An Exposition of the New Testament Comprising the Entire "BE" Series vol. 1* (Canada: Victor Books, 1973), 697-698.

¹¹⁹ John F. Walwood and Roy Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures, Old Testament* (Zondervan: Victor, 1985), 278.

¹²⁰ Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, eds., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Proverbs - Isaiah*, ed. 6 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2008), 758 -759.

the prophecy may have a wider application as revealed in the book of Isa. 45:1 and 44:28, but it does not encompass material wealth in the juxtaposition of faithfulness to God.¹²¹

It is therefore inappropriate to relate the passages with the material acquisition as common among PGT. In such a context, Christians will not manifest whole-life stewardship that honours God.

It is indisputable that God blessed Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Solomon and Job with enormous wealth. Atkinson asserts that God does not always relate spirituality to material riches. However, the Lord engages the wealthy to exercise justice and provide for the poor.¹²² PGT notion of wealth and faithfulness to God fails to take into consideration several poor Israelites in the O.T. who were righteous yet experienced material lack. God's continual injunction to Israel was to mind about the poor (Dt.15:11; Lev. 19:10; 25:25, 35).

Furthermore, PG preachers prefer to use 3 John 1-2 to convince their audiences that God wants all faithful believers to prosper materially. Craig Keener observes that such expression was a standard greeting to John's audience and even in many ancient letters. This salutation would be likened to contemporary expression, "I hope you are well" today.¹²³ Ronald Sider notes that the biblical principle for prosperity and stewardship for believers is in Pr. 30:8-9, "Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, "Who

¹²¹ John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Commentary, Old Testament: An Exposition of the Scriptures* by Dallas Seminary Faculty (Colorado Spring: Cook Communication Ministries), 1099 – 1100.

¹²² Atkinson, 678 -79.

¹²³ Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academics, 1993), 751.

is the Lord?” Or I may become poor and steal, and so disown the name of my God.”¹²⁴ Therefore, the aspiration for wealth disclaims Biblical doctrine on the simplicity of life and commitment to whole-life stewardship.

PGT use of selective biblical passages intensifies the strong relationship between faith and wealth. This puts into question its hermeneutics. King and Martinez claim that Joel Osteen has little regard for good biblical exegesis. Osteen, one of the champions of prosperity teaching and a notable motivational speaker ignores expository preaching and gives his audience only seven biblical life principles to live by.¹²⁵ In his book, *Your Best Life Now*, Osteen writes, “Search the Scriptures and highlight those that particularly apply to your life situation. Write them down and get in the habit of declaring them.” He further teaches:

You’ve got to believe good things are on their way. You must believe that God is at work in your life, that He is restoring you to your rightful place. In other words, you’ve got to see those things coming to pass. You need to see that business turning around. It has to be conceived in your heart. Look at life through your eyes of faith into that invisible world and see your dreams coming to pass.¹²⁶

On a positive note, many Christians, even from evangelical persuasion, attest that Christians can attain material wealth when they inculcate biblical principles on stewardship. By following the work ethics from Scriptures, the gospel has the potential to

¹²⁴ Ronald J. Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: Moving from Affluence to Generosity* (W. Publishing Group, 1997), 106-107.

¹²⁵ L. King and R. Martinez eds., *Strange fires: Joel Osteen’s prosperity gospel*, (2011) www.spiritwatch.org. Retrieved from Worldwide web on 06/10/2018.

¹²⁶ J. Osteen, *Your best life now* (New York, USA: Faith Words, 2004), 79.

correct man's relationship with God, which may enhance the blessings of wealth. For example, the Bible encourages honest work while condemning unfaithfulness.¹²⁷

However, critics refute the methods and the basis upon which the prosperity teachings pivot. Sider cautions Christians against biblical distortion that attributes God's love and generosity on human effort. He asserts that rich Christians must be careful not to distort the biblical teaching that through giving offerings, tithes, and "sowing of seed", God can be constrained to reward obedience with material abundance.¹²⁸ PG champions discount the many biblical passages that portray the unrighteous people as wealthy and the righteous as poor. To the rich man of Jesus' parable, Luke, chapter 16, Abraham said, "Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things" (Lk. 16:25). When Christians understand the gift of salvation and the accompanying spiritual benefits, demanding material riches for their offerings and tithes is an affront to God for his unmatched riches in Christ. Grant Retief notes that PG churches:

Offer motivational talks, not biblical sermons; proof-texts, not biblical theology; applications of the gospel, not the gospel; moral improvement, not conversion; calls to social justice and giving, not evangelism; status in the community, not accountability-affording membership; flattery, not discipline; lessons in getting busy, not discipleship; professionalism, not leadership¹²⁹.

Scholars from evangelical persuasion dissent from using faith to amass wealth. They relate it to the resurgence of the old tradition of the Roman Catholic Church of

¹²⁷ See: Eph. 4:28; 1Th. 4:11; 2Th. 3:10-12; cf. Ge. 1:26; 2:15-16.

¹²⁸ Sider, 92-94.

¹²⁹ Grant Retief, "The Rise of a Parallel, Post-Biblical Christianity"
<https://www.9marks.org/article/journalrise-parallel-post-biblical-christianity/> Article01.14.2014 (Retrieved from Worldwide web on 21/03/2018).

indulgences, where sinners made payments to redeem themselves from eternal punishment. Martin Luther opposed the practice and the church channeling money to the Pope in Rome. According to Justo Gonzalez, discontentment about indulgence led to the reformation of 1517, which gave birth to Protestantism. Later, in 1562, the Catholic Church stopped the indulgence business.¹³⁰ Aarni Kuoppamaki implies that PGT is modern indulgences in disguise.¹³¹ In support, Zambian Baptist pastor Conrad Mbewe laments that many churchgoers attend churches for material benefits and not for the advancement of their spiritual maturity. To him, PGT dupes people who deal with the frustrations of delayed gratifications. He asserts, “A lot of people are embittered because they have parted with the little money that they had to depend on and it has not multiplied. Consequently, the name of God is getting a lot of bad publicity from these bitter individuals.”¹³² It seems like many Christians have lost the impetus to love God for who he is and have resorted to what he offers.

2.3 Biblical Theology of Material Prosperity on Whole-life Stewardship

Description of abundant material prosperity God gives to his people abounds in both the O.T. and the N.T. God is the Creator and he owns all the wealth (Ps. 50:10). He is spiritually and materially wealthy and he liberally bestows both upon those he chooses (php. 2:4; 1 Ch. 29:12; Php. 4:19). According to David Atkinson, et al, God gives resources, and abilities to his people and he expects them to handle them according to his

¹³⁰ Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity: the Early Church to the present Day* (Peabody: Massachusetts, Prince Press, 2001), 120.

¹³¹ Aarni Kuoppamaki, “Africa: Preachers of Prosperity - Faith as Business” 2017<https://allafrica.com/stories/201705230572.html> (Retrieved from Worldwide web on 13/04/2019).

¹³² Conrad Mbewe, “African Import of Charismatic Chaos” *YouTube video*, (2016) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ici16qfd70s> (Retrieved from Worldwide web on 06/11/2016).

will. God warns against the dangers of material provisions when people have an improper attitude and perspective. Believers should be cautious lest they brag, “My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me” (Dt. 8:17). The theme of personal stewardship disregards private ownership of possessions to being a faithful and committed caretaker of the resources of God.¹³³ It embraces one’s entire lifestyle on the acquisition of wealth and possessions, disposition and their application.

2.3.1 The Old Testament Doctrine on Material Wealth

The O.T. provides passages that reveal God as the creator and the one who sustains his creation. He alone has the prerogative to direct the functioning of the gifts and wealth he has entrusted in the care of his people. The major divisions of the O.T. books, Pentateuch, Poetry, Wisdom Literature, Writings, and the Prophets provide conscientious execution of possessions and concern for the needy as moral virtues.¹³⁴ Closer considerations of these passages in O.T. reveal incredible insights into God’s purposes on stewardship and its application in the life of his people.

The books of the Pentateuch advance the conviction that God blesses his faithful servants with spiritual and material resources. Reno Brazo asserts that the story of Abraham and the O.T. passages “depict wealth as a blessing.”¹³⁵ The book of Genesis 12:1-3 reveals that God promised to prosper Abraham and his descendants as fulfilled in Ge. 13:2 and 14:20. Abraham is described as wealthy (Ge. 20:14-16; 24:35; 26:13; 30:43;

¹³³ David J Atkinson and David F. Field, Eds., *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1995), 840-41.

¹³⁴ T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker, eds., *Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch* (Downer Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1969), 885.

¹³⁵ R. R. Reno Brazos, *Theological Commentary on the Bible: Genesis* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2010), 148.

47:27). Isaac, Abraham's son, also prospered and had much wealth (Ge. 26:12-14). God made Jacob's son, Joseph successful materially and caused him to become the prime minister of Egypt. The book of Exodus further highlights that God wanted his people to leave Egypt with wealth as they departed to the promised land of Canaan (Ex. 11:12-13; 12:35-36). Besides, Moses also taught Israel, "It is the Lord your God who gives you the power to get wealth" (Dt. 8:18). David Bauer regards Deuteronomy chapters 27-28 and 30 as the hallmark of theology that the PG advocates use to establish prosperity and comfort as the will of God to the righteous while curses to the unrighteous.¹³⁶

In light of the above passages, how would the Israelites be responsible stewards with the riches God had given to them? In the Pentateuch books, God instructed the wealthy Israelites to be generous to the poor and the needy in their midst (Ex. 23:10 -11; Dt. 15:11). This implies that individuals did not receive the gift of wealth merely for the sake of favour. Acquisition of property and wealth was subordinate to the obligation to care for the needy in the community.¹³⁷ It was for a wider application to empower God's people to honour and to magnify God. On the contrary, it was a sin to use possessions and riches for selfish gratification. This principle of stewardship runs throughout the passages of the O.T., and it encourages the rich to be generous towards the poor. However, how should Christians respond to PGT that encourages amassing of wealth and enjoyment of it at the expense of the poor people who are being misled? This is a concern that AGC should examine to be good stewards.

¹³⁶ David R. Bauer and Robert A. Traina, *Inductive Bible Study: A Comprehensive Guide to the Practice of Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2011), 312.

¹³⁷ William A. Dyrness and Veli-Matti Karkkainen, eds., *Global Dictionary of Theology* (Nottingham, England: Intervarsity Press), 577.

Many passages also reveal that wealth and abundance can saddle spiritual development and occasion strife. A good example is the narrative of Lot's servants and those of Abraham. The servants of Lot and those of Abraham is a case in point. Given this landscape, Christians should be conscious of how they use the wealth God entrusts to them. Holmes Rolston asserts that, to a Christian, prosperity is either a blessing from God or a potential power for evil use. Wealth can lead to pride and arrogance, instead of simplicity in living and humility in Christ.¹³⁸

The context of the Hebrew people and the data from several passages in the Poetry and Wisdom Literature give evidence that God prospers the obedient but punishes the disobedient. Rolston shows, "Covenant blessings in the O.T. often take the form of wealth and material prosperity".¹³⁹ The Psalmist reveals that wealth and riches are in the house of the man who fears the Lord (Ps. 112: 1, 3). The righteous flourish "like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers" (Ps. 1:3). God rewards prosperity to those who trust in Him as indicated by Ps. 112: 1, 3. It also indicates that wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever. These texts appear to enact conventional prosperity paradigm of the Jewish people that faithfulness and industrious life resulted in prosperity while wickedness and ill-gotten gains caused curses. In contrast, Hassell Bullock asserted that the above passages contrast with Psalms 37, 49, and 73 that discuss the problems of the wealthy and the wicked. His conclusion is that being wealthy is not a

¹³⁸ Rolston, 107.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 57.

sign that one is righteous.¹⁴⁰ This is illuminating to the church with respect to perceiving and executing its whole-life stewardship mandate.

God warned the Israelites against the peril of overlooking him as their source of wealth (Dt. 8:7-18). Proverbs 10:15 recognizes the blessings of wealth but Pr. 18:10-11 alerts the readers of enticements and traps of trusting in wealth and not in God. According to Edward Curtis, no amount of wealth can render fulfilment to life.¹⁴¹ Those who persist in seeking wealth in anticipation for purpose, hope, and satisfaction, often lead their souls into damnation. Hassell Bullock notes that Pr. 39: 6b reminds people that accumulation of wealth blinds spiritual perspectives and instead lead people to trust in their own material portfolios.¹⁴² The benefits of wealth are temporal, and the relentless pursuit of its benefits is transient. Wisdom narratives call and encourage the manner in which God's people should live and relate to others. Curtis asserts that a Christian's focus should remain on God's goodness and faithful love. Enjoyment of the simple pleasures of life in necessities such as food, drinks is a gift from God. But finding pleasure in them more than in God leads to a feeling of emptiness with a hope that "just a little more" will bring the meaning they crave for in their lives.¹⁴³

The Bible is not in support of consumerism ideology as mirrored in the PG messages. Curtis advocates that the centrality of the Bible confronts contemporary

¹⁴⁰ Hassell C. Bullock, *Teach the Text Commentary Series: Psalm 1-72* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker House, 2015), 287.

¹⁴¹ Edward M. Curtis, *Teach the Text Commentary Series, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2013), 58.

¹⁴² Hassell Bullock C., *Teaching the Text Commentary Series: Psalms. Volume 1: Psalms 1-72* (Grand Rapids Michigan: Baker Books, 2015), 287.

¹⁴³ Curtis, 58.

consumerism culture with the message that wealth and possessions are inadequate to provide meaning to one's soul.¹⁴⁴ He stresses that godly stewardship values relationships, takes time to rest, enjoys life, and helps the needy.¹⁴⁵ However, there are drawbacks to wealth and worldly pleasures when enjoyed outside God's will. Possessions have the power to undermine faith and can become an idol that ruins relationships and ministries. William Dyrness and Veli-Matti Karkainen assert that Scriptures warn against the futility and folly of accumulating wealth for one's personal security.¹⁴⁶ Ecclesiastes in general and particularly chapter 12 portrays life outside God as meaningless, empty, miserable, and purposeless regardless of one's wealth and pleasures. The opinion of several Bible scholars underscores the fact that, though the book of Ecclesiastes seems to enact and encourage people to find opportunities for pleasure and delight, its significant lesson for life is the sovereignty of God in a world that is broken with sin, and that one day, he will require accountability.

The books of Job and Ecclesiastes protest against human claim that wealth identifies with righteousness while lack of it is a consequence of sin. Craig Blomberg insists that the book of Job shows that not everyone will achieve consistent fairness in this world.¹⁴⁷ Wangonya concurs with Blomberg that, "It is wrong to insist that righteousness always attracts reward while unrighteousness draws judgment in this

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Dyrness, 581.

¹⁴⁷ Craig L. Blomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Possessions* (Downers Grove, Illinois, 2000), 242.

life.”¹⁴⁸ Citing Job’s initial life, he stresses that because of his (Job’s) righteousness, God blessed him with immense wealth, fame and a perfect family (Job 1:1-3). Nonetheless, he later lost them all and even went through great personal testing (Job Chapter 2-37).¹⁴⁹ Blomberg contends that the book of Job and Ecclesiastes along with Psalms, point to the future eschatology as the only event that will bring about true and equitable solutions to this world’s injustices.¹⁵⁰ The texts of Ecclesiastes 5:8-17 and 6:1-12 further reveal that, by trusting in transient riches and indulgences, a person can bring despair in his/her life. Therefore, to claim that prosperity is for all righteous people in this life is to fail to encapsulate the entire biblical concept on God’s gift of whole-life stewardship.

The concrete evidence from Job’s life during his tests proves that the righteous also suffer (Job 2-37) and that God remains sovereign and loving forever despite miseries in life. Commenting about Job’s faith, Adeyemo reiterates that Job remained faithful to the Lord despite his agony because “he was God-centred and not thing-centred.”¹⁵¹ Though Satan insinuated that the removal of Job’s wealth would cause him to curse God to his face (Job 1:11), Job acted to the contrary.¹⁵² When Satan destroyed his children, riches, and health, he proved his love and allegiance towards God and not worldly success.¹⁵³ Blomberg and other notable Bible scholars insist that the books of Job and Ecclesiastes along with Psalms and Daniel point to the future eschatology as the only

¹⁴⁸ Wangonya, 340.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Blomberg, 59.

¹⁵¹ Tokunboh Adeyemo, Ed., *Africa Bible Commentary* (Nairobi: World Alive Publisher, 2006), 572.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 59.

event that will bring about true and equitable solutions to this world's injustices.¹⁵⁴ Hence, to conclude that prosperity is for all righteous people in this world is to fail to encapsulate the entire biblical concept on the reward. The book of Ecc.5:8-17, 6:1-12 further reveals that by trusting in transient riches and indulgence, a person can bring despair in his/her life. One must have an eternal clear perspective on life and wealth by fearing God and observing all his commandments (Ecc. 3:21; 12:13; and 12:17). It is noteworthy from the wisdom books that faithfulness to the Lord at all times guarantees his spiritual blessing and not earthly wealth as advanced by PG preachers. The need for the African church to comprehend this truth for effective response is therefore imperative.

The teaching on the prosperity also features prominently in the O.T. books of the Prophets and the Writings. The Royals amassed great wealth together with their clientele and a few rich landowners who also possessed large portions of the countryside land. God also blessed faithful kings such as Hezekiah (2 Ki. 18-20), Josiah (2 Ki. 22:1-23:30) with material blessings. The religious profile of Solomon reveals that God was pleased to give him wealth in tandem with wisdom, long life, and honour (1 Ki. 3:11-13).¹⁵⁵ Sadly, though, later, his great wealth contributed to the oppression and misery of the subjects (Israelites) he was to govern with integrity and wisdom. He oppressed the children of Israel and in his later years became unjust and sinful.

The Bible demonstrates that wealth commences with God and it is his bounty to his people. Wayne Grudem and Barry Asmus noted that while God's intention is always

¹⁵⁴ Blomberg, 242.

¹⁵⁵ Lawrence O. Richard, *Bible Reader's Companion* (Paris, Ontario: Victor, 2002), 223. .

to bless his children so they too can care for others, many who became rich in the O.T. alienated their lives from that of God.¹⁵⁶ Thus, the prerequisite for remaining good stewards depends on the proper use of wealth by caring for the needy, seeking justice and advancing God's Kingdom.

2.3.2 The New Testament Doctrine on Material Wealth

The N.T. advances the major principles of the O.T. understanding of prosperity and stewardship and portrays different strands associated with the possession of wealth. The New Testament depicts private possessions as legitimate according to Jesus' parables (Mt. 25:14-30, Lk. 16:1-8; 19:12-22).¹⁵⁷ Such values like working hard, caring for the poor, managing of finances, and remaining faithful stewards of God are essential aspects implied in the parables and the N.T. passages. Of interest is the story of "the rich young man" whose wealth is noted in the Gospel books (Mt. 19:20; Mk. 10:17; and Lk. 18:18). These verses reveal that possessions reflect where a person's allegiance is, whether in God or in the world.

Michael Maura considers money and possessions as essential gifts in life, which should glorify God.¹⁵⁸ Money and possessions find space in our everyday engagements. Tom Wright noted that newspapers provide great room for stories about money and wealth. The "Glamour and glitz it seems to provide, the shock and the horror when it runs out, the never-ending scandals about people getting it, embezzling it, losing it, and

¹⁵⁶ Wayne Grudem and Barry Asmus, *The Poverty of Nations: A Sustainable Solution* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2013), 240 -241.

¹⁵⁷ William A. Dyrness and Veli-Matti Karkainen, eds., *Global Dictionary of Theology* (Downer Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 2008), 576.

¹⁵⁸ Ken Mbugua, Michael Otieno Maura, Conrad Mbewe, John Piper, Wayne Grudem, *Prosperity? Seeking the True Gospel* (Nairobi: Africa Christian Textbooks, 2015), 123.

getting it again.”¹⁵⁹ Besides what it can accomplish, it has an influence on one’s soul and eternal perspective. Mbugua noted that money has the potential to lead to numerous temptations that lead to sin.¹⁶⁰ This implies that several of those in PGT could be in danger of violating the spirit of whole-life stewardship, hence the need for an investigation on the impact of the doctrine of PG in AGC, Kampala area.

Goliama declares that gifts whether spiritual or secular demonstrate the gratuity of God to his children to advance human dignity, justice, and values.¹⁶¹ However, when wealth is not properly used, it becomes dangerous (Lk. 16: 10-18). To avoid its peril follow God’s Word. William Taylor rightly observes that prosperity that God gives conforms to proper ethical consideration and leads to intentional solidarity.¹⁶²

In the Gospels, the Lord Jesus was neutral in his teaching on both riches and poverty. Blomberg asserts that Christ supported neither poverty nor wealth as God’s signature for blessings upon the righteous, and impoverishment as a curse for the unfaithful.¹⁶³ Jesus, however, gives a stern warning against destructive nature of wealth in the story of the rich farmer and teaches that life does not depend on the sum of wealth one acquires in life (Lk. 12:15). Trent Butler considers Jesus’ teaching on material wealth as a warning against the threat of prosperity because of its ability to impede spiritual development (Lk. 8:14). According to Butler, Jesus viewed the temptations of riches as a spiritual power in two ways (Mt. 6:24), either as an object of worship or as a rival to God.

¹⁵⁹ Tom Wright, *Luke for Everyone: Bible Study Guide* (London: Publication Cit, 2014), 196.

¹⁶⁰ Mbugua et al., 123.

¹⁶¹ Goliama, 256-257.

¹⁶² William D. Taylor, ed., *Global Missiology for the 21st Century: The Iguassu Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2000), 33.

¹⁶³ Blomberg, 127-145.

He, Butler concludes that Christ's counsel for all believers is to trust in God to meet their needs. To those who have excess resources, they should be compassionate towards the needy.¹⁶⁴ Consequently, his discourses often exhorted his audiences to desist from loving wealth (Mt. 19:21; Lk.12:33-34). He taught those who were rich to give it away, like the case of Zacchaeus (Lk.19:8).¹⁶⁵ This is contrary to the contemporary teachings of PGT. The urgent call to respond to the strange teaching is inevitable to bring Christians to the heart of authentic N.T. stewardship.

Furthermore, the sermon of Jesus on the Mount illuminates his attitude on wealth. He advised his audience to invest their treasures in heaven where they would remain secure for eternity (Mt. 6:19-21). Thomas Oden emphasizes that the Church needs to implement its stewardship in light of the N.T. teaching that places God at the centre of faith and practices. This will reveal the love believers have for God and their concerns for the welfare of the disenfranchised.¹⁶⁶ David Bawlk notes that Christ's selfless service placed his compassion for the needy at the centre of his heart impulse.¹⁶⁷ The teachings and the life of Christ emphasize compassion to the poor (Lk. 14: 12-14, Lk. 18:22) by first pleasing God. However, PGT does not emphasize the need for a surrendered life, which, God desires to fill with his Holy Spirit to advance his glory on earth. Possessions, opulence, and social advancement should not be the vehicle that drives people to seek

¹⁶⁴ Trent C. Butler, ed., *Holman Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, Tennessee, Holman Bible Publishers, 1991), 1401.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Thomas C. Oden, *John, Wesley's Teachings: Ethics and Society, Volume 4*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2014), 57.

¹⁶⁷ David Bawks, "Poverty and Suffering: The Role of the Holy Spirit" in *Christianity and Suffering: African Perspectives* Rodney L. Reed, ed., (Langham: Global Library, 2017), 12-16.

God as noted in many contemporary PGT churches. It therefore behoves AGC to seek God for who he is, what he has done, and how he wants to transform the world through the gospel of Salvation in Christ. Thus, by PGT craving for a sumptuous life as a spiritual right for all faithful Christians is to violate the essence of the N.T. understanding of whole-life stewardship.

In addition, Jesus challenged his followers to maintain an eternal perspective in their attitude and conduct towards possessions. David Jones and Russell Woodbridge depict Jesus' Sermon on the Mount as a boundless counsel to his audience to invest their lives in heaven where everlasting security is assured (Mt. 6:19-21).¹⁶⁸ On the same note, Douglas relates the Sermon on the Mount to other N.T. passages on benevolence. The teachings encourage hospitality and generosity towards the poor (Lk. 14: 12-14; Lk. 18:22).¹⁶⁹ The Scriptures make it apparent that Christ's message to every believer is to please God first, to advance the gospel, and to identify with the needy. The biblical message of the Gospel books on wealth challenges the popular notion of PGT that faithfulness is always concomitant to earthly success. To insist on wealth acquisition as a biblical signature for faithfulness is mere conjecture and not N.T. doctrine.

No wonder, the book of Luke depicts wealthy people as not concerned about the poor. Indeed, Jesus implied that wealth seduced people to forsake God. During Christ's life and ministry on earth, the rich and the affluent undermined those who lacked material

¹⁶⁸ David W. Jones and Russell S. Woodbridge, *Health Wealth & Happiness: Has the Prosperity Gospel Overshadowed the Gospel of Christ?* (Grand Rapids MI.: Kregel Publications, 2011), 468 Kindle Location.

¹⁶⁹ J.D. Douglas and Merrill C. Tenney, eds., *The New Bible Dictionary* (London: Intervarsity Press, 1987), 208.

resources. This necessitated him to talk about proper stewardship of money and property (Lk. 3:11) which also have a bearing on talents and abilities one has. Sider observes that wealthy people were self-righteous and greedy (Lk. 12:13-15; 16:14-15); they disregarded the poor (Lk. 18:9) and were in danger of apostasy (Lk. 8:14; 9:25).¹⁷⁰ To Candy Brown, Luke warned his audience as he does to the contemporary church to shun the sin of pride, contentiousness, selfishness and hoarding wealth (Lk. 12:13-21; 16:19-31). He instead invites them to a life of whole-life stewardship characterized by love and generosity towards the needy (Lk. 14:12-14; 19:8).¹⁷¹ According to France and Mark, Luke's insight on the relationship between possessions and the Kingdom of God is a total "reversal of the normal human scale of value."¹⁷² Therefore, Christians need to reconsider how they should practice stewardship.

Jesus often related accumulation of MP to unrighteousness and stressed that the purpose of treasures is for advancing the KOG. The Bible urges Christians to invest in heaven and not on earth (Lk. 12:32) because worldly resources can endanger one's relationship with God. Dyrness contends that Luke's articulation on money and possessions ought to be for serving the Lord and his people. Interestingly, Christ did not relate righteousness to a total repudiation of one's riches to God. A good example is Zacchaeus in Luke 19 who upon his conversion was not required to surrender all he had

¹⁷⁰ Ronald, 97.

¹⁷¹ Candy Gunther Brown, *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing* (Oxford: University Press, 2011), 40.

¹⁷² R. T. France, Mark L. Straus and John H. Walton, eds., *Teaching the Text Commentary Series: Luke* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2013), 263.

(Lk. 19:1-10).¹⁷³ Therefore, when PGT insinuates that, their followers furnish them with wealth; it depicts their exegetical deficiency. By insisting that giving is a prerequisite to affluence and abundance they are leading people into temptations of greed and covetousness, which are forms of idolatry. Therefore, those who have personal possessions should direct them towards the advancement of the gospel and others' welfare. Dyrness is equivocal when he avouches that loving wealth and power dull an individual's spiritual needs and "foster alienation from God, and make spiritual sterility."¹⁷⁴ The dangers of craving for wealth and its improper appropriation occupy considerable space in numerous Bible passages. The N.T. references provide illumination to this effect.¹⁷⁵ Unfortunately, PG seems to anchor its teaching on the very pillars it is supposed to extirpate.

PG explosion of abundant wealth as the sign of faith is detrimental to spiritual advancement and consequently to whole-life stewardship. To be obsessed with material wealth is a sign of spiritual bankruptcy.¹⁷⁶ Grant Osborne notes that the love of possessions poses a threat to a human soul because when peoples' goal in life is to seek MP sin ensnares them.¹⁷⁷ Therefore, to maintain the coherency between obedience to God and material prosperity is baseless in light of many perspicuous N.T. passages on stewardship. In fact, Osborn believes that it may be an indication of the sins of pride,

¹⁷³ Dyrness, 580.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 581.

¹⁷⁵ See Mk. 8:34-38; Lk. 14:12-14; 10:25-37; 16:19-31; and Mt 5:42.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Grant R. Osborn, *Teaching the Text Commentary Series: Mark* (Grand Rapids Michigan: Baker Books, 2014), 180.

arrogance, and unrighteousness.¹⁷⁸ No wonder, God consistently aligns his heart with the poor and the humble in society. Dyrness observes that, often, the N.T. teaching on “money to the rich is annoying, meddlesome, and distressing.”¹⁷⁹ He further notes that to be both materially prosperous and a true disciple of Christ can be quite a challenge.¹⁸⁰ In light of the N.T. theology, Jesus bequeaths the church with his magnanimous life, which was lofty, unselfish, devoted to God and to humanity. It is therefore inordinate vanity for PG advocates to insist on economic upward mobility, which does not consist of spiritual development.

The call of Christ to the church to return to whole-life stewardship is loud and clear in this dispensation of trying to escape from material restlessness. Wiersbe, basing on Mk. 8:34-36, “If any man would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me” emphasizes that obedience leads to sacrifice and suffering.¹⁸¹ Pain and sufferings are means by which God at times uses to purge and purify the hearts of his people. Dyrness’ acumen on the futility of asserting that obedience to God leads to opulence is noteworthy. The inclination for wealth and the love of money are signs of last day’s apostasy.¹⁸² Though PGT insinuates that riches will bring peace, comfort, and hope, it suffices to note that joy, hope, and peace for Christians emanates from submission to the Lordship of Christ, which leads to responsible stewards.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Dyrness, 581.

¹⁸¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Classic Sermons on Suffering* (Grand Rapids Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1984) 146 -152.

¹⁸² . Dyrness and Karkainen, 580.

It is imperative to acknowledge that although Christ portrays in his teachings possible dangers associated with the accumulation of personal wealth on earth, he nonetheless idealizes poverty as a virtue for righteousness. The Gospels reveal that salvation is consistently holistic in nature. Blomberg asserts, “Material sustenance without spiritual salvation proves meaningless, but the liberation that God in Christ grants regularly includes a physical or material dimension to it as well.”¹⁸³ He asserts that Christ’s injunction to his disciples is that they emulate his sacrificial attitude and generosity instead of basking in the glory of ‘godly materialism’.¹⁸⁴ This should be a sobering insight to many Christians who connote that all the rich are unrighteous but the impecunious as holy and dear to God. What seems to transpire in the life and teachings of the Lord is that abundance of life ensues from the right relationship with God. PGT, in their self-sufficiency, misconstrue and so adulterate the Scriptures that should promote whole-life stewardship. This is quite misleading to gullible Christians who need the knowledge to escape from PGT fraudulence.

Like the Gospel Books, the teachings of Acts in the N.T. also reiterates the distinctive place of wealth as measures for meeting personal material requisitions as well as those of the new community members in Christ (Ac. 2: 44-45; 4:32-35). Tremper Longman and David Garland portray the new community of grace as expressing its unity and love by addressing social concerns for the poor.¹⁸⁵ Acts 18:2-3 shows that Priscilla and Aquila were rich and they used their wealth wisely by serving others. They

¹⁸³ Blomberg, 145.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 146.

¹⁸⁵ Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, eds., *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, 10th Ed. Luke – Acts* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2007), 337.

demonstrated that wealth is for the advancement of God's work and blessing others. Only a church filled with the knowledge and grace of the Lord can penetrate PG messages and exhibit a life of whole-life stewardship. Therefore, the momentous issue is to understand whole-life stewardship, which has been tainted by PGT.

Passages in the book of Acts show that money is good, but when abused, it can be perilous to a Christian's faith. The dangers of people who were defeated by the power of wealth abound as the following Scripture references divulge. Examples of such people include Ananias and his wife (Ac. 5:1-10), Simon Magus (Ac. 8:18-23), the owners of the slave girl from whom Paul cast out the demons (Ac. 16:19), Demetrius the silversmith (Ac. 19:24-27), and Felix (Ac. 24:26). Scriptures caution against idolatry but encourage Christians to embrace godly love by sharing possessions to bless the needy. Longman contends, "If contemporary Christianity is weak and ineffectual, it is not because of opposition from outside but because we who call ourselves Christians have forgotten the mandate to love one another even as Jesus loved his own."¹⁸⁶ Indeed, the book of Acts reveals the exceptional community of Christ filled with love for the lord characterized by tenderness and pure compassion. Incongruously, PGT churches and their advocates do not portray such a community that uplifts and strengthens the weak. No wonder, those from the evangelical wing understand PG as exploitative in its orientation for it negates biblical doctrine on stewardship.

Like the book of Acts, the Epistles show that wealth can be a spiritual obstruction to a believer's life. Dyrness and Karkkainen contend that the pursuit of opulence for

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 758.

personal gratification is unscriptural. He asserts, “The principle of steadily increasing consumption run against the grain of Paul’s teaching in 2 Corinthians 4:7-8.”¹⁸⁷ God warns against envying the affluent and the book of James reveals that “As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered” (Jas. 5:11). Orsborn by considering the poor and the affluent concludes that both have to yield to the Spirit of God for heart transformation. Referring to James 1:9-11, he states that, the rich should glory in their humility while the poor in their exaltation in Christ Jesus. The rich should instead aspire for spiritual riches in Christ (Eph. 3:8; 2:7-8; 2 Co. 8:9) instead of pursuing temporal economic wealth. On the same note, the Bible warns Christians against covetousness, greed, and selfishness (Heb. 13:5). One of those who were guilty of such sins was Demas (2 Ti. 4:10). The above passages reveal avariciousness in the lives of God’s people. Therefore, Paul warned the church that those who loved money would lose eternity. “For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is covetous has no inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God” (Eph. 5:5). The dangers of money show that the sin of covetousness disqualifies one from Christian ministry (2 Ti. 3:3). Christians are instead encouraged to trust in God and to be compassionate towards the needy. In so doing, they would store up for themselves eternal life, the only true wealth (1Ti. 6:17-19).

Further, examination made by Atkinson towards MP shows that wealth brings with it the responsibility of generosity towards the needy and should be shared with a view to equality (1Ti. 6:18; 2 Corinthians 8 and 10).¹⁸⁸ In agreement with Atkinson, Oden concurs that Christ’s own example shows that though he was rich, he chose a life of

¹⁸⁷ Dyrness and Karkkainen, 580.

¹⁸⁸ Atkinson, 679.

poverty so that through him, believers might be rich (2 Co. 8:9).¹⁸⁹ In the same vein, John Stott affirms that Christians are encouraged to be generous and contented as an appropriate expression of solidarity with the poor (1 Ti. 6:17-19) to imitate the generous God and to store up treasures in heaven.¹⁹⁰ John Gillman asserts, “The gospel mandates all believers to respond in some way to share their possessions according to the purpose of God who calls them.”¹⁹¹ It is apparent that one of the reasons the apostles wrote the epistles to their audiences was to reveal salvation and stewardship in a concrete manner to manifest God’s love to all people. Reggie Kidd discusses the relationship between the rich to the church and concludes that PGT presents concern and potential dangers to the body of Christ. He calls the attention of the wealthy to embrace 1Ti. 6:17-19. “The proper role of rich Christians in the church is to support the church generously. The rich are not to encourage the poor to be wealthy as evident among the prosperity preachers.”¹⁹² Instead, both the rich and the poor should cultivate love and commitment to the Lord Jesus and aspire for eternal riches. PGT seems to fail in this area. In fact, Christine Kimuya reveals that the good life PGT is advancing today will find its fulfilment in the future reign of Christ.¹⁹³ The proper biblical understanding of seeking first the Kingdom of God and allowing God to bless his people with necessities is an invitation to all believers.

¹⁸⁹ Oden, 290.

¹⁹⁰ John Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today* 4th edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2006), 315.

¹⁹¹ John Gillman, *Possessions and the Life of Faith: A Reading of Luke – Acts* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 69.

¹⁹² Reggie M. Kidd, *Wealth and Beneficence in the Pastoral Epistles: A Bourgeois Form of Early Christianity?* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholar press, 1999), 75.

¹⁹³ Kimuya, 97.

By examining the stewardship passages from the O.T. and the N.T., Christians should use what God has provided for necessities in life. However, God does not just limit his providence to necessities; he sometimes chooses to endow his people with more blessings of riches to be a blessing to the needy and to advance the Kingdom cause. Therefore, Christians should not feel guilty for living in an expensive house, driving a good car, wearing a proper suit of clothes or eating a good meal. Brian Griffiths believes that what matters most to God is that Christians live for the Lord and not for personal gratification that “worship money and live for consumption and the creation of a personal fortune”.¹⁹⁴ In fact, Douglas Harink notes that our society condones unscrupulous acquisition of wealth as normative. For many people, “disproportionate and wealth is normal. Opulence and indulgence are normal.”¹⁹⁵ Thomas reminds the church to call Christian members back to the heart of faithful stewardship and leave behind a splendid heritage for the future generation to emulate.¹⁹⁶ PGT does not help to restore the unwavering convictions of the biblical truth that constitutes aspects of whole-life stewardship that are missing in the Church.

2.4 Cultural Concepts that Accommodate Popular PGT

This section considers how African cultural concepts in AGC interface with PGT and stewardship. African cultures reverberate with concepts that epitomize the PG orientation and influence their world. Believers cannot comprehend the principles of

¹⁹⁴ Brian Griffiths, *The Creation of Wealth: A Christian's Case for Capitalism* (Downers Grove: Ill. Intervarsity Press, 1984), 60.

¹⁹⁵ Douglas Harink, *Theological Commentary on Bible: 1 & 2 Peter* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2009), 107.

¹⁹⁶ E. Ernest Thomas, *To Whom Much is Given: the Stewardship Question of Jesus* (New York, Abingdon-Cokes Bury Press, 1946), 126-127.

whole-life stewardship without stressing the role of culture, religion, and social concerns in a given context(s).

2.4.1 PGT and African Tradition Concepts of Wealth in AGC

Several scholars stress the indisputable abiding continuity between African Traditional Religion (ATR) and PGT. Judith Bahemuka understands ATR to refer to “The wholeness of African life: the African perception of self visa-a-vis environment, attitude towards life, values, and self-awareness.”¹⁹⁷ Religion gives an African a sense of self-worth and identity. Obadare avows that in both the ATR and PGT, individuals acquire a new social identity.¹⁹⁸ Laurenti Magesa emphasizes the power of the African religion when he asserts, “With African religion, nationality and ethnicity are integral to the definition of personal identity”¹⁹⁹ From an African perspective, religion plays an essential role in a person’s conduct in relation to his/her community. As Peter Kasenene claims, “It is the strongest force that unites people into the community and gives individuals a sense of identity.”²⁰⁰ Africans attach themselves to their ancestors whom they believe to influence their social morals.²⁰¹ PGT takes advantage of this social tie by creating a sense of oneness that enables their followers to want to stay together even amidst economic exploitation. It has failed to develop an understanding of a spiritual

¹⁹⁷ Judith M. Bahemuka, “The Hidden Christ in African Traditional Religion” in *Jesus in African Christianity: Experimentation and Diversity in African Christology*, J.N.k. Mugambi Laurenti Magesa, eds. (Nairobi, Kenya: Initiative Ltd., 1989), 1.

¹⁹⁸ E. Obadare, “Raising righteous billionaires: The prosperity gospel reconsidered”. *HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 72(4), a3571. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v72i4.3571>, 2016. Retrieved from Worldwide web on 20/08/2017.

¹⁹⁹ Laurenti Magesa and Zablon Nthamburi, eds., *Democracy and Reconciliation: A Challenging for African Christianity* (Nairobi: Action Press, 1999), 77.

²⁰⁰ Peter Kasenene, *Religious Ethics in Africa* (Kampala, Uganda: Fountain Publishers, 1998), 18.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

community of righteous people whose desire is to serve God and others based on the biblical understanding of their calling.

Psychologically, PGT and African cultures share the view that material wealth is a favour from God and brings happiness. Ebenezer Obadare posits that material lack does not come from God because all he does is good (Ge. 1:25). God cannot be the source of a curse. People should elude associating curses with God.²⁰² The prosperity followers construe the Scriptures as promising wealth and pleasure to all Christians now. Ogbu Kalu reveals that such a plain understanding of biblical texts resonates well with the African attitude.²⁰³ This causes several Africans to believe that God is powerfully active in blessing prosperity followers as seen earlier in this chapter. Oyedepo teaches that one of the reasons why Christ was manifested was to enrich believers.”²⁰⁴ This mutual compliance of PGT with the African worldview offers a causal connection that enhances material bounty for those committed to God. Ogungbile reports that PG advocates are being contextual in their response to the reality of the African challenges.²⁰⁵ Keith Burton notes that Africans view the Bible as a practical book that addresses the pragmatic concerns of God’s people.²⁰⁶ Therefore, both the ATR and PGT perception of God reveals that God is interested in the entire affairs of human beings. Hence, many

²⁰² Ebenezer Obadare, “Raising Righteous billionaires”: The prosperity gospel reconsidered”, *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 72(4), a3571. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v72i4.3571>, (2016), 5.

²⁰³ Ogbu Kalu, “Globalisation and Religion: The Pentecostal Model in Contemporary Africa,” *Uniquely Africa? African Christian Identity from Cultural and Historical Perspective*, James L. Cox and Carrier Ter Har, eds. (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003), 138.

²⁰⁴ David Oyedepo O., *Understanding Financial Prosperity* (Logos: Dominion Publishing House, 2005), 60.

²⁰⁵ David Ogungbile, “African Pentecostalism and the Prosperity Gospel,” *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*, Clifton R. Clarke, ed., (Oregon: Pickwick Publication, 2014), 84.

²⁰⁶ Keith Augustus Burton, *The Blessings of Africa* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academics, 2007), 81.

Africans question the logic of virtue in Christian suffering. Sider notes, “In our day, some who have dared to preach and live what the Bible teaches about the poor and possessions have experienced terrible persecution.”²⁰⁷ The fact that PGT denies Christian suffering, its dissonance with both the O.T. and N.T. is disquieting. Unless checked, PG will cause the church to face far-reaching consequences in relation to whole-life stewardship.

Accordingly, Ogungbile points out that the prosperity gospel has positively contributed to the improvement of the African social and spiritual life.²⁰⁸ The positive stance of PGT provides fertile soil for its growth among numerous communities of Africa. Larbi argues that, by advocating for PG, Christians are able to relate to the Bible and the gospel pragmatically.²⁰⁹ Despite some scholars seeing compatibility between PGT and African philosophy on wealth acquisition and its dissemination, others fail to appreciate the link. Thomas contends that PGT is individualistic in its orientation and is promoting a culture that contradicts the communal spirit of *ubuntu* inherent in its fabric.²¹⁰ As Douglas Waruta also notes that Ubuntu “guarantees a “sense of security and just protection.”²¹¹ However, Wilbur O’Donovan notices the incongruity between the two worldviews. The Western culture from where PGT began reflects individualism while the

²⁰⁷ Ronald J. Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: Moving from Affluence to Generosity* (Tennessee: W. Publishing Group, 1997), 40.

²⁰⁸ Ogungbile, 80.

²⁰⁹ Larbi E. K., *The Eddies of Ghana Christianity* (Accra: Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, 2001), 130.

²¹⁰ J. C. Thomas, “Overtly and Capitalism in West Africa: A Christian Perspective,” *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology*, Vol. XIV (2009): 53.

Ubuntu refers to correct behaviour, as defined by a person's relations with other people. One must act favourable towards others or behave in a manner that profits the community. Such acts could be as simple as helping a stranger in need, or much more complex ways of relating with others. A person who behaves in these ways *has ubuntu*. He or she is a full person.

²¹¹ Dauglous W. Waruta, “Who is Jesus Christ for Africans Today? Prophet, Priest, Potentate,” *Jesus in African Christianity: Experimentation and Diversity in African Christology*, J.N.k. Mugambi Laurenti Magesa, eds., (Nairobi, Kenya: Initiative Ltd., 1989), 40.

African mirrors ubuntu.²¹² This begs the question, so why do so many Africans welcome PG message if it lacks contextualization?

PGT finds a home based on its adaptive nature into the culture in which it expresses itself. Thomas indicates that the PG merges its capitalistic Western tendencies with both the African and the Christian life thereby producing “syncretistic blend of incompatible faiths rather than reinforced enculturation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”²¹³ Perhaps, a discussion on magic will suffice to illuminate the intimate relationship between PGT and the ATR that informs their life and worship.

The African Traditional Religion (ATR) abounds in magic. Magic is “a belief in mystical powers that are believed to be saturating the universe.”²¹⁴ Africans relate to two kinds of magic. White magic is perceived to be favourable towards humanity because its primary role is for protection against the evil forces that exist everywhere. They can be manipulated through “utterances of a set of words or the performance of sets of acts, or both, to control or bend the powers of the world to man’s will.”²¹⁵ In contrast, black magic is considered evil and dangerous to people and their possessions. The magic is associated with witchcraft and sorcery. Mbiti suggests that the practice of black magic thrives best where there are strife, envy, hatred, suspicion, fear, ignorance or false accusations.²¹⁶ While there has been much debate among religious scholars on the

²¹² Wilbur O’Donovan, *Biblical Christianity in Modern Africa* (Kutunayake: Paternoster Press, 2006), 1-17.

²¹³ Thomas, 2009, 54.

²¹⁴ Richard J. Gehman, *African Traditional Religion in Biblical Perspectives* (Nairobi, East African Educational Publishers, 1989), 67.

²¹⁵ Noss, 20.

²¹⁶ John Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy* (London: SPCK, 1969), 199.

relationship between Magic and Religion, there is a general agreement that “magic can no longer be separated from religion as some have done.”²¹⁷ The nature of these magical powers is mysterious. PG advocates take advantage of the ignorance of the masses in Africa who live in fear and hopelessness to persuade them that coming to Christ and being faithful in giving their possessions to them would bring blessings and a future. The church cannot realize the dangers of following PGT unless a study of this nature is undertaken.

Armed with the above knowledge on magic, one can discern a closer relationship between PGT and magical tendencies such as the use of repetitive words through confessions in the ATR. Both entities incorporate symbols in their worship to try to manipulate God to do what they desire. The fact that they perform miracles and practice exorcism does not mean that their powers emanate from God. As Paul Herbert has noted, even other religions of the world such as the Shamans, Hindu sadhus, and Muslims fakirs have duplicated miracles, wonders, and signs.²¹⁸ Therefore, to conclude that because the PG preachers use the Bible and the name of Christ (besides witnessing some manifestations of miracles and wonders), they are genuine servants of God, would contravene the warning of Christ to those who call him Lord but fail to submit to his Lordship (Lk 6:46). Herbert is succinct, “Scripture repeatedly warns us to be on our guard in the last days, when Satan will counterfeit the works of God.”²¹⁹ Hence, what

²¹⁷ Gehman, 69.

²¹⁸ Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1985), 224.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

should matter to Christians is what the Bible teaches and not what people promulgate as the authentic gospel.

Furthermore, Africans understand poverty and wealth as a phenomenon influenced by spiritual forces. Gifford acknowledges the African belief on the existence of the capricious spiritual powers such as spirits and demons that influence human life.²²⁰ Other notable scholars on the African religious studies and philosophies such as John Waliggo, Douglas Waruta, Zablon Nthamburi, and Mugabi among others concur with Laurenti Magesa's articulation that spiritual forces influence Africans.²²¹ The malignant ones cause vile and misfortunes that influence humankind.²²² This perception of spirituality in Africans' daily affairs is consistent with John Mbiti's assertion that spirits find special space in an African paradigm.²²³ By PGT purporting to address such concerns related to fear and poverty perpetuated by the malevolent powers, it has found a home in the continent. According to Lovemore Togarasei, the quest for concrete solutions to human sufferings in Africa, elucidate the rationale behind the influx in the PG churches.²²⁴ AGC needs to present Christ in a manner that his power will deal with the sins, fears, hopelessness, and other vices bedevilling the continent. Zablon Nthamburi rightly comments, "If Christ is not concerned about our social, political, economic and

²²⁰ Paul Gifford, "Christianity, Development and Modernity in Africa" Review by Chammah J. Kaunda (2016), 7. onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/erev.12254/Abstract (Accessed 10th October 2017).

²²¹ J.N.K. Mugambi and Laurenti Magesa, eds., *Jesus in African Christianity: Experimentation and Diversity in African Christology* (Nairobi Kenya: Initiatives Ltd., 1989), 74.

²²² Magesa Laurenti, *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books 2004), 262.

²²³ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 2nd edition (Norfolk: Heinemann, 1999), 193.

²²⁴ Lovemore Togarasei, "The Pentecostal Gospel of Prosperity in African Contexts of Poverty: An appraisal" *Exchange* 40 (2011): 340.

spiritual reality of existence, he will not be relevant in Africa.”²²⁵ The Lord Jesus is far much more powerful than the ancestors, magicians, politicians, and PG prophets and therefore able to guide and bless Christians.

Similarly, PGT and African philosophy avow that the Bible depicts God as rich and wills to grant his children a right to appropriate their Fathers’ riches. Amy Stambach maintains that the two concepts regard God as the creator and the owner of abundance and that all his children have the right to receive copious stuff in this life.²²⁶ One method of inculcating PGT message is through songs. Africans love music and any message wrapped in a song reach a large audience. Togarasei noted a popular Nigerian song, ‘Double double’ by Uche that amply captures PG notion on possessing whatever is desirable in large measures.²²⁷ Similarly, Goliama also referred to Rose Muhando, a Tanzanian famous gospel singer who released an album in 2011 with the following words: *Ukitaka magari mazuri onjeni utamu wa Yesu* (if you want posh cars, taste the sweetness of Jesus), *Ukitaka majumba mazuri onjeni utamu wa Yesu* (If you want beautiful houses, taste the sweetness of Jesus).²²⁸ Such lyrics express PGT motif of worldly hope, victory, success, restoration of dignity, and respect. God’s principles on whole-life stewardship for his children are not for them to succumb to the impulse of

²²⁵ Zablon Nthamburi, “Christ as seen by an African: A Christological Quest” in *Jesus in African Christianity: Experimentation and Diversity in African Christology*, J.N.k. Mugambi Laurenti Magesa, eds. (Nairobi, Kenya: Initiative Ltd., 1989), 54.

²²⁶ Amy Stambach, “Spiritual Warfare-101: Preparing the Student for Christian Battle,” *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 39 (2009): 137-144.

²²⁷ Togarasei, 333.

²²⁸ Goliama, 201.

multitudes that accord homage to PGT. Rather, the Scriptures exhort Christians to be humble and acknowledge the Lordship of Christ in their lives.

From the social perspective, Africans venerate their leaders whom they obey without question. To challenge traditional African leaders is culturally indecorous. This African worldview presupposes that PGT leaders and traditional authorities have attained an undisputable status over their subjects.²²⁹ Both PGT and the ATR expect their loyal members to donate sacrificially whatever resources their leaders may demand to reciprocate favour in return.²³⁰ Gifford divulges that the attitude of leadership in ATR mirrors the concept of the “Big man of the big God” of the village chiefs. This concept has been transported in the ‘big man’ (bishop/apostles) of the PG churches. The “Big man” comes with power and wealth, which he may appropriate well or abuse.²³¹ Traditional African culture often attaches value to material and spiritual success, which causes their subjects to venerate them, and pledge their allegiance in all respect. In the African context, money and wealth reflect a symbol of identity. Gifford observes that the trajectory of once humble ‘servants of God’ is today demanding honour and telling people to designate them with titles such as “bishop,” “Archbishops,” “Apostles,” and “Prophets”.²³² Femi Adeleye refers to such preachers as ‘fraudsters’ and ‘tricksters’ who fleece the flock instead of feeding them.²³³ No wonder, some of the Prosperity gossellers

²²⁹ Togarasei, 340.

²³⁰ Ibid., 339.

²³¹ Paul Gifford, “Christianity, Development and Modernity in Africa” reviewed by Chammah J. Kaunda, *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*, Clifton R. Clarke, ed., (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2014): 138.

²³² Paul Gifford, “The Prosperity Gospel in Africa: Expecting Miracles,” *Christian Century* (July 10: 2007): 22.

²³³ Adeleye, 41-49.

move around with bodyguards who protect them. The Church needs to be knowledgeable on the Lordship of Jesus Christ and his matchless gifts to his followers. He is concerned about the holistic welfare of his people and he alone deserves to be given the ultimate honour by the church. Deane declares that Christ has not left Christians comfortless. To those whose hearts are open, trusting, and loving, he will abide with them to be a new and nobler self in them.²³⁴ The Bible does not warrant authority to any man except Christ, who is Lord over creation. Therefore, those who are assuming the place of God are violating the Scriptures and defeating the spirit of whole-life stewardship.

Given this scenario, PG advocates in Africa generally impose autocratic leadership approach where challenging authority means being disrespectful to elders. Adeleye noted that the leaders usually crave for big following, visibility, exposure, influence, and public presence.²³⁵ Such leadership divests church members of the authority to engage in meaningful dialogue to challenge PG conjectures. Some scholars have concluded that prosperity advocates are manoeuvring a sumptuous lifestyle at the expense of their followers wallowing in poverty.

Similarly, PGT and ATR leaders prefer to celebrate their achievements to worshipping God. They connect their value to the wealth and success they have attained in life. Andrew Murray attests that the leaders have pride and avarice that replaces God in their lives.²³⁶ Both the African and PGT concepts of accumulation of wealth are devoid of the servanthood spirit of humility and total surrender to the Lordship of Christ, which

²³⁴ W.J. Deane, in *The Pulpit Commentary*, H.D.M. Spence, and Joseph S. Exell, Vol. 15, Matthew, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 666

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Andrew Murray, *Humility the Journey towards Holiness* (MN: Bethany House, 2001), 16.

is the essence of whole-life stewardship. To dethrone the resurgence of rampant covetousness among Christians, they should live and serve in the light of a life that declares, “Jesus’ humility became our salvation. His salvation is our humility.”²³⁷ However, the confession will be ineffective without a believer first surrendering his life to the Lordship of Christ and the resources God has given to him/her.

PGT and African philosophy converge in advocating for the administration of wealth in advancing the wellbeing of the impoverished. Using the Kenyan traditional spirit of *Harambe*, Christine Schliesser relates it to cultural sensitivity in the PG method of doing ministry. In PGT, preachers engage their followers and empower them with the knowledge to make wealth. They achieve this by helping them to identify, prioritize, and implement sustainable development projects.²³⁸ Leaders mobilize their followers to participate in works of benevolence such as feeding the poor, supporting the elderly, and victims of rape and AIDS in communities. While it is undeniable that many Christians are suffering due to poverty and the temptations to turn to PGT for solutions to life demands are real, God requires his children to maintain integrity and faithfulness.

While others consider PGT as legitimate, logical and therefore plausible, Andreas Heuser reveals that their techniques of empowerment and their attitude in blessing the needy are questionable. Some scholars think that PG champions are not genuinely

²³⁷ Ibid., 17.

²³⁸ Christine Schliesser, “On a Long Neglected Player: The Religious Factor in Poverty Alleviation; the Example of the So-called ‘Prosperity Gospel’ in Africa,” *Exchange* 43, 4 (2014): 350-351. Harambe: refers to a Kenyan philosophy where a community comes together to support those who are needy.

compassionate; they are doing their personal businesses.²³⁹ He continues to say that the methods and the trends of their messages are not based on the values of the Kingdom of God such as justice, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Ro.14:17).²⁴⁰ This is a violation of the Christian understanding of stewardship as revealed in the N.T. AGC stewardship methods need to take into consideration the spirit of love, mercy, selfless service to others in honour of God.

PGT and the African culture put value on hard work. Benezet Bujo's reflection on the African Swahili proverb is instructive. *Mgeni siku mbili: siku ya tatu mpe jembe*, "Treat your guest as a guest for two days, and give him a hoe on the third day."²⁴¹ African traditions do not encourage parasite living. Similarly, David Ogunbile observes that PGT growing churches equip their members with the knowledge of diligent work. Self-employment is encouraged as a better option for sustenance than working as an employee or day labourer. Ogunbile continues to claim that, the PG has contributed to a positive attitudinal change in economic matters. The teaching is "constantly harping on wealth creation, prosperity, they organize workshops, symposiums, talks, and seminars on economic matters, they also led the way in opening a business and investing in different organizations."²⁴² Consequently, churches collect colossal sums of money from their congregants who expect to climb the social ladder of success. When some believers

²³⁹ Andreas Heuser, ed., "Religio-Scapes of the prosperity gospel: An Introduction of Pastures of plenty: Tracing Religio-Scapes of the Prosperity Gospel in Africa and beyond" (Peter Lang, Frankfurt: 2015), 20.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Benezet Bujo, *Foundations of an African Ethic: Beyond the Universal Claims of Western Morality* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001), 137.

²⁴² David Ogunbile, "African Pentecostalism and the Prosperity Gospel," *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*, Clifton R. Clarke, ed., (Oregon: Pickwick Publication, 2014), 45.

work hard and experience material success, they seem to affirm PGT as an authentic doctrine and make it appear as if it is God's method for all the faithful Christians.

2.4.2 PGT and African Spiritual perception of Wealth in AGC

Adherents of the PG and Africans share common spiritual perceptions and views on symbols as a means of acquisition of wealth. In African traditional cultures, symbols are essential realities in the process of communication between God and his people. Eugene Hillman observes that among the Maasai tribe of East Africa, application of spittle and oil from animal fats, gestures, and declaration of words characterize the Maasai rituals through their respected elders. Symbolically, the Maasai elders apply spittle, *inkamulak*, as an efficacious way of enacting divine occurrences and so bring the desired fecund gains.²⁴³ Christine Schliesser also affirms that teachers of the PG encourage their members who seek deliverance from *demons of poverty* to apply holy anointing oil on material items such as mantles, and other physical objects (money, gadgets, vehicles, houses, etc.) to attract blessings.²⁴⁴ Clark notes that PGT followers apply anointing oil and water to invoke the supernatural in warding off the spirit of poverty and decreeing the spirit of prosperity.²⁴⁵ The oil and water are used in juxtaposition with the declaration of theological vocabularies that underpin the spiritual focus of the PG. Clark indicates, "Anointing for breakthrough open doors, open

²⁴³ Eugene Hillman C.S., *Inculturation Applied: Toward an African Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 55.

²⁴⁴ Schliesser, 347

²⁴⁵ Clifton R. Clark, ed., *Pentecostal Theology in Africa* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick, Publications, 2014), 142-144.

heavens”, and “financial independence”.²⁴⁶ Africans value anointing oil as a symbol that carries with it some divine powers to cleanse and avert misfortunes in life.

Another way for acquiring the blessings in the PG churches is by using objects to relate to the paranormal world. Likewise, in the African culture, material objects apply when communicating with the spirit world as Mbiti enlightens. “The diviner or medicine-man provides amounts of mystical power to people in the form of charms, amulets, power, rags, and feathers among others intended to bring a fortune of prosperity”.²⁴⁷ Therefore, those who attach signs and objects to influence prosperity, find common features that shape their favourable response to PGT. Many people in Africa see this acquaintance method with PGT as contextual and thus embrace it.

Additionally, PG apostles prophesy and encourage their congregations to have faith and positive confessions to access the blessings of wealth from God. Debra Mumford asserts, “Prophecy encourages believers to give money cheerfully knowing that God will bless them. For Creflo Dollar, prophecy predicts God’s future actions and calls believers to be obedient to God and assures them that God will bless them.”²⁴⁸ Gifford’s observation at Winners Chapel in Nairobi on New Year’s Day 2007 illuminates. The preacher claimed, “If you want to own ten cars, buy ten stickers, and prophesy over them every day.”²⁴⁹ This attitude of exaggerated use of confession and prophecies to garner

²⁴⁶Ibid.

²⁴⁷ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* 2nd edition (Norfolk: Heinemann, 1999), 193.

²⁴⁸ Debra Mumford J., “Rich and Equal in the Eyes of Almighty God! Creflo Dollar and the Gospel of Racial Reconciliation” *Pneuma* 33 (2011): 234.

²⁴⁹ Paul Gifford, “Expecting Miracles: The prosperity Gospel in Africa,” *Christian Century* (July 10, 2007): 20.

wealth is not enshrined in the Bible and so serious Christians find it strange in light of whole-life stewardship.

Robin Horton narrates that both the PGT and the ATR perceive words to be effectual in causing changes in the spiritual world.²⁵⁰ Likewise, Mumford reports that the proponents of PGT, and in particular Dollar, challenges Christians to increase their faith by meditating and confessing the Scriptures.²⁵¹ Scriptures and Christian evangelical traditions affirm that there is no corroboration between the Christian faith and the confessions of Scriptures concerning their potency to influence the supernatural to manifest material wealth. This notion of confessing words to manipulate deities feature prominently among African societies that believe in magic. John Noss recognizes that world religions use “utterance of set words to bend the spiritual powers of the world to man’s will.”²⁵² Cope provides a sobering reminder that “Words have power, but they are not the power of control; they are the power of influence”²⁵³ towards obedience in Christ. Therefore, such misuse of Scripture undermines the place of true understanding of God’s faith and ossifies genuine worshipers from faithful stewardship.

Horton acknowledges that there exists in an African assumption that the power of words, uttered under appropriate circumstances have the potency to produce the desired outcome.²⁵⁴ Africans regard appropriate confession of words and their implications as essential in influencing both their spiritual and economic blessings. Hillman attests that

²⁵⁰ Robin Horton, *Patterns of Thought in Africa and the West* (Cambridge: University press, 1995), 223-228.

²⁵¹ Romans 10:17, Hebrews 11:1, James 2:14-17, Mark 4:2, Hebrews 4:2, and Mt. 1:20.

²⁵² John Noss, *Man’s Religion* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1963), 20.

²⁵³ Cope, 7.

²⁵⁴ Horton, 223.

Africans, who want to experience financial break-through and other blessings, should perpetuate the invocations of breathing out of words.²⁵⁵ However, to those who understand the essence of whole-life stewardship, they advance virtues of work ethics and not a mere confession of words.

PG messages on wealth amalgamate with syncretistic spiritual tendencies and interfere with whole life stewardship. PGT and African traditional concepts of wealth have spread through media of mass communications such as TV broadcasts, radio programs, and social media. Jacob Olupona said that both visual and social media creates online cyberspace worshipers who join in marathon daily, weekly, and monthly. They offer worship and “prayers that address existential and daily concerns of devotees.”²⁵⁶ While it is appropriate to deal with such concerns, preachers should depend on the Bible and not human philosophies. Heuser observed that the TBN network that has popularised joint conferences and seminars, teaching on business, fellowships, founding independent ministries, and mass crusades to promote PG. This promotes the interchange of ideas, which enables PGT preachers to group themselves thus experiencing a breakthrough on an international scale.²⁵⁷ However, the promotion has not helped the church to realize discipline and spiritual growth required of those who understand biblical stewardship. Ignorant people who imbibe PGT from the TV preachers are not critical enough to discern the sources of their miracles. Thus, those who are ignorant of God’s word resort

²⁵⁵ Hillman, 58-62.

²⁵⁶ Jacob K. Olupona, *African Religions: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: University Press, 2014), 121.

²⁵⁷ Andreas Heuser, “Charting African Prosperity Gospel economies,” *HTS Theologise Studies/Theological Studies* 72 no, 1 (2016): 382.

to PGT for solutions instead of seeking God's Word on biblical understanding and practice on stewardship.

Inevitably, as Nelus Niemandt notes, "Church members in the prosperity gospel movement look up to their spiritual leaders as liberators and hope-givers."²⁵⁸ As a result, followers venerate their leaders who give them hope beyond their wildest dreams. According to Jacqueline Bass, PGT teaches that the poor are either in a "lifestyle of poverty" or under a "curse of poverty."²⁵⁹ This point is congruous with the ATR paradigm that believes that special elders called medicine men own supernatural abilities to deal with black magic. According to Gehman, the disillusioned who are seeking remedies accord the medicine man of the African community the great respect."²⁶⁰ Therefore, because of PGT's adaptability and its appeal to the African culture, many people have continued to respect and follow "the anointed man of God" for miracles and wonders. This is syncretism and the African church should be concerned about it to save the future of its Christian faith.

2.5 Principles of Whole-Life Stewardship

Stewardship is a mandate from God to his people to carry out His mission here on earth. Whole-life stewardship encompasses every aspect of a Christian's engagement and takes into account the attitude, the purpose, and the character of God in the

²⁵⁸ Nelus Niemandt, "The Prosperity Gospel, the Decolonisation of Theology, and the abduction of Missionary Imagination," www.missionalia.journals.ac.za | <http://dx.doi.org/10.7832/45-3-199>. (Retrieved on 26/03/2019).

²⁵⁹ Jacqueline Bass, "Things Fall Apart: Faith, Prosperity and Division within the African American Community" (Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science, Diss., University of California, 2015), 5.

²⁶⁰ Gehman, 69.

management process of his resources. For this study, whole-life stewardship refers to the Christian discipleship that embraces kingdom principles related to economics, material possessions, time, gifts, and abilities. The following discourse articulates biblical principles on whole-life stewardship that are imperative for one to appropriate God's gifts for his (God's) honour and glory.

Whole-life stewardship acknowledges God as the creator, and therefore the owner of all things. God has entrusted humanity with the responsibility of managing his creation. According to Walter Elwell, "The idea that man is a steward of God in his relation to the world and his own life is inherent in the creation story of Genesis 1-3 in which he is appointed lord of all things except God himself."²⁶¹ Anne Bradley avows that God's call to stewardship began from Genesis 1:28 when God commanded humanity to multiply and fill the earth.²⁶² Gregory Crofford asserts that God owns the world, and he has loaned it to his people to be its custodians.²⁶³ God expects his people to work hard. Charles Canter indicates that he mandates humankind to care for his resources and to use them according to his will.²⁶⁴ This provides insight on how God expects his children to respond to the sacred responsibility of stewardship.

Whole-life stewardship acknowledges that Christians should work hard and serve as God intended. Anne Bradley avers that good stewardship requires intentionality and

²⁶¹ Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Michigan: Baker Academic, 2003), 1149.

²⁶² Anne Bradley, "Whole-life Stewardship: A Call to Greatness," *Faith, Work and Economics*, www.tifwe.org. (Retrieved from worldwide Web 10/02/2019).

²⁶³ Gregory Crofford, "Theology in Overalls: Where Theology Meets Every Day Life," <https://gregorycrofford.com/author/gregorycrofford/> (Accessed 13/03/2019).

²⁶⁴ Charles W. Carter, *A Contemporary Wesleyan Theology* (Ohio: Schmuel Publishing Company, 2009), 162.

effectiveness to what God assigns his children.²⁶⁵ God expects Christians to work hard and take care of their needs and those of others (Eph. 4:28). However, he does not expect them to overwork or to sloth about as both of them are equally condemned in the Bible.²⁶⁶ Thomas adds that to be a good steward does not necessitate one living in constant hurrying, bustling, and being on a race.²⁶⁷ Christians should not succumb to too much work and disregard God's purpose which is to "Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness" (Mat. 6:33).

Whole-life Stewardship takes into consideration the right attitude that pleases God as articulated in the N.T. books.²⁶⁸ Paul wrote to the church, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving (Col. 3:23-24)."²⁶⁹ Even when it infringes on spiritual matters, Christians should incorporate faithfulness to the ministry of the gospel. Fisher pointed out that the N.T. gives a broader perspective on Stewardship, which encompasses administration of the spiritual gifts especially the preaching of the gospel.²⁷⁰ Anne Bradley concurs that "By embracing the true call to whole-life stewardship, individuals can achieve greatness and fulfil the biblical call to bring about flourishing."²⁷¹ Christopher Bound asserts that stewardship calls for zero tolerance on selfish expectation in return for the blessings of

²⁶⁵ Anne Bradley, "Whole-life Stewardship: A Call to Greatness," *Faith, Work and Economics*, 2014 www.tifwe.org (Retrieved from worldwide Web 06/03/2019).

²⁶⁶ See Pr.. 6:6-11; 10:26; 13:4; 12:25-26; 22:13; 23:21; 26:13-16.

²⁶⁷ Thomas, 1946, 56.

²⁶⁸ See Ac. 20:34; 1Th. 2:9; 2Th. 3:6-12.

²⁶⁹ See Col. 3:23-24; Ro. 14:7-8; 1Co. 10:31.

²⁷⁰ F. L. Fisher, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Michigan: Baker Academic, 2003), 1150.

²⁷¹ Anne Bradley, 1.

God.²⁷² The African church needs to redefine its teaching on whole-life stewardship based on authentic theology of selfless service to the Lord.

Whole-life stewardship involves the right relationship with God and fellow human beings. Powers alludes to this when he suggests that stewardship exposes one's heart condition and their relationship with God.²⁷³ Christians should manage God's resources out of the love and commitment that ensues from the heart of gratitude to him. God is never delighted when his children squander resources for their personal gratification. Atkinson clearly states that wealth and possessions should not be an idol but rather, a means to do God's will.²⁷⁴

Whole-life stewardship takes into consideration the outward service to God and humanity in light of eternal perspective. Jesus taught that "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Lk. 12:34). In Luke 12:33, Jesus said, "Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, treasures in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys." These verses presuppose God's heart for all his people and their response to them represents what they worship. Thus, the essence of stewardship as revealed in these passages denotes love towards God as inherent in a life of compassion. In his teachings, Christ alerted his disciples about the peril to the allurements of material wealth and its negative implications to human soul and relationships. The book of Matthew 6:21 says, "Where your treasure is there your heart will be." God calls his children to examine

²⁷²Christopher Bounds and Lo Jim, *Unholiness: Overcoming the Forces that Attack Your Soul* (IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2015), 30.

²⁷³Power, 133.

²⁷⁴Atkinson, 814-815.

where their personal allegiances are, whether on earth or in heaven. Today, many Christians are trusting in wealth and not in God. Bruce Ben laments that current church giving in many evangelical churches is worrying.²⁷⁵ John and Sylvia Ronsvalle say that many Christians are accumulating their income and caring less about supporting God's work.²⁷⁶ The call for believers is to demonstrate their gratitude to God by being good stewards.

Whole-life stewardship derives its essence in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ at the cross. Rolston observes that when believers yield themselves to the Lordship of Christ, they must seek to make their wealth in a way that pleases him.²⁷⁷ They should demonstrate their trust and faithfulness to God by giving their tithes and offerings. Believers should fund the ministry of God as much as they can without confining themselves to tithing. Rolston argues that tithing is actually an expression of the least appreciation a Christian can offer to God.²⁷⁸ Ben concurs with Rolston, "It would also be a mistake to say that God only desires ten percent. The tithe is where one begins from in giving to God" but "it is not where one should end."²⁷⁹ This denotes that Christians who abdicate tithing and rendering their offerings to God portray self-centredness and independence. They rob God of his glory and delude themselves that the gifts they own

²⁷⁵ Bruce Ben A., *Increasing Financial Stewardship in the Church of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2007), 126.

²⁷⁶ John Ronsvalle and Ronsvalle Sylvia, *Behind the Stained Glass Windows* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 38.

²⁷⁷ Holmes Rolston, *Stewardship in the New Testament Church* (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1959), 73.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Ben, 126.

are their personal resources. Thus, to Thomas Oden, Christians should place their trust in God and not focus on what attracts the flesh and appeals to the eyes.²⁸⁰

To Christians, whole-life stewardship should entail being accountable to God and others. Believers should strive for excellence rather than mediocrity (Gal. 6:4). Oden notes how John Wesley taught his audience on the need for Christians to be good stewards by being accountable to their leaders. He elucidated that the use of physical resources and money was analogous to the economy of time. He warned people against the dangers of not redeeming the time as this tended to limit productivity in one's Christian faith.²⁸¹ In this regard, Luke 12:24 states, "Everyone to whom much is given, of him will much be required; and of him to whom men commit much they will demand the more." Hence, to neglect the application of God-given talents and abilities is a serious matter and church leaders like pastors should champion the need for Christians to understand and use their special abilities.²⁸² Several passages in the Bible demonstrate the seriousness God attaches to resources he renders to his people. Matthew chapter 25 and Luke 19 reveal that faith in Christ means that Christians should express stewardship through concern for others. Robert Mounce contends that God promises to reward the faithful stewards but punish the disobedient.²⁸³

²⁸⁰Thomas C. Oden, *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1972), 70-78.

²⁸¹Ibid., 93-100.

²⁸²J. C. Thomas, "Overtly and Capitalism in West Africa: A Christian Perspective," *Ogbomosho Journal of Theology*, Vol. XIV (2009): 53.

²⁸³Robert H. Mounce, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series: Matthew* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1991), 236.

The attitude of many Christians ought to demonstrate a commitment to proper management of time. Anne Bradley states the seriousness of the gift of time and the need to maximize it. “Time is the most precious of our scarce resources. No matter how much material wealth one has, he or she only has twenty-four hours per day, and no one knows how many days he or she has on this earth”.²⁸⁴ Time is a gift from God and requires an appropriate application. David Atkinson asserts that the focus of congregational stewardship should entail the giving of time.²⁸⁵ Christians should budget their quality time in attending the church worship services, Bible studies, prayer meetings, evangelism, men and women meeting and Sunday school programs. They can wisely use their time to participate in the choir, clean the church, and usher. Besides, they could also participate in starting home cell groups, visiting the sick and praying with them. Furthermore, they could engage in giving hope to the discouraged by serving their communities in various practical ways.

Rolston asserts that God gives his children time for both private and public worship.²⁸⁶ John Wesley expounded this concept when he taught that God expects his people to work and earn, have personal devotion time, and spend moments with family members. Christians should also spare time for enough rest.²⁸⁷ Therefore, committed Christians in Africa have a unique opportunity to demonstrate the right implementation of time through prudence, integrity, and service to the Lord and others.

²⁸⁴ Anne Bradley, “Whole-life Stewardship: A Call to Greatness,” *Faith, Work and Economics*, www.tifwe.org. (Retrieved from worldwide Web 06/03/2019).

²⁸⁵ Rolston, 814-815.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 72.

²⁸⁷ Oden, 93-104.

On material wealth, the Bible reveals that possessions are inherently good. Corbett and Fikkert assert that wealth accumulation is beneficial for survival, economic investments, and savings. Christians should develop a positive attitude and self-discipline when God blesses them with wealth. Steve Corbett rightly observes that it is the wrong attitude and methods of acquiring wealth besides its selfish application in a believer's life that features prominently as evil.²⁸⁸ Wrong understanding of its acquisition and dissemination can lead to the temptation of pride, selfishness, greed and other vices that can impinge on a Christian's spiritual life. One must depend on the Holy Spirit to guide him/her on the use of material resources. Corbett and Fikkert illuminate on the attitude one should possess when dealing with both the rich and the poor. They insist that it is inappropriate to judge them based on their economic status. Christians should avoid romanticizing both material wealth and poverty as common among PG followers in Kampala.²⁸⁹ In addition, they insinuate that, although the Bible majorly singles out the economically poor as needing attention (Ac. 6:1-7), that does not signify that they occupy a more unique place in the heart of God than the rich do.²⁹⁰

Another principle that defines whole-life stewardship is the assurance that God has promised to supply the requirements of his children in Christ Jesus. He has promised to provide our needs when we ask him.²⁹¹ He will never forsake his children but care for their needs regardless of their financial status (Ro. 8:28-29). Christians should, therefore

²⁸⁸ Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty without Hurting the Poor and Yourself* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2009), 188.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ See, Phil. 4:19; Matt. 6:25-34; Ps. 33:18-19; Luke. 12:29-31; and 2Cor. 9:8.

be contented and grateful to God instead of pursuing wealth as their goal in life (James 1:9-10). They need to check their desires in light of God's Word to see if they are contented and grateful to the Lord or not.

For proper management of the church finances, the local churches should guide its members on the collections. The church should encourage giving as planned by the local leadership to avoid being heretical (1Co. 16:1-3; Ac. 11:27-30). Some foreseen needs and projects that emerge frequently, and require money should be assigned as the church deems indispensable (Ac. 11:27-30). Currently, many people are reluctant to give to the sound Bible teaching churches because they misunderstand them as involved in the business of making money at the expense of spiritual nourishment of the church members. This has mired the grace of giving and the accompanying blessings of stewardship in church life.

Ultimately everything belongs to God; resources are placed in our care to use as God sees fit; God desires that we use these resources to meet our necessities and to help others in need: and thus, spending resources on luxuries for ourselves while others remain in need is robbing God.²⁹²

Wesley's interpretation of how Christians should demonstrate whole-life stewardship provides a classic ideal of effective use of God's resources.

2.5 Summary of Review of Literature and Research Gap

PGT claims that all faithful believers are entitled to MP through "sowing seeds" besides tithing to the "anointed man of God" who offers special prayers to those who

²⁹²Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace; John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville Tennessee: Kingswood Books, 1994), 244.

desire wealth. Consequently, the proponents allege that their doctrine elevates the social and economic standards of their members, thereby promoting hope in a wealthy God. Besides, PG promotes their doctrine of faith to positive confessions, which gullible seekers consider as sanctified imaginations that God honours with material riches. Thus, adherents of the gospel place temporal material things above spiritual blessings. However, for many evangelical scholars, PG bases its tenets on the wrong premises and fails to meet the biblical standards of whole-life stewardship. They accuse PGT advocates of manipulating their followers who remain poor while they live lavishly. The proponents distract people from God's truth, which is the centre of whole-life stewardship. They, therefore, become the object of worship and not God, a factor that obscures the relationship in Christ, which is the source of the true spiritual prosperity and from where Christian stewardship commences.

While other Christians believe that God may bless believers with material riches, PGT misrepresents the gospel by excluding the sufferings and difficulties of this world. The fact that it denies a life of contentment but encourages amassing temporal and not eternal blessings, many evangelicals consider it as a false tenet that contravenes stewardship. In moments of material lack, God has promised his help, presence, and love for all who trust in him. Thus to both the rich and the poor, there is a need for an intentional commitment to the whole-life stewardship which is contained in the confidence believers have through faith in Christ Jesus.

The ATR and PGT share many common philosophies such as God being involved in the wholeness of the life of his people. God is rich and powerful and he takes care of

both the physical and the social needs of those who trust him. He delights in blessing those who please him but curses the disobedient with sufferings and poverty. Thus, to those who believe in God, poverty is evil and God desires to eliminate it from Christians. Rather, it should be associated with Spiritual powers such as evil spirits and demons that oppress sinners. These powers may at times influence wealth among some community members through special leaders who manipulate the forces to unleash blessings. Communities consider the leaders who control such powers as mediators, counselors, liberators, and hope givers. However, the understanding of PGT and ATR on the source of wealth and its use differ from that of the biblical teaching on whole-life stewardship.

The biblical concept of wealth reveals that material possessions are intrinsically good and that God's people should acquire them through hard work that honours God. Those whom God has blessed with wealth should know that it belongs to him and for his glory. Nevertheless, for those living in material lack, they should remain faithful to the Lord and intentionally commit themselves to whole-life stewardship. The devotion to stewardship finds its motivation in the love of God as revealed in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. It is characterized by the passion to serve and bless others in anticipation for eternal rewards. PG on faith and wealth fail to justify why many faithful people in the Bible were poor. They cannot offer biblical discipleship to the poor Christians to be responsible stewards with the gifts God has entrusted to them.

The literature on PGT revealed that PGT might have some ethical, economic, psychological and sociological benefits. However, the doctrine mirrors irresponsible exegesis, which distorts the biblical truth on whole-life stewardship. The gap that exists is

the failure to find scholarly resources that are hermeneutically relevant to assist members of AGC to counter PGT and embrace whole-life stewardship. The research will suggest ways on how AGC can mitigate PGT misrepresentations and help its members augment its whole-life stewardship.

The biblical theology on literature revealed that wealth is a gift from God and he determines whom to bless. The dearth that exists is the absence of relevant knowledge to guide AGC Christians of different economic status on how to engage in whole-life stewardship in a manner that glorifies God. The researcher anticipates enlightening AGCs and other Christians on the need to remain faithful to the Lord regardless of one's social and economic standings.

Lastly, literature exposed fundamental compatibility between the ATR, African cultural concepts, and PGT that are influencing material possessions in the context of AGC in the Kampala area. The deficiency that remains is how to assist AGC members whose essential religious and cultural values overlap with PGT. The research will mitigate the gap by collecting data from AGC members and thereby providing relevant knowledge on whole-life stewardship in seminars and conferences.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodological steps that clarify the research site, target population, sample size, sampling techniques, and data collection methods and instruments. Furthermore, it examined instrument validity and reliability, data analysis and presented the research ethical considerations for the study.

3.2 Research Design

The study used a cross-sectional survey research design. John Creswell attests that this design is essential because it collects and analyses data to make inferences about the population of interest at a specific point in time.²⁹³ Triangulation of research methods was employed which involved collecting, analyzing, and integrating qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative approach enabled the examination of the perception of the people on the prosperity gospel teaching, and whole-life stewardship in the Africa Gospel Church (AGC).

3.3 Research Site

Creswell says that the study research site is the physical setting where the researcher carries out the study to reveal the demographical information of the research respondents.²⁹⁴ The study was in seven (7) AGCs, Kampala area. The researcher selected the site because of its cosmopolitan nature, the area where PG phenomenon is rampant,

²⁹³ John Creswell, W., *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2003), 16.

²⁹⁴ Creswell (2014), 116.

and many people are likely to embrace the teaching. These selected sites included: AGC Kisugu, AGC Katale, AGC Nakyigalala, AGC Banda and AGC Bukasa. Others were AGC Masese and AGC Bugiri. The sites allowed identification of the information-rich cases.

3.4 Target Population

Obwatho underscores a target population as an entire group a researcher wants to study.²⁹⁵ The study population comprised of different categories of church members in AGC. The study considered seven churches from the Kampala area, which comprised of almost 923 church members. The study segmented the population into three categories, which included the lay members, the lay leaders, and the pastors.

3.5 Study Sample

3.5.1 Study sample size

The researcher distributed 216 questionnaires to members from the seven AGCs in Kampala Area. The members had demonstrated their faithfulness in church attendance over a period of at least three years. Fourteen (14) more questionnaires were conducted with AGC pastors (2 from each local church) and 49 AGC lay leaders who participated in the FGD. These lay leaders actively participate in different leadership roles in AGC. FGD in each of AGC numbered seven people.

²⁹⁵Simon Obwatho, *Academic Research Writing: The Logical Sequence* (Kenya, Nairobi: Starbright, 2014), 60.

The study used Yamane Taro sample size formula to calculate the sample size.²⁹⁶

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where;

n = Sample size

N = total population

e² = the errors term (at 95% confidence interval, e = 0.05).

Therefore,

$$n = (923) \div (1 + (923 \times 0.05^2))$$

$$n = 279.06$$

$$n = 279.1$$

Table 3.1: Sample Categories

Sample Categories	Sample Size	Actual sample
Lay members	216	214
Lay Leaders	49	49
Pastors	14	14
Total Number of Respondents	279	277

3.5.2 Sampling Procedure

The study employed both probability and non-probability sampling techniques such as simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques respectively in order to provide those who participated in the study. Ranjit Kumar argues that the purposive

²⁹⁶ Taro Yamane, *Analysis of Sample Size in Consumer Survey* (Poland: GFK Polonia, 2013), 8. http://ec.europa.eu/.../surveys/.../metadata_pl_all_en.pdf (Retrieved on 10/08/2017).

sample technique helps to select respondents.²⁹⁷ Purposive sampling applied to pastors in AGC because of the relevant information they had towards the study.

Simple random sampling technique gives each respondent an equal chance to participate in the study. According to Creswell, simple random sampling is a sampling technique where the researcher selects a group of respondents (a sample) for study from a larger group (a population).²⁹⁸ The study collected data from approximately thirty-nine respondents from each of the seven churches. The pastors in these respective seven churches requested the congregation members who had stayed for at least three years in the church to remain after the Sunday worship service. The pastors introduced the researcher to the congregation who informed them about the research and sought their informed consent to participate in the study. The pastor assigned each lay church member with a specific number. The numbers were written on pieces of paper, placed in the basket and reshuffled. Then the researcher picked the papers at random without replacement until 31 respondents were selected.

3.6 Data Collection

The researcher used 230 questionnaires for both lay members and pastors. FGDs applied to the 49 AGC lay leaders to obtain qualitative data. He also used telephone calls to collaborate with pastors and research assistants in arranging for meeting venues, a convenient time for the meetings, and facilitation of refreshments during data collection.

²⁹⁷ Ranjit Kumar, *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*, 4th ed. (London: SAGE Publication, 2014), 379.

²⁹⁸ Creswell (2003), 185.

3.6.1 Data Collection Instruments

The study used a semi-structured questionnaire to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. A questionnaire refers to a data collection instrument that the study distributes to participants to solicit for their honest responses. The semi-structured questionnaire is a “combination of both structured and unstructured segments within the same questionnaire that is designed in a way where a close-ended question is followed by an open probe for further explanation.”²⁹⁹ The questionnaires used the Likert scales of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree and Strongly Agree to allow respondents to answer each prompt research statement. The study further obtained Qualitative data from the questionnaire by allowing the respondents to give their comments in spaces provided after each prompt statement to yield rich and more genuine responses from the participants.

The study further employed the FGDs. According to Coolican, FGD yields richer perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes from a larger number of participants. The FGDs generated a richer understanding of Christians’ views on PGT, biblical theology of material prosperity in relation to whole-life stewardship, and cultural concepts that accommodate popular prosperity gospel teaching in AGC.

3.6.2 Pilot Testing of Research Instruments

The research instruments were pilot tested at Kisigula Reformed Church where ten (10) lay church members and four (4) pastors responded to the study questionnaires

²⁹⁹ Ranjit Kumar, *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*. 4th ed. (London: SAGE Publication, 2014), 399.

while seven (7) lay leaders participated in FGD to ensure that the instruments collect valid data.

3.6.3 Instrument Reliability

Reliability of the research instrument is the extent to which the instrument produces consistent results. Reliability of the instrument was determined by carrying out a pilot study. According to Mugenda and Mugenda, a pilot study is a small-scale version or trial run in preparation for the major study.³⁰⁰ The researcher selected and asked eight (8) research experts to comment on the clarity, biases and ambiguities in the questionnaires and the FGD question guides.

3.6.4 Instrument Validity

Instrument validity is the degree by which a research instrument tool excels in presenting what the study intended to present and perform what it had to perform.³⁰¹ The researcher used questionnaires to collect data and tested the validity of this instrument by first giving it out to the Africa Nazarene University research supervisors and afterward lecturers at the Reformed Theological College (in Kampala) reviewed its applicability.

3.6.5 Data collection procedures

The researcher with the help of six research assistants sought the informed consent of the respondents who signed the formal consent forms certified by the National Council of Science and Technology, Uganda. The research assistants administered questionnaires to the pastors and the lay church members. He also used pen and paper to

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 95.

³⁰¹ Olive M. Mugenda and Abel Mugenda, G. *Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (Nairobi, Kenya: Act Press, 2003), 57.

inscribe since they were less costly and simple to be administered by the research assistants. FGDs were moderated by the research assistants, and the responses were captured by audio recorders and note taking.

3.7 Data Processing and Analysis

Data processing and analysis is the systematic arrangement and synthesis of the research information to make sense and it allows the study to generate patterns, trends, and test relationships that exist between the hypotheses.³⁰² The study used Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS version 25) software application to code, enter and analyze data, and to present results in form of descriptive statistics (bar graphs, frequency tables, and pie charts) to recapitulate data. The researcher tested the hypotheses using a linear regression technique.

3.8 Legal and Ethical Considerations

According to Creswell, ethical considerations are integral to the researcher because they relate to all phases of the research process. They highlight the researcher's moral integrity and responsibility for academic, political, and social obligations.³⁰³ The researcher acquired an introduction letter from the Department of School of Religion and Christian Ministries of the Africa Nazarene University (ANU), which he presented to the two Ugandan government institutions of higher learning, Makerere University School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, and Uganda National Council for Science and Technology. They approved the study and issued research consent forms that the respondents signed before conducting the study. The researcher certified that the

³⁰² Ibid., 145.

³⁰³ Creswell (2003), 66-67.

participants understood the research purpose and the objectives before the data collection. He sought the permission of the participants and assured them of confidentiality during and after the research. He further observed his academic obligations as well as respected the participants' rights.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter includes presentation, analysis, and interpretation of findings based on the specific objectives of the study. It stretches from the introduction, followed by the response rate, demographic data of the respondents and descriptive statistics interlinked with qualitative results.

The results were presented on the objectives; to explore the degree to which the members of AGC have imbibed the popular claim of prosperity gospel; to examine the biblical/theology of material prosperity in relation to whole-life stewardship, and to determine how cultural concepts of material prosperity in Africa accommodate prosperity teaching.

Descriptive statistics include the numbers, tables, charts, and graphs used to describe, organize, summarize and present raw data. Descriptive statistics examine measures of central propensity and dispersion.³⁰⁴ Descriptive analysis of the results is composed of information on demographic data of the respondents.

4.2 Response Rate

In the study, the researcher used both the FGD and self-administered questionnaires (to both the pastors and the lay church members) to aid in the collection of data. From the results returned, out of 216 questionnaires issued for lay members, 214

³⁰⁴ Sarah Boslaugh and Paul Andrew Watters, *Descriptive Statistics and Graphics – Statistics in a Nutshell* <https://www.oreilly.com/library/view/statistics-in-a/9780596510497/ch04.html> (Retrieved from Worldwide Web on 24/04/2019).

questionnaires were returned fully completed, constituting 99.0% return, while 2 questionnaires were not returned, constituting to 1.0%. The researcher also used 14 questionnaires to collect data from 14 AGC pastors. The questionnaires were all returned resulting in a 100% response. According to Andrea Fryrear, a response rate of above 80% for a survey is appropriate and therefore reliable.³⁰⁵ The descriptive statistics obtained were as below:

Table 4.1: Response Rate of Sample Respondents

Tool	Planned/Scheduled	Received/Held	Percentage (%)
Questionnaires	230 (216 Lay Church Members plus 14 Pastors)	228 (Lay members 214, and pastors 14)	99.1%
FGD questions	49 (Lay Leaders) for 7 FGDs	49	100%
Total	279	277	99.3%

Table 4.1 above shows the response rate obtained from the questionnaires and FGD. From the data captured, the study obtained a response rate of above 99%. A response rate above 80% is good enough to represent a survey.

4.3 Social-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic profile describes the basic characteristics of the sampled respondents in terms of their gender, age, income, educational attainment, among others in such a manner that allows easier segmentation or social grouping. While these parameters vary in each study, those characteristics employed in the study are critical to clientele living conditions of the respondents selected for the study. Bio-data findings

³⁰⁵ Andrea Fryrear, (July 27th, 2015) “What is a Good Survey Response,”
Rate<https://www.surveygizmo.com/resources/blog/survey-response-rates/>.(Retreaved from Worldwide Web. 24/04/2019).

discussed in this section reflect the responses obtained from the field findings on demographic characteristics on gender, age, and education levels as explained below:

4.3.1 Gender of the Study Respondents

Figure 4. 1: Gender of AGC Lay Members

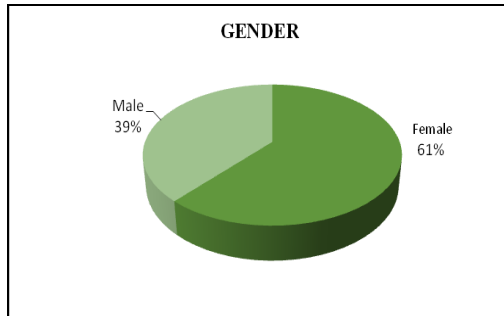
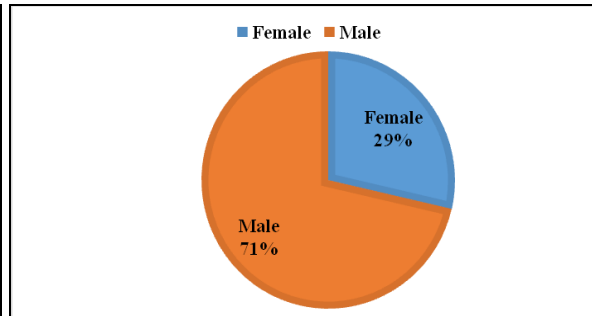


Figure 4.2: Gender of AGC Pastors



Study findings in Figure 4.1 reveal that amongst the lay church members, 61.5% (133) were female and 38.5% (83) were male respondents. According to study findings, most of the respondents were females (61.5%). Findings in Figure 4.2 reveal that most of the church pastors were male (71%) as compared to female (29%). This is in line with the findings by Sherilyn who found out that the biggest proportion of Christians in most churches in Africa is women.³⁰⁶ However, having reasonable participation of men in the study made it balanced in relation to gender. Since both male and female respondents participated in the study, the findings can easily be trusted as unbiased.

³⁰⁶ Sherilyn M., "Faith Sample Post: Challenges of Professional Christian Women," *Verblio* (May, 3, 2018) <https://www.verblio.com/blog/faith-sample-post-challenges-professional-christian-women> (Retrieved from the Worldwide web 20/04/2019).

4.3.2 Age of the Respondents

Figure 4.3: Age of Lay Leaders

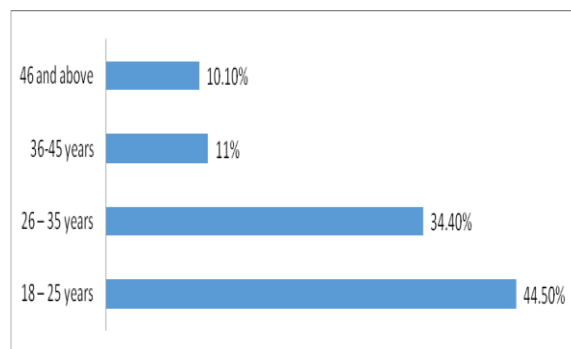
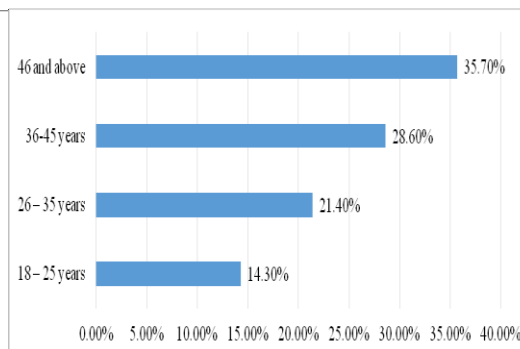


Figure 4.4: Age of Pastors



The study captured the ages of respondents as actual distinct values. However, it grouped age data in the analysis for concise understanding and presentation. The findings indicated that 18-25 constituted the largest percentage of respondents, who were 96 (44%). Those who were in an age group of 26-35 were 74 (34.3%), 24 (11%) were in the age group of 36-45 years, and 46 years and above age group were 22 (10%). Seventy-nine percent of the respondents in the study formed the majority since 70% of the Ugandan population is aged below 35 years.³⁰⁷

Study findings in Figure 4.4 reveal that 36% (5) of the total respondents (pastors) were aged 46 years and above, 29% (4) were aged between 36 and 45 years, 21% (3) were aged between 26 and 35 years, while 14% (2) were aged 18-25 years. Findings showed that respondents (pastors) were old enough and had the experience to add needed information to the study.

³⁰⁷ “Demographic and Health Survey,” (Rockville: Maryland, 2016) .
https://www.ubos.org/onlinefiles/uploads/ubos/pdf%20documents/Uganda_DHS_2016_KIR.pdf (Retrieved on 03/05/2019).

4.3.3 Level of Education of the Respondents

Figure 4.5: Education of Lay Members

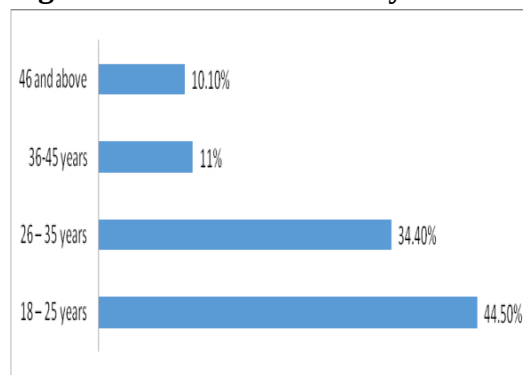
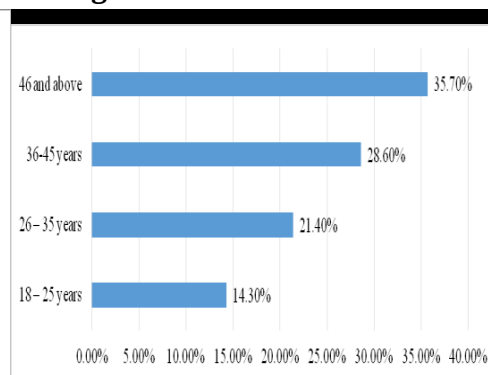


Figure 4.6: Education of Pastors



In the study, all the respondents at one time attended formal schooling, which helped them to grasp the ideals required for the study. The data in Figure 4.5 reveals that 36% (78) of the total respondents had a high school education, 32% (69) college/university education, 30% (64) had a primary school education, while 2% (5) had other qualifications including masters, vocational qualifications among others. This implied that though most of the church members had not acquired higher education, however, they had attained some level of education that enabled to understand the influence of PGT, biblical/theological knowledge on possessions, and their own African cultures. Figure 4.6 reveals that 43% (6) of the pastors had high school level of education, 29% (4) had college/University, while 29% (4) had primary school level of education.

4.3.4 Monthly Income for Lay Church Members and Pastors

Figure 4.7: Income of AGC Lay Members

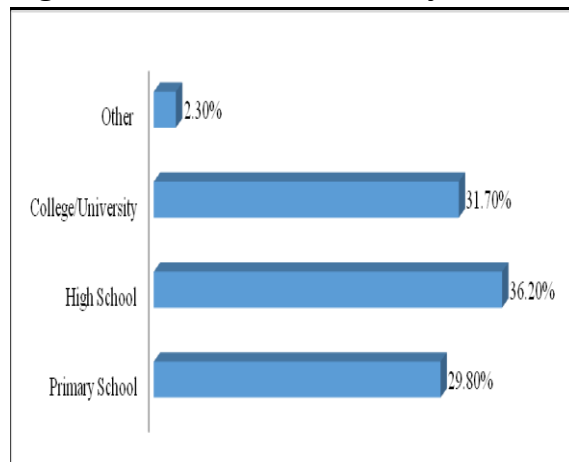


Figure 4.8: Income of AGC Pastors

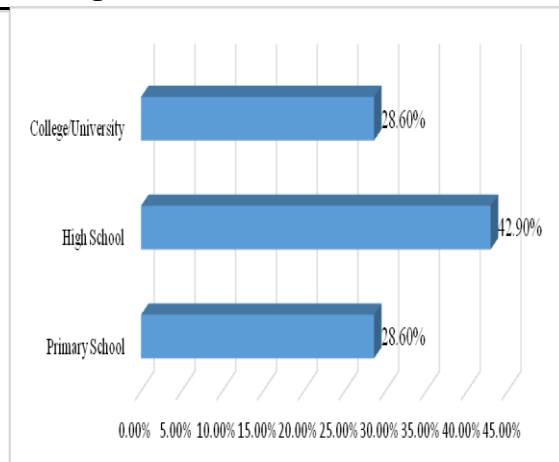


Figure 4.7 show that 71% (153) of lay church members earn less than UGX 190,000 per month, 26% (55) earn between UGX 193,800 and UGX 570,000, 3% (7) earn between UGX 573,800 and UGX 1,330,000. One percent earns between UGX 1,333,800 and UGX 1,900,000 per month. Findings indicate that all respondents earn income per month hence they are relevant to contribute to the investigation on prosperity and stewardship of AGC.

Figure 4.8 indicates that 57% (8) of the pastors earn between UGX 193,800 and UGX 570,000, 21% (3) earn between UGX 573,800 and UGX 1,330,000, and 21% (3) earn less than UGX 190,000. Findings show that all pastors earn some money, therefore, suitable to participate in the study.

4.4 Presentation of Research Analysis, Findings, and Interpretation

This section comprises of the detailed findings from the field of study using both the FGD and questionnaire methods. They are descriptively presented in the study based on the specific objectives, which are Popular PGT on wealth, biblical theology of

material prosperity on whole-life stewardship, and cultural concepts that accommodate popular PGT in AGC, Kampala Uganda.

4.4.1 Popular Prosperity Gospel Teaching on Wealth

Findings in this section are in response to the first research question; what is the degree to which members of the Africa Gospel Churches have imbibed the popular claim of prosperity Gospel. This section provides the data results and analysis in Tables 4.2 – 4.6.

4.4.1.1 Perception of AGC on wealth as taught by PGT

Table 4.2: Perception of AGC on wealth

Assessment Areas for Popular Claims of Prosperity Gospel	Percentage/ Frequency				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
Born again Christians are children of God and are entitled to material wealth	10.6% (23)	17.9% (39)	6.4% (14)	28.4% (62)	36.7% (80)
God gets disappointed when his children do not prosper	10.6% (24)	17.9% (40)	6.4% (27)	28.4% (54)	36.7% (73)
It is wrong to preach on material riches as rights of God's children	22.5% (49)	22.9% (50)	10.6% (23)	22.9% (50)	21.1% (46)
The good news for the poor in the Bible includes material wealth	21.1% (46)	24.3% (53)	14.7% (32)	22% (48)	17.9% (39)
Living an extravagant life is a sign of success	40.4% (88)	25.7% (56)	9.2% (20)	11.5% (25)	13.3% (29)

KEY: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA)

The Table 4.2 reveals that 37% (73) of the total respondents strongly agreed that born again Christians are children of God and are entitled to material wealth, 28% (62) agreed, 18% (39) disagreed, 11% (23) strongly disagreed while 6% (14) neutral. Majority of the respondents (65%) agreed that born-again Christians are children of God who are entitled to material wealth. The results can be attributed to the fact that many Christians believe God expects them to ask for wealth and confidently anticipate them.

The views of the respondents sought to answer the area of assessment that God gets disappointed when His children do not prosper materially. Thirty-seven percent (73) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement under study, 28% agreed, 18% (40) disagreed and 11% (27) strongly disagreed while 6% (24) neither agreed nor disagreed. The (65%) of the respondents who agreed imply that congregants expect their pastors to conduct public worship services in ways that encourage material wealth.

Table 4.2 points out that 23% (50) of the respondents strongly disagreed that it is wrong to preach on material riches as rights of God's children, 23% (50) disagreed it is wrong to preach on material riches, 22% (49) strongly agreed, 21% (46) agreed while 11% (23) were neutral. According to the study, majority of the respondents (46%) agreed that it was right to preach on material riches as rights of God's children. The results can be attributed to the fact that a number of people who served the Lord in the Bible were rich.

Regarding the good news, 24% (53) of the respondents disagreed that it includes material wealth, 22% (48) agreed, 21% (46) strongly disagreed, 18% (39) strongly agreed while 15% (32) were neutral. The study shows that most respondents (45%) disagreed that the good news for the poor in the Bible includes material wealth.

Forty percent (88) of the respondents strongly disagreed that living an extravagant life is a sign of success, 26% (56) disagreed, 13% (29) strongly agreed, 12% (25) agreed while 9% (20) were neutral. Data reveals that 66.1% of the respondents disagreed that living an extravagant life is a sign of success because it can also be a sign of pride.

4.4.1.2 AGC perception on faith and wealth

Table 4.3: AGC perception of Faith and Wealth

Assessment Areas for Popular Claims of Prosperity Gospel	Frequency/percentages				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
Material poverty comes due to lack of faith	19.3% (42)	28% (61)	8.3% (18)	22% (48)	22.5% (49)
Frequent teaching on faith should be encouraged for believers to be materially rich	11.9% (26)	25.7% (56)	11.5% (25)	25.2% (55)	25.7% (56)
Pastors should encourage testimonies on how to get rich	21.1% (46)	19.7% (43)	7.3% (16)	29.4% (64)	22.5% (49)
Wealth comes to those who know God's promises	10.1% (22)	16.5% (36)	10.1% (22)	32.1% (70)	31.2% (68)
Material riches prove that one has much faith in a wealthy God	26.1% (57)	29.8% (65)	12.4% (27)	14.3% (31)	17.4% (38)

KEY: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA)

Study findings reveal that 28% (61) disagreed that material poverty comes due to lack of faith, 23% (50) strongly agreed, 22% (48) agreed, 19.3% (42) strongly disagreed while 8% remained neutral. The biggest percentage (47%) of respondents disagreed that material poverty comes due to lack of faith. This implies that it is wrong to associate faith with wealth, and poverty with the lack of it.

Findings from the study demonstrate that 26% (56) strongly agreed that frequent teaching on faith should be encouraged for believers to be materially rich, 25% (56) disagreed, 25% (55) agreed, 12% (26) strongly disagreed while 12% (25) neither agreed nor disagreed. A big percentage of respondents (50.9%) agreed that frequent teaching on faith should be encouraged in order to achieve material advancement. The study shows that 38% of respondents disagreed that frequent teaching on faith should be encouraged

for believers to be materially rich. This implies that some AGC members strongly believe in spiritual factors while others rely on natural means to acquire riches.

Concerning whether pastors should encourage testimonies in AGC for members to get rich, 29% (64) of the respondents agreed that they should, 22% (49) strongly agreed, 21% (46) strongly disagreed, 20% (43) disagreed while 7% (16) neither agreed nor disagreed to the above. Most of the respondents (52%) agreed that pastors should encourage testimonies from Christians on how to get rich in life. This implies that AGC respondents want their pastors to provide an environment for them to hear testimonies of financial breakthrough to inspire them to prosper.

The data shows that 32% (70) of the total respondents agreed that wealth comes to those who know God's promises, 31% (68) strongly agreed, 16% (36) disagreed, 10% (22) strongly disagreed while 10% (22) were neutral. Sixty-three percent of the Christians agreed that wealth comes to those who know God's promises. This implies that those who want to be rich must read the Bible where God prospered his people more, hear more about health and wealth gospel, and obey PG preachers more to gain worldly blessings.

Study findings revealed that 30% (65) disagreed that material riches prove that one has much faith in a wealthy God, 26.1% (57) strongly disagreed, 17% (38) strongly agreed, 14% (31) agreed while 12% (27) neither agreed nor disagreed. Most respondents (56%) disagreed that material riches prove that one has much faith in a wealthy God. Findings show that respondents agree that having material possessions does not mean that

someone has much faith. This can be explained by the fact that some respondents in AGC fail to see the coherence between faith and riches.

4.4.1.3 AGC perception of Symbols in Garnering Wealth

Table 4:4: AGC Perception of Symbols to Garner Wealth

Assessment areas of popular claims of the prosperity gospel	Percentages/frequency				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
Physical contact (laying on hands, anointing oil, handkerchiefs) increases faith for riches	42.2% (92)	26.6% (58)	12.8% (28)	11.9% (26)	6.4% (14)
Symbols such as oil, water are useful in a worship service, for they increase congregants' faith for material gain	41.3% (90)	25.7% (56)	14.7% (32)	13.3% (29)	5.0% (11)

KEY: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA)

Study findings from Table 4.4 above reveal that 42% (92) of the study respondents strongly disagreed that Physical contact (laying on hands, anointing oil, handkerchiefs) increases faith for riches, 27% (58) disagreed, 13% (28) are neutral, 12% (26) agreed while 6% (14) strongly agreed. Most respondents (69%) disagreed that physical contact increases faith for riches. They asserted that praying through physical contact has no impact on faith and consequently on material riches that Christians possess.

Findings show that 41% (90) of the total respondents strongly disagreed that Symbols such as oil and water are useful in a worship service to increase congregants' faith for material gain, 26% (56) disagreed, 15% (32) neither agree nor disagree, 13% (29) agreed while 5% (11) strongly agreed. Most of the respondents (67%) disagreed that Symbols such as oil and water are useful in a worship service to increase church members' faith for material gain.

4.4.1.3 AGC perception on Material Lack as taught by PG Advocates

Table 4.5: AGC Perception of Material Lack as taught by PG Advocates

Assessment areas of popular claims of prosperity gospel	Percentages/frequency				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
Poverty is a sign that someone is under a curse	36.7% (80)	28% (61)	10.1% (22)	15.1% (33)	10.1% (22)
Special deliverance prayer is important to avert poverty	11.9% (26)	15.1% (33)	14.2% (31)	31.7% (69)	27.1% (59)
Salvation from sin involves freedom from poverty	14.7% (32)	20.2% (44)	13.3% (29)	26.6% (58)	25.2% (55)
Poverty cannot be related to a rich and a loving God	21.1% (46)	25.7% (56)	14.7% (32)	23.4% (51)	15.1% (33)
Material wealth always indicates favour from God	22% (48)	28% (61)	8.3% (18)	22% (48)	19.7% (43)

KEY: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA)

The above Table 4.5 indicates that 37% (80) of the respondents strongly disagreed that Poverty is a sign that someone is under a curse, 28% (61) disagreed, 15% (33) agreed, 10% (22) strongly agreed while 10% (22) neither agreed nor disagreed. Findings show that most respondents (65%) disagreed that poverty is a sign that someone is under a curse. This implies that poverty is not an indication of a curse rather, lack of hardworking and financial discipline besides other factors.

Regarding exorcism, Table 4.5 indicates that 32% (69) of the study respondents agreed that special deliverance prayer is important to avert poverty, 27% (59) strongly agreed, 15% (33) disagreed, while 14% (31) neither agreed nor disagreed to the above statement. Findings show that 58.8% of respondents agreed that special deliverance prayer is important to avert poverty. However, some respondents (27%) disagreed that it is all about someone's faith and hard work, which God blesses. This explains the

rationale behind the sizeable number of respondents who disagree that special deliverance prayer is a prerequisite in averting poverty.

Twenty-seven percent (58) of the respondents agreed that Salvation from sin involves freedom from poverty, 25% (55) strongly agreed, 20% (44) disagreed, 15% (32) strongly disagreed while 13% (29) neither agreed nor disagreed. Majority (52%) of the respondents agreed that salvation from sin involves freedom from poverty. Findings imply that most Christians believe that sinning binds someone to poverty but material blessings come through Christ.

Further findings revealed that 26% (56) of the respondents disagreed that Poverty cannot relate to a rich and a loving God, 23% (51) agreed, 26% (56) disagreed, 15% (33) strongly agreed, while 14.7% (32) neither agreed nor disagreed. The study indicates that 47% of the respondents agreed that poverty relates to a rich and a loving God.

Table 4.5 further indicates that 28% (61) disagreed that material wealth always indicates favour from God, 22% (48) strongly disagreed, 22% (48) agreed, 20% strongly agreed while 8% (18) were neutral. Fifty percent of respondents disagreed that material wealth always indicates favour from God. This implies that God determines whom to bless with prosperity.

4.4.1.4 AGC Perception on the Methods of PGT in Acquiring Wealth

Table 4.6: AGC Perception on the Methods of PGT in Acquiring Wealth

Assessment areas of popular claims of prosperity gospel	Percentages/frequency				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
Christians should repeatedly claim physical prosperity to get more wealth	28.9% (63)	24.3% (53)	11.9% (26)	19.3% (42)	15.6% (34)
Believers should listen to messages of prosperity to prosper materially	19.3% (42)	22.9% (50)	12.4% (27)	26.6% (58)	18.8% (41)
Christians should support PG preachers with their money to succeed materially	33% (72)	26.1% (57)	6.4% (14)	18.3% (40)	16.1% (35)
Wealth depends on how much one gives to God in the form of sowing a seed	15.1% (33)	17.4% (38)	12.4% (27)	30.7% (67)	24.3% (53)

The above table (4.6) records that 29% (63) of the respondents strongly disagreed that Christians should repeatedly claim physical prosperity to get more wealth, 24% (53) disagreed, 19% (42) agreed, 16% (34) strongly agreed, while 12% (26) were neutral. Findings indicate that most of the respondents (53%) disagreed that Christians should repeatedly claim physical prosperity to get more wealth. This implies that AGC Christians understand the biblical basis of getting wealth, which is putting trust in God, working hard, exercising financial discipline,

Study findings show that 27% (58) of the total respondents agreed that Believers should listen to messages of prosperity to prosper materially, 23% (50) disagreed, 19% (42) strongly disagreed, 19% (41) strongly agreed while 12% (27) neither agreed nor disagreed to the above. Forty six percent of the respondents agreed that believers should listen to messages of prosperity to be wealthy. On the other hand, 42% of the Christians disagreed that believers should listen to messages of PG.

Findings further show that 33% (72) of the respondents strongly disagreed that Christians should support prosperity gospel preachers with their money to succeed materially, 26% (57) disagreed, 18% (40) agreed, 16% (35) strongly agreed, while 6% (14) neither agreed nor disagreed. The study reveals that 59% of the Christians disagreed that Christians should support prosperity gospel preachers with their money to succeed materially. This implies that AGC members believe giving to ministries through their local churches and not taking their contributions to individual preachers is the will of God.

Study findings show that 31% (67) of the respondents agreed that wealth depends on how much one gives to God in form of ‘sowing a seed’, 24% (53) strongly agreed, 15% (33) strongly disagreed while 12% (27) agreed, while 12.4% (27) were neutral. Study findings reveal that most of the respondents (55%) agreed that wealth depends on how much a Christian gives back to God. However, 32% (71) refuted the idea of sowing for wealth. Findings imply that God always rewards those who ‘sow seeds’ and AGC Christians attached the importance of sowing their tithes and offerings in the church and, ministries.

4.4.2 Biblical theology of MP in Relation to Whole-life Stewardship

Findings in this section are in response to the second research question; what is the biblical theology of material prosperity in relation to whole-life stewardship? Tables 4.7 - 4.10 show the data result and analysis of the biblical theology of material prosperity.

4.4.2.1 AGC biblical perception of wealth

Table 4.7: AGC Biblical Perception of Wealth

assessment Areas for Biblical Theology of MP in Relation to Whole-life Stewardship	Percentage/ Frequency				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
The Lord Jesus chooses who is to be wealthy or poor	25.2% (55)	13.8% (30)	9.6% (21)	25.7% (56)	25.7% (56)
Spiritual and material prosperity is not always God's will for all his children	27.5% (60)	17% (37)	14.7% (32)	26.6% (58)	14.2% (31)
God at times uses material poverty to test a Christian's faith	7.8% (17)	8.7% (19)	8.7% (19)	33.9% (74)	40.8% (89)
God does not use poverty to test a Christian's faith	27% (59)	28.9% (63)	10.6% (23)	20.2% (44)	13.3% (29)
God may allow material lack for his glory	11.5% (25)	10.6% (23)	10.6% (23)	36.2% (79)	31.2% (68)
God has equal love for both the rich and the poor	2.3% (5)	3.2% (7)	3.2% (7)	30.3% (66)	61.0% (133)

KEY: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA)

Table 4.7 above shows that 26% (56) of the respondents strongly agreed that the Lord Jesus chooses who is to be wealthy or poor, 26% (56) agreed, 25% (55) strongly disagreed, 14% (30) disagreed while 10% (21) neither agreed nor disagreed. The biggest percentage of respondents (51%) agreed that it is the Lord who determines who is to be wealthy or poor. Findings imply that Christians are not responsible for either the wealth they have or the poverty they experience. This explains why most Christians agreed that it is God's will for some to remain poor.

Findings from the study highlight that 28% (60) of the total respondents strongly disagreed that spiritual and material prosperity is not always God's will for all his children, 27% (58) agreed, 17% (37) disagreed, 15% (32) neither agreed nor disagreed while 14% (31) strongly agreed. The study reveals that 45% of the respondents disagreed

that spiritual and material prosperity is not always God's will for all his children. Findings show that God wants his people to prosper. This implies that AGC members prefer to hear the true biblical teachings on material prosperity.

Findings from the study indicate that 41% (89) of the respondents strongly agreed that God at times uses material poverty to test a Christian's faith, 34% (74) agreed, 9% (19) disagreed, 9% (19) neither agreed nor disagreed while 8% (17) strongly disagreed. Study findings indicate that 75% of the respondents agreed that God at times uses material poverty to test the faith of Christians. This indicates that AGC members can embrace a life of sacrifice if they know that it is a test of their faith.

Study findings reveal that 29% (63) of the respondents disagreed that God does not use poverty to test a Christian's faith, 27% (59) strongly disagreed, 20% (44) agreed, 13% (29) strongly agreed, while 11% (23) neither agreed nor disagreed. Study findings show that the biggest percentage of respondents (56%) disagreed that God never uses poverty to test a Christian's faith. God is the author of all good things and wants his people to enjoy them.

Study findings revealed that 36% (79) of the respondents agreed that God might allow material lack for his glory, 31% (68) strongly agreed, 12% (25) strongly disagreed, 11% (23) disagreed, while 11% (23) neither agreed nor disagreed. Findings indicate that 67% of respondents agreed that God might allow material lack for his glory. Findings imply that Christians always have an obligation to glorify God regardless of their material status. This implies that AGC respondents understand that God can allow bad circumstances in the lives of his children for an eternal cause.

Study findings showed that 61% (133) strongly agreed that God has equal love for both the rich and the poor, 30% (66) agreed, 3% (7) disagreed, 3% (7) neither agreed nor disagreed while 2% (5) strongly disagreed. Ninety-two percent of the respondents agreed that God has equal love for both the rich and the poor. Findings showed that loving God does not discriminate against anyone regarding his or her financial status.

4.4.2.2 AGC Perceptions on Jesus teachings on wealth

Table 4.8: AGC Perception of Jesus Teaching on Wealth

Assessment Areas for Biblical Theology of MP in Relation to Whole-life Stewardship	Percentage/ Frequency				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
Jesus encouraged a life of riches	25.7% (56)	21.1% (46)	17% (37)	18.8% (41)	17.4% (38)
Jesus encouraged a life of poverty	34.9% (76)	32.1% (70)	17% (37)	8.7% (19)	7.3% (16)
Jesus supported neither poverty nor wealth	22.5% (49)	13.3% (29)	27.1% (59)	18.8% (41)	17.9% (39)
The primary reason why people get wealth is to meet the needs of other people	6.9% (15)	11.9% (26)	11.9% (26)	33.9% (74)	35.3% (77)
God gives wealth to us for a good purpose	2.8% (6)	1.4% (3)	4.6% (10)	45.9% (100)	45.4% (99)

KEY: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA)

Study findings reveal that 26% (56) of the respondents strongly disagreed that Jesus encouraged a life of riches, 21% (46) disagreed, 17% (38) strongly agreed, 19% (41) agreed while 17% (37) neither agreed nor disagreed. Forty-seven percent of the respondents disagreed that Jesus encouraged a life of riches. This implies that AGC members view Jesus teaching in light of more suffering and pain as opposed to affluence and self-gratification.

Study findings indicate that 35% (76) of the total respondents strongly disagreed that Jesus encouraged a life of poverty, 32% (70) disagreed, 17% (37) neither agreed nor disagreed, and 9% (19) agreed while 7% (16) strongly agreed. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents supported that Jesus encouraged a life of poverty. Jesus himself encouraged the rich to support the poor with their resources by teaching a life of hard work and financial accountability. This may explain the reason Christians denied that the Lord supported the life of poverty.

Results from the field data show that 27% (59) of the respondents were neutral that Jesus supported neither poverty nor wealth, 23% (49) strongly disagreed, 19% (41) agreed, 18% (39) strongly agreed while 13% (29) disagreed. Thirty-seven percent said that Jesus supported neither poverty nor riches. Most Christians believe that establishing a detailed ethic of economic prosperity from the example of Christ's life is intricate. Therefore, it is difficult for many Christians to discern whether Jesus favoured the possession of wealth or not.

Study findings show that 35.3% (77) strongly agreed that the primary reason why people get wealth is to meet the needs of other people, 34% (74) agreed, 12% (26) disagreed, 12% (26) neither agreed nor disagreed, 7% (15) strongly disagreed. More than half of the respondents (69%) agreed that the primary reason why people get wealth is to meet the needs of others. Study findings imply that most respondents agree that when God gives his people wealth, they should use it to promote his plans on earth by meeting the needs of his people.

The study sought to understand the views of AGC respondents on the purpose of God for blessing his children. Forty-six percent (100) agreed that God gives wealth to people for a good purpose, 45% (99) strongly agreed, 5% (10) neither agreed nor disagreed, 3% (6) strongly disagreed while 1% (3) disagreed. Ninety-one percent of the respondents agreed that God gives wealth to Christians for a good purpose. Most respondents in AGC believe that when God blesses someone with riches, he attaches responsibilities to him. This justifies why most respondents concurred that God gives wealth for a good purpose and that Christians should endeavour to fit within his will to remain faithful stewards.

4.4.2.3 AGC Perception on the Dangers of wealth

Table 4.9: AGC Perception on the Dangers of Wealth

Assessment areas for Biblical Theology of MP in relation to Whole-life Stewardship	Percentages/frequency				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
Wealth can be dangerous to a Christian's faith	17% (37)	17% (37)	11% (24)	28% (61)	27.1% (59)
Material riches can lead to sin	13.8% (30)	9.6% (21)	8.7% (19)	33% (72)	34.9% (76)
Christians should use their wealth as they want	30.3% (66)	27.1% (59)	6.4% (14)	19.7% (43)	16.5% (36)
Rich people will not inherit the Kingdom of heaven	27.5% (60)	30.7% (67)	18.3% (40)	13.8% (30)	9.6% (21)

KEY: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA)

Study findings show that 28% (61) of the total respondents agreed that wealth can be dangerous to a Christian's faith, 27% (59) strongly agreed, 17% (37) strongly disagreed, 17% (37) disagreed, while 11% (24) neither agreed nor disagreed. More than half (55 %) of the respondents agreed that wealth could be dangerous to a Christian's

faith. Findings imply that most respondents consider the love of wealth as the main source of sin.

Thirty-five percent (76) of the respondents strongly agreed that material riches can lead to sin, 33% (72) agreed, 13.8% (30) strongly disagreed, and 10% (21) disagreed while 9% (19) neither agreed nor disagreed. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents agreed that material riches could lead to sin. This could be attributed to the fact that most congregants of AGC understood biblical teaching and were aware that the pursuit of riches could bring harmful desires that might plunge them into spiritual wreckage.

Findings from the study indicate that 30% (66) of the respondents strongly disagreed that Christians should use their wealth as they want, 27% (59) disagreed, 20% (43) agree, 17% (36) strongly agreed while 6% (14) neither agreed nor disagreed. Study findings show that 57% of the respondents disagree that Christians are free to use their material wealth as they wish. Study findings show that most Christians believe that God blesses them with material possessions to use according to God's will. This implies that AGC members understand that God prospers people for his good plans.

Findings indicated that 31% (67) of the total respondents disagreed that rich people will not inherit the kingdom of heaven, 28% (60) strongly disagreed, 18% (40) neither agreed nor disagreed, 17% (38) strongly agreed while 14% (30) agreed. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents disagreed that rich people would not inherit the Kingdom of heaven. Nevertheless, 31% of those who participated revealed that rich people will not inherit the kingdom of God. This implies that a sizable number of AGC members need a biblical basis to understand the teaching on stewardship.

4.4.2.4 AGC Perception of the Methods of Acquiring Wealth

Table 4.10: AGC Perception of Method on Acquiring Wealth

Assessment areas for Biblical Theology of MP in relation to Whole-life Stewardship	Frequency/percentages				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
When Christians work hard and give to God, they always get adequate material blessings	6.4% (14)	6.9% (15)	6.9% (15)	36.2% (79)	43.6% (95)
When believers are faithful in paying their tithes and offerings, God prospers them materially	4.6% (10)	3.2% (7)	6.9% (15)	39.4% (86)	45.9% (100)
It takes the discipline of hard work, savings and giving to receive wealth from God	4.6% (10)	6.4% (14)	6.9% (15)	42.2% (92)	39.9% (87)

KEY: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA)

Findings from Table 4.10 show that 44% (95) of the total respondents strongly agreed that when Christians work hard and give to God, they always get adequate material blessings, 36% (79) agreed, 7% (15) strongly disagreed, 7% (15) neither agreed nor disagreed while 7% (15) disagreed. Therefore, majority of the respondents (79.8%) agreed that when Christians work hard and give to God, he blesses them with material success as articulated mainly in the O.T.

Concerning financial giving in the church, 46% (100) of the total respondents strongly agreed that when believers are faithful in paying their tithes and offerings, God prospers them materially, 39% (86) agreed, 7% (15) neither agreed nor disagreed, 5% (10) strongly disagreed, while 3% (7) disagreed. Eighty-five percent agreed that when believers were faithful in paying their tithes and offerings, God prospered them materially. Findings reveal that respondents agreed that when Christians fulfill their financial obligations as commanded by God, he rewards them. This implies that when AGC members give to God, they expect economic blessings.

Findings also indicated that 42% (92) agreed that it takes the discipline of hard work, savings and giving to receive wealth from God, 40% (87) strongly agreed, 7% (15) neither agreed nor disagreed, 6% (14) disagreed, and 5% (10) strongly disagreed. Most of the respondents (82%) agreed that it takes the discipline of hard work, savings and giving to receive wealth from God. Respondents agreed that Christians should work hard since it is God's ordained method of caring for his creation and a means of livelihood. This explains the big number of respondents who agree that it takes the discipline of hard work, savings and giving in order to receive the blessing of wealth from God.

4.4.3 Cultural Concepts of Prosperity in AGC that Accommodate PGT

Findings in this section were in response to the third research question. That states; how do cultural concepts of material prosperity in Africa accommodate prosperity teaching? The results of the study data are presented in Table 4.11 - 4.15.

4.4.3.1 AGC Cultural Perception of Wealth

Table 4.11: AGC Cultural Perception of Wealth

Assessment areas on Cultural Concepts that Accommodate Popular PG	Percentage/ Frequency				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
Material lack is evil and is a curse	31.2% (68)	27.5% (60)	13.3% (29)	13.8% (30)	14.2% (31)
Material riches indicate happiness	16.5% (36)	28.4% (62)	9.6% (21)	22.5% (49)	22.9% (50)
Wealth shows wisdom and power	17.9% (39)	24.8% (54)	10.6% (23)	24.3% (53)	22.5% (49)

KEY: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA)

Table 4.11 shows that 31% (68) of the total respondents strongly disagreed that material lack is evil and a curse, 28% (60) disagreed, 14% (31) strongly agreed, 14% (30)

agreed while 13% (29) were neutral. The data shows that 59% of the respondents disagreed that material lack is evil and a curse to Christians. This shows that material lack is a normal occurrence among Christians and they should therefore not link it to a curse as attested by PGT.

Twenty-eight percent (62) of the total respondents disagreed that material riches indicate happiness, 23% (50) strongly agreed, 23% (49) agreed, 17% (36) strongly disagreed while 10% (21) neither agreed nor disagreed. Findings show that half respondents (45%) agreed that material riches indicate happiness. On the other hand, an equal number of Christians believes that dependency on the Lordship of Christ is what elicits true enduring happiness and joy.

Study findings revealed that 24% (53) of the respondents agreed that wealth shows wisdom and power, 25% (54) disagreed, 23% (49) strongly agreed, 18% (39) strongly disagreed while 11% (23) neither agreed nor disagreed. Findings point out that most respondents (47%) agreed that wealth shows wisdom and power.

4.4.3.2 AGC perception of the Role of Leaders and Wealth

Table 4.12: AGC perception of the Role of Leaders and Wealth

Assessment areas on Cultural Concepts that Accommodate Popular PG	Percentages/ Frequency				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
Subjects often honour their leaders who prosper	16.1% (35)	16.1% (35)	12.8% (28)	37.6% (82)	17.4% (38)
Christians should expose their wealth for self-recognition	42.2% (92)	28.4% (62)	6.4% (14)	15.1% (33)	7.8% (17)
Pastors should not talk about financial prosperity of his/her church members	22.5% (49)	33% (72)	12.8% (28)	14.7%\ (32)	17.0% (37)
A poor church leader cannot be effective in the Christian ministry	27.1% (59)	23.9% (52)	8.3% (18)	22.9% (50)	17.9% (39)
Church members should obey elders (pastors) without questioning them	27.5% (60)	25.2% (55)	13.3% (29)	16.1% (35)	17.9% (39)

KEY: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA)

Findings further show that 38% (82) of the respondents agreed that subjects often honour those leaders who prosper, 17% (38) strongly agreed, 16% (35) disagreed, 16% (35) strongly disagreed while 13% (28) neither agreed nor disagreed. The study revealed that 55% of the respondents agreed that subjects often respect leaders who prosper. This implies that many Christians will follow leaders without being critical on what they tell them even if it is a fraud.

Study findings further reveal that 42% (92) of the total respondents strongly disagreed that Christians should expose their wealth for self-recognition, 28% (62) disagreed, 15% (33) agreed, 8% (17) strongly agreed, while 6% (14) were neutral. Seventy-one percent of the respondents disagreed that Christians should expose their wealth for self-recognition. God has called Christians to find their recognition in the finished work of

Christ at the cross. Therefore, the participants considered self-recognition as a way of feeding one's ego.

Findings reveal that 33% (72) of the study respondents disagreed that pastors should not talk about financial prosperity to their church members, 23% (49) strongly disagreed, 17% (37) strongly agreed, 15% (32) agreed while 13% (28) neither agreed nor disagreed. Study findings show that 56% of the respondents disagreed that pastors should not talk about financial prosperity to their church members. Majority of the Christians disagreed because the Bible encourages Christians to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness before other additional things. This may be attributed to the fact that many Christians have abused prosperity and that there is no proper understanding of whole-life stewardship.

Findings also indicate that 27% (59) of the total respondents strongly disagreed that a poor church leader cannot be effective in the Christian ministry, 24% (52) disagreed, 23% (50) agreed, 18% (39) strongly agreed while 8% (18) neither agreed nor disagreed. Fifty-one percent of the respondents agreed that a poor church leader could not be effective in the Christian ministry. This implies that AGC Christians would follow a rich pastor and not a poor one.

Findings from the study show that 28% (60) of the total respondents strongly disagreed that Christians should obey elders/pastors without questioning them, 25% (55) disagreed, 18% (39) strongly agreed, 16% (35) agreed while 13% (29) neither agreed nor disagreed. Findings show that most respondents (53%) disagreed that Christians should obey pastors without questioning them. This implies that the respondents would not

blindly follow their church leaders because they are aware that they (church leaders) have limited knowledge.

4.4.3.3 AGC Perception on Spiritual Influence on Prosperity

Table 4.13 AGC Perception on Spiritual Influence on Prosperity

Assessment areas on Cultural Concepts that Accommodate Popular PG	Percentages/frequency				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
Material wealth can result from evil spirits and demons	22.9% (50)	17.4% (38)	9.2% (20)	28.4% (62)	22% (48)
Witchdoctors have power influence on one's financial success	44% (96)	18.3% (40)	12.4% (27)	17.9% (39)	7.3% (16)
Believers should go to their pastors for prayers of financial breakthrough	15.1% (33)	21.1% (46)	12.8% (28)	29.8% (65)	21.1% (46)
Deliverance prayers should be conducted in our churches to avert material lack	18.3% (40)	14.7% (32)	12.8% (28)	34.9% (76)	19.3% (42)
We should hear special anointed pastors who understand the evil spirits of poverty	29.8% (65)	24.8% (54)	8.3% (18)	22% (48)	14.7% (32)

KEY: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA)

Table 4.13 shows that 28% (62) of the total respondents agreed that material wealth can result from evil spirits and demons, 23% (50) strongly disagreed, 22% (48) strongly agreed, 17% (38) disagreed while 9% (20) neither agreed nor disagreed. The data points out that 50% of the respondents agreed that material wealth at times results from evil spirits and demons. This implies that many Christians in AGC still recognizes that spiritual forces influence their economic wellbeing and would prefer those churches that emphasise deliverance ministries.

Findings show that 44% (96) of the total respondents strongly disagreed that witch doctors have the power to influence one's financial success, 18% (40) disagreed, 18% (39)

agreed, 12% (27) neither agreed nor disagreed, while 7% (16) strongly agreed. Findings indicate that most of the respondents (62%) disagreed that witchdoctors have powers to influence one's financial success. This could be attributed to the fact that Christians are changing their paradigm from traditional ways of viewing life to new and more scientific ones. Through formal education and the burgeoning access to information through technology, many Christians are aware of changes in economic dynamics and find it hard to believe in witchcraft as a supernatural means that can help to solve their economic concerns.

Findings from the study further indicate that 30% (65) of the respondents agreed that believers should go to their pastors for prayers of financial breakthrough, 21% (46) strongly agreed, 21% (46) disagreed, 15% (33) strongly disagreed while 13% (28) neither agreed nor disagreed. Findings show that 51% of the respondents agreed that believers should go to their pastors for financial breakthrough prayers. Therefore, those trust their pastors as the mediator between God and them would compromise their faith in need of material prosperity.

Findings from the study show that 30% (65) of the respondents strongly disagreed that Christians should hear special anointed pastors who understand the evil spirits of poverty, 25% (54) disagreed, 22% (48) agreed, 15% (32) strongly agreed while 8% neither agreed nor disagreed. Findings imply that 55% of the respondents disagreed that Christians should hear special anointed pastors who understand the evil spirits of poverty. Findings imply that Christians are aware of an increasing number of preachers who

emphasize miracles of a financial breakthrough at the expense of salvation and spiritual discipleship.

4.4.3.4 AGC Perception on Wealth Acquisition as Taught by PG

Table 4.14: AGC Perception of Wealth Acquisition as Taught by PG

Assessment areas on Cultural Concepts that Accommodate Popular PG	Percentages/frequency				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
Positive confessions and repetition of words can increase faith for material success	21.6% (47)	21.6% (47)	14.2% (31)	23.9% (52)	18.8% (41)
Material success comes mostly by giving to anointed servants of God	30.7% (67)	29.4% (64)	14.7% (32)	11.9% (26)	13.3% (29)
Christians need formulas of what to do and say to get material wealth	19.3% (42)	16.1% (35)	11.9% (26)	28% (61)	24.8% (54)
Material riches come when the church members obey their leaders	17% (37)	24.8% (54)	14.2% (31)	26.6% (58)	17.4% (38)
Freedom from poverty comes through sacrificial giving	16.1% (35)	17.4% (38)	12.8% (28)	33.5% (73)	20.2% 44%

KEY: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA)

Findings from the study indicate that 23.9% (52) agreed that positive confessions and repetition of words could increase faith for material success, 22% (47) strongly disagreed, 19% strongly agreed, and 22% (47) disagreed, while 14% (31) neither agreed nor disagreed. Findings show that 44% disagreed, while 43% agreed that positive confessions and repetition of words could increase faith for material success. This implies that AGC still prefers to follow some cultural and PGT's methods of acquiring possessions.

Study findings reveal that 31% (67) of the study respondents strongly disagreed that material success comes mostly by giving to anointed servants of God, 29% (64) disagreed, 15% (32) neither agreed nor disagreed, 13% (29) strongly agreed while 12% (26) agreed. Findings show that 60% of the respondents disagreed that wealth comes mostly by giving

to anointed servants of God. This implies that if Christians chose to give to “the anointed servants of God,” they would be disappointed in the end.

Study findings reveal that 28% (61) of the total respondents agreed that Christians need formulas of what to do and say to get material wealth, 25% (54) strongly agreed, 19% (42) strongly disagreed, 16% (35) disagreed while 12% (26) neither agreed nor disagreed. Findings show that 53% of the respondents agreed that Christians need formulas of what to do and say to get material wealth. Most Christians agreed with formulas like, ‘sowing a seed’ to receive material wealth from God, “claim it and receive it”, to influence their perceptions on the Christian faith and practices. This means that many AGC members have imbibed PGT.

Findings show that 27% (58) of the total respondents agreed that material riches come when the church members obeyed their leaders, 25% (54) disagreed, 17% (38) strongly agreed, 17% (37) strongly disagreed while 14% neither agreed nor disagreed. Findings show that most of the respondents (44%) agreed that material riches come when the church members obey their leaders. However, 42% disagreed with the statement. This implies that leaders have an influence on the prosperity of those they lead and those who want to get rich.

Thirty-four percent (73) of the total respondents agreed that freedom from poverty comes through sacrificial giving, 20% (44) strongly agreed 17% (38) disagreed, 16% (35) strongly disagreed while 13% (28) neither agreed nor disagreed. The study reveals that 54% of the respondents held that freedom from poverty comes through sacrificial giving.

Findings imply that when believers give sacrificially to God, it becomes a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to him and he blesses them.

4.4.3.5 AGC perception of the General Acquisition and use of Wealth

Table 4.15: AGC Perception of the General Acquisition and use of wealth

Assessment areas on Cultural Concepts that Accommodate Popular PG	Percentage/frequency				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
Prosperity comes by hard work and financial discipline	6.9% (15)	8.3% (18)	10.1% (22)	43.6% (95)	31.2% (68)
In our church, wealth is used mostly for helping the less fortunate	7.8% (17)	11.9% (26)	14.2% (31)	43.1% (94)	22.9% (50)
Material goods are means used to please God so he can bless us from poverty	18.3% (40)	21.1% (46)	12.4% (27)	30.7% (67)	17.4% (38)

KEY: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA)

Study findings show that 44% (95) of the study respondents agreed that prosperity comes by hard work and financial discipline, 31% (68) strongly agreed, 10% (22) neither agreed nor disagreed, 8% (18) disagreed while 7% (15) strongly disagreed. Seventy-five percent of the respondents agreed that material prosperity comes through hard work and financial discipline. Christians who have financial discipline are usually involved in hard work, saving, giving to God and to the needy, record keeping, and the like which can lead to prosperity. This implies that Christians would opt for working hard if they found an opportunity instead of embracing the teaching of PG.

Study findings showed that 43% (94) of the respondents agreed that wealth is used mostly for helping the less fortunate, 23% (50) strongly agreed, 14% (31) neither agreed nor disagreed, 12% (26) disagreed while 8% strongly disagreed. Findings show that most of the respondents agreed (66%) that wealth is for helping less fortunate Christians.

Findings imply that one of the responsibilities of the church is to encourage those who have resources to help those in need. This analysis suggests that AGC respondents understood Scriptural commands to help the poor as a core biblical doctrine that demonstrates practical love to the needy world.

Findings reveal that 31% (67) of the respondents agreed that material goods were means used to please God so he could lift the poor from poverty, 21% (46) disagreed, 18% (40) strongly disagreed, 17.4% strongly agreed, while 12% (27) neither agreed nor disagreed. Forty-eight percent of the respondents agreed that material goods are means for pleasing the Almighty God to save Christians from poverty. This can be attributed to the fact that by using the material possessions into God's service, Christians show God that they love him and in response, he reciprocates by rewarding them bountifully.

4.4.4 Biblical Principles on Whole-Life Stewardship

Findings in this section relate to whole-life stewardship among Christians. Tables 4:16-19 show result findings, and study analysis on the perceptions of AGC on whole-life stewardship.

4.4.4.1 AGC perception on the Right Attitude on Giving

Table 4.16: AGC Perception on the Right Attitude on Giving

Assessment Areas on Whole-life Stewardship	Percentages/frequency				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
Whole-life stewardship considers the right attitude in giving as more important than what is given	6.9% (15)	11% (24)	19.3% (42)	39% (85)	23.9% (52)
Christian giving should be an external commitment with eternity in perspective	11.5% (25)	14.2% (31)	9.2% (20)	51.8% (113)	13.3% (29)
Christians giving should show that God is the owner of everything they own	6.9% (15)	7.8% (17)	11% (24)	52.8% (115)	21.6% (47)
Christians should be contented with what God gives them	8.3% (18)	10.6% (23)	13.3% (29)	53.2% (116)	14.7% (32)
Christians should give to God expecting nothing in return	6.0% (13)	6.9% (15)	17.4% (38)	44% (96)	25.7% (56)
Christians should give to God deliberately and systematically	7.8% (17)	15.1% (33)	9.6% (21)	47.7% (104)	19.7% (43)

KEY: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA)

Study findings show that 39% (85) of the total respondents agreed that Whole-life stewardship considers the right attitude in giving as more important than what is given, 24% (52) strongly agreed, 19% (42) neither agreed nor disagreed, 11% (24) disagreed, while 7% (15) strongly disagreed. Most of the respondents, 63% agreed with the above statement and this can be explained by the fact that AGC members understand that giving is an expression of love to God and others.

Findings show that 52% (113) of the respondents agreed that Christian giving should be an external commitment with eternity in perspective, 14% (31) disagreed, 13% (29) strongly agreed, 11% (25) strongly disagreed, while 9% (20) neither agreed nor

disagreed. Majority of the respondents (65.1%) agreed that Christian giving should be an external commitment with eternity in perspective so that when believers express their faith outwardly like helping the needy, spreading the gospel, they anticipate God to reward them in heaven.

Findings from the study indicate that 53% (115) of the total respondents agreed that Christian giving should show that God is the owner of everything they own, 22% (47) strongly agreed, 11% (24) neither agreed nor disagreed, 8% disagreed, while 7% (15) strongly disagreed. Most of the respondents (74%) agreed that Christians giving should show that God is the owner of everything they own. Many Christians acknowledge that whatever they have is out of God's love because God is the originator and beginning of everything. Therefore, it is the mandate of stewardship to give to God.

Study findings show 53% (116) of the total respondents agreed that Christians should be contented with what God has given them, 15% (32) strongly agreed, 13.3% (29) neither agreed nor disagreed, 11% (23) disagreed, while 8% (18) strongly disagreed. Findings show that most of the respondents (67.9%) agreed that Christians should be contented with what God has given them. This could be attributed to the sound biblical teachings that AGC Christians were taught over the decades, that they should thank God for whatever he had given to them instead of coveting for worldly success.

Study findings show that 44% (96) of the total respondents agreed that Christians should give to God expecting nothing in return, 26% (56) strongly agreed, 17% (38) neither agreed nor disagreed, 7% (15) disagreed, while 6% (13) strongly disagreed. Findings show that most of the respondents (70%) agreed that Christians should give to

God expecting nothing in return. Christian giving is out of gratitude to the blessings God has given to his children and not a business where his people trade with Him. What God requires from his children is to be trustworthy and faithful in what He has entrusted to them.

Study findings show that 48% (104) agreed that Christians should give to God deliberately and systematically, 20% (43) strongly agreed, 15% (33) disagreed, 10% (21) neither agreed nor disagreed, while 8% (17) strongly disagreed. Majority of the respondents (67%) agreed that Christians should give to God deliberately and systematically because the Bible requires true Christians to practice the discipline of giving to God. God expects Christians to practice a life of integrity and this they can demonstrate through their intentional commitment to give steadily.

4.4.4.2 Work in relation to Whole-life Stewardship in AGC

Table 4.17: AGC Concept of Work in Relation to Whole-life Steward

Assessment areas on Whole-life Stewardship	Percentages/frequency				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
Christians should strive for excellence in their work	7.3% (16)	15.1% (33)	11.0% (24)	45.9% (100)	20.6% (45)
Christians should work as if they are working for God and not for men	9.2% (20)	11.0% (24)	10.6% (23)	50.0% (109)	19.3% (42)
Christians should work hard to support themselves and others	12.4% (27)	14.7% (32)	14.7% (32)	45% (98)	13.3% (29)

Dangers of wealth as relates to Whole-life stewardship

KEY: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA)

Study findings show that 46% (100) of the total respondents agreed that Christians should strive for excellence in their work, 21% (45) strongly agreed, 15% (33)

disagreed, 11% (24) neither agreed nor disagreed, while 7% (16) strongly disagreed. Findings imply that most of the respondents (67%) hold that Christians should strive for excellence in their work. God demonstrated an excellent work at creation (Genesis 1-3) and he desires the same for all his people wherever he positions them. Christians should be faithful and obedient to their masters who pay them wages for their excellent services.

Study findings demonstrate that 50% (109) of the total respondents agreed that Christians should work as if they are working for God and not for men, 19% (42) strongly agreed, 11% (24) disagreed, 10% (23) neither agreed nor disagreed, while 9% (20) strongly disagreed. Sixty-nine percent of the total respondents agreed that Christians should work as if they are working for God and not for men. Christians find their values in God's Word and the relationship they have with the Lord Jesus Christ. This means that AGC Christians understand the importance of hard work as God's means to meet their needs and those of others and as a way of being responsible stewards.

Findings indicate that 45% (98) of the total respondents agreed that Christians should work hard to support themselves and others, 15% (32) disagreed, and 15% (32) neither agreed nor disagreed, while 12% (27) strongly disagreed. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents imply that AGC members will not neglect work for miraculous provision from God. They will not easily accept PGT to lure them into fraud to acquire material resources. They also recognize that the material resources they have are for supplying the needs of others.

4.4.4.3 Wrong Attitude on Material Possessions

Table 4:18: Wrong Attitude on Material Possessions

Assessment areas on whole-life Stewardship	Percentages/frequency				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
Contentment should only be found in one's relationship with the Lord but not in wealth	6.9% (15)	9.6% (21)	10.6% (23)	33.9% (74)	39.0% (85)
Christians should not have high regards for those who are rich	27.1% (59)	36.2% (79)	14.7% (32)	12.4% (27)	9.6% (21)
Wealthy people have the temptation of being arrogant	20.2% (44)	44.5% (97)	8.3% (18)	19.7% (43)	7.3% (16)
Dishonest Christians demonstrate lack of depending on God to provide for their needs	10.1% (22)	20.2% (44)	12.4% (27)	45.0% (98)	12.4% (27)
Christians who don't give their resources to God are robbing Him and deceiving themselves	9.6% (21)	10.6% (23)	16.1% (35)	50.0% (109)	13.8% (30)
Those who fail to serve God and others are being controlled by their wealth	14.7% (32)	48.6% (106)	11.5% (25)	19.3% (42)	6.0% (13)
The problem with wealth is the attitude, not the riches themselves	29.8% (65)	32.6% (71)	12.8% (28)	22.9% (50)	1.8% (4)

KEY: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA)

Findings indicate that 39% (85) of the study respondents strongly agreed that contentment should only be found in one's relationship with the Lord but not in wealth, 34% (74) agreed, 11% (23) neither agreed nor disagreed, 10% (21) disagreed, while 6.9% (15) strongly disagreed. Findings show that most of the respondents (73%) agreed that contentment should ensue out of one's relationship with the Lord but not from wealth. Christians understand that mixing wealth and serving God at the same time cannot give satisfaction. Material success can breed in believers an attitude of independence, complacency, and contentiousness, which contradicts the essence of serving God. This means that God demands our loyalty and expects believers to find meaning and purpose in him and not in anything else.

Study findings indicate that 36% (79) of the total respondents disagreed that Christians should not have high regards for those who are rich, 27% (59) strongly disagreed, 15% (32) neither agreed nor disagreed, 12% (27) agreed, while 10% (21) strongly agreed. Findings show that most of the respondents (63%) disagreed that Christians should not have high regards for those who are rich because riches tend to turn peoples' hearts from God. This implies that the respondents do not always consider material success as a favour from God. Rather, God blesses some to demonstrate His benevolence to the impoverished in society.

Study findings reveal that 45% (97) of the total respondents disagreed that wealthy people have the temptation of being arrogant, 20% (44) strongly disagreed, 20% (43) agreed, 8% (18) neither agreed nor disagreed, while 7% (16) strongly agreed. Study findings show that 65% of the respondents disagreed that wealthy people have the temptation of being arrogant. This implies that at times people misunderstand wealthy people as arrogant when in reality they may not be.

Study findings reveal that 45% (98) of the total respondents agreed that dishonest Christians demonstrate lack of depending on God to provide for their needs, 12.4% (27) strongly agreed, 20% (44) disagreed, 12% (27) neither agreed nor disagreed, while 10% (22) strongly disagreed. Most of the respondents (57%) agreed that dishonest Christians demonstrate a lack of dependency on God to provide for their needs. This rests on the premises that wealthy people often rely on their riches to meet their immediate needs. The peril of being independent Christian tends to make people partial towards God.

Therefore, such an attitude of self-determination in one's own wisdom can create pride that competing for devotion to God.

Study findings reveal that 50% (109) of the total respondents agreed that Christians who don't give their resources to God are robbing Him and deceiving themselves, 16% (35) neither agree nor disagreed, 14% (30) strongly agreed, 11% (23) disagreed, while 10% (21) strongly disagreed. Findings show that most of the respondents (64%) agreed that Christians who do not give their resources to God are robbing Him and deceiving themselves. Giving demonstrates love and personal relationship with God. This can reveal our commitment to Christ and his service on earth. Therefore, those who fail to give God their resources fail to acknowledge and appreciate the purpose of God in blessing them.

Findings from the study show that 49% (106) of the total respondents disagreed that those who fail to serve God and others are being controlled by their wealth, 19.3% agreed, 15% strongly disagreed, 12% (25) neither agreed nor disagreed, while 6% (13) strongly agreed. Findings showed that most of the respondents (63%) disagreed that those who fail to serve God and others were controlled by their wealth. This could be attributed to the fact that some people were overwhelmed with responsibilities and care hence, they had no time to interact with others in the church or in other fellowships.

Study findings reveal that 33% (71) of the total respondents agreed that the problem with wealth is the attitude that accompanies it not the riches themselves, 30% (63) strongly disagreed, 23% (50) agreed, 13% (28) neither agreed nor disagreed, while 2% (4) strongly agreed. Sixty-three percent of the total respondents disagreed because the

Bible does not oppose wealth for God is the creator of all riches in the world. He gave great wealth to His people in the Bible. What God opposes is the evil attitude of greed, pride, and covetousness, which normally devastate many spiritual lives. This explains why the respondents disagreed that wealth in itself is not the problem rather the ungodly conditions it usually brings.

4.4.4.4 Stewardship and Work

Table 4.19: Stewardship and Work

Assessment areas on whole-life stewardship	Percentages/frequency				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
Christians should regularly assess how they spend their resources (material, time, talents, etc)	9.6% (21)	6.9% (15)	9.2% (20)	56.0% (122)	18.3% (40)
Gifts and talents are for serving God and others	9.6% (21)	12.8% (28)	18.8% (41)	34.9% (76)	23.9% (52)
The way Christians spent their money, time, gifts, and talents reflect their commitment to God	4.1% (9)	6.0% (13)	6.0% (13)	61.5% (134)	22.5% (49)
Financial stewardship includes budgeting, investments, saving, and freedom from debts	5.0% (11)	11.0% (24)	15.1% (33)	57.3% (125)	11.5% (25)

KEY: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA)

Study findings indicate that 56% (122) agreed that Christians should regularly assess how they spend their resources (material, time, talents, etc), 18% (40) strongly agreed, 10% (21) strongly disagreed, 9% (20) neither agreed nor disagreed, while 6.9% (15) disagreed. Findings imply that most of the respondents (74%) agreed that Christians should regularly assess how they spend their resources. Proper management of resources shows that Christians are being accountable and willing to surrender to God what He has entrusted to them with. Christians can realize material resource when they manage their

resources to save more for future investments; therefore, living by faith is not being careless with one's time and spending.

Findings reveal that 35% (76) of the total respondents agreed that Gifts and talents are for serving God and others, 24% (52) strongly agreed 19% (41) neither agreed nor disagreed, 13% (28) disagreed, while 10% (21) strongly disagreed. Findings show that 59% of the total respondents understand the value of spiritual gifts and natural talents as abilities that God gives for service to edify others and to advance his Kingdom on earth.

Study findings show that 62% (134) of the total respondents agreed that the way Christians spent their money, time, gifts, and talents reflect their commitment to God, 23% (49) strongly agreed, 6% (13) neither agreed nor disagreed, 6% (13) disagreed and 4% (9) strongly disagreed. Findings show that most of the respondents, 84% agreed that the way Christians spent their money, time, gifts and talents reflect their commitment to God. When Christians totally trust God, they surrender to Him and fulfill his requirements. They invest their quality time in Kingdom matters; use their wealth and talents in ways that honour God.

Findings reveal that 57% (125) of the total respondents agreed that financial stewardship includes budgeting, investments, saving, and freedom from debts, 15% (33) neither agreed nor disagreed, 12% (25) strongly agreed, while 11% (24) disagreed. Most of the respondents (69%) agreed that financial stewardship involves a number of things which include budgeting investments, saving, and freedom from debts. This implies that

acquisition of material success is not chance rather; it involves skills and aptitude from God, time and financial discipline.

4.4.5 Intervening variables

The study considered two intervening variables, current discipleship methods in AGC, and economic levels of AGC members. The study wanted to understand whether the variables had any influence on the independent (popular PGT, biblical theology of Material prosperity, and cultural concepts that accommodate popular GT in Africa) and dependent variables (whole-life stewardship in AGC).

The current discipleship methods in AGC teach whole-life stewardship in a general sense, as an act of being responsible for resources that belong to God. The manual does not have exhaustive teaching on material resources and does not address stewardship of time, abilities, and talents. With such limitation, methods of disseminating knowledge through teaching, preaching, evangelism, discipleship, Bible Study, and Sunday school is minimal. This implies that the current infiltration of popular PGT through media and literature can expose AGC members to confusion on how to demonstrate whole-life stewardship. This makes some of AGC pastors and their church members to misinterpret and misuse scriptures wrongly. An instance is where many respondents considered wealthy pastors to have a stronger divine connection with God than those who are poor.

The findings revealed that the majority of AGC members earn less than 50 dollars per month while most pastors earn between 50 and 150 dollars each month. This may imply that the congregants will be highly tempted to spend much time seeking for how to

meet their immediate needs either outside the church or by giving to PG teacher through ‘seed sowing’ for financial miracles. The cultural concern that poverty is a curse poses likelihood to lure many people towards remedies even from wrong places. To those who are committed and surrendered to God and understand that God can work through sufferings and lack, have chosen to remain faithful and trust him to meet their needs.

4.5 Testing Hypotheses

4.5.1. Relationship between Popular PGT and Whole-life Stewardship

The study applied the paired t-test to examine relationships between popular PGT on wealth and whole-life stewardship since the two variables are numerical. Results in the table proved that popular PGT is associated with the whole-life stewardship (Sig 2 – tailed = 0.00) whereby an increase in the average years of popular PGT to 3 years would lead to the increase in impacting the whole-life stewardship to 3.4. This implies that when pastors continue with popular prosperity gospel teaching more Christians would engage in activities that advance the doctrine of PGT in the church.

Table 4.20: Relationship between Popular PGT on Wealth and Whole-Life Stewardship

				Paired Differences		t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviat ion	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Stewardship - Objective_1	3.36 2.95	.74278	.31163	.50993	8.165	217	.000

Hypothesis Statement One

Hypothesis statement one which states that *the prosperity gospel teaching has not significantly imbibed the whole-life stewardship of AGC members in Kampala Area Uganda* is rejected, as the results obtained clearly reflect an association between the variables (sig 2-tailed =.000).

4.5.2 Relationship between Biblical Theology of MP and Whole-life Stewardship

The relationship between biblical theologies of Material prosperity in Relation to Whole-life Stewardship was tested using the paired t-test since the two variables are numeric. Results in the table prove that biblical theology of material prosperity in relation to whole life stewardship is not associated with the whole life of stewardship (Sig 2 - tailed= 0.425). This implies that when pastors preach the biblical theology of material prosperity, it would have no effect on a Christians' life of serving the Lord.

Table 4.21: Relationship between Biblical Theology of MP and Whole-life Stewardship

				Paired Differences		t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Stewardship - Objective_2	3.36 3.33	.50993	.04049	.09565	.799	217	.425

Hypothesis Statement Two

Hypothesis statement two, which states that *there is no effect of biblical theology on whole-life stewardship among AGC members in the Kampala area* is accepted because results (Sig.2–tailed=0.425) prove that there exists no relationship between the variables.

4.5.3 Relationship between Cultural Concepts that Accommodate PGT and Whole-life Stewardship

The relationship between cultural concepts that Accommodate Popular Prosperity Gospel Teaching and Whole life stewardship was tested using the paired t-test since the two variables are numeric. Results in the table prove that cultural teachings that accommodate popular prosperity gospel teaching are associated with the whole-life of stewardship (Sig 2 -tailed=0.000). Whereby an increase in the average years of cultural teaching that accommodate PGT to 3 years would also lead to an increase in the average years of stewardship to 3.4. This implies that when pastors continue with the concepts of cultural teaching that accommodate PGT, Christians would continue with advancing the teaching and life of culture contrary to whole-life stewardship.

Table 4.22: Relationship between Cultural Concepts that Accommodates PGT and Whole-life Stewardship

				Paired Differences		T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Stewardship - Objective_3	3.362.97	.71149	.30176	.49171	8.233	217	.000

Hypothesis Statement Three

Hypothesis statement three which states that “There is no statistically significant consequence of African culture on whole-life stewardship in AGC, Kampala area is rejected because results obtained clearly reflect an association between the variables (Sig. 2-tailed = .000).

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This section presents the discussion, a summary of the research findings, conclusions and recommendations drawn from the study. The study sought to investigate the influence of prosperity gospel teaching (PGT) on whole-life stewardship in Uganda a case of Africa Gospel Church (AGC), Kampala.

5.2 DISCUSSIONS

5.2.1 Popular Prosperity Gospel Teaching on Wealth

5.2.1.1 The perception of AGC on wealth as Taught by PGT

Findings in Table 4.2 showed that 65% of the respondents supported that born-again Christians are children of God and are entitled to material wealth. Mary Namukasa noted:

*God is the Creator and the owner of all things. He is rich; he provides and gives all good things. Abraham is one of those he promised wealth Genesis 12:1. He created human beings whom he loves and wishes to prosper. We are his heirs, representatives, and caretakers of his wealth here on earth. What he wants from us, Christians is to seek him first and his righteousness according to Mt. 6:33. He wants his children to be happy by enjoying what he created and to support the mission of the church.*³⁰⁸

The view that Christians are entitled to prosperity agrees with the findings of Ebenezer Obadare who asserts that MP is an aftermath of spiritual transformation

³⁰⁸ Mary Namukasa, FGD, at AGC Katale on 19 September 2018.

and therefore mandatory for every Christian.³⁰⁹ However, few of the respondents disagreed with the above concept that MP is for all believers. Emily Kyalisima argued that *“God does not want people to store their riches on earth because they eventually lose them. In addition, wealth can lead to pride which may cause one to lose eternity. To Christians, material wealth is not a guarantee.”*³¹⁰ This concurs with Thomas Oden’s understanding of Paul’s teachings in (2Co. 6:10) that the suffering of Jesus Christ did not eliminate suffering and lack from a Christian’s life.³¹¹

Sixty-five percent of the respondents in Table 4:2 agreed that God gets disappointed when his children fail to prosper. Daniel Kumanya noted that *“God desires prosperity for his people according to Jer. 29:11. Most poor Christians demonstrate a weakness or lack of faith in God. Prosperity is one of the promises of God to us and poverty may mean living in a sin (s) of disobedience.”*³¹² However, some pastors said that God is never disappointed when a Christian is poor because he is the one who determines whom to bless with wealth.³¹³ In agreement with the findings, Shane Clifton argues that the context of Paul’s letter to the Macedonian Christians who gave to the needy churches reveals that the

³⁰⁹ Ebenezer E. Obadare, “‘Raising righteous billionaires’: The prosperity gospel reconsidered’, *HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 72(4), a3571. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v72i4.357>, 2016, 1.

³¹⁰ Emily Kyalisima, FGD, AGC Kisugu, 15 September 2018.

³¹¹ Thomas C. Oden, *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1972), 135.

³¹² Daniel Kumanya, FGD, AGD Katale, 19 September 2018.

³¹³ Comments from questionnaires (AGC Masese 20 September 2018; AGC Kisugu, 15 September 2018, and AGC Banda 24 September 2018)

believers were not rich materially, but rather spiritually (2Co. 8:3).³¹⁴ Abiola Mbamalu, observes that the Macedonians modeled Christ's life of sacrificial love and generosity.³¹⁵ Thus, using the above verse to promote PG is indecorous to the biblical truth of whole-life stewardship and is not a justification mechanism to AGC church.

Majority of the respondents, 47% in Table 4.2 agreed that it is fine to preach on material riches as rights of God's children. Leonard Sserubula commented that *"God's will is for his people to prosper as long as the preacher's motive for preaching is right. Material prosperity (MP) is important in promoting the work of the Kingdom of God and advancing the gospel of salvation."*³¹⁶ On the contrary, some respondents contended that *MP could divert the Christians' focus from God to worldly goals.* Emily Nantumbwe comments reflect the comments, of the majority. *"Satan uses wealth mostly to mislead righteous people. For example, when he tempted Jesus, he used material wealth. Preaching on MP creates an unbalanced gospel in the body of Christ."*³¹⁷ The danger of promoting the theology in AGC is that it can easily overshadow the discipline of growing in whole-life stewardship, which would jeopardize the church's mission of evangelizing and making disciples for Christ.

³¹⁴ Shane Clifton, "Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analyzing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia," *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies* (Brill Academic Publishers, 2009), 27.

³¹⁵ Abiola Mbamalu, "Prosperity a part of the atonement": An interpretation of 2 Corinthians 8:9', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 36(1), Art. #1418, 8 pages. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ve.v36i1.1418>, (2015), 44 (Retrieved on 10/04/2016).

³¹⁶ Leonard Sserubula, FGD at AGC Nakigalala, 7 October 2018.

³¹⁷ Emily Nantumbwe, comment from questionnaire, AGC Bukasa, 29 September, 2018.

Forty-six percent of the respondents in Table 4.12 disagreed that the good news for the poor in the Bible includes material wealth. The respondents equated salvation to the love and grace of God and not a success. Most of the respondents claimed that God wants the poor to prosper (3John verse 2). Jesse Ntege said, *“We also want to come out of poverty. The Bible informs believers on how to trust God for salvation, spiritual growth, and principles to work, which brings prosperity.”*³¹⁸ On the contrary, *“Pastor Kasim, of Bugiri said, “The Good News only relates to things of the spirit, not material wealth. It is about salvation through Christ and living a godly life.”* However, Simon Coleman has a divergent opinion when he asserts that God saves his people and prospers them materially in order to reveal His glory to other nation so that they too would worship the true God (Deuteronomy 28:10-13).³¹⁹

Sixty-six percent of the respondents in Table 4.2 said that living an extravagant life is not a sign of success. Comments from the questionnaires generally showed that an extravagant life *depicts the lack of God’s knowledge, selfishness, and spiritual immaturity.* The majority therefore contradicted Oyedepo’s doctrine of MP, which advocates for both wealth and extravagant living.³²⁰ The few respondents who agreed with Oyedepo attributed extravagance to a live testimony that God blesses those who trust him. Jonathan Mukisa said that,

God may allow someone to be poor. However, when God blesses materially one becomes a living testimony of his grace, love and mercy to

³¹⁸Jesse Ntege, FGD, AGC Masese, 20 September 2018.

³¹⁹ Simon Coleman, *The Globalisation of Charismatic Christianity: Spreading the Gospel of Prosperity* (Cambridge: University Press, 2000), 42.

³²⁰ David Oyedepo, “The prosperity Gospel in Africa: Expecting Miracles,” *Christian Century* by Paul Gifford, July, 10, 2007, 21.

*the world. By being extravagant, people will see the blessing without one talking about it and will come to God. This provides an occasion of witnessing to them about salvation and his care towards his people.*³²¹

In agreement with the few respondents, Mumford, referring to Ecc.5:18-19 claims that Christians should not feel guilty for being rich if they rightly obtained the possessions and are spending the wealth in harmless ways. This has made the ‘sowing of seeds’ slogan commonly known in the local Luganda language, *kitwale mu linya lya Yesu*³²² to become a dictum to many believers. The danger of *kitwale* is that stewardship will hinge on selfishness and personal gratification and not on the love and relationship with God.

5.2.1.2 AGC perception of faith and wealth

Results revealed that 47% of the respondents in Table 4.3 refuted that material poverty comes due to lack of faith. Respondents across AGCs presented several general views on faith and MP, which ranged from lack of jobs to the will of God. Conversely, some contended that faith is what enables believers to receive from God. However, a sizeable number (45%) supported that those who are poor lack faith. Juliet Namuddu noted, “*For one reaps from what he/she confesses as a spiritual proof that he has faith in God as the provider.*”³²³ Miriah Federesi also asserted that “*We should claim Scriptures when our motives for asking are pure and when we know that it is God’s will to bless us.*” Several preachers in Uganda claim that when a believer spends much time praying, hearing prosperity messages, and ‘sowing seeds’, they receive wealth. Jones and

³²¹Jonathan Mukisa, FGD, AGC Banda, 24 September 2018.

³²²*Kitwale mu linya lya Yesu (take it in Jesus name)* is a common phrase used by preachers in PGT churches in Uganda (and mostly in Kampala) to mean that members who have faith and are ‘sowing seeds’ should take their desired miracle(s) in the name of Jesus. Members respond in loud confession, “*kitwala mu linya lya Yesu*” (I take it in Jesus name).

³²³Juliet Namudu, FGD, AGC Nakigalala, 7 October 2018.

Woodbridge quote prosperity preacher Gloria Copeland. “Give \$ 10.00 and receive \$ 1,000.00; give \$ 1,000.00 and receive \$ 100,000.” She continues to say, “In short, Mark 10:30 is a very good deal.”³²⁴ Therefore, confessing and claiming God’s promises to acquire wealth may contribute to Christians being irresponsible in their use of time, skills, finances, and energies. This would curtail their chances of being responsible stewards.

Fifty-one percent of the respondents in Table 4.3 averred that frequent teaching on faith should be encouraged for believers to be successful. Eddy Wafula referred to Romans 10:17, “*Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God*” and explained that “*faith builds, gives hope, confidence, and strength to believers to trust in God, and to work hard to get wealth.*”³²⁵ One of the believers who opposed the statement was Sooki Rebecca. She argued, “*Jesus did not teach on faith as a means for material acquisition. Teaching on wealth can encourage laziness because believers will spend too much time in churches listening to PG messages and praying for miracles from God.*”³²⁶ In support, Lisa Withrow highlights that Jesus commended the Smyrna Church members for their unwavering commitment to God despite their sufferings. “I know your afflictions and your poverty – yet you are rich (Re. 2: 9).”³²⁷ This indicates that the Christians at Smyrna, though poor, possessed riches far more valuable than any treasure in the world. Therefore, there is a limited association between faith and wealth.

³²⁴ David Jones and Russell Woodbridge S., 2011. *Health, Wealth & Happiness: Has the Prosperity Gospel Overshadowed the Gospel of Christ?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2011).

³²⁵ Eddy Wafula, FGD, AGC Bukasa, 29 September 2018.

³²⁶ Rebecca Sooki, comment from questionnaire, AGC Bugiri, 22 September 2018.

³²⁷ Lisa R. Withrow, “Success and the Prosperity Gospel: From Commodification to Transformation a Wesleyan Perspective,” *Journal of Religious Leadership*, Vol. 6, no. 2 (Fall 2007): 27.

Fifty-two percent of the respondents in Table 4.3 supported that pastors should encourage testimonies on how to get rich. Joseph Ssentongo testified that,

*Testimonies are good because they inspire us and give us hope that God will bless us. It is a matter of being faithful and patient. God has blessed my friends with good jobs, promotions, and visas to go and work abroad, and I am waiting for my turn. I am glad that God is a practical and loving God who will not leave me to shame.*³²⁸

This testimony harmonizes well with PGT tenet that insinuates that when Christians hear testimonies, they can trust God for their material miracles.³²⁹ Nthamburi notes that the histories of disintegrating social, economic, political and religious periods in Uganda, between 1971 and 1980s were fertile ground for people to search for solutions to their challenges. People were seeking for hope and stability.³³⁰

However, some respondents disagreed that MP testimonies should be encouraged in the church for they are unbiblical and preachers who encourage such testimonies are duping their naive followers. A testimony from Kasim Damulila elucidates the point.

I come from a very poor family. I lived a life of hopelessness and uncertainty because I did not know what the future held for me. A friend told me that if I went to where he attends Church, God would make me rich through his pastor's prayers. The first day I attended church, the pastor asked those who had testimonies to go forward. There were narratives of how God had blessed his people with cars and land in miraculous ways. At the end of the service, I went forward to be prayed for by the pastor who prophesied over my life. He said that I was going to be exceedingly blessed with a house in a year's time. After the years, I have not seen any tangible results. Life has continued to be even worse since then. After four years now, I am still waiting. These preachers are liars

³²⁸ Joseph Ssentongo, a lay member, comments from questionnaire, AGC Nakigalala, 7 October 2018.

³²⁹ David, Ogungbile "African Pentecostalism and the Prosperity Gospel" in *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*, Clifton R. Clarke, ed., (Oregon: Pickwick Publication, 2014), 45.

³³⁰ Zablon Nthamburi, ed., *From Mission to Church: A Handbook of Christianity in East Africa* (Nairobi, Kenya: Uzima Press, 1995), 106-107.

*and thieves. I do not believe them and I urge my friends not to believe such pastors.*³³¹

This implies that those who are seeking solutions to their life challenges will be gullible to PGT and endanger their commitment to whole-life stewardship.

Sixty-three percent of the respondents in Table 4.3 narrated that wealth comes to those who know God's promises. Ben Okurut noted, *"To those who know God's promises and are faithful to them, God gives them wealth (Mat. 6:3 and De.28:1-14). When we give to God our money, he blesses us. For nothing is impossible with Him. God owns silver, gold, and all that are in the world. Those who work hard, he blesses them with MP."*³³² Oyedepo asserts that when Christians fail to "sow the seeds" by faith, they attract all manner of misfortunes in life.³³³ One of those who opposed the "sowing of seed" to ministries and to "the anointed man" of God said, *"God gives material wealth to those he is pleased to bless. God's promises are mostly spiritual as opposed to material success as advocated by the PG adherents."*³³⁴ This implies that AGC Christians would be tempted to go to those who are wealthy in PGT thinking that they have much faith to help them realize MP.

Findings in Table 4.3 revealed that majority of the respondents disagreed (56%) that material riches prove that one has much faith in a wealthy God. Their claims are stated in Jael Nalubale's comment:

³³¹Dickson Kayanja, FGD, AGC Katale, 20 September 2018.

³³²Benson Okurut, FGD, AGC Kisugu 15 September 2018.

³³³Oyedepo O., *Understanding Financial Prosperity* (Logos: Dominion Publishing House, 2005), 30.

³³⁴Jack Kayihura, comments from questionnaire, AGC Bugiri, 22 September 2018.

*God gives faith and wealth as gifts according to his will. Jesus was not rich materially while on earth. Yet he had matchless faith in God. It is hard work, financial discipline, and knowledge of how to do business that brings wealth. Those who associate wealth with faith are wrong for even Satan gives wealth to those who serve him.*³³⁵

AGC associates wealth to faith, yet the Bible does not acknowledge the link between the two. Therefore, the church will need to be equipped with the knowledge on whole-life stewardship to transform its current paradigm on material possessions and faith.

5.2.1.3 AGC perception of symbols in garnering Wealth

Concerning the use of physical contact (laying on hands and handkerchiefs) as a means to increase faith for riches, most respondents (69%) in Table 4.4 disagreed that it is biblical to associate those elements with faith. Jacky Nambanvu asserted, *“God listens to prayers and rewards hard work of his children and not the practices of physical contact to gain wealth.”* She continues to say that, *“Some PG preachers just take advantage of those who do not know God’s word. Problems in life do not require such practices. Christ did not use them and so his followers should desist from such doctrines.”*³³⁶ Furthermore, sixty-seven percent of the respondents in Table 4:4 disagreed that Symbols such as oil and water are useful in a Christian worship service for increasing congregants’ faith for material gain. Pastor Solomon Ssentamu commented that *“The physical elements cannot help one’s faith to acquire wealth and therefore*

³³⁵Jael Nalubale, FGD, AGC Bugiri, 22 September 2018.

³³⁶Jacky Nambavu, comment from questionnaire, AGC Banda, 24 September 2018.

contradict the Scriptures, and misrepresent the will of God.”³³⁷ This means that AGC believers deem those who use oil and water in their Christian faith for wealth as contradicting the Bible. Anointing in the Bible was used for those assuming public offices (Kings and prophets), physical healing and for other things to signify the spiritual presence of the Holy Spirit.

5.2.1.4 AGC perception on Material Lack as taught by PG Advocates

Majority of the respondents (65%) disagreed that poverty is a sign that someone is under a curse (Table 4:5). The FGD held at Kisugu attributed poverty to *“Lack of a job, uninformed mindset, God’s timing, working hard, lack of prayers, and understanding God’s principles concerning work, injustices, and others. Some cited lack of tithing and giving towards God’s work.”*³³⁸ In agreement with the findings, Nicholas Williman argued that Christians who were troubled by poverty should not consider themselves cursed.³³⁹ Nevertheless, twenty-five percent pointed to generational curses as a contributing factor to a life of lack. This explains different responses regarding PG towards whole-life stewardship.

Fifty-nine percent of the respondents in (Table 4:5) avowed that special deliverance prayer is important to avert poverty. In agreement, Jed Ngamita said, *“Sometimes, poverty comes because of cultural factors and people need the ministry of exorcism to overcome material lack. Those who are bewitched desperately need*

³³⁷ Pastor Solomon Ssentamu, Comments from a questionnaire, AGC Masese, 20 September 2018.

³³⁸ Pastor Abel Kawesi, FGD, AGC Kisugu, 15 September 2018.

³³⁹ Nicholas, Walliman. *Your Undergraduate Dissertation: The Essential Guide for Success*. Washington DC: SAGE, 2011.

deliverance prayers (exorcism), fasting and biblical teachings.”³⁴⁰ Many people in Kampala flock churches where ‘deliverances’ from poverty are conducted since many believe that poverty comes because one is either cursed, bewitched or disobedient to the voice of God’s anointed servants who are his prophets and special representatives on earth. However, those from the FGD who disagreed that a faithful believer needs exorcism had this to say, “*Christians do not need special deliverance prayers to avert poverty. What is essential is the knowledge of God’s Word on possessions and to act accordingly*”³⁴¹ This resonates with Peter Oyugi who noted that the phenomenon of deliverance from poverty to get blessings based on spiritual disciplines is strange and has to do with ATR religious framework.³⁴² Depending on spiritual exorcism to interfere with normal work or God-ordained natural laws to meet his peoples’ needs does not reflect responsible whole-life stewardship.

From the study, 52% of the respondents in Table 4:5 expressed that salvation from sin involves freedom from poverty. The following statement illustrates the perceptions of those who participated:

*Sin binds someone in poverty. Salvation frees us from both the spiritual and the material lack. Our God is a God of prospers his people and he does things based on ones’ faith. Salvation also gives wisdom to the recipients of God’s grace to know how to wisely acquire and use material resources. When Christ cried on the cross and said, it is finished, even poverty was included among the things he finished on the cross.*³⁴³

³⁴⁰Jed Ngamita, FGD, AGC Bukasa, 29 September 2018.

³⁴¹Moses Karuna, FGD, AGC Masese, 20 September 2018.

³⁴²Peter Mbede Oyugi, “Why prosperity Gospel Preachers Are Prospering while Most of their Members are suffering.” *In Christianity and Suffering, African Perspective*, ed. Rodney L. Reed, ASET series., 2017.

³⁴³Paul Akiki, FGD, AGC Bukasa, 29 September 2018.

Three-quarters of AGC pastors who answered the questionnaires opposed the statement that salvation involves freedom from poverty. Valeria Namuddu asserts, *“Poverty is a mind-set. Salvation deals with spiritual matters and not material wealth. Those who work hard can acquire riches. Salvation does not remove suffering.”*³⁴⁴ In line with study findings, Oyugi is convinced that the gospel makes the audience better and wiser besides bringing a transformed life. It changes perspective, and believers are empowered to think wisely, leading to a great positive development in their lives.³⁴⁵ Though it is hard to make a strong assertion from the N.T. that salvation involves freedom from poverty, it is logical to conclude that salvation can have an indirect positive influence on one’s income. This implies that if AGCs disciplined their members on biblical theology on stewardship God would bless the members with wealth.

Fifty percent of the respondents in Figure 4.5 articulated that material wealth does not always indicate favour from God. The FGD noted, *“God loves everyone. His favour is to reveal Christ more and to empower his children to walk in his purposes. It is wrong to attach wealth to favour. Satan can also give wealth to those who agree with him.”*³⁴⁶ In agreement with the study findings, Oden noted that John Wesley stressed that in the Bible, God does not always provide wealth as a sign of his favour; neither is poverty an indication of his punishment.³⁴⁷ The association between righteousness and wealth is even more tenuous in the N.T. Bradley Koch insists that in the N.T., wealth does

³⁴⁴ Valeria Namudu, comments from questionnaire, AGC Nakigalala, 7 October 2018.

³⁴⁵ Oyugi, 46.

³⁴⁶ Samson Amoti, FGD, AGC Banda, 24 September 2018. Lay members and pastors in AGC Kisugu, AGC Masese, AGC Bugiri, and AGC Katale also expressed the same sentiment.

³⁴⁷ Thomas C. Oden *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1972), 249-251.

not often relate to a life of obedience.³⁴⁸ Nevertheless, those lay members and pastors who related faith to wealth said, *God is rich and his favour makes people rich both spiritually and materially. Good examples include Job and Abraham. Unless God's favour is on a Christian, none of what he does will succeed even being materially rich.* God's favour is not always measured by how much material possessions one has, but by how deep one's relationship is with the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence, if AGC members continued to relate wealth to God's favour, many who lack MP would be discouraged and fail to serve God faithfully.

5.2.1.5 The perception of AGC on methods PGT use to acquire wealth

The view of the majority of the respondents 46% in (Table 4.6) said that believers should listen to messages of prosperity to prosper materially. In support, one of those in FGD said, *"The PG messages inspire hope, encourage hard work, and equip people with knowledge of God concerning wealth."*³⁴⁹ Those who opposed the view asserted, *"PGT does not balance the gospel of God. Besides, it misleads people on the important principles of heaven (Col. 3) but instead, promotes worldly interests."*³⁵⁰ The appeal to go to the PG churches plays a significant role among many urban Ugandans who struggle to survive. The danger of uncritical listening can create perpetual dependency on the "anointed man of God" and replacing the Word of God with the views of men. This perception would curtail the spirit of whole-life stewardship and negatively affect the Church.

³⁴⁸Bradley Koch, "Who are the Prosperity Gospel Adherents?" *Journal of Ideology* Vol. 36 (2014): 11.

³⁴⁹Jimmy Sserunkuma, FGD, AGC Bugiri, 22 September 2018.

³⁵⁰ Kim Ojambo FGD, AGC Kisugu, 15 September 2018.

More study findings in Table 4:6 revealed that 53% of the respondents disagreed that Christians should repeatedly claim physical prosperity to get more wealth. Cosmos Sseguja argued that *“Christians should work hard and not claim the material wealth. What is important is to love God and focus on him. God has his timing for everything, including giving of wealth.”* Peter acknowledges that PGT ties its identity and value on much wealth and it makes the economically disenfranchised to resort to repeated claiming of wealth.³⁵¹ A good example is a case where members are encouraged to utter positive confessions like, “I am a millionaire”, “I am blessed and exceedingly rich”, “Let the poor say I am Rich”, “Name it and claim it” and so on. Mathew 6:32 shows that God has warned believers against the love of money and chasing richness.³⁵²

In support of the above prompt statement, a lay leader from FGD, Doreen Mwanje, stated, *“The Bible says that whatever a Christian asks he will receive. As long as what we claim is not sin, God will grant it.”*³⁵³ This contradicts the Biblical teachings on stewardship. Hence, Christians should not use a mere endless circle of repetition of promises as vehicles for material success. Rather, they should emulate Apostle Paul who lived and showed a good example of contentment by working hard and supporting other Christians and did not use incantation of positive words as a means to gain MP.

The findings in Table 4.6 showed that the majority in 59% of the respondents disagreed that Christians should support PG preachers with their money to succeed materially. David Kumanya highlighted that *“God exhorts Christians to seek first the*

³⁵¹ Peter R. Yong “Prosperity Teaching in an African Context,” *African Journey of Evangelical Theology*, vol. 1 no. 1 (1996): 10.

³⁵² Ibid., 9.

³⁵³ Doreen Mwanje, FGD, AGC Nakigalala, 7 October 2018.

*Kingdom of God and his righteousness and receive other blessings, including material wealth. Even if someone decided to support such preachers, God would not be obligated to those who gave.*³⁵⁴ Those in support argued that when they give to PGT advocates, “*it is as if we are giving directly back to God. What we sow is what we reap. If we have faith, we should give to them trusting God to give us back. The more one gives money the more he/she gets and what is received will help in running the ministry.*”³⁵⁵ The view purports that those who want to be wealthy will continue to promote PGT through their giving. Obadare argued that PGT has failed to avail realistic solutions to the economic crisis bedevilling the African context.³⁵⁶ Hence, the need to inform AGC Christians on the proper giving that honours only God.

Fifty-five percent of the respondents in Table 4.6 related wealth to how much one gives to God in the form of “sowing a seed.” Different respondents had varied opinions on the concept of “sowing a seed.” However, the majority related sowing to hard work.

*God blesses those who “sow seeds” by faith. However, they must work to realize the material blessings. God responds positively to those who give towards his work. For example, by causing an increase in one’s salary, getting a new job, and the like, God has often done this to those who give faithfully. God wants to bless us with both material and spiritual welfare.*³⁵⁷

As captured in the literature section (chapter two), though some verses in the Bible seem to advance the sowing and reaping principle as Scriptural, many biblical scholars are

³⁵⁴ David Kumanya, FGD, AGC Bugiri, 22 September 2018.

³⁵⁵ Zephroza Nakayiza, FGD, AGC Banda, 24 September 2018.

³⁵⁶ E. Obadare, “Raising righteous billionaires: The prosperity gospel reconsidered,” *HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies* vol. 72, no 4 (2016): 3571.

³⁵⁷ Rose Komakech, FGD, AGC Masese, 30 September 2018.

reluctant to take the passages literally, because they manifest ostensible ambiguities. Hence, Bible interpreters must follow hermeneutical methods of doing exegesis to understand what the Bible meant then and how they relate to contemporary Christians to avoid inevitable exploitation of ignorant Christians and hence miss the heart of whole-life stewardship.

5.2.2 Biblical Theology of MP in Relation to Whole Life Stewardship

5.2.2.1 AGC Biblical perception of Wealth

Findings in Table 4:7 demonstrated that 52% of those who participated agreed that the Lord chooses who is to be wealthy or poor. Mercy Kobusingye contended that *“God has the final authority on the destiny of his people, whether poverty or riches. Jesus said the poor shall always be with us. Again, if someone is a poor manager of God’s resources, God may decide to take the riches away.”* She further claimed, *“Wealth depends on an individual’s faith in God and hard work. God has good plans for all his children and poverty is not part of that good plan.”*³⁵⁸ Christians should work hard not with a mindset of being wealthy but to meet their needs and those of others in response to being good stewards.

Forty-five percent of the respondents 4.7 indicated that spiritual and material prosperity is not always God’s will for all his children. Pastor Haman Parajo claimed, *“If a Christian has MP it helps to serve God better than if she/he is poor. God wants his children to possess both material and spiritual blessings that can make their lives*

³⁵⁸ Mercy Kobusingye, FGD, AGC Bugiri, 22 September 2018.

*comfortable.*³⁵⁹ In consensus with the study findings, Omri Elisha asserted that the Scriptures clearly demonstrate God's desire for material well-being and prosperity for his children. God's ultimate plan to see humanity prosper in his presence frames the story of the Bible.³⁶⁰ Forty percent of the respondents disagreed with the statement. Brandon Seguja said, "*God blesses us, Christians with wealth according to his will. Sometimes he allows poverty on his people to deepen their love and trust in him so as to become a witness to his mercies and love.*"³⁶¹ The Church needs to come to a sobering reminder that an ardent attempt to equate the Christian faith with MP undermines the heart of the N.T. perspective on the gospel. AGC needs to understand that while the proper acquisition of wealth is commendable, God requires the right attitude and motivation for its application. Only then, will the church be good custodians over God's gifts.

Table 4.7 revealed that the majority of the respondents in 56% stated that God at times uses material poverty to test the faith of Christians. The life trajectory of Job in the Bible was a key reference cited by the respondents. *Vanessa Akarang noted, "God allowed Satan to test Job and he may choose the same method for his children today."*³⁶² In line with the study findings, Jones and Woodbridge argue that Job had great faith yet God allowed Satan to test him and he eventually lost all his children, servants, health and livelihood.³⁶³ Majority (33%) of those who opposed to the statement (were mainly from AGC Nakigalala and AGC Bukasa) said, *God, cannot test his children with bad things.*

³⁵⁹ Haman Parajo, questionnaire, AGC Banda 24 September 2018.

³⁶⁰ Omri Elisha, *Moral Ambition: Mobilization and Social Outreach in Evangelical Mega Churches* (University of California Press, 2011), 40.

³⁶¹ Brandon Seguja, comments from questionnaire, AGC Nakigalala, 7 October 2018.

³⁶² Vanessa Akarang, comment from Questionnaire, AGC Bukasa 29 September.

³⁶³ Jones and Woodbridge, Kindle Location, 1321.

From several examples from the Bible (Job, Ezekiel, Joseph, Paul) at times, God permits trials among his people to enable them to experience an intimate fellowship with Him. Therefore, whole-life stewardship should continually enable reconstitution of spiritual growth to mirror the commitment and the faith believers place in their God.

Table 4.7 showed that the majority of the respondents (91%) agreed that God has equal love for both the rich and the poor. Almost all the respondents agreed that God loves the poor as well as the rich. The FGD in various churches attested that “*God does not segregate anyone because all people bear his image and likeness. Jesus died for all to demonstrate his love for the world.*” When it comes to wealth and poverty, generally “*it is about hard work and financial discipline that mostly influence material acquisition.*” Nevertheless, those who are good stewards yet remain poor should be encouraged because, as Hilary Kawoya noted, “*What matters is good stewardship before God.*”³⁶⁴ In agreement with the study findings, Fernando cites the preaching of Paul in 1Timothy 6:6-7, “*But godliness with contentment is a great gain.*”³⁶⁵ This implies that in the N.T., beyond necessity, riches are not a big deal. Therefore, God favours neither the poor nor the rich but He cares more about everyone’s spiritual state than worldly gains.

5.2.2.2 AGC Perceptions on Jesus teachings on wealth

In relation to the study findings in Table 4:8, the majority of the respondents (47%) disagreed that Jesus encouraged a life of riches. Majority of the pastors, who participated in the research, stressed that the Lord discouraged wealth. They claimed that

³⁶⁴ Hilary Kawoya, comment from questionnaire, AGC Bugiri, 22 September 2018.

³⁶⁵ Fernando Ajith, “Jesus: The Message and Model of Mission,” *Global Missiology for the 21st Century*, William D. Taylor, ed., (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 209-210.

Jesus taught, *that it is hard for a rich man to love God with all his heart. Riches can bring divided attention. No wonder, Jesus encouraged the rich young man to sell all he had and give to the poor because the riches had become an idol in his heart.*” In consensus, Atkinson noted that Jesus did not limit himself to the humble in the society but he also regularly interacted with the religious elites such as the scribes, Sadducees, and Pharisees, as well as members of the Sanhedrin, and Joseph of Arimathea besides others. Therefore, AGCs should emulate the example of Jesus as they manage God’s resources.

Furthermore, 75% of respondents in Table 4.8 supported that the primary reason why people get wealth for the good purpose of meet the needs of other people. Esther Nakyiganda noted, *“We bless the needy – the poor because when we do that we do it to the Lord. People begin to see God’s love through us and hence a way of serving others. This is the reason for God’s blessings upon our lives.”*³⁶⁶ It is therefore clear that everyone is a steward of all the material possessions, time, abilities, and talents God has liberally provided.

5.2.2.3 AGC Perception on the Dangers of wealth

Table 4.9 revealed that 55% of the respondents agreed that wealth could be dangerous to a Christian’s faith and lead to sin. Grace Amoti urged that *“Those who are wealthy are being controlled by Satan and are proud, selfish, and rude. They run the risk of wrecking their faith and missing eternity. Therefore, unless the wealthy humble themselves and allow the Holy Spirit to control their lives, they run the risk of losing*

³⁶⁶ Esther Nakiganda, FGD, AGC Kisugu, 29 September 2018.

eternity.”³⁶⁷ Mumford asserts that when one pursues material riches and spiritual riches, then material matters, even if cared for out of a sense of duty, may become a nuisance and interfere with one’s faith.³⁶⁸ This implies that believers should allow Christ to control their lives to enable them to exercise stewardship, as required by God.

Gibson Kapere noted that wealth can lead to sin.

*Many Christians have made their wealth to be idols and they are worshipping them instead of God. Wealth can lead to pride, all other kinds of sins, or even reduce one's faith in God. Some people may resort to wrong methods to get wealth and others may spend their wealth selfishly.*³⁶⁹

The above view concurs with that of Ajith Fernando who recalls the Sower in Jesus’ parable (Mt. 13:13). Here, Jesus explained how wealth could deceive and choke the word of God from the lives of people causing them to be unfruitful.³⁷⁰ Bruce Burron concurs that Satan has a way of diverting the attention of believers from great eternal rewards to worldly affluence by plunging them into worldly pleasures.³⁷¹ AGC members need to be aware of the schemes the enemy, Satan has upon their souls especially when it comes to wealth. The church will only be able to overcome him when they are equipped with the understanding of whole-life stewardship.

³⁶⁷ Grace Amoti, FGD, AGC Banda, 24 September 2018.

³⁶⁸ Mumford, 221.

³⁶⁹ Gibson Kapere, comment from a questionnaire from a lay member, AGC Bugiri, 22 September 2018.

³⁷⁰ Fernando Ajith, “Jesus: The Message and Model of Mission”. In *Global Missiology for the 21st Century*, edited by William D. Taylor (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 209-210.

³⁷¹ Bruce Barron, *The Health and Wealth Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1987). Thomas C. Oden, *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1972), 254.

³⁷¹ Ajith, 209-210.

³⁷¹ Adeleye, 4-5.

Mary Birungi who was in support said, “*Some Christians make their wealth idols and worship them instead of God. Wealth can lead to pride, reduce one’s faith in God, and breed different kinds of sins. Some people may resort to wrong methods of getting wealth and spending it on sumptuous living.*”³⁷² This statement found agreement with Blomberg who underscores that the N.T. seems to depict wealth more of a danger than a blessing.³⁷³ In contrast, Bon Nyanzi and others argued that “*wealth is a blessing from God; it keeps Christians away from anxiety and making stupid mistakes and sinning. It also brings glory back to God. As long as we trust God and we use our wealth well, MP is not dangerous to a Christian’s faith*”³⁷⁴. Furthermore, George Folarin also understands Jesus’ teaching as a warning against the peril of wealth in his parable about the rich farmer who acquired sufficient wealth to secure a comfortable retirement (Lk. 12:16-21).³⁷⁵ This implies that in the N.T., beyond necessity, riches are not a big deal. Therefore, since God favours neither the poor nor the rich but cares more about everyone’s spiritual state than worldly gains, AGCs should celebrate their stewardship in Christ and endeavour to remain faithful in honour of God.

Other lay members (23%), the pastors, and some lay leaders from the FGDs disagreed that wealth can be dangerous to a Christian’s faith and lead to sin. Dickson Opio elucidated, “*When God blesses his children, his blessings bring no sorrow. Thus, as long as a believer surrenders his/her life to God, wealth becomes a resource for*

³⁷² Mary Birungi, comment from a questionnaire, AGC Masese, 30 September.

³⁷³ Craig L. Blomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Possessions* (Downers Grove, Illinois, 2000), 144-146.

³⁷⁴ Bon Nyanzi, comments from questionnaire, AGC Katale from FGD, 20 September 2018.

³⁷⁵ Folarin, 30.

advancing God's business on earth. Therefore, it is not the wealth which is bad rather; it is human selfishness that makes wealth evil."³⁷⁶ The different perspectives above denote that there is a need for AGC to understand whole-life stewardship principles as articulated for believers in the N.T. passages to assist Christians from confusion and sins.

Table 4.9 demonstrated that the respondents (57%) disagreed that Christians are free to use their material wealth as they want. Merlin Golola argued, *"We should not have the freedom to spend our resources as we wish. We are mere custodians of the gifts of God. He alone has the best knowledge for blessings us. Wrong use of the possessions may mean that we are selfish and heading for judgment."*³⁷⁷ In line with the study findings, Bradley Koch affirmed that Christians should not live lavishly for that is not the will of God for everyone to thrive economically and enjoy life.³⁷⁸ Therefore, Christians should know that though God desires for them to enjoy the abundance of his generosity, it is fundamental to remember that there will come a time for giving accountability to God. This implies that those whom God has privileged to enjoy abundance should equally be careful to fulfill his purposes here on earth. They should not merely use the wealth to gratify their selfishness but rather, to serve God and others.

Findings in Table 4.9 showed that majority of the respondents (59%) disagreed that the rich people will not inherit the kingdom of heaven. The FGDs and the lay members generally agreed that wealthy Christians can inherit the Kingdom of God if they

³⁷⁶ Dickson Opio, comment from a questionnaire, AGC Masese, 20 September 2018.

³⁷⁷ Merlin Golola, comment from a questionnaire, AGC Katala, 19 September 2018

³⁷⁸ Bradley A. Koch, "The Prosperity Gospel and Economic Prosperity: Race, Class, Giving, and Voting Submitted to the faculty of the University Graduate School in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Sociology. Indiana University July 2009, 1.

surrender their lives to the Lordship of Christ. The FGDs noted that *“Those who trust in Jesus and follow his teachings will make it to heaven whether rich or poor. The only hindrance will be sin in their hearts – for the Bible indicates that the righteous will inherit the kingdom of heaven.”*³⁷⁹ In the same vein, Lisa Withrow noted that rich people can attain heaven, and the Bible records several wealthy people who found favor with God (Abraham, Job, and even Joseph of Arimathea, etc).³⁸⁰ Nevertheless, as noted earlier, wealth can lead to the temptation to idolize riches. To those who compromise their faith, wealth is a possible danger. The church should understand the essence of whole-life stewardship, which would allow the rich and the poor to serve the Lord and others with confidence.

5.2.2.4 AGC perception of the Methods of Acquiring Wealth

Eighty percent of the respondents in Table 4.10 agreed that when Christians work hard and give to God, they always get adequate material blessings. The majority believe that *“God blesses the hard work of his people and he has given us jobs as means through which he channels his blessings to and through us. So when Christians are industrious and good managers of God’s recourses, they can expect riches.”* On the contrary, few respondents (13%) attested that God himself decides whom to bless with material wealth. Lydia Nakato claimed that *“There are many faithful Christians who are dealing with issues ranging from the high cost of living to injustices, difficult choices, etc which cause*

³⁷⁹ Andrew Kateregga, FGD, AGC Kisugu, 15 September 2018.

³⁸⁰ Lisa R. Withrow, “Success and the Prosperity Gospel: From Commodification to Transformation a Wesleyan Perspective,” *Journal of Religious Leadership*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Fall, 2007), 27.

*them to remain in material lack despite their hard work.*³⁸¹ The conclusion that when Christians work hard and give to God is not a guarantee of perpetual adequate material reward here on earth since God, in his prerogative decides the life of his people. God may bless some here on earth with wealth while others may experience pain and material lack despite working hard and sacrificing for the Lord and his people. Therefore, Christians should focus on whole-life stewardship with the goal to please God in anticipation of eternal reward.

Table 4.10 revealed that the majority of the respondents (85%) agreed that when believers are faithful in paying their tithes and offerings, God prospers them materially. Abel Ssebugwawo noted that *“God keeps his word and has promised to bless us with abundant MP in light of Mal. 3:6-10.”*³⁸² On the contrary, Pastor Nathan Sekimpi from Masese asserted that *“God blesses us spiritually and in many other ways. It is, therefore, spiritual immaturity to confine God’s blessings to wealth and worse still, to demand or serve God for worldly gains.”*³⁸³ God enacted tithe in the dispensation of the law in the O.T. and those in the N.T. should give beyond a tithe because God has already blessed them with salvation, which is the greatest gift to the world. In agreement, Clifton and other Bible scholars note that several preachers were misusing Malachi 3 to inspire believers to tithe and give offering with a paradigm of getting rich as it is in many

³⁸¹ Lydia Nakato, FGD, AGC Banda, 24 September 2018.

³⁸² Abel Ssebugwawo, comment from a questionnaire, AGC Bukasa, 29 September 2018.

³⁸³ Pastor Nathan Sekimpi, comment from a questionnaire, AGC Masese, 20 September 2018.

churches.³⁸⁴ This should not be so because God enacted tithe in the dispensation of the law in the O.T. and those in the N.T. are not supposed to be bound by the Hebrew Laws of tithing. In fact, the N.T. understanding of God's grace urges Christians to give beyond tithing because God has already blessed them with salvation, which is the greatest gift (riches) to the world.

Findings in Table 4.10 revealed that 80% of the lay church members agreed that it takes the discipline of hard work, savings, and giving to others and to God to be prosperous. Jane Nanjovu pointed out that, *"God adds wealth to those who give to the needy and towards his work. One must also work hard and have the discipline of saving. A Christian should not expect to be a busybody, selfish, lazy, and extravagant and anticipate being a good steward."*³⁸⁵ This implies that Christians in AGC know godly ways of managing resources. What they probably need is support from AGC leadership to develop creative measures of starting jobs and engaging in wealth generation. In agreement, Folarin asserts that if God is working in the hearts of Christians to produce a new attitude of giving and saving based on his principles on whole-life stewardship they would experience material increase.³⁸⁶ Hence, the knowledge of whole-stewardship will avail fresh understanding and an impetus imperative for advancing the plans of God among AGC members.

³⁸⁴ Shane Clifton, "Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analysing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia" *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies*. (Brill Academic Publishers, 2009), 67.

³⁸⁵ Jane Nanjovu, comment from a questionnaire, AGC Bukasa, 29 September 2018.

³⁸⁶ George O. Folarin, "Contemporary State of Prosperity Gospel in Nigeria," *Asia Journal of Theology* 21 (1) (2007): 81.

Further findings in Table 4:10 showed that 82% of the respondents agreed that good stewardship involves one's abilities to use time and talents well. The FGDs from various AGC members showed that *using the above gifts is a demonstration of love and thankfulness to God for his grace and mercies. It also shows true worship and commitment to God and to his work. It is a sign that his children are accountable to him and that their focus is on heavenly rewards.* Some claimed that when we are faithful to him, he protects us and supplies our needs as well. One of the respondents noted that *"God is the giver of all blessings and when Christians use them wisely, they honour him by transforming other people's lives."* This, therefore, implies that AGCs have the potential of being a special tool in the hands of God. PGT cannot provide AGC with the knowledge and assistance it needs to practice whole-life stewardship.

5.2.3 Cultural Concepts that Accommodate PGT

5.2.3.1 AGC Cultural Perception of Wealth

Findings in Table 4.11 showed that 59% of the respondents disagreed that material lack is evil and a curse to Christians. Most lay members and the pastors noted that *"It is not biblical to say that people living in lack are cursed. Some are poor because of their poor planning and management of resources God gives to them. At times it may be about God's decision to make one rich or not."*³⁸⁷ However, one respondent whose voice represented the comments of the rest (28%) revealed that *"Uncommitted Christians who compromise their faith are cursed and therefore cannot experience material*

³⁸⁷ Abigail Namusisi, comments from questionnaires, AGC Bugiri, 22 September 2018.

prosperity and a life of contentment.”³⁸⁸ This implies that some of AGC members would go to PG pastors if they faced economic hardships. This means that there is a need for more understanding of what the Bible needs to inculcate to AGC members.

Table 4.11 showed that 46% of the respondents revealed that material riches such as money, houses, vehicles, land, and others indicate happiness. Caro Nantambi claimed, *“In most homes, wealthy people are happy because they are not stressed about their basic needs such as those who are living in lack. This shows that they are enjoying life.”*³⁸⁹ In support of the study, Koch reports David Oyedepo’s doctrine that money brings happiness. When one has funds, he can go for holidays, provide the best facilities for family as well as meeting other needs.³⁹⁰ However, almost an equal number of lay members who participated in the study refuted the statement. They argued that *“Many poor people who trust in God are happy. “Majority of rich people who are depending on their wealth to give them meaning and identity do not experience happiness. Many of them have exchanged God, the source of joy with wealth and other idols.”*³⁹¹ In agreement, Blomberg notes that material riches alone cannot provide a meaningful life. Christ’s invitation to his disciples is to espouse spiritual and not material sustenance.³⁹² The assumption that much material wealth denotes happiness may be true, however, God’s promises to his faithful children is joy, which is able to sustain Christians amidst life challenges.

³⁸⁸ Moses Kato, FGD, AGC Banda, 24 September 2018.

³⁸⁹ Caro Nantambi, lay member’s comment, questionnaire, AGC Katale, 20 September 2018.

³⁹⁰ Koch, 36.

³⁹¹ Charles Okot, FGD, AGC Banda, 24 September 2018.

³⁹² Blomberg, 127.

Findings in Table 4.11 showed that 47% of the participants in the study agreed that wealth shows wisdom and power. One of the lay members, Jesse Mwanga summarised the statement succinctly. *“MP, wisdom, and power are inseparable therefore those who love and trust in God gain wisdom and wealth.”*³⁹³ However, some claimed that many righteous people in the Bible did not receive wealth, such as Apostle Paul, Lazarus, and others. Therefore, wealth and wisdom have no such connection. From the FGD, Solomon Mayende asserted that *“Christians can get riches from relatives (inheritance), well-wishers, witch doctors, and so on. Wealth, therefore, does not always mean that the prosperous are wiser than those living in lack.”*³⁹⁴ This implies that those in AGC who believe that the rich people are wise would be tempted to follow PGT advocates who parade their wealth. This would jeopardize whole-life stewardship as revealed in the Bible. There is need for a critical mind of how people became wealthy in the Bible times and their implication towards whole-life stewardship in AGC.

5.2.3.2 AGC Understanding on the role of Leaders and Wealth

Further findings in Table 4.12 indicated that 45% of the respondents agreed that subjects often honour those pastors who prosper materially because they expect material assistance from them. Some in support referred to the Baganda proverb, *Akuwa okulya; yakutwala omuluka* (meaning, you like a chief whom you get food from, who helps you). One of the FGD members asserted, *“Wealth attracts respect. We need rich pastors who will meet our needs holistically. There is no glory in having a poor pastor because he/she can become a burden to the church instead of being a blessing.”* However, some pastors

³⁹³ Jesse Mwanga, comment from questionnaire, AGC Bukasa, 29 September 2018.

³⁹⁴ Solomon Mayende, FGD, AGC Masese, 30 September 2018.

argued that since poverty is not a sin against God it is wrong to emphasize the need for being wealthy. Those who are wealthy are often in danger of covetousness unless the Spirit of God humbles them. Actually, they have a tendency to be proud and insensitive to those they lead. A Pastor stated that, *“Leadership is a gift from God and does not necessarily depend on one’s material possessions.”*³⁹⁵ Therefore, even though subjects consider their spiritual leaders as deserving honour, Christians should embrace and demonstrate a caliber of life of integrity by choosing those filled with godly wisdom, love, and compassion in readiness to serve as good stewards.

Findings in Table 4.12 demonstrated that 71% of the respondents refuted that Christians should expose their wealth for self-recognition. One of the participants in FGD attested that:

*Living a luxurious life, showing off to others, and victimizing the poor are vices that depict spiritual immaturity. God hates people who brag about their wealth. It is not biblical for one to expose his wealth before others. God does not want people who boast. He is looking for a compassionate heart that reaches out to bless others.*³⁹⁶

AGC from the Wesleyan/holiness tradition will have to balance the link between religious observances and authentic holiness. Therefore, the Christians who have managed to get material possessions should desist from living such discriminatory lives and concentrate on using their material possessions to participate in the building of the Kingdom of God.

Table 4.12 demonstrates that 56% of the respondents disagreed that pastors should not talk about financial prosperity to their church members. Majority of lay

³⁹⁵ Pastor Gideon Kibuka, comment from a Questionnaire, AGC Banda, 24 September 2018.

³⁹⁶ James Lukwago, FGD, AGC Kisugu, 15 September 2018

members stated that, *“Pastors should talk about other church members’ wealth to encourage others to work hard and to give them hope that God will change their unfavourable economic conditions.”* Thirty-two percent of the lay members were not for the idea of pastors talking about prosperity in the church because it may discourage those who live in lack. *“Different people can misconstrue the pastor’s intention and hence discourage those who are not prospering materially.”* Majority of the Christians disagreed with the statement under investigation because the Bible encourages Christians to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness before other blessings. Therefore, pastors should address whole-life stewardship, which would help their members to understand the core Christian doctrine on possessions.

Fifty-one percent of the respondents in Table 4.12 commented that a poor church leader cannot be effective in the church or Christian ministry. Christians respect and honour prosperous leaders because they believe that God is using them to display his glory on earth. Boas Mukisa asserted that *“We expect our pastors to counsel us and help us when we are in material lack. Poor pastors may love and advise us, but because they are needy too, they become limited on how much they can offer to us.”*³⁹⁷ However, pastors and lay members attributed the life of many rich pastors to selfishness, insensitivity, and lack of integrity. *“What matters most is the faithful life of the pastor and his love for his flock and not riches.”*³⁹⁸ Hence, one’s effectiveness should not be determined by how much wealth one possesses, rather a heart that is willing to serve

³⁹⁷ Boas Musisis, FGD, AGC Nakigalala, 7 September 2018.

³⁹⁸ John Kakungulu, Comments from the questionnaire, AGC Bugiri, 22 September 2018.

others and live righteously before God. There is therefore a need for AGC to learn more about God's requirement regarding stewardship.

Fifty-three percent of the respondents in Table 4.12 disagreed that Christians should obey their elders/pastors without questioning them. Dorothy Kadaga averred:

*We need to be critical about what our leaders teach and preach. Human beings are limited in knowledge. They are imperfect and can easily lead people astray. When what they teach does not line up with that of God, they should be respectfully engaged in a dialogue.*³⁹⁹

However, some lay members (33%) commented that “A pastor represents God in our midst. If he/she walks right with God, there is no need to question him/her even when they ask us for money because what we need are blessings. If the pastor does something stupid, he will be accountable to God and not to us in the end.”⁴⁰⁰ Christians should, therefore, follow leaders who submit to the Lordship of Christ and maintain wisdom as responsible custodians of God's gifts. To those who are not faithful with church funds, members should pray and seek the Lord's direction on the way forward.

5.2.3.3 AGC perception on spiritual influence on Prosperity

Fifty percent of the participants (Table 4:13) indicated that material wealth could result from evil spirits and demons. Josephine Okot argued that “*Wealth can come from Satan and all his agents. However, such riches do not last for long. This applies mostly to young Christians with weak faith or ignorant of God's word or believers who compromise their faith for wealth.*”⁴⁰¹ In agreement, Jacob Olupona contends that “The devil and other evil spirits occupy an equally critical space in Pentecostal theology. Some

³⁹⁹ Dorothy Kadaga, FGD, AGC Nakigalala, 7 October 2018.

⁴⁰⁰ Wilson Kato, Questionnaire, AGC Bukasa, 29 September 2018.

⁴⁰¹ .⁴⁰¹ Josephine Okot, FGD, AGC Banda, 24 September 2018.

churches blame the devil and evil spirits for misfortune and other life crises.”⁴⁰² During FGD Nakayiza referred to the Baganda proverb that says, *Akabi tekabula musombi* (meaning that misfortune always has a bringer).⁴⁰³ Africans consider witch doctors or sorcerers to have magical powers that can influence circumstances for people to receive riches and increase their chances of success as well as taking care of some obstacles in their life (Table 4.13). The temptation to rely on syncretism where people turn to their cultural ways of life may curtail whole-life stewardship. Christians should depend on God as the provider and not seek other means. It becomes imperative, therefore, to provide knowledge that would equip AGC for N.T. stewardship.

Fifty-one percent of the respondents in Table 4:13 contended that believers should go to their pastors for prayers of financial breakthrough. Those who agreed said that *“It is during this time when members go to their pastors that many people open up their hearts and minds to the servants of God who counsel them on what to do.”* This resonates with Simon Colman who asserts that God has called Pastors and ordained leaders to undertake spiritual activities and to offer counsel to his children on life issues.⁴⁰⁴ Lioy also alludes to the fact that pastors have faith and wisdom to pray for their church members and to encourage them to become what God intended them to be. Others like John Musoke repudiated by saying that, *“People should know the Scriptures and do what*

⁴⁰² Jacob K. Olupona, *African Religions: A very Short Introduction* (Oxford: University Press, 2014), 102.

⁴⁰³ “Luganda Proverbs and their meanings” <https://ekitibwakyabuganda.wordpress.com/category/proverbsengeero/> Posted on November 6, 2017 by ekitibwakya Buganda (Retrieved from Worldwide web on 1/05/2019).

⁴⁰⁴ Simon Coleman, *The Globalisation of Charismatic Christianity: Spreading the Gospel of Prosperity* (Cambridge: University Press, 2000), 22.

it instructs. Going to pastors for help regarding material wealth can make people to rely on pastors and not on God.”⁴⁰⁵ Therefore, pastors should pray for their flock, encourage congregants to attend public fellowships, conduct weekly Bible study, to inculcate true knowledge on whole-life stewardship but not dupe people with clever words.

Fifty-four percent of the respondents in Table 4.13 indicated that churches should conduct deliverance prayers to avert material lack. Pastor John Okidi noted that *“Some people are poor because they are under satanic bondage and what they need is a prayer of deliverance. Such prayers can do wonders.”*⁴⁰⁶ In addition to deliverance prayers, a respondent, Valentine Eladu stressed that Christians should be taught the N.T. principles on stewardship of *“working hard, managing time well, using abilities and material resources to enable the transformation of lives.”*⁴⁰⁷ The concept of hard work and spirituality connotes an amalgamation of the African culture and the Bible. AGC will need to trust God’s Word on how possessions can be acquired legally and not through subtle spiritual deliverance as advocated by PGT.

Majority of the respondents 54% in Table 4.13 disagreed that Christians should hear special anointed pastors who understand the evil spirits of poverty. A lay member commented, *“We should listen to anointed pastors and preachers who know our culture and are knowledgeable in God’s Word to help us overcome material lack.”*⁴⁰⁸ In Uganda, the ministry of exorcism in the church is rampant especially among the born-again

⁴⁰⁵ John Musoke, Comment from questionnaire, AGC Banda, 24 September 2018.

⁴⁰⁶ John Okidi, comments from a questionnaire, AGC Katala, 19 September 2018.

⁴⁰⁷ Valentine Eladu, comments from questionnaire, AGC Bugiri, 22 September 2018.

⁴⁰⁸ Hilary Serunkuma, comment in questionnaire, AGC Bugiri, 22 September 2018.

fellowships where leaders claim divine enablement. Jimmy Kasirivu, a lay church member noted,

These pastors have invaded churches with their claims to have the divine authority that can break the spiritual bondage of poverty from the poor and unleash material success. Christians whose perspectives are on possession and affluence are having a wrong attitude that dishonours the Lord Jesus. No wonder, such believers easily find themselves duped by the PG “anointed man of God” who inculcates greed and selfishness⁴⁰⁹

5.2.3.4 AGC Cultural Perception of Wealth Acquisition

The study sought to find out AGCs’ perceptions on positive confessions and repetition of words in acquiring MP. Forty-four percent in Table 4:14 disagreed that confessions and repetition of words when used appropriately are essential in faith to garner wealth. However, an almost equal number (43%) agreed that confessions and repetition of words can increase faith for material success. During the discussion, Robert Okema indicated that:

If the desire for wealth coheres with God’s will, it is fine to confess and practice repetition of words. When we are positive, it means that we have faith and faith is what makes God to bless us. It increases hope and wisdom. Words are powerful, they have authority to enable us to achieve its repeated outcome. Proverbs 18:21 states that life and death are in the power of the tongue.⁴¹⁰

In agreement with PGT, the use of repetitive words to get wealth is common as indicated by Femi Adeleye who captures the PG’s common formulas, “Say it”; “Do it”; “Receive it”; and “Tell it”. God has not provided such mundane formula in his word.⁴¹¹ Liroy insists

⁴⁰⁹Peter Kato, comment in a questionnaire, AGC Katale, 20 September 2018

⁴¹⁰ Robert Okema, FGD, AGC Bukasa, 29 September 2018.

⁴¹¹Femi Adeleye, 64.

that those who practice confession and repetition of words are depending on superstition and philosophies of people and demons. Fifty-three percent of the respondents in (Table 4.14) agreed that they needed formulas from men of God to prosper. Respondents from all the three categories (pastors, lay leaders, and lay members) attested to the fact that *“Formulas inform, generate faith, enhance hard work, and focus people on God’s principles.”* The phenomenon of positive confessions and incantation of spoken words of prosperity does not guarantee material gain and so Christians should discard such a doctrine as theologically sound.⁴¹² Whole-life stewardship does not involve formulas and repetitive words that act like magic to render wealth to those who use them. Therefore, AGC will need to be well informed on how biblical principles of whole-life stewardship work.

The investigation revealed that 60% of the respondents (Table 4.14) disagreed that material success comes mostly by giving to the “anointed man of God.” Dorothy Senyonga noted that *“All ministers of God should serve based on God’s calling upon their lives. Their goal should not be the material benefits they anticipate to garner from their congregations.”*⁴¹³ Therefore, the stewards should give their resources without focusing on material rewards but blessings from God, which may manifest in good health, job promotion, happy marriage, healthy children, and wealth as he determines.

Findings in Table 4.14 showed that most of the respondents (44%) agreed that material riches come when the church members obey their leaders. However, 42% of the lay leaders (Table 4.14) and three-quarters of the pastors disagreed that material riches

⁴¹² Dan Liroy, *The Heart of the Prosperity Gospel : Self or the Savior ?* Vol. 1 no. 1 (2007): 43-44.

⁴¹³ Dorothy Senyonga, comment from questionnaire, AGC Kisugu, 15 September 2018.

come when the church members obey their leaders. They attributed MP to *obeying biblical principles of whole-life stewardship, which entails hard work, good planning, and better jobs among other factors*. AGC respondents recognized that *loyalty to those in authority might bring a sense of oneness and order in the Church but not wealth*. Congregants look up to their leaders for spiritual nourishment, direction, and accountability. The leaders provide guidance to challenges that confront the members and society. There is little overt evidence from the Bible that obeying spiritual leaders ever brought material success. Therefore, associating riches with obeying leaders raises a question in AGC's perception of whole-life stewardship and the leaders need to take measures to avert the assumption.

Study Table 4:14 showed that 54% of the respondents agreed that freedom from poverty comes through sacrificial giving. Lay members attested that *"When we sacrificially give our finances and material riches in form of tithes, and offerings to God, he sees our love and commitment to his work and he blesses us with more wealth."* The views from the FGDs were generally opposed to the above statement. *"God blesses those who work hard, put their trust in him, and accept his finished work on the cross. Those who trust in his salvation and in his promises can experience freedom from poverty when they are industrious."* In line with the findings, the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 8:2 wrote to the Macedonian Christians who gave out of their extreme poverty beyond their ability. The Apostle did not promise them worldly riches. Therefore, to reduce sacrificial giving to worldly gains is to champion for a theological drift away from whole-life

stewardship. Sacrificial giving should ensue from the acknowledgment of God's love for his children in Christ and not from selfish desires of amassing wealth.

5.2.3.5 AGC perception on the General Acquisition and use of Wealth

Seventy-five percent of the respondents in Table 4:15 conveyed that prosperity comes through hard work and financial discipline. Most pastors indicated that Christians can be wealthy if they work hard and exercise financial discipline. Joshua Mukisa noted:

*If a believer works hard, uses his money wisely on needs and not wants, saves and invests in a business, he can realize a financial breakthrough. However, not all Christians will realize prosperity. Some do not have wealth on earth despite their hard work. Some Christians are investing in other people's lives instead of trying to accumulate wealth.*⁴¹⁴

Some from the FGDs added that *“Working hard should be for self-support, family provision, Christian compassion, and promotion of community welfare. God has not promised MP when we work. Rather, he has promised to meet our needs in Christ Jesus.”*

Interestingly, about 15% of the lay members said that God gives wealth “to those he favours and to those who know his promises.” Therefore, there is a need to help some of AGC members to return to authentic whole-life stewardship.

Study findings in Table 4.15 revealed that 73% of those who participated agreed that Christians should use their wealth mostly for helping the needy as an act of compassion and love towards the less fortunate. From the FGDs, Dorene Nyanzi posited that Christians through the church *“should spend the offerings rendered to God to provide food, shelter, clothing, and medical care for the needy besides donating for*

⁴¹⁴ Joshua Mukisa, Comment from a questionnaire, AGC Masese, 20 September 2018.

missionary work, and education.”⁴¹⁵ This is a commendable way of stewardship. Christians should be encouraged to continue with this spirit of love and compassion to honour the Lord.

Table 4:15 revealed that 48% of the respondents agreed that Christians should use material goods to please God so that he may deliver them from poverty.

*God wants His people to be involved in his program of advancing his Kingdom here on earth. He expects Christians to use the material riches he has entrusted into their care to build and maintain institutions like hospitals, churches, and schools among others. Besides, he wants Church ministries, which include preaching the gospel, discipling believers and, conducting activities (such as helping missionary programs, educating young people in the Church, schools, and seminaries among others) which advance his plans on earth.*⁴¹⁶

Nevertheless, there is no guarantee that such kinds of involvements will always attract prosperity. When Christians sacrifice what they have towards God’s activities, he blesses them in whichever way he determines, not necessarily with earthly success as common among PGT churches.

5.3 Summary of the Study

5.3.1 Degree to which AGC has imbibed PGT

The study sought to explore the degree to which members of AGC have imbibed the popular claim of PGT. The findings revealed that AGC members were impacted by the prosperity messages and therefore unable to demonstrate whole-life stewardship. The members believed that if they followed Abrahamic covenant and PGT they would

⁴¹⁵ Dorene Nyanzi, FGD, AGC Banda, 24 September 2018

⁴¹⁶ Jane Nantambi, FGD, AGC Banda, 23 October 2018.

experience both spiritual and material prosperity. AGC has failed to demonstrate the N.T. understanding of whole-life stewardship required of Christ's disciples.

5.3.2 Biblical Theology of MP Regarding Whole-Life Stewardship

The second objective was to survey the biblical theology of material prosperity in relation to whole-life stewardship. The findings indicated that the majority of AGC members understood that they were stewards of God's gifts and that God's love for them is unconditional despite their economic and social circumstances. Wealth comes with hard work and a disciplined life that honours God. Christians know that whole-life stewardship demands their time, wealth, gifts and other resources in helping others and advancing the KOG on earth.

5.3.3 Cultural Concepts that Accommodate Popular PGT

The third objective was to determine how cultural concepts of MP in Africa accommodate PG. The study portrayed that AGC members valued culture and that they had strong cultural attachments to wealth. They believed that lack is a curse and needs special deliverance prayers (exorcism). Further, the members attributed respect to wealthy leaders/pastors because they expect concrete assistance from them.

5.4 Conclusions

5.4.1 Degree to which Members of AGC have Imbibed PGT

The hypothesis that PGT has not significantly imbibed the whole-life stewardship of AGC members in Kampala area was rejected because analysis indicated a positive significant impact with a regression coefficient of 0.000 at a significant level less than 0.05. This implies that if AGC continued with their current teachings, the members would

continue under the influence of PGT, which would lead to wrong attitudes of giving and helping others.

5.4.2 Biblical Theology of MP in Relation to Whole-life Stewardship

The hypothesis that there is no effect of biblical theology on whole-life stewardship among AGC members in the Kampala area is accepted because analysis results indicated a regression coefficient of 0.425 at a significant level which is greater than 0.05. This implies that if AGC continued to use the Bible methods to disciple their members towards whole-life stewardship they would not be influenced by PGT.

5.4.3 Cultural Concepts of MP in Africa that Accommodate PGT

The hypothesis that there is no statistically significant consequence of African culture on whole-life stewardship in AGC, Kampala area was rejected because analysis results indicated a positive significant effect with a regression coefficient of 0.000 at a significant level less than 0.05. This means that if AGC members continued to accept the African cultural values that contravene the Bible on whole-life stewardship, they would be negatively influenced by PGT in faith and deeds.

5.5 Recommendations

5.5.1 General Knowledge Contribution of the Study

- The church should be zealous in exposing the deceptions of PGT through social media, literature, conferences, seminars, and social media without attacking or condemning its proponents.

- The Church should discern that cultural values and material possessions are congruent to the Christian faith and practices wherever the gospel is presented and whole-life stewardship is conducted.
- A believer's identity does not depend on worldly success and possessions. Therefore, those who have material wealth should use it to advance the gospel and be compassionate to the needy. Those who find themselves in material lack should work hard, demonstrate financial discipline and trust in the Lord to supply their needs.
- The Church needs to articulate the biblical and legitimate means of acquiring material prosperity and the purpose for which it is given.
- The Church should handle the doctrine of prosperity cautiously by teaching its members the biblical passages that are lucid in light of unclear texts the adherents of PGT prefer to use.
- There is a need for formal theological/biblical training for church leaders to implement exegesis. The leaders would use the theological/biblical knowledge and skills to disciple their Church members during the Sunday school and Bible Study contact sessions.

5.5.2 The Popular claim of the PG Teachings on Whole-life Stewardship in AGC

- There is a need for a manual on whole-life stewardship that can effectively counter PGT.
- There should be periodic workshops and conferences to help AGC leaders and members to understand the biblical doctrine on whole-life stewardship.

- Pastors should be encouraged and sponsored to attend formal biblical/theological training for proper hermeneutical interpretation.
- The leaders should encourage their members through workshops and seminars to work hard and be disciplined in their use of material resources, time and gifts.
- Churches can start income generating projects to enable the members to save and get credit from informal as well as formal institutions to generate income.
- Church councils/committees should hold pastors accountable for their teachings.
- Leaders should sensitize their congregants on the dangers of PGT and discourage them from reading PG literature and listening to programs that advance the theology on M.P.
- Pastors should be encouraged to support their families and the ministry through tent-making as a demonstration of good stewardship to avoid the temptations of manipulating their church members through “seed sowing.”

5.5.2 Biblical Theology of MP in Relation to Whole-life Stewardship in AGC

- Pastors should be equipped with tools like Bible commentaries, lexicons, and others, so as to exegete the Bible appropriately and avoid the deceptions in PGTs.
- AGC members need to focus on their relationship with Christ and stress the spiritual wealth available to all Christians. Material riches should not be the goal of their lives.
- Christians should sacrificially advance the gospel and compassionately serve those who are needy in the church and society.

5.5.3 Cultural Concepts of MP in Africa that Accommodate PGT

- AGC should evaluate those cultural values that do not augur well with the biblical teachings on whole-life stewardship. The members should not seek help from witchdoctors and PG preachers to manage their economic challenges.
- AGC should encourage a healthy dialogue in church-related matters between its leaders and followers to mitigate the cultural consciousness of fear.
- Christians should trust God with their lives and desist from “seed sowing” and formulas that do not promote whole-life stewardship.
- AGC leadership should seek to empower the existing social groups (mothers, youths, singles and the married) in the church by supporting them financially, morally and spiritually to enable them to deal with practical concerns of the congregants.
- Lastly, AGC leaders should have periodic seminars and discussion groups to provide them with the knowledge that will assist in educating their members on the right cultural values that encourage whole-life stewardship.

5.6 Areas for Further Research

Further research could be carried out in the following areas:

- The educational background of church members in the urban and rural areas of Uganda and PGT
- Factor(s) that contributed to AGC members leaving PGT churches
- How do wealthy Christians contribute to whole-life stewardship?
- Factors encouraging people to remain in PG churches

- Ways on how Christian communities could work together to improve their economic wellbeing.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire for Lay Church Member

**Study Title: The Impact of Prosperity Gospel Teaching on Whole-life Stewardship:
A case of Africa Gospel Church in Kampala, Uganda**

Name: James Ouma

Tel: +256 772 920234

E-Mail: oumajames47@yahoo.com

Questions for lay members and leaders

1. Name of your Local Church: _____
2. Position in the Local Church : _____ Mob. No. _____
3. Age: 13-17 ☐ 18-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46 - 65 ☐
4. Gender: Male ☐ female ☐
5. Level of Education: Primary school ☐ High School ☐ College/University ☐ Other ☐
6. Income per month: Less than 50 dollars ☐ 51-150 dollars ☐ 151- 350 dollars ☐ 351-500 ☐ Above 500 dollars ☐

Section B: Research Contents (Qualitative Data)

For each statement, tick [✓] only one box that best represents your opinion about the statement. Also, give your short comment on the line below the boxes as you wish to.

1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

(I) Objective one: Popular Prosperity Gospel Teaching on Wealth

7. Born-again Christians are children of God and are entitled to materially wealth.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

 Comment: _____
8. God gets disappointed when His children do not prosper

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

 Comment: _____
9. It is wrong to preach on material riches as rights of God's children.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

 Comment: _____

The good news for the poor in the Bible includes materially wealth.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

10. Living an extravagant life is a sign of success.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

11. Material poverty comes due to lack of faith.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

Frequent teaching on faith should be encouraged for believers to be materially rich.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

12. Pastors should encourage testimonies on how to get rich.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

Wealth depends on how much one gives to God in form of "sowing a seed."

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

13. Physical contact (laying on of hands, anointing oil, handkerchiefs) increases faith for riches.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

14. Poverty is a sign that someone is under a curse.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

15. Poverty cannot be related to a rich and a loving God

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

16. Special deliverance prayer is important to avert poverty.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

17. Salvation from sin involves freedom from poverty.

1

2

3

4

5

Comment: _____

18. Material wealth always indicates favour from God.

1

2

3

4

5

Comment: _____

19. Christians should repeatedly claim physical prosperity to get more wealth.

1

2

3

4

5

Comment: _____

20. Believers should listen to messages of prosperity to prosper materially.

1

2

3

4

5

Comment: _____

21. Wealth comes to those who know God's promises.

1

2

3

4

5

Comment: _____

22. Christians should support prosperity gospel preachers with their money to succeed materially.

1

2

3

4

5

Comment: _____

23. Symbols such as , water (and the like) are useful in a worship service, for they increase congregants' faith for material gain.

1

2

3

4

5

Comment: _____

(II) Objective Two: Biblical theology of Material Prosperity in Relation to Whole-life Stewardship

24. The Lord chooses who is to be wealthy or poor.

1	2	3	4	5
Comment:				

25. Spiritual and material prosperity is not always God's will for all his children.

1	2	3	4	5
Comment:				

29. God at times uses material poverty to test a Christian's faith.

1	2	3	4	5
Comment:				

30. God does not use poverty to test a Christian's faith.

1	2	3	4	5
Comment:				

31. God may allow material lack for His glory.

1	2	3	4	5
Comment:				

32. Wealth can be dangerous to a Christian's faith.

1	2	3	4	5
Comment:				

33. Christians should use their wealth as they want.

1	2	3	4	5
Comment:				

34. Material riches can lead to sin.

1	2	3	4	5
Comment:				

35. Jesus encouraged a life of riches.

1	2	3	4	5
Comment:				

36. Jesus encouraged a life of poverty.

1	2	3	4	5
Comment:				

37. The primary reason why people get wealth is to meet the needs of other people.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

38. God has equal love for both the rich and the poor.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

39. Good stewardship involves one's abilities to use time, talents and abilities well.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

(III) Objective Three: Culture Teachings that Accommodate Popular Prosperity Gospel Teaching

40. Material lack is evil and is a curse.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

41. Material riches indicate happiness.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

42. Wealth shows wisdom and power.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

43. Subjects often honor leaders who prosper.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

44. We should expose our wealth for self-recognition.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

45. Material wealth can result from evil spirits and demons.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

46. Freedom from poverty comes through sacrificial giving.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

47. Material riches come when the church members obey their leaders.

Comment: _____

48. In our church, wealth is used mostly for helping the less fortunate.

Comment: _____

49. Material goods are means used to please God so he can bless us from poverty.

Comment: _____

50. Positive confessions and repetition of words can increase faith for material success.

Comment: _____

51. Witch doctors have power influence one's financial success.

Comment: _____

60. Material success comes mostly by giving to anointed servants of God.

Comment: _____

61. We should hear special anointed pastors who understand the evil spirits of poverty.

Comment: _____

62. Believers should go to their pastors for prayers of financial breakthrough.

Comment: _____

63. A Pastor should not talk about financial prosperity of his/her church members.

Comment: _____

64. Prosperity comes by hard work and financial discipline.

Comment: _____

65. Deliverance prayers should be conducted in our churches to avert material lack.

Comment: _____

66. We should obey elders (pastors) without questioning them.

Comment: _____

67. Christians need formulas of what to do and say to get material wealth

1

2

3

4

5

4

4

4

4

Comment: _____

68. **A poor** church leader cannot be effective in the Christian ministry.

1

2

3

4

5

4

4

4

4

4

Comment: _____

Thanks for your time and responses, God Bless as you.

APPENDIX 2: Questionnaire for Pastors

**Study Title: The Impact of Prosperity Gospel Teaching on Whole life Stewardship:
A case of Africa Gospel Church in Kampala, Uganda**

Name: James Ouma

Tel: +256 772 920234

E-Mail: oumajames47@yahoo.com

1. Occupation: _____ Mob. No. _____
2. Name of your local church: _____
3. Age: 13-17 ☐ 18-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46 & above ☐
4. Gender: Male ☐ female ☐
5. Level of Education: Primary school ☐ High School ☐ College/University ☐
Other ☐
6. Income per month: Less than 50 dollars ☐ 51-150 dollars ☐ 151- 350 dollars ☐
351-500 ☐ Above 500 dollars ☐

For each statement, tick [✓] only one box that best represents your opinion about the statement. Also, give a short comment why you answered as you did on the comment line below.

1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

I. Popular Prosperity Gospel Teaching

7. The Bible does not teach that all believers should be materially prosperous.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Comment: _____

8. God wants all his faithful children to be materially wealthy.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Comment: _____

9. Special deliverance (for exorcism) prayers should be offered to those who lack materially.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Comment: _____

10. God always blesses Christians who have faith (in his word) with material wealth.

1

2

3

4

5

Comment: _____

11. Positive confession about prosperity by Christians attracts worldly success.

1

2

3

4

5

Comment: _____

12. "Sowing and reaping" is God's principle for believers to acquire physical blessings.

1

2

3

4

5

Comment: _____

13. Prosperity depends on one's giving to the church, preachers and charity organizations.

1

2

3

4

5

Comment: _____

14. If Christians obey their spiritual leaders, the God blesses them materially.

1

2

3

4

5

Comment: _____

15. God has given all his children to be material wealthy.

1

2

3

4

5

Comment: _____

16. Preachers should encourage the teaching on prosperity in the church for the less privileged members to get hope of being rich materially.

1

2

3

4

5

Comment: _____

17. Faithfulness in tithing and giving offerings to God and the church increase material prosperity.

1

2

3

4

5

Comment: _____

18. The application of oil for freedom on those who lack wealth is biblical.

1

2

3

4

5

Comment: _____

19. Pastors and church leaders need to provide an environment where Christians should hear the prosperity message.

1

2

3

4

5

Comment: _____

20. "Seeds" should only be offered to pastors and churches that have prospered materially.

1

2

3

4

5

Comment: _____

21. Salvation redeems believers from the curse of material poverty.

1

2

3

4

5

Comment: _____

22. All servants of God especially pastors should be rich or people to believe in the God who is All- Powerful and rich.

1

2

3

4

5

1
Comment: _____
23. God does not require wealthy Christians to share their wealth with the needy.

1 2 3 4 5
Comment: _____
24. Pastors should promote businesses in churches to gain success and riches for ministry.

1 2 3 4 5
Comment: _____

25. Songs that advances material prosperity should be encouraged in churches and ministries.

1 2 3 4 5
Comment: _____
26. Our talents and abilities from God should be invested to promote material wealth.

1 2 3 4 5
Comment: _____
27. When Christians spend much of their time in spiritual disciplines (such as prayers, fasting, discipleship, evangelism, and others) they gain wealth.

1 2 3 4 5
Comment: _____

II. Biblical Theology of Material Prosperity in relation to Whole-life Stewardship

28. There is a relationship between worldly riches and one's eternity.

1 2 3 4 5
Comment: _____
29. God sometimes allow material lack even to his faithful servants.

1 2 3 4 5
Comment: _____

30. Obedience does not always bring material prosperity.

1 2 3 4 5
Comment: _____

31. Material lack is not always a curse.

1 2 3 4 5
Comment: _____
32. Wealth is a gift from God.

1 2 3 4 5
Comment: _____
33. Material wealth is for the good of others and the ministry of the Lord.

1 2 3 4 5
Comment: _____

34. Congregants should give their wealth because they love God and others.

1 2 3 4 5

Comment: _____

35. Faithful stewardship is surrender and commitment and not what will be gained in return.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Comment: _____

36. Giving tithe and offerings will not always make a believer wealthy.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Comment: _____

37. God has not promised his children material riches when they give to him.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Comment: _____

38. Material poverty can bring glory to God.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Comment: _____

39. God promises Christians spiritual blessings when they use their wealth in God's work and charity.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Comment: _____

40. If Christians are not careful, wealth can be used for evil.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Comment: _____

41. God is more concerned about our hearts than our material possessions.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Comment: _____

42. God is equally concerned about both our spiritual and our material welfare.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Comment: _____

43. Christ does not care whether believers are materially rich or not.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Comment: _____

44. God gives wealth to believers to help those who are needy in the society.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Comment: _____

45. Material goods come as a result of hard work and financial discipline.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Comment: _____

46. Pastors should encourage songs in public worship that inspire Christians to believe God for financial miracles.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Comment: _____

47. Testimonies and public display of one's wealth during worship gatherings do not honour God.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

48. Church members should be taught about the dangers of material prosperity.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

III. Cultural Concepts that Accommodate Popular Prosperity Teaching

49. Divine agents like evil spirits, and demons influence material acquisition.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

50. Witch doctors can influence a Christian's economic state.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

51. Wealthy leaders can impart spiritual blessings to their subjects.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

52. Those who are subjects should not oppose their leaders.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

53. We need prosperity to be good leaders.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

54. Material poverty is evil and a curse.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

55. Giving special gifts (money, talents, and time) to leaders contribute to material prosperity from God.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

56. Christians have a right to be rich.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

57. Those who are poor materially cannot have much impact in the society.

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

58. Teaching on "sowing seed" is important for believers to have faith to gain wealth.

- 1 2 3 4 5
Comment: _____
59. It is embarrassing to be a faithful Christian and yet live an impoverished life.
- 1 2 3 4 5
Comment: _____
60. A Christian does not command respect without material well-being.
- 1 2 3 4 5
Comment: _____
61. Material goods come from hard work and financial discipline.
- 1 2 3 4 5
Comment: _____
62. Poor people should be prayed for to get freedom from the spell of financial misfortunes.
- 1 2 3 4 5
Comment: _____
63. It is right to conduct deliverance services to cast out evil spirits of poverty.
- 1 2 3 4 5
Comment: _____
64. The material possession is a sign of God's favor.
- 1 2 3 4 5
Comment: _____
65. The purpose for material blessings is to help the needy need in society.
- 1 2 3 4 5
Comment: _____
66. Christians should care more about relationships in the church than about wealth.
- 1 2 3 4 5
Comment: _____
67. Believers are poor because they have a generational curse.
- 1 2 3 4 5
Comment: _____
68. Christians prosper because they know how to plan well their time in light of God's word.
- 1 2 3 4 5
Comment: _____

Thanks for your time and responses, God Bless as you.

APPENDIX 3: Questionnaire on Whole – Life Stewardship

Study Title: The Impact of Prosperity Gospel Teaching on Whole-life Stewardship: A case of Africa Gospel Church in Kampala, Uganda

Name: James Ouma

Tel: +256 772 920234

E-Mail: oumajames47@yahoo.com

Questions for lay members and leaders

1. Name of your Local Church: _____
2. Position in the Local Church: _____ Mob. No. _____
3. Age: 13-17 ☐ 18-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46 - 65 ☐
4. Gender: Male ☐ female ☐
5. Level of Education: Primary school ☐ High School ☐
College/University ☐ Other ☐
6. Income per month: Less than 50 dollars ☐ 51-150 dollars ☐ 151- 350 ☐
dollars ☐ 351-500 ☐ Above 500 dollars

Section B: Research Contents (Qualitative Data)

For each statement, tick [✓] only one box that best represents your opinion about the statement. Also, give your short comment on the line below the boxes as you wish to.

1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly

Agree. Please give your honest comment(s) on the lines provided after each statement.

7. Stewardship considers right attitude in giving as more important than what is given
 Comment:

1
4

2
4

3
4

4
4

5
4
 8. Christian giving should be an external commitment with eternity in perspective
 Comment:

1
4

2
4

3
4

4
4

5
4
 9. Christians should give to God deliberately and systematically
 Comment:

1
4

2
4

3
4

4
4

5
4
 10. Christians should work hard to support themselves and others
 Comment:

1
4

2
4

3
4

4
4

5
4
- Wealthy people have the temptation of being arrogant
- | |
|---|
| 1 |
| 4 |
- | |
|---|
| 2 |
| 4 |
- | |
|---|
| 3 |
| 4 |
- | |
|---|
| 4 |
| 4 |
- | |
|---|
| 5 |
| 4 |

Comment: _____

11. Financial stewardship includes budgeting, investments, saving, and freedom from debts

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

12. Those who fail to serve God and others are being controlled by their wealth

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

13. Christians giving should show that God is the owner of everything they own

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

14. Christians should be contented with what God has given them

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

15. Christians who don't give their resources to God are robbing Him and deceiving themselves

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

16. Christians should regularly assess how they spend their resources (material, time, talents, etc)

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

17. Christians should give to God expecting nothing in return

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

18. Gifts and talents are for serving God and others

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

Comment: _____

19. Contentment should only be found in one's relationship with the Lord but not in wealth

1	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4

4

Comment: _____

20. The way Christians spent their money, time, gifts, and talents reflect their commitment to God

1 2 3 4 5

Comment: _____

21. Dishonest Christians demonstrate lack of depending on God to provide for their needs

1 2 3 4 5

Comment: _____

22. Christians should not have high regards for those who are rich

1 2 3 4 5

Comment: _____

23. Christians should strive for excellence in their work

1 2 3 4 5

Comment: _____

24. The problem with wealth is the attitude not the riches themselves

1 2 3 4 5

Comment: _____

25. Christians should work as if they are working for God and not for men

1 2 3 4 5

Comment: _____

Thank you so much for your answers and your time.

APPENDIX 4: Focus Group Discussion Tool for Lay Leaders

Study Title: The Impact of Prosperity Gospel Teaching on Whole-life Stewardship:

A Case of Africa Gospel Church in Kampala, Uganda

Name: James Ouma

Tel: +256 772 920234

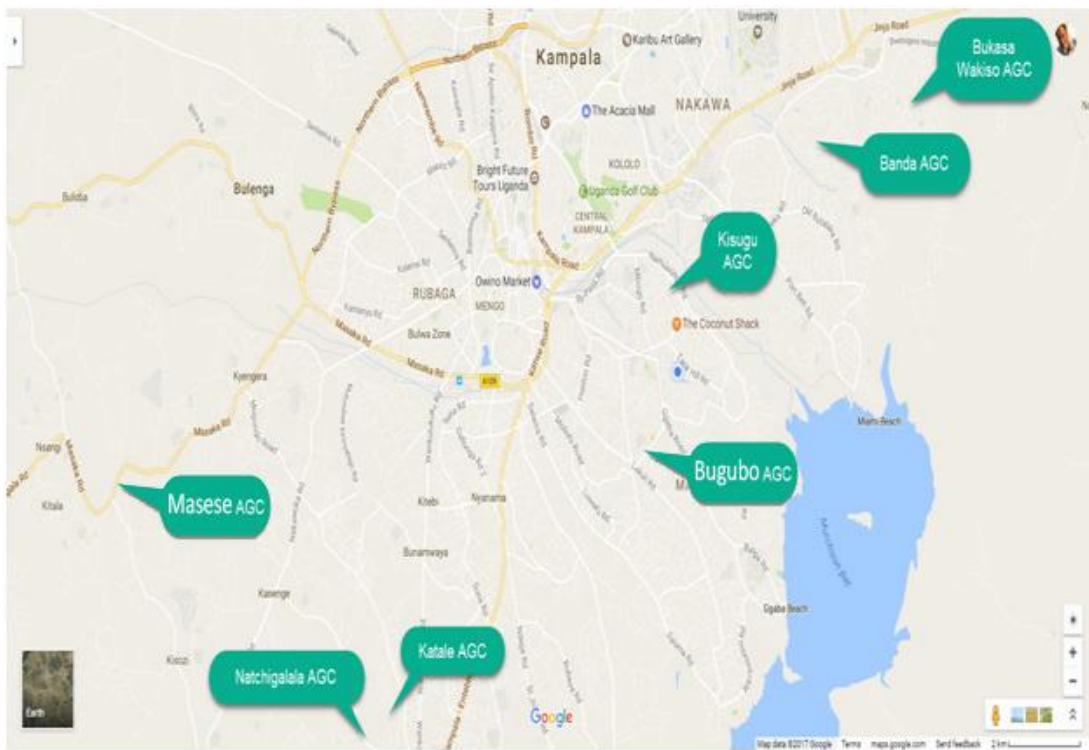
E-Mail: oumajames47@yahoo.com

1. What is your opinion about the teaching that every faithful Christian should be materially prosperous?
2. Why do Christians give their material wealth//finances to God?
3. To whom and how should Christians give?
4. What is your view on claiming scriptures that promise worldly blessings and receiving the blessings?
5. What is your opinion on the statement, “Jesus became poor so that we can become rich?”
6. In your view, should Christians be accountable to people and to God on their use of time, talents, and material wealth? Explain.
7. Is there any relationship between faith and being materially rich? Explain.
8. In which ways do you think God responds to Christians who “sow a seed” by faith?
9. What is your comment that poverty is a consequence of sin? Explain.
10. What is your view that salvation through Christ brings spiritual freedom?
11. Do you believe that salvation brings about riches? Explain.
12. How often do you plan for ministry time and how do you help church members to maximize their talents and abilities?
13. What do you teach Christians who are faithful yet lack material wealth?
14. As spiritual children of Abraham, do you think you and the members of your church are entitled to receive both spiritual as well as worldly riches from God? Please explain your answer.

15. How does God respond to prayer of His children who seek for riches?
16. What is your opinion on the teaching that poverty in the lives of Christians is a curse?
17. What is your opinion on those who say that sometimes God allows material lack among those He loves?
18. What do you understand by, “Only with difficulty will a rich person enter the Kingdom of heaven?”
19. How do you explain the relationship between evil forces like demons, evil spirits regarding poverty and riches?
20. Do you give hope to Christians living in material lack? If yes, how do you do that?
21. In your ministry experience, do you believe that different levels of income influence how people respond to the teaching on wealth like an exorcism (spiritual deliverance)? Explain.
22. Which levels of income earners do you think are most prone to attend deliverance services (lower income earners, middle-income earners, those with high income)? Please explain.
23. What strength do you see in prosperity gospel messages?
24. Are there some weaknesses you see in the prosperity teaching?
25. What is your general opinion about the prosperity teaching?
26. Can you think of ways of how the church is helping you to plan for your time and to develop your gifts?
27. How best can you serve God with the gift of time, material resources and talents?
28. Do you have any question or comment regarding stewardship or prosperity gospel teaching?

Thank you so much for your answers and your time.

APPENDIX 5: Research Site Map



APPENDIX 6: Research Authorization Letter



13th March, 2018

The Executive Secretary,
The Uganda National Council Of
Science & Technology,
Box 6884 Kampala,
UGANDA.

James Ouma (14J01PMN15) is a bonafide student at Africa Nazarene University. He/She has finished his/her course work and has defended his/her thesis proposal *entitled "An Investigation of the Influence of Prosperity Gospel Teaching on Whole-Life Stewardship: A Case of Africa Gospel Church in Kampala, Uganda"*

Any assistance accorded to him/her to facilitate data collection and finish his/her thesis is highly welcomed.

Prof. Zablon Nthamburi
REGISTRAR

APPENDIX 7: Research Permit



Uganda National Council for Science and Technology

(Established by Act of Parliament of the Republic of Uganda)

Our Ref: SS 4687

3rd August 2018

Mr. James Ouma
Africa Gospel Church
Kampala

Dear Mr. Ouma,

Re: Research Approval: An Investigation of the Influence of Prosperity Gospel Teaching on Whole – Life Stewardship: A Case of Africa Gospel Church in Kampala, Uganda

I am pleased to inform you that on **13/07/2018**, the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) approved the above referenced research project. The Approval of the research project is for the period of **13/07/2018 to 13/07/2019**.

Your research registration number with the UNCST is **SS 4687**. Please, cite this number in all your future correspondences with UNCST in respect of the above research project.

As Principal Investigator of the research project, you are responsible for fulfilling the following requirements of approval:

1. All co-investigators must be kept informed of the status of the research.
2. Changes, amendments, and addenda to the research protocol or the consent form (where applicable) must be submitted to the designated Research Ethics Committee (REC) or Lead Agency for re-review and approval prior to the activation of the changes. UNCST must be notified of the approved changes within five working days.
3. For clinical trials, all serious adverse events must be reported promptly to the designated local IRC for review with copies to the National Drug Authority.
4. Unanticipated problems involving risks to research subjects/participants or other must be reported promptly to the UNCST. New information that becomes available which could change the risk/benefit ratio must be submitted promptly for UNCST review.
5. Only approved study procedures are to be implemented. The UNCST may conduct impromptu audits of all study records.
6. An annual progress report and approval letter of continuation from the REC must be submitted electronically to UNCST. Failure to do so may result in termination of the research project.

LOCATION/CORRESPONDENCE

Plot 6 Kimera Road, Ntinda
P. O. Box 6884
KAMPALA, UGANDA

COMMUNICATION

TEL: (256) 414 705500
FAX: (256) 414-234579
EMAIL: info@uncst.go.ug
WEBSITE: <http://www.uncst.go.ug>



Uganda National Council for Science and Technology
(Established by Act of Parliament of the Republic of Uganda)

Below is a list of documents approved with this application:

	Document Title	Language	Version	Version Date
1.	Research proposal	English	2.0	June 2018
2.	Informed consent form	English	2.0	June 2018
3.	Focus group discussion for lay leaders (FGD)	English	N/A	N/A
4.	Questionnaires	English	N/A	N/A

Yours sincerely,

Isaac Makhuwa

For: Executive Secretary

UGANDA NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Copied to: Chair, Makerere University School of Social Sciences, Research Ethics Committee

LOCATION/CORRESPONDENCE

Plot 6 Kimera Road, Ntinda
P. O. Box 6884
KAMPALA, UGANDA

COMMUNICATION

TEL: (256) 414 705500
FAX: (256) 414-234579
EMAIL: info@uncst.go.ug
WEBSITE: <http://www.uncst.go.ug>

APPENDIX 8: Consent Forms (Lay Church Members, Leaders, and Pastors)

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent form for the Africa Gospel Church Lay Members

Study Title: "An Investigation of the Influence of Prosperity Gospel Teaching on Whole-Life Stewardship: A Case of Africa Gospel Church in Kampala, Uganda."

Date: 2018 -2019
 Name of Funder: Self sponsor
 Name of Principle Investigator: James Ouma
 Institution: Africa Nazarene University/Religion Department
 Position: Student
 Address: P.O. Box 11788, Kampala
 Telephone: + (256)772920234
 E-mail: oumajames47@yahoo.com

This Informed Consent Form contains two parts:

- Information Sheet: to share information about the research with you
- Certificate of Consent for signatures should you agree to take part

You will be given a copy of the full written informed consent form.



Version 2 18052018." An Investigation of the Influence of Prosperity Gospel Teaching on Whole-Life Stewardship: A Case of Africa Gospel Church in Kampala, Uganda, 1

Part I: Information Sheet

Introduction

I am James Ouma, conducting research a study titled: **"An Investigation of the Influence of Prosperity Gospel Teaching on Whole-life Stewardship: A Case of Africa Gospel Church in Kampala, Uganda."**

You are requested to participate in a research study. This consent form explains the research and the role of participants in the study.

Please consider this informational and give your honest answers to the best of your knowledge. Before you participate, you are free to talk to someone you feel comfortable with about the research.

If you encounter some words that you do not understand, ask me to stop as we go through the information and I will explain them to you. If you have questions at a later time, you can ask me or any member of the research team.

Purpose of the research

I am conducting the study because despite Africa Gospel Church (AGC) having good biblical teachings on stewardship, it continues to show trends of wrong teachings from the prosperity gospel teachings (PGT). The aim of the study is to explore the degree to which AGC members are predisposed to the popular prosperity gospel teaching, survey the biblical theology of the prosperity teaching in relation to whole-life stewardship, and to determine main cultural concepts in Africa that accommodate popular prosperity teaching. The knowledge obtained in this work will inform the church curriculum on stewardship and improve on the way church members live and serve God, and the society at all levels.

Participation in the Study

I am inviting seven Africa Gospel Churches to participate in the research. The study includes lay members, lay leaders, and pastors to offer their understanding on prosperity gospel teaching, and whole-life stewardship.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. You are free to stop participating in the interview or study at any time you wish.

Duration

This study will take place over a period of one year total.

Benefits/Risks in being in the Study

I will be asking you questions about your understanding on your material resources, time, gifts and your Christian faith. Some of the questions may make you feel uncomfortable. While I don't intend that you

feel that way, if you however, decide not to continue. By participating in this study, it is possible that you will be at a minimal risk, which may cause no harm for example: you may feel that if you reported what your pastor teaches on prosperity, you may lose his favour.

Version 2 18052018," An Investigation of the Influence of Prosperity Gospel Teaching on Whole-Life Stewardship: A Case of Africa Gospel Church in Kampala, Uganda, 2



As Church members, you will have an opportunity to grow spiritually, and to develop your ministry skills. You will also gain Scriptural wisdom which will assist you from being duped by prosperity gospel preachers who are mushrooming in the contemporary church.

Reimbursement

You will not be given fare at the point of interviews since the investigation is being conducted on Sunday at your usual worship premises. However, the refreshment will be offered to you as a round figure of Sh. 5,000 (five thousand shillings only). If the researcher will request a participant to meet him for the purpose of the study, he will give a refund of Sh. 10,000 only as transport.

Confidentiality

The records of this study will be kept private. I will not share the identity or records of the participants of this study with others. Information about you that will be collected during research will be put away under key and lock and no one besides the researcher will have access to the records.

Privacy

There will be no privacy when conducting the interviews since the nature of the research is general and within public domain.

Sharing Results

I will share the results of the work through publication in referred journals, presentations at theological conferences including AGC annual national meetings. I will also use the study knowledge in international conferences and across stakeholders, following the completion and approval of the study for other interested people to learn from the research. However, confidential data will not be shared.

The knowledge that I get from doing this research will also be shared with you through sermons, bible study and conferences before it is made widely available to the public. I will tell you about the presentations through your pastors (at the churches where research was conducted) through telephone and/or SMS messages.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

You are not obligated to participate in this research if you are not willing. You are also free to stop at any point of the interview as you wish. It is your choice and all of your rights will still be respected. Refusing to participate in this study will not affect your membership in the church in any way.

Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest while carrying out this study.

Ethical Clearance:

The study has been approved by Makerere University School of Social Sciences Research and Ethics Committee, and Uganda National Council for Science and Technology

Contact Information

The researcher involved in this study is Rev. James Ouma. In case of any question about the research project, (you may ask him now or later, even after the study has started. If you wish to questions ask later, you may contact me at:



Name of the principal Investigator: James Ouma
 Address: Africa Gospel Church, Kisugu
 P.O. Box 11788, Kampala
 +(256) 772920234
 Oumajames47@yahoo.com

This research study has been reviewed and approved by Africa Nazarene University by the department of religion, Research and Ethics Committee, which is a committee whose task is to ensure that research participants are protected from harm.

Contacts and Questions

The researcher(s) conducting this study are mentioned below. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have any questions on your right as a research participant contact:

Dr. Stella Neema
 The Chair
 Makerere School of Social Sciences
 Research Ethics Committee
 Telephone: +256- 772 457576
 E-mail: sheisim@yahoo.com

Or
 The Executive Secretary
 The Uganda National Council of Science and Technology,
 Kimera Road. Ntinda P. O. Box 6884 Kampala, Uganda
 Telephone: (256) 414 705500
 Fax: +256-414-234579
 Email: info@uncst.go.ug



Part II: Certificate of Consent**Statement by Participant**

I have read the above information or it has been read to me. I have received answers to the questions I have asked. I consent to participate in this research.

Printed name of participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

If the participant is illiterate, a literate witness must sign (if possible, this person should be selected by the participant and have no connection to the research team). Participants who are illiterate should include their thumb print as well.

Literate Witness:

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Participant:

Thumbprint

Statement by the Person Taking Consent

I have accurately read the information sheet to the potential participant and ensured that the participant understands the information within to the best of the ability. I confirm that the participant was given the opportunity to ask question about the study and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly based on my knowledge. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent and that consent has been given freely and voluntarily. A copy of this informed consent form has been provided to the participant.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name Interviewer: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____



INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent form for the Africa Gospel Church Lay Leaders

Study Title: "An Investigation of the Influence of Prosperity Gospel Teaching on Whole-Life Stewardship: A Case of Africa Gospel Church in Kampala, Uganda."

Date: 2018 -2019
 Name of Funder: self sponsor
 Name of Principle Investigator: James Ouma
 Institution: Africa Nazarene University/Religion Department
 Position: Student
 Address: P.O. Box 11788, Kampala
 Telephone: + (256)772920234
 E-mail: oumajames47@yahoo.com

This Informed Consent Form contains two parts:

- Information Sheet: to share information about the research with you
- Certificate of Consent for signatures should you agree to take part

You will be given a copy of the full written informed consent form.

Part I: Information Sheet

Introduction

I am James Ouma, conducting research a study titled: "An Investigation of the Influence of Prosperity Gospel Teaching on Whole-life Stewardship: A Case of Africa Gospel Church in Kampala, Uganda."

You are requested to participate in a research study. This consent form explains the research and the role of participants in the study.

Please consider this informational and give your honest answers to the best of your knowledge. Before you participate, you are free to talk to someone you feel comfortable with about the research.

If you encounter some words that you do not understand, ask me to stop as we go through the information and I will explain them to you. If you have questions at a later time you can ask me or any member of the research team.



Version 2 18052018." An Investigation of the Influence of Prosperity Gospel Teaching on Whole-Life Stewardship: A Case of Africa Gospel Church in Kampala, Uganda, 6

Purpose of the research

I am conducting the study because despite Africa Gospel Church (AGC) having good biblical teachings on stewardship, it continues to show trends of wrong teachings from the prosperity gospel teachings (PGT). The aim of the study is to explore the degree to which AGC members are predisposed to the popular prosperity gospel teaching, survey the biblical theology of the prosperity teaching in relation to whole-life stewardship, and to determine main cultural concepts in Africa that accommodate popular prosperity teaching. The knowledge obtained in this work will inform the church curriculum on stewardship and improve on the way church members live and serve God, and the society at all levels.

Participation in the Study

I am inviting seven Africa Gospel Churches to participate in the research. The study includes lay members, lay leaders, and pastors to offer their understanding on prosperity gospel teaching, and whole-life stewardship.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. You are free to stop participating in the interview or study at any time you wish.

Duration

This study will take place over a period of one year total.

Benefits/Risks in being in the Study

I will be asking you questions about your understanding on your material resources, time, gifts and your Christian faith. Some of the questions may make you feel uncomfortable. While I don't intend that you feel that way, if you however, decide not to continue. By participating in this study, it is possible that you will be at a minimal risk, which may cause no harm for example: you may feel that if you reported what your pastor teaches on prosperity, you may lose his favour.

As Church members, you will have an opportunity to grow spiritually, and to develop your ministry skills. You will also gain Scriptural wisdom which will assist you from being duped by prosperity gospel preachers who are mushrooming in the contemporary church.

Reimbursement

You will not be given fare at the point of interviews since the investigation is being conducted on Sunday at your usual worship premises. However, the refreshment will be offered to you as a round figure of Sh. 5,000 (five thousand shillings only). If the researcher will request a participant to meet him for the purpose of the study, he will give a refund of Sh. 10,000 only as transport.

Confidentiality

The records of this study will be kept private. I will not share the identity or record of the participants of this study with others. Information about you that will be collected during research will be put away under key and lock and no one besides the researcher will have access to the records.

Privacy

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Version 2 18052018. "An Investigation of the Influence of Prosperity Gospel Teaching on Whole-Life Stewardship: A Case of Africa Gospel Church in Kampala, Uganda, 7

Sharing Results

I will share the results of the work through publication in referred journals, presentations at theological conferences including AGC annual national meetings. I will also use the study knowledge in international conferences and across stakeholders, following the completion and approval of the study for other interested people to learn from the research. However, confidential data will not be shared.

The knowledge that I get from doing this research will also be shared with you through sermons, bible study and conferences before it is made widely available to the public. I will tell you about the presentations through your pastors (at the churches where research was conducted) through telephone and/or SMS messages.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

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Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest while carrying out this study.

Ethical Clearance:

The study has been approved by Makerere University School of Social Sciences Research and Ethics Committee, and Uganda National Council for Science and Technology

Contact Information

The researcher involved in this study is Rev. James Ouma. In case of any question about the research project (you may ask him now or later, even after the study has started. If you wish to questions ask later, you may contact me at:

Name of the principal Investigator: James Ouma
Address: Africa Gospel Church, Kisugu
P.O. Box 11788, Kampala
+(256) 772920234
Oumajames47@yahoo.com

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The Chair
Makerere School of Social Sciences
Research Ethics Committee
Telephone: +256- 772 457576



Version 2 18052018." An Investigation of the Influence of Prosperity Gospel Teaching on Whole-Life Stewardship:
A Case of Africa Gospel Church in Kampala, Uganda, 8

E-mail: sheisim@yahoo.com

Or

The Executive Secretary

The Uganda National Council of Science and Technology,
Kimera Road. Ntinda P. O. Box 6884 Kampala, Uganda

Telephone: (256) 414 705500

Fax: +256-414-234579

Email: info@uncst.go.ug



Part II: Certificate of Consent**Statement by Participant**

I have read the above information or it has been read to me. I have received answers to the questions I have asked. I consent to participate in this research.

Printed name of participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

If the participant is illiterate, a literate witness must sign (if possible, this person should be selected by the participant and have no connection to the research team). Participants who are illiterate should include their thumb print as well.

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Printed Name: _____

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Date: _____

Printed Name Interviewer: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____



INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent form for the Africa Gospel Church Pastors

Study Title: "An Investigation of the Influence of Prosperity Gospel Teaching on Whole-Life Stewardship: A Case of Africa Gospel Church in Kampala, Uganda."

Date: 2018 -2019
 Name of Funder: self sponsor
 Name of Principle Investigator: James Ouma
 Institution: Africa Nazarene University/Religion Department
 Position: Student
 Address: P.O. Box 11788, Kampala
 Telephone: + (256)772920234
 E-mail: oumajames47@yahoo.com

This Informed Consent Form contains two parts:

- Information Sheet: to share information about the research with you
- Certificate of Consent for signatures should you agree to take part

You will be given a copy of the full written informed consent form.

Part I: Information Sheet

Introduction

I am James Ouma, conducting research a study titled: "An Investigation of the Influence of Prosperity Gospel Teaching on Whole-life Stewardship: A Case of Africa Gospel Church in Kampala, Uganda."

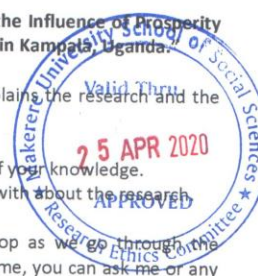
You are requested to participate in a research study. This consent form explains the research and the role of participants in the study.

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Version 2 18052018." An Investigation of the Influence of Prosperity Gospel Teaching on Whole-Life Stewardship: A Case of Africa Gospel Church in Kampala, Uganda, 11



Purpose of the research

I am conducting the study because despite Africa Gospel Church (AGC) having good biblical teachings on stewardship, it continues to show trends of wrong teachings from the prosperity gospel teachings (PGT). The aim of the study is to explore the degree to which AGC members are predisposed to the popular prosperity gospel teaching, survey the biblical theology of the prosperity teaching in relation to whole-life stewardship, and to determine main cultural concepts in Africa that accommodate popular prosperity teaching. The knowledge obtained in this work will inform the church curriculum on stewardship and improve on the way church members live and serve God, and the society at all levels.

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Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest while carrying out this study.

Ethical Clearance:

The study has been approved by Makerere University School of Social Sciences Research and Ethics Committee, and Uganda National Council for Science and Technology

Contact Information

The researcher involved in this study is Rev. James Ouma. In case of any question about the research project (you may ask him now or later, even after the study has started. If you wish to questions ask later, you may contact me at:

Name of the principal Investigator: James Ouma
Address: Africa Gospel Church, Kisugu
P.O. Box 11788, Kampala
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Oumajames47@yahoo.com

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Contacts and Questions

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Dr. Stella Neema
The Chair
Makerere School of Social Sciences
Research Ethics Committee
Telephone: +256- 772 457576



E-mail: sheisim@yahoo.com

Or

The Executive Secretary

The Uganda National Council of Science and Technology,

Kimera Road. Ntinda P. O. Box 6884 Kampala, Uganda

Telephone: (256) 414 705500

Fax: +256-414-234579

Email: info@uncst.go.ug

Part II: Certificate of Consent

Statement by Participant

I have read the above information or it has been read to me. I have received answers to the questions I have asked. I consent to participate in this research.

Printed name of participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

If the participant is illiterate, a literate witness must sign (if possible, this person should be selected by the participant and have no connection to the research team). Participants who are illiterate should include their thumb print as well.

Literate Witness:

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Participant:

Thumbprint

Statement by the Person Taking Consent

I have accurately read the information sheet to the potential participant and ensured that the participant understands the information within to the best of the ability. I confirm that the participant was given the opportunity to ask question about the study and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly based on my knowledge. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent and that consent has been given freely and voluntarily. A copy of this informed consent form has been provided to the participant.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Version 2 18052018. "An Investigation of the Influence of Prosperity Gospel Teaching on Whole-Life Stewardship: A Case of Africa Gospel Church in Kampala, Uganda, 14



APPENDIX 9: Objective four dropped from the thesis research Proposal

RESEARCH PROPOSAL SUMMARY

It is the REC requirement that the composition of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) include individuals with varied backgrounds and education. Investigators are therefore required to attach fourteen (14) copies of a 3-4 page (maximum 4 pages) for those of full board review, Research Proposal Summary using the headings provided below in terminology that is understandable across disciplines.

3.1. RESEARCH QUESTION TO BE ADDRESSED BY THIS PROPOSAL

The research seeks to investigate the influence of prosperity gospel teaching on whole-life stewardship in the Africa Gospel Churches in Kampala area, Uganda.

4.2. RATIONALE FOR RESEARCH

The study aims at answering the following questions

- i. To what degree have the members of the AGC imbibed the claims of prosperity Gospel?
- ii. What is the biblical theology of material prosperity in relation to whole-life stewardship?
- iii. How do cultural concepts of material prosperity accommodate prosperity teaching?
- iv. ~~What is the effect of a newly developed manual on whole-life stewardship (sensitive to the African context) on the thinking of African Gospel Church members?~~

The Lord, Jesus Christ mandated the Church to go and make disciples of all nations. (Matthew 28:18-20). The Africa Gospel Church (AGC), the participating subject realizes that biblical discipleship requires obedience to demonstrate love that brings honour to God. Therefore, all its members are required to demonstrate faithfulness in whole-life stewardship in all areas of material possessions and finances, time management, and employment of their gifts and abilities.

However, the church is facing stewardship crisis from various contemporary preachers whose emphasis is miracles and prosperity. Such preachers advocate a different gospel from the biblical perspective which is duping many gullible Christians. These advocates of the gospel tell their disciples to attract material blessings by naming and claiming them by faith. They say, "Just have faith!" "Give and it shall be given to you a hundred fold." This phony gospel encourages followers of the prosperity teachers to remain faithful to them and to God for worldly gain. As a result, Christians listening and believing in these dissenting voices have exchanged the godly virtues of obedience, humility sacrificial service, love for God and his mission on earth with selfish ambitions. Unless genuine preachers teach authentic gospel on whole-life stewardship, the church will believe the spurious gospel to be the truth. Thus, a need to research about the teaching in order to counter its current impact and its future influence on the church becomes imperative to bring back the Christian faith to its rightful place on whole-life stewardship.

Version 2, 23052018 "An Investigation of the Influence of Prosperity Gospel Teaching on Whole-life Stewardship: A case of Africa Gospel Church in Kampala, Uganda" -Email: pumajames47@yahoo.com
Mob: 0772902244

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—The advocates of the prosperity doctrine focus their message on the immediate, material rewards for faithfulness to God. This seems to contradict the biblical demands on faithfulness to God in all circumstances (in needs, wants). Members of the AGC reflect discrepancy in their

RESEARCH PROPOSAL SUMMARY

Faithful biblical obligations regarding stewardship. Conducting this study will disclose concerns why the church is disposed towards the gospel of prosperity.

Objectives

This research will be guided by the following objectives:

- i. To explore the degree to which members of the Africa Gospel Church have imbibed the claim of prosperity;
- ii. To survey the biblical theology of material prosperity in relation to whole-life stewardship;
- iii. To determine how cultural concepts of material prosperity in Africa accommodate prosperity teaching; and
- iv. To develop a manual on whole-life stewardship that is sensitive to the African context.

METHODS

Approach

This is a case study design. It will integrate causal design because it has ability to understand a phenomenon by measuring what impact a specific change will have on existing norms and assumptions. Causal effect occurs when a change in one phenomenon (independent variable) leads to a change in the dependent variable and draws relevant information in the study. A non-probability sampling paradigm will be used as the researcher assumes uniform distribution of respondents within the targeted population.

The study design and rationale for that design

This is a case study design; where causal design will be incorporated. Both qualitative and quantitative methods will be applied in the study to enable the examination of the perception of the people on the prosperity gospel teaching, and whole-life stewardship in the Africa Gospel Church (AGC). Qualitative method will be used to determine which category of church members are most influenced by the prosperity teaching. The paradigm will be adopted because it is the most appropriate method that will be able to investigate and determine which variables might be causing certain behaviour, or whether causality exists between variables. Given the various variables that will be tested in this study on the influence of prosperity gospel teaching on the Christians in Africa Gospel Church, the above design is the most suitable one.

Population

The study population are the different categories of church members in the AGC. The first category is the lay members; the second is the lay leaders and the last one is the pastors. All these population will be drawn from the seven AGCs namely: AGC Kisugu, AGC Katakale, AGC Banda, AGD Nakigalala, AGC Bukasa, AGC Masese, and AGC Bugiri.

Version 2, 23052018 "An Investigation of the Influence of Prosperity Gospel Teaching on Whole-life Stewardship: A case of Africa Gospel Church in Kampala, Uganda" —Email: gumajames47@yahoo.com
Mob: 0772920234

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Date: _____
Printed Name Interviewer: _____
Signature: _____
Date: _____



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