

OPEN CHRISTIAN PRESS

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE AGE

*Exposing Modern Deceptions, Counterfeit Christianity, and the
Church's Captivity to the Spirit of the Age*

PART III

COUNTERFEIT CHRISTIANITY AND THE CAPTIVITY OF THE CHURCH

CHAPTER 11

The Prosperity Gospel, Manifestation, and the Baptism of Greed

Prof. Sixbert SANGWA

Open Christian University | Center for Faith and Work

[ORCID 0000-0001-8650-1444](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8650-1444) | ssangwa@openchristian.education

Edited by Prof. Dr. Placide Mutabazi

First Open Christian Press edition, 2026

Open Christian Press, an Open Christian University imprint
books.openchristian.education

CHAPTER PUBLICATION METADATA

Abstract

This chapter examines the prosperity gospel as a practical theology of desire that relocates Christian faith from trust in the sovereign God to techniques for obtaining health, wealth, influence, protection, and visible success. Building upon the book's preceding analyses of the sovereign self, reconstructed theology, counterfeit Christianity, selective hermeneutics, and the commodification of created life, it argues that prosperity teaching often treats faith as a force, words as instruments of reality-production, giving as investment, healing as present entitlement, and material increase as evidence of divine favour. The chapter distinguishes God's real provision, miraculous healing, diligent work, responsible enterprise, generous giving, and lawful wealth from presumption, positive confession, manifestation culture, seed-faith transactions, commercialised access, and the blaming of sufferers. It traces the movement's historical and philosophical genealogy through sacred exchange, New Thought, mind-cure, healing revivalism, broadcast religion, motivational spirituality, and digital platforms, while resisting simplistic claims of direct intellectual dependence. Through sustained exposition of Matthew 6:19-34, Luke 12:13-21, Acts 8:9-24, 1 Timothy 6:3-19, 2 Corinthians 8-9, and related texts, the chapter presents the strongest prosperity case fairly and answers it biblically, historically, logically, and pastorally. Particular attention is given to African contexts of unemployment, informality, weak public systems, spiritual causality, digital fundraising, communal obligation, and aspiration. The chapter confronts exploitative teachers, corrects sincere error, comforts the poor and sick, affirms medicine and vocation, and restores giving as grace rather than leverage. It concludes that the prosperity gospel cannot prepare the church for unanswered prayer, persecution, disability, death, judgment, or Christ's return. In the last second before midnight, Christ Himself, not prosperity, must again become the church's treasure.

Keywords

prosperity gospel; manifestation; positive confession; seed-faith giving; biblical stewardship; divine healing; rapture readiness

Publication details

Book: The Gospel According to the Age: Exposing Modern Deceptions, Counterfeit Christianity, and the Church's Captivity to the Spirit of the Age

Chapter: Chapter II: The Prosperity Gospel, Manifestation, and the Baptism of Greed

Author: Prof. Sixbert SANGWA

Book editor: Prof. Dr. Placide Mutabazi

Publisher: Open Christian Press, an Open Christian University imprint

Edition: First edition

Publication year: 2026

Language: English

Suggested citation

Sangwa, S. (2026). The prosperity gospel, manifestation, and the baptism of greed. In P. Mutabazi (Ed.), *The Gospel according to the age: Exposing modern deceptions, counterfeit Christianity, and the church's captivity to the spirit of the age* (Chapter II). Open Christian Press.

Rights and Scripture notice

Copyright © 2026 Sixbert Sangwa. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored, or transmitted in any form or by any means without prior written permission from the publisher, except as permitted by applicable copyright law. Scripture quotations marked CSB have been taken from the Christian Standard Bible®, Copyright © 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. Christian Standard Bible® and CSB® are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers.

[Publisher: books.openchristian.education](https://books.openchristian.education) | editor@openchristian.education

When the Altar Becomes a Checkout Counter

A checkout counter does not ask whether the buyer loves the merchant. It asks whether the price has been paid. The transaction is complete when money changes hands and the promised item is released. Nothing more intimate is required.

When that logic enters the sanctuary, prayer becomes an order form, faith becomes purchasing power, confession becomes a transaction code, testimony becomes product advertising, and the offering becomes a deposit placed against an expected return. God may still be called Father, but He is treated as the administrator of a spiritual market. Christ may still be preached, but He is presented as the guarantor of upward mobility. The Holy Spirit may still be invoked, but His power is measured by visible outcomes: a healed body, a cancelled debt, a visa, a marriage, a promotion, a contract, a child, a vehicle, a property, or an expanding platform.

The altar remains. The market has moved inside it.

Chapter 10 defended created order in marriage, parenthood, childhood, embodied life, disability, ageing, and death. It showed that autonomous desire does not stop when it reaches the household. The same desire enters the church and asks the pulpit to bless personal ambition. Once the self has been taught to interpret every limit as an obstacle to fulfilment, it becomes natural to seek a religious technique for overcoming limits. Prosperity theology supplies that technique. It takes the consumer self described in Chapter 5, the reconstructed deity described in Chapter 6, the counterfeit gospel described in Chapter 7, and the selective hermeneutics exposed in Chapter 8, then joins them in a practical religious economy.

The result is not simply excessive preaching about money. It is a reconstruction of the Christian faith. Faith becomes a force. Words become instruments of reality-production. Giving becomes investment. Blessing becomes visible increase. Healing becomes an entitlement. Suffering becomes an accusation. Testimony becomes proof that the method works. God becomes the guarantor of personal success, and Jesus becomes the provider of the desired life rather than the crucified Lord who commands self-denial.

This chapter does not deny that God provides. He feeds birds, clothes flowers, gives wisdom, grants work, opens doors, heals bodies, supplies daily bread, entrusts wealth, answers prayer, and sometimes delivers His people in ways that astonish them. Scripture does not teach that poverty is holy merely because it is poverty, that sickness should never be treated, that enterprise is worldly, or that believers must expect uninterrupted defeat. The Creator is generous. Work is dignified. Wise planning matters. Medicine can be providential. Wealth can serve mercy and mission. Miracles are real.

The deception begins when gifts are turned into guarantees, promises are detached from covenant and context, faith is detached from its object, prayer is detached from submission, and giving is detached from grace. It becomes another gospel when health, wealth, influence, and comfort move from possible providences to covenant rights; when the sick are blamed for remaining sick; when the poor are told that lack proves defective faith; when donors are promised returns that Scripture never promised; and when God is sought principally as a means to obtain something regarded as more desirable than God Himself.

The controlling thesis is therefore severe but necessary: the prosperity gospel baptises the ambitions of the sovereign self. It converts covetousness into expectation, greed into vision, fundraising into revelation, testimony into advertising, and disappointment into evidence of defective faith. By displacing the crucified and risen Christ with techniques for obtaining desire, it offers a faith unable to prepare believers for persecution, unanswered prayer, disability, bereavement, economic loss, death, judgment, or the return of the Lord.

This argument develops the author's earlier warnings that prosperity preaching can displace Christ's saving mission, convert the gospel into a promise of material ease, and later return in the more respectable language of holistic transformation while leaving the cross at the margins (Sangwa, 2024b, 2025a, 2025b). The present chapter extends those conclusions through historical genealogy, sustained exegesis, contemporary evidence, and a constructive theology of faith, provision, healing, stewardship, suffering, and hope.

In the last second before midnight, the church does not need a method for loving the present age more efficiently. She needs oil in her lamp, truth in her mouth, holiness in her life, mercy in her hands, and Christ as her treasure.

What Prosperity Teaching Is, and What It Is Not

Precision is a duty of truth. The expression *prosperity gospel* is sometimes used carelessly to condemn any sermon about provision, healing, business, diligence, generosity, success, or hope. That imprecision harms discernment. It also allows genuine prosperity teachers to dismiss criticism as hostility toward divine goodness.

Prosperity theology is best understood as a family of teachings rather than one uniform creed. Its strongest forms teach that believers possess a present right to health, material prosperity, success, or victory and can obtain these benefits through faith, positive confession, obedient giving, spiritual laws, or alignment with divine promises. The Lausanne Theology Working Group described it as teaching that believers have a right to health and wealth and may obtain them through positive confessions and the sowing of financial seeds. The group also acknowledged that the movement contains biblical elements and flourishes amid severe social need, while concluding that its dominant forms gravely distort Scripture and harm the church (Lausanne Theology Working Group, 2010).

The *Word of Faith* movement refers more specifically to traditions that emphasise faith as an active spiritual law, the believer's authority, the creative or formative power of spoken words, divine healing, covenant prosperity, and the practical appropriation of promises. The boundaries are porous. Not every person who values confession, healing prayer, or bold faith accepts every Word of Faith claim. Not every Pentecostal or charismatic church is prosperity-oriented. Pentecostal Christianity includes many communities of sacrifice, holiness, mission, prayer, social care, and costly witness. To collapse the entire tradition into prosperity theology would be historically false and pastorally unjust.

Positive confession ordinarily refers to the practice of speaking words believed to agree with God's promises and rejecting speech thought to strengthen doubt, sickness, poverty, or defeat. Biblical confession is real. Christians confess Jesus as Lord, confess sin, proclaim God's truth, bless, lament, give thanks, and encourage one another. The error appears when confession is treated as a mechanism that produces reality, when naming suffering is condemned as unbelief, or when the believer's words are assigned creative power belonging uniquely to God.

Manifestation has several meanings. In ordinary Christian speech, it may refer to the visible disclosure of God's work or the appearance of spiritual gifts. In contemporary self-help and New Thought settings, it often means bringing a desired outcome into experience through focused thought, visualisation, affirmation, emotional alignment, or confidence that the desired future already exists. Christianised manifestation adds biblical vocabulary, prayer, decrees, and promises while retaining the autonomous aim: the self identifies the desired reality and employs spiritual means to summon it.

Seed-faith giving describes a model in which money, property, or another offering is presented as seed expected to produce a divinely multiplied harvest. Scripture uses agricultural imagery for generosity, mission, obedience, and moral consequence. The problem is not the metaphor. The problem is the transaction imposed upon it. When a preacher identifies a financial amount, links it to a predicted blessing, and presents the transfer as a mechanism for obtaining healing, marriage, fertility, protection, employment, travel, or wealth, giving has been changed from worship into leverage.

New Thought names a diverse metaphysical movement that developed in the nineteenth century around mind-cure, the divinity or spiritual potential of the self, mental causation, affirmative prayer, health, and abundance. It is not identical to Pentecostalism or evangelical Christianity. Yet historical scholarship has shown that the modern prosperity gospel arose through a convergence of streams that included metaphysical ideas about mind and speech, Pentecostal healing revivals, positive thinking, entrepreneurial individualism, and mass media (Bowler, 2013). Contemporary Unity teaching still speaks openly of abundance, affirmations, visualisation, prosperity consciousness, and alignment with a universal flow of good (Unity, n.d.). These similarities do not prove that every prosperity preacher consciously studied New Thought. They do reveal a shared spiritual grammar in which thought, speech, and alignment become instruments for obtaining desired conditions.

Biblical prosperity must therefore be defined differently. Scripture can use prosperity language for wellbeing, fruitfulness, peace, wisdom, successful obedience, material provision, or the fulfilment of a God-given task. Yet the Bible does not make one outward condition the universal sign of faithfulness. Joseph prospered in slavery because the Lord was with him, but prosperity did not mean freedom from chains. Paul abounded and suffered need. The Macedonians possessed deep poverty and overflowing generosity. The church in Smyrna was materially poor and spiritually rich. Laodicea considered itself wealthy while Christ called it poor, blind, and naked. Biblical prosperity is subordinate to covenant, vocation, holiness, neighbour-love, providence, and eternity. It is never a blank cheque signed by God and completed by desire.

Faith is not presumption. Prayer is not technique. Hope is not certainty that one preferred outcome must occur. Healing prayer is not a guarantee of immediate cure. Wealth is not righteousness. Poverty is not holiness. Contentment is not economic passivity. Entrepreneurship is not greed. Ministerial support is not the sale of access. A testimony is not evidence that a formula works universally. A miracle is not a product. A pastor is not a broker standing between God and clients.

These distinctions permit the chapter to correct without caricature. They also force the critic to come under judgment. A person may denounce prosperity preachers while secretly envying their wealth. A poor church may worship money as intensely as a rich church. A conservative ministry may reject positive confession while

measuring divine favour by buildings, donors, attendance, political access, or academic prestige. Mammon does not cease to be mammon because it wears austere clothing.

The Old Desire to Purchase Sacred Power

Prosperity theology is modern in vocabulary and media, but the desire beneath it is ancient. Fallen humanity repeatedly seeks a religious system that can be activated, predicted, and controlled. Pagan sacrifice often functioned as exchange. Gifts were offered so that divine powers would provide rain, fertility, victory, protection, or prosperity. Israel was repeatedly tempted to copy such arrangements while retaining the Lord's covenant name.

The temptation appears with particular clarity in [Acts 8:9-24](#). Simon had amazed Samaria through magic and had been celebrated as a great power. After Philip preached Christ, Simon professed belief and was baptised. When he saw the Holy Spirit given through the apostles, he offered money for the authority to confer the gift. Peter's response was not mild: Simon's silver could perish with him because he imagined that God's gift could be obtained with money.

The sin was larger than commercial ambition. Simon wanted spiritual power while remaining the kind of person who could possess and distribute it. He did not want to be mastered by grace. He wanted grace to become an asset. The gift of God was reduced to transferable capital, and apostolic authority became a franchise opportunity.

This episode must not be misused to condemn every salary, book sale, conference fee, ministry budget, or material object used in prayer. Scripture commands churches to support faithful workers. Publishing has costs. Travel requires resources. Buildings, media systems, education, and mercy ministries require money. The distinction concerns what is being sold and what is being promised. A book may be sold because paper, labour, editing, and distribution have costs. Divine favour cannot be sold. A counsellor may charge for professional time. Forgiveness cannot be sold. A conference may require registration. Access to God cannot be sold. Oil may be purchased as oil. Anointing cannot be purchased.

Church history records repeated abuses of sacred exchange. Relics, indulgences, pilgrimage access, masses, blessings, offices, and protections have at different times been entangled with money and power. These examples differ historically and doctrinally, and they should not be collapsed into one accusation. Their common warning is that religious institutions easily convert spiritual longing into revenue. When fear of judgment, desire for healing, grief for the dead, or hope for blessing is financially exploitable, sacred language can become a market instrument.

The Reformation's recovery of justification by faith challenged the sale of spiritual benefit, but Protestant communities were not thereby immunised against religious commerce. The form changed. The old transaction might promise reduced punishment or sacred merit. The modern transaction may promise financial multiplication, health, promotion, or protection. In each case, the vulnerable are invited to convert money into spiritual advantage.

The decisive biblical contrast is grace. Grace is not cheap because Christ's blood purchased redemption. It is free to the sinner because the price has been paid by Another. The gospel does not place forgiveness, adoption, the Spirit, access to the Father, or eternal life behind a payment wall. The church that charges the poor for what Christ gives freely has forgotten both the cross and the poor.

From Mind-Cure to Media-Empowered Faith

A responsible genealogy must avoid a parade of villains. Movements develop through convergence, adaptation, reaction, and local creativity. New Thought, Pentecostal healing, positive thinking, American individualism, postwar consumer culture, mass broadcasting, and global Christian networks did not form one secret project. They supplied languages and practices that could be combined.

Nineteenth-century mind-cure traditions argued that spiritual or mental states shape bodily conditions. Some teachers spoke of divine mind, universal law, affirmative thought, and the overcoming of limitation through consciousness. Unity's current resources still encourage affirmations, gratitude, visualisation, and a prosperity mindset aligned with abundance (Unity, n.d.). The movement's theology differs fundamentally from historic Christian confession, especially in its account of God, Christ, sin, and human nature. Yet its language now circulates far beyond formal New Thought institutions. "Change your thinking and change your life," "align with abundance," "speak your reality," and "manifest your future" have become ordinary cultural slogans.

Early Pentecostalism arose from different sources and cannot be reduced to New Thought. It emphasised repentance, holiness, the Holy Spirit, gifts, healing, mission, and expectation of Christ's return. Its multiracial and working-class beginnings often stood against social respectability. Many Pentecostals endured poverty and persecution rather than treating them as evidence of spiritual failure. The later prosperity movement emerged

when healing revivalism, confident faith, entrepreneurial ministry, positive thinking, and modern media increasingly converged.

Oral Roberts became especially influential through global healing crusades, broadcasting, publishing, higher education, and the language of seed faith. Scholars associated with Oral Roberts University describe seed faith, whole-person healing, and expectation of miracle as central themes in his preaching (Ma, 2021). Asamoah-Gyadu (2018) traces Roberts's mediated influence in Africa and the local appropriation of seed-faith ideas by leading African Pentecostal figures. This history illustrates globalisation without cultural passivity. African leaders did not merely copy an American product. They translated, intensified, contested, and adapted it within settings shaped by spiritual causality, economic insecurity, communal obligation, and aspirations for modernity.

The relationship between E. W. Kenyon, Kenneth Hagin, New Thought, and Word of Faith remains debated. Some critics have described direct dependence; other scholars have argued for more complex overlap and mediation. The evidence supports caution. Similarities in mental causation, confession, health, and prosperity are real, but intellectual influence is rarely a straight line. Bowler (2013) presents the prosperity gospel as a synthesis of metaphysical, Pentecostal, and self-help currents rather than the invention of one person. Nel (2020) likewise treats African prosperity theology as requiring hermeneutical and contextual analysis rather than simple accusations of foreign contamination.

Mass media transformed the movement. Radio and television enabled the preacher to enter homes, narrate miracles, display crowds, request funds, and build parasocial trust across distance. The testimony became a repeatable media unit. The donation appeal could be linked to an immediate promise. The ministry's survival depended increasingly upon audience attention, emotional intensity, and recurring support. Media did not create prosperity theology, but it rewarded teachings that could be simplified into memorable claims and visible results.

Digital platforms intensify the pattern. A short clip can isolate a promise from a sermon. A livestream can display a payment code while the preacher announces a prophetic window. Mobile money can make the distance between emotional appeal and financial transfer almost disappear. Algorithms favour confidence, novelty, urgency, personal testimony, and dramatic transformation. Ibrahim (2023) argues that digital media are not passive channels in African Pentecostalism; platforms possess their own agency through algorithmic ranking and shape the religious practices they carry.

The present form is therefore more personalised than classic televangelism. A user can receive a daily declaration, submit a prayer request, purchase a course, join a private group, send a seed, watch a testimony, and receive a tailored message without entering a local congregation. Manifestation culture then meets prosperity Christianity in the same device. Christian language, entrepreneurial coaching, therapeutic affirmation, and algorithmic visibility merge into a portable religion of anticipated breakthrough.

The movement is not static. Some prominent teachers now reject crude "give to get" formulas and define prosperity as peace, wholeness, relationship with God, or capacity to bless others. Recent official materials from Creflo Dollar Ministries, for example, criticise transactionality and broaden prosperity beyond money (Creflo Dollar Ministries, 2026). Such developments should be acknowledged rather than ignored. They may represent genuine correction, strategic rebranding, or a mixture of both. The test remains whether Scripture governs the revised teaching, whether past harm is named, and whether the cross, suffering, repentance, and divine sovereignty recover their rightful place.

The Doctrinal Architecture of Transactional Christianity

Prosperity theology does not depend upon one disputed verse. It operates through an architecture in which several doctrines reinforce one another.

First, God is imagined as predictably bound to principles. He may be described as sovereign, but sovereignty is practically reduced to the faithful operation of spiritual laws. If the believer believes, speaks, gives, and acts correctly, God must produce the corresponding result. This makes the system attractive because it promises order amid uncertainty. It also makes God functionally smaller than the system. He becomes the administrator of laws that the informed believer can activate.

Second, humanity is elevated from dependent creature to spiritual operator. Believers are told that, because they bear God's image or share Christ's authority, their faith-filled words exercise creative power. The Creator-creature distinction is blurred. Delegated authority becomes quasi-divine causation.

Third, the fall is interpreted primarily as loss of dominion, health, prosperity, or victorious identity. Sin may be acknowledged, but the practical problem becomes ignorance of rights and failure to use spiritual authority. Salvation then appears as the recovery of control.

Fourth, the atonement is expanded into a present guarantee of comprehensive material and bodily success. Christ's victory is real and cosmic. Yet prosperity teaching often collapses the "already" and the "not yet." The resurrection inheritance is demanded before resurrection. Every symptom becomes an illegitimate occupation.

Every lack becomes a curse already cancelled. The believer is taught to deny the reality that redemption has not yet removed from mortal life.

Fifth, faith is redefined as a force or law. Official Kenneth Copeland Ministries materials describe faith as an active or living force, and a 2026 teaching explicitly presents faith-filled words as creative instruments for changing situations (Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 2026). The language illustrates the central issue. Biblical faith acts, perseveres, asks boldly, and receives promises. Yet its power lies not in faith as a substance but in the living God whom faith trusts.

Sixth, speech becomes causative. Proverbs about the power of the tongue, Jesus' teaching about speaking to a mountain, and God's creation through speech are combined into a doctrine of verbal production. Negative words are feared because they allegedly authorise negative outcomes. Lament, diagnosis, uncertainty, and grief can then be condemned as spiritual sabotage.

Seventh, giving becomes exchange. Agricultural metaphors are converted into financial laws. The ministry identifies itself as fertile soil. The amount given is linked to the scale of return. Urgency is created through a limited prophetic window. The giver's desire supplies the product category: debt cancellation, fertility, employment, healing, marriage, travel, protection, or business increase.

Eighth, testimony authenticates the system. Success stories are treated as experimental confirmation. Failures are individualised. If the expected outcome does not occur, the believer must have doubted, spoken negatively, disobeyed an instruction, given too little, harboured sin, or failed to wait. The method is protected from falsification by transferring responsibility to the sufferer.

Ninth, leadership becomes mediatorial. The preacher is presented as possessing unusual access, superior anointing, special soil, prophetic information, or covenantal authority. Financial loyalty to the leader becomes loyalty to God. The believer's relationship with Christ is gradually redirected through a human access point.

Finally, eschatology is brought into the present as comfort. Christian hope is relocated from resurrection, the coming kingdom, and the presence of God to visible triumph within the current age. A faith designed around success cannot understand the martyrs, the persecuted church, the disabled saint, the unanswered prayer, or the dying believer. It has no adequate language for Holy Saturday, only Easter morning without Good Friday.

Faith Is Not a Force

The prosperity system depends upon a category error. It treats faith as though it were a spiritual energy, law, or capacity that produces outcomes when correctly released. Scripture presents faith differently.

Faith has an object. Abraham did not believe in believing. He believed God. The saving power of faith does not arise from the intensity of mental certainty but from the truth and sufficiency of Christ. A weak hand may receive a strong Saviour. A trembling believer may cling to an unshaken promise. Conversely, intense confidence in a false promise remains false confidence.

[Hebrews 11](#) is often invoked through the phrase “the substance of things hoped for.” Yet the chapter does not present faith as raw material from which desires are manufactured. It recounts people who trusted God's word and therefore obeyed. Some conquered kingdoms, escaped danger, and received the dead. Others were tortured, mocked, imprisoned, destitute, mistreated, and killed. The chapter deliberately places visible victory and visible defeat within one testimony of faith. Those who died without earthly deliverance did not possess inferior faith. The world was not worthy of them.

Faith rests upon promise, not preference. The believer may ask for a desired outcome with boldness, but desire does not become divine speech merely because it is intense. [1 John 5:14-15](#) locates confidence in asking according to God's will. [James 4:1-3](#) warns that people can ask and not receive because desires are disordered. The words “in Jesus' name” do not turn a request into an instruction issued to God. To pray in His name is to ask as one united to His person, mission, character, and will.

Jesus prayed in Gethsemane with perfect faith. He asked that the cup pass, then submitted: “Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done” ([Luke 22:42](#)). Prosperity teaching sometimes treats such submission as a confession of doubt. Scripture presents it as the obedience of the Son. Faith does not deny desire. It places desire beneath the Father.

Paul prayed repeatedly concerning the thorn in his flesh. The answer was not removal but sufficient grace ([2 Corinthians 12:7-10](#)). Timothy experienced recurring illness and received practical advice ([1 Timothy 5:23](#)). Trophimus was left sick at Miletus ([2 Timothy 4:20](#)). Epaphroditus nearly died, and Paul describes his recovery as mercy rather than the automatic enforcement of a right ([Philippians 2:25-30](#)). These texts do not teach unbelief. They teach creaturely dependence.

Faith also works through ordinary means. Noah believed and built. Joseph interpreted providence and administered grain. Nehemiah prayed and organised labour. Paul trusted God and used legal rights, travel plans,

vocational skill, medical companionship, and financial support. A farmer who prays for harvest must still cultivate. A student who prays for success must still study. A church that prays for the poor must still share. Faith is not an alternative to obedience, planning, skill, medicine, work, or evidence. It orders them beneath God.

Presumption begins where faith claims what God has not promised. Satan tempted Jesus to leap from the temple by quoting a promise of angelic protection. Jesus refused to convert Scripture into a test imposed upon the Father ([Matthew 4:5-7](#)). The promise was true. The application was rebellious. Prosperity hermeneutics often repeats the pattern: a true verse is placed inside a false demand.

The author has previously argued that “name it and claim it” elevates human control over submission to God’s purpose and that biblical faith may pass through abundance or need while remaining anchored in Christ (Sangwa, 2024c, 2025b). This chapter extends that conclusion. Faith is not confidence that circumstances will obey us. It is confidence that God remains faithful when circumstances do not.

When Human Speech Is Treated as Creation

Words matter. They reveal the heart, bless or wound neighbours, shape communities, establish promises, teach doctrine, and direct action. A lie can destroy a reputation. A truthful warning can save a life. Repeated speech can train attention and desire. Scripture therefore commands disciplined speech.

The power of words, however, is moral, relational, covenantal, and social before it is metaphysical. Human speech can change reality because people hear, believe, respond, organise, obey, resist, and act. A judge’s sentence changes legal status because lawful authority stands behind it. A marriage vow creates covenant because God and community recognise the act. A command from an employer changes work because delegated authority exists. None of these examples means that the speaker creates *ex nihilo*.

God’s speech is unique because God is unique. [Genesis 1](#) does not teach a general law by which spiritual beings create through words. It reveals the sovereign Creator whose speech brings into existence what did not exist. Humanity bears God’s image, but image-bearing is not equality of being. A child may resemble a parent without possessing the parent’s authority. A creature may speak truthfully without becoming Creator.

[Mark 11:22-25](#) is often used to teach that believers can speak outcomes into existence. The passage begins, however, with “Have faith in God,” not “Have faith in your words.” The mountain image expresses extraordinary confidence in God’s power. The paragraph also joins prayer with forgiveness. It does not present autonomous mental certainty, nor does it cancel the broader biblical teaching on God’s will, suffering, and providence.

[Romans 4:17](#) says that God gives life to the dead and calls things into existence that do not exist. The subject is God. The text magnifies Abraham’s faith because he trusted the One with resurrection power. To transfer the divine action to the believer reverses the sentence.

Positive confession becomes spiritually harmful when truth is renamed negativity. A cancer diagnosis is not a curse spoken into existence. A bank statement is not unbelief. A widow’s lament does not empower death. The Psalms name fear, enemies, hunger, sickness, abandonment, and grief without treating honesty as surrender to evil. Biblical lament speaks pain to God because faith believes God can hear the truth.

Silencing lament creates a false community. The successful testify; the suffering disappear. People learn to smile while afraid, announce healing while symptoms continue, and avoid seeking treatment lest medical evidence appear to contradict faith. A congregation may then become unable to carry burdens because burdens must first be denied.

Affirmations can have ordinary psychological value. Rehearsing true statements may correct destructive self-talk, support disciplined action, and strengthen courage. The Christian objection is not to all intentional speech. It concerns truth, authority, and object. “God is with me” may be a faithful confession grounded in promise. “I will receive a specific contract this week because my words create reality” is a different claim. One submits the self to truth. The other submits reality to the self.

Manifestation culture offers the sovereign self a liturgy. Visualise the future, feel its reality, speak it, remove negative people, protect energy, and act as though the desired result has already arrived. Christianised manifestation replaces “the universe” with “God” and “energy” with “faith,” but the direction of authority may remain unchanged. The believer chooses the end; spiritual practices are employed as means. Prayer no longer asks, listens, repents, waits, or surrenders. It performs certainty.

The biblical alternative is neither pessimism nor verbal carelessness. Christians should speak truth, hope, thanksgiving, promise, intercession, encouragement, confession, and praise. They should refuse cynical speech and faithless fatalism. They should also preserve lament, uncertainty, petition, and silence. The mouth of faith can say, “The Lord will deliver,” and it can say, “Though he slay me, I will hope in him.” It can ask for healing

and prepare a will. It can pray for employment and revise a budget. It can declare resurrection while weeping at a grave.

Seed Faith and the Conversion of Giving into Investment

The New Testament speaks extensively about giving. It presents generosity as grace, worship, fellowship, justice, mercy, mission, thanksgiving, equality, sacrifice, and imitation of Christ. Prosperity teaching narrows this rich theology into a mechanism of return.

The seed metaphor is biblical. Jesus uses seed for the Word, the kingdom, and human response. Paul uses sowing and reaping for moral conduct and generosity. The metaphor teaches that actions have consequences, that generosity bears fruit, and that God supplies resources for further good. It does not establish a guaranteed financial multiplier payable to the donor on demand.

[2 Corinthians 8:1-15](#) begins not with wealthy donors but with Macedonian believers whose deep poverty overflowed in generosity. They gave voluntarily, urgently, and beyond expectation because they first gave themselves to the Lord. Paul does not promise that their gift will make them rich. He points to Christ, who became poor for their sake, and to equality within the body so that one group's abundance may meet another group's need.

The phrase about Christ becoming poor must be read within the incarnation and the collection for suffering believers. It does not mean that Jesus exchanged heavenly financial wealth so that Christians could become affluent. The eternal Son humbled Himself, entered creaturely vulnerability, and gave Himself so that sinners might share the riches of grace. The immediate ethical result is generosity toward the needy, not personal enrichment.

[2 Corinthians 9:6-15](#) does promise divine provision. The cheerful giver may trust God to supply seed and bread and to increase the harvest of righteousness. Yet the stated purpose of enrichment is generosity. The cycle is not: give to a ministry, receive private wealth, display blessing. It is: receive grace, give freely, meet needs, produce thanksgiving, and become able to give again.

[Galatians 6:7-10](#) likewise speaks of sowing to the flesh or Spirit and doing good without growing weary. The harvest is eternal life, not a guaranteed financial return. [Luke 6:38](#) occurs in a context of mercy, forgiveness, and nonjudgmental generosity. It is not a fundraising tariff.

[Malachi 3:6-12](#) addresses covenant unfaithfulness in Israel, including neglect of the storehouse and the Levites. God's promise of rain, crops, and protection belongs to the Mosaic covenant's land structure. The passage reveals God's faithfulness and rebukes robbery, but it cannot be transferred without qualification into a universal contract guaranteeing donors financial multiplication. The church is not ancient Israel's agrarian state, the pastor is not automatically a Levite, and a ministry account is not necessarily the temple storehouse.

First fruits also carried covenantal meaning within Israel's land, harvest, priesthood, and worship. A modern preacher may teach gratitude and priority in giving. He may not invent a compulsory extra payment, attach a private prophecy to it, and threaten loss upon those who refuse. A vow must be voluntary, truthful, and never extracted through emotional coercion.

Transactional giving commonly employs four pressures. The first is urgency: the opportunity will close tonight. The second is specificity: give a certain amount linked to a chapter, date, or prophetic number. The third is testimony: someone gave and immediately received. The fourth is blame: failure to receive indicates doubt or disobedience. Together they create a closed commercial system in sacred language.

The moral seriousness increases when poor believers borrow, sell productive assets, neglect rent, delay treatment, or deprive dependants to fund the promise. The widow's mites in [Mark 12:41-44](#) are often invoked to praise sacrificial giving. The surrounding context, however, condemns scribes who devour widows' houses. The passage should make leaders tremble before celebrating the poor person's last coin.

Christian giving should be planned, willing, proportionate, accountable, and truthful. It should support faithful ministry, relieve need, strengthen mission, honour parents, provide for dependants, and cultivate freedom from greed. Giving may involve sacrifice, but sacrifice is not recklessness. A parent who gives away food money under pressure has not necessarily displayed greater faith than the parent who feeds the household in obedience to [1 Timothy 5:8](#).

Sangwa's earlier work consistently distinguishes cheerful stewardship from "give to get" religion and warns that Christian ministry must not become a route to private enrichment (Sangwa, 2024d, 2025b). The biblical correction is not stinginess. It is generosity liberated from manipulation. Grace gives because it has received Christ, not because it is trying to purchase Him.

Wealth, Blessing, and the False Moral Ledger

Prosperity theology often reads visible wealth as a spiritual report card. The wealthy believer is assumed to have mastered faith, honour, covenant, or divine principles. The poor believer is invited to search for hidden failure. Scripture refuses this ledger.

The Old Testament contains material covenant blessings. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David, Solomon, and Job possessed wealth. Deuteronomy promised Israel agricultural and national blessing for covenant obedience. Proverbs often connects diligence, wisdom, honesty, generosity, and prosperity. These texts must not be erased to protect a theology of deprivation.

They must, however, be read canonically. Abraham lived as a pilgrim and died without possessing the land in fullness. Jacob's wealth arrived through conflict and exile. Joseph prospered as a slave and prisoner before becoming an administrator. David suffered persecution. Solomon's wealth became entangled with excess, political alliances, and idolatry. Job's losses were not caused by defective faith, and his restoration cannot be turned into a universal timeline. Proverbs states general patterns of wisdom, not mechanical promises immune to injustice, disaster, or persecution.

Deuteronomy's blessings belonged to Israel's covenant vocation in a land, with national judgments, crops, enemies, rain, and fertility. [Deuteronomy 8:10-20](#) warns that prosperity creates its own danger. Israel may forget the Lord and say, "My power and my own ability have gained this wealth." The text most often used to promise wealth actually warns the prosperous against self-deification.

The New Testament intensifies the warning. Jesus was beloved by the Father and had nowhere to lay His head. He refused the kingdoms offered by Satan. He warned that wealth can choke the Word, divided loyalty between God and mammon, and told the rich ruler to surrender possessions. [Luke 6:20-26](#) pronounces blessing upon the poor and woe upon the rich in a way that cannot be domesticated into a general promise of upward mobility.

[Luke 12:13-21](#) exposes the rich fool. His land produces abundantly. Nothing in the parable says the harvest was stolen or lazily acquired. His sin appears in the grammar of possession: my crops, my barns, my grain, my goods, my soul. He interprets abundance as private security and extends his future without reference to God or neighbour. God calls him a fool not because planning is evil but because he planned as though death required permission.

[Psalm 73](#) describes the prosperity of the wicked. [Psalm 49](#) warns that wealth cannot redeem a life from death. [Ecclesiastes 5:10-20](#) observes that the lover of silver is never satisfied and that wealth may be kept to the owner's harm. The Bible therefore treats prosperity as morally ambiguous. It can be gift, stewardship, temptation, instrument of justice, source of pride, or sign of judgment.

Poverty is also morally complex. Some poverty results from laziness, addiction, violence, waste, or refusal to work. Scripture addresses these sins. Other poverty arises from disability, bereavement, war, corruption, unjust wages, predatory debt, exclusion, unequal opportunity, weak institutions, family burden, illness, climate shock, or economic structures beyond individual control. The poor are not one moral category.

Contemporary African conditions make simplistic explanations especially cruel. The World Bank reported in 2025 that regional economic growth had strengthened, yet most new labour-market entrants still entered low-productivity informal work and wage-paying jobs represented only about one quarter of employment (World Bank, 2025). A young believer may pray, study, work, give, and remain underemployed because the economy does not contain enough stable jobs. To call that person faithless is not discernment. It is ignorance wearing spiritual authority.

The church must resist two distortions. One romanticises poverty and treats economic weakness as inherently spiritual. The other moralises poverty and treats wealth as proof of favour. Scripture calls the poor to faith, work where possible, wisdom, community, and hope. It calls the wealthy to humility, generosity, justice, and uncertainty about riches. It calls the whole church to bear burdens.

[1 Timothy 6:3-10](#) gives the decisive apostolic frame. False teachers imagine godliness as a means of gain. Paul answers that godliness with contentment is great gain. The desire to be rich leads into temptation, traps, harmful desires, wandering from faith, and many griefs. Yet Paul does not tell the rich to become irresponsible or pretend not to possess wealth. He commands them not to be arrogant or place hope in uncertainty, but to be rich in good works, generous, and willing to share.

The issue is not possession alone but hope, identity, use, and lordship. Wealth becomes spiritually dangerous when it serves as evidence that the owner is exceptional, invulnerable, or favoured above others. Poverty becomes spiritually dangerous when it produces envy, despair, theft, or hatred. Christ judges both the pride of abundance and the idolatry of lack.

Poverty, Work, Enterprise, and Structural Truth

Prosperity preaching gains credibility partly because some Christian teaching about poverty has been passive, fatalistic, or socially detached. A sermon that only tells hungry people to wait for heaven can become an ally of injustice. The biblical rejection of prosperity theology must therefore include a serious theology of work, enterprise, development, and public responsibility.

God created humanity for fruitful dominion. Work precedes the fall. Proverbs praises diligence, planning, skill, honest trade, savings, and care for the household. Paul worked with his hands and required those able to work not to exploit the church. Christian entrepreneurs can create goods, employment, tax revenue, innovation, and social stability. Profit is not intrinsically sinful. It becomes sinful when generated through deception, exploitation, corruption, harmful products, unjust wages, or idolatrous ambition.

The author has argued elsewhere that ambition and wealth must be ordered beneath calling, differentiated stewardship, and the purposes of God rather than treated as unlimited entitlements (Sangwa, 2024a). That distinction matters. Vocation asks, “What has God entrusted to me, and whom should it serve?” Sovereign ambition asks, “How great can I become, and what spiritual method will secure it?”

Contentment is not the absence of effort. Paul learned contentment while travelling, working, organising collections, appealing legal decisions, mentoring leaders, and preaching across the empire. Contentment means that obedience is not postponed until circumstances improve and identity is not determined by income. The content person can seek a better job without worshipping promotion, build a business without despising small beginnings, and endure scarcity without concluding that God has ceased to be Father.

Structural analysis is equally necessary. Corruption can divert public resources. Conflict destroys markets. Weak infrastructure raises costs. Unjust trade terms reduce local value creation. Predatory lenders profit from desperation. Discrimination blocks opportunity. Poor health systems convert treatable disease into long-term poverty. Family breakdown can place disproportionate burdens on women and children. None of these realities cancels personal responsibility, but none can be exorcised by telling individuals to speak positively.

Prosperity theology can silence prophetic witness by individualising every outcome. If poverty is caused chiefly by deficient faith, rulers, employers, markets, and institutions escape moral examination. The worker is told to sow rather than organise against wage theft. The patient is told to confess rather than demand accountable care. The unemployed graduate is told to break a curse rather than question systems that produce credentials without jobs.

The opposite error treats every personal failure as structural and removes moral agency. Scripture will not permit that either. Some people do need discipline, sobriety, budgeting, training, restitution, and harder work. The church should teach these practices. It should also provide mutual aid, mentoring, savings groups, vocational networks, emergency support, and honest financial education without pretending that each programme is the gospel.

Williams (2022) argues that prosperity theology underestimates the multidimensional causes of African poverty and may weaken communal values of justice and mutual responsibility. Mashau and Kgatle (2019) likewise propose an African Christian alternative grounded in ubuntu, though any cultural framework must remain beneath Scripture. The strongest correction joins personal stewardship with structural truth, enterprise with justice, and hope with honesty.

The poor need more than promises of supernatural multiplication. They need churches that refuse to exploit them, families that share, employers who pay justly, governments that govern honestly, schools that teach effectively, lenders who do not devour, and believers who treat economic life as discipleship. Most of all, they need the gospel that grants dignity no income can create and hope no recession can destroy.

Healing, the Atonement, Medicine, and Unanswered Prayer

The healing question carries profound pain. It should never be treated as a debating exercise detached from bodies, families, bills, infertility, disability, mental illness, chronic pain, and graves.

God heals. Scripture commands prayer for the sick. Jesus healed with compassion and authority. The apostles witnessed extraordinary signs. [James 5:13-18](#) directs elders to pray and anoint. The church that never asks God to heal may confess divine power while practising functional unbelief.

Guaranteed-healing theology makes a different claim: because Christ bore sickness or because healing belongs to redemption, every believer has a right to immediate physical healing and continued sickness ordinarily reflects defective faith, confession, knowledge, or obedience. This claim must be tested with the whole canon.

[Isaiah 53:1-12](#) presents the Servant bearing griefs, sorrows, transgressions, and iniquities. [Matthew 8:14-17](#) applies the text to Jesus' healing ministry. The atonement ultimately secures the redemption of the whole person, including bodily resurrection. Disease and death belong to the fallen order Christ came to defeat. The question is not whether healing belongs to redemption, but when and how its fullness is applied.

The New Testament places believers within an inaugurated kingdom. The powers of the age to come have entered history, yet creation still groans. Christians possess the Spirit as firstfruits while awaiting adoption in the redemption of their bodies ([Romans 8:18-25](#)). Every believer is justified now. Not every believer is glorified now. Every believer will be raised or transformed at Christ's coming. Not every believer will be cured before death.

Jesus' healings were signs of the kingdom and acts of mercy. They were not distributed as a universal exemption from mortality. Those healed in the Gospels later died. Lazarus was raised and later died again. Final healing is resurrection, when death itself is destroyed.

The apostolic record includes unanswered or differently answered suffering. Paul received sustaining grace. Timothy used a practical remedy. Epaphroditus recovered through mercy. Trophimus remained sick for a time. Paul speaks of outward decay even as inward life is renewed ([2 Corinthians 4:7-18](#)). None of these texts authorises prayerlessness. They prohibit cruelty toward those who remain ill.

Medicine is not a competitor to God. Ordinary providence works through human knowledge, plants, surgery, vaccines, medication, sanitation, nutrition, rest, counselling, and rehabilitation. A doctor can be mistaken, an industry can be corrupt, and a treatment can carry risk. These truths require evidence and accountability, not rejection of medicine as unbelief. The God who can heal without means can also heal through means.

Mental illness requires the same care. Depression is not automatically ingratitude. Psychosis is not simply negative confession. Trauma is not healed by public pressure to testify. Prayer, Scripture, fellowship, clinical care, safety, medication, sleep, and time may all belong to responsible treatment. A theology that blames sufferers may deepen shame and delay help.

Infertility is especially vulnerable to transactional promises. Couples may be told to sow a seed for a child, attend a special altar, purchase an object, or prove faith by announcing conception before evidence. When pregnancy does not occur, the woman often bears disproportionate blame. Scripture honours fertility as gift and records miraculous conceptions, yet it does not promise every couple a child. The church must surround infertile believers with dignity rather than turn longing into revenue.

Disability likewise exposes the limits of triumphalism. Christians should pray for healing and remove barriers. They should not make disabled believers feel like unfinished testimonies. A person can display the works of God through healing, endurance, wisdom, service, protest against injustice, or faithful dependence. The body awaiting resurrection remains fully human and fully included in Christ.

The church must learn to say several truths together: God can heal; we should ask; medicine can be gift; some recover suddenly; some recover gradually; some remain ill; some die; none of these outcomes by itself measures faith; and every believer in Christ will finally be healed in resurrection.

This preserves hope without making promises God has not made. It also restores lament. [Habakkuk 3:17-19](#) rejoices in God when crops fail and stalls are empty. The prophet does not call loss imaginary. He declares that God remains salvation when visible prosperity disappears.

Testimony: Witness or Advertising

Testimony belongs to Christian worship. The healed person may glorify God. The delivered believer may strengthen others. The church should remember answers to prayer. Silence about divine mercy can become another form of unbelief.

A testimony becomes advertising when it is selected, shaped, or timed to sell a method, leader, event, or offering. The difference concerns truth, verification, context, and purpose.

Prosperity testimony commonly compresses complexity. A person gives, then receives money. A prayer is offered, then symptoms improve. A declaration is made, then employment arrives. The sequence is presented as causation. Other factors disappear: prior applications, family support, medical treatment, ordinary probability, policy changes, delayed timelines, or contradictory cases.

This does not mean the event was not providential. Christians rightly interpret life through providence. It means that providence is not a laboratory formula. God may answer through ordinary means, and one testimony cannot establish a universal law.

Selection bias deepens the illusion. The person who received is invited to the platform. The hundred who did not receive remain silent. The audience hears a curated world in which the method repeatedly succeeds. If failures are never counted, success has no denominator.

Healing claims require special care. Churches should rejoice without manufacturing certainty. A person who reports improvement should be heard respectfully. Where the claim is medically testable, responsible verification should be encouraged. Verification does not quench the Spirit. Luke investigated testimony. Paul named witnesses to the resurrection. Truth need not fear records.

Pressure to “confess healing” before evidence can create harm. Some people stop treatment. Others hide symptoms. When the condition returns, they carry double grief: illness and alleged spiritual failure. A leader who publicised the testimony may quietly revise the story, blame doubt, or move to the next event.

The ethical discipline of testimony includes consent, accuracy, privacy, corroboration, and willingness to correct. Children and vulnerable adults should not be exposed for promotional value. Medical documents should not be displayed without informed consent. Financial testimonies should not imply guaranteed returns. Failed predictions should be acknowledged publicly when public claims were made.

Chapter 3 established that the God of truth is not honoured by useful falsehood. That principle enters the revival meeting and fundraising appeal. A fabricated miracle cannot defend a real Christ. An exaggerated testimony cannot produce genuine faith. The church does not need to make God look powerful by lying about what He did.

The most mature testimony may not be a sudden reversal. It may be a saint who remains faithful through dialysis, a widow who refuses bitterness, a family that learns generosity during unemployment, or a dying believer who confesses resurrection. Prosperity culture hides these witnesses because they do not sell immediate control. Heaven may regard them as the clearest evidence of grace.

Spiritual Merchandise and Commercialised Access

Material objects have legitimate roles in Christian life. Scripture itself records oil, cloths, water, bread, wine, laying on of hands, and physical acts associated with prayer and worship. Christianity is not a religion of disembodied ideas. The incarnation affirms material creation.

The danger begins when an object is assigned power independent of God's sovereign action, sold as a carrier of guaranteed benefit, or used to bind the believer to a leader. Oil becomes protection. Water becomes fertility. A cloth becomes healing. A bracelet becomes deliverance. A sticker becomes immunity from accidents. A book becomes access to secrets. A private appointment becomes the only route to prophetic clarity.

This chapter does not attempt the full analysis of occult objects, divination, or syncretistic ritual, which belongs to Chapter 14. The present concern is commercialised access. What happens when sacred promise is packaged and priced?

A ministry may distribute oil without charge or recover ordinary cost without claiming that money purchases anointing. A publisher may sell a book. A church may charge for accommodation or meals. The ethical boundary is crossed when the product is marketed as spiritually necessary, when the buyer is promised an outcome, when refusal is framed as unbelief, or when price creates a hierarchy of access to prayer and leadership.

The gospel abolishes spiritual aristocracy. Every believer approaches the Father through Christ. Pastors serve as shepherds and teachers, not toll gates. A private prayer line for premium donors contradicts the character of grace. An “anointed” object sold to the frightened poor turns pastoral care into extraction.

[Acts 3:1-10](#) gives a striking contrast. Peter says, “I don’t have silver or gold, but what I do have, I give you.” The apostle does not ask the disabled man for seed before ministry. He gives in the name of Jesus. The miracle cannot be converted into a universal promise of cure, but the apostolic posture remains: spiritual ministry moves outward as gift.

Paul also recognises the right of ministers to receive support, yet he sometimes refuses the right to remove obstacles and works with his hands ([1 Corinthians 9:1-18](#); [Acts 20:33-35](#)). The New Testament therefore refuses two extremes. It rejects the neglect of faithful workers and the exploitation of congregations. Support is honour, not purchase. A salary sustains service; it does not buy a sacrament.

Where leaders live extravagantly among impoverished congregations, judgment requires evidence and proportion. A vehicle may be necessary for travel. Security may be prudent. A house may have been purchased through prior work. Public visibility can create unusual costs. Wealth alone does not prove fraud.

The proper questions concern source, transparency, accountability, scale, sacrifice, and neighbour-love. Are financial statements independently reviewed? Can boards challenge the founder? Are staff paid justly? Are appeals truthful? Are funds restricted as promised? Do leaders disclose conflicts? Does the ministry care for the poor it summons to give? Is private luxury financed by public desperation?

A pastor may own much and be generous. Another may own little and be greedy. The heart is hidden from observers, but methods and fruit can be examined. [2 Peter 2:1-3](#) warns that false teachers exploit through greed and fabricated words. The church must not call financial scrutiny rebellion. Light is a friend of integrity.

Africa and the Global Marketplace of Breakthrough

Africa cannot be described as one religious environment. Its nations, languages, histories, economies, churches, and spiritual traditions differ profoundly. Prosperity teaching appears in many forms and should not be treated as an African essence.

The continent nevertheless carries enormous significance for global Christianity. Pew Research Center estimated that sub-Saharan Africa contained about 697 million Christians in 2020, representing 31 percent of the world's Christians, and was the only region where Christianity increased slightly as a share of population between 2010 and 2020 (Pew Research Center, 2025). The theology formed in African churches will therefore shape global Christianity.

Prosperity teaching gains plausibility in settings where ordinary life is precarious. A person faces unemployment, unstable currency, medical scarcity, fertility stigma, migration pressure, corruption, insecure housing, and weak public protection. The message that God can intervene is not irrational. It answers real needs and takes spiritual causality seriously.

Some prosperity-oriented churches provide goods that critics should acknowledge. They create community, encourage sobriety, teach confidence, connect job seekers, support entrepreneurship, mobilise charity, and challenge fatalism. They may give poor people language of agency in societies that repeatedly humiliate them. Omavuebe (2021) describes the Nigerian prosperity gospel as a mixed ideology, carrying both hope and serious distortion. Williams (2022) similarly notes that its appeal cannot be separated from poverty and aspiration.

The error lies not in hope but in the promise attached to it. A congregation may teach diligence without claiming that every diligent believer will become wealthy. It may pray for breakthrough without selling a formula. It may encourage enterprise without making the entrepreneur spiritually superior to the farmer, cleaner, unemployed graduate, or disabled believer.

African spiritual worlds often include strong expectations of power, protection, blessing, curses, ancestors, and hidden causation. Pentecostal Christianity has sometimes broken decisively with older allegiances. It has also sometimes translated them into Christian vocabulary. The pastor becomes the specialist who detects enemies, breaks curses, secures fertility, and protects business. Prosperity then operates within a competitive spiritual economy.

The opposite temptation is secular contempt. Western observers may dismiss African prayer while worshipping markets, therapy, technology, and individual autonomy. The biblical critique judges both imported manifestation culture and local transactional spirituality. It refuses the claim that poverty is solved by confession and the claim that material reality contains no spiritual dimension.

Globalisation complicates origins. Coleman (2000) describes charismatic Christianity as a transnational arena of language, ritual, embodiment, and exchange. Asamoah-Gyadu (2018) shows how mediated seed-faith travelled into African settings and was locally appropriated. Meyer (2004) warns against categories that treat African Pentecostalism as merely imported or merely indigenous. The movement is global and local at once.

Digital media now enable sermons, testimonies, offerings, products, and prophecies to cross borders instantly. A phrase coined in an American broadcast may be preached in Accra, Kigali, Lagos, Nairobi, Johannesburg, São Paulo, Manila, or London within days. African preachers also export theology through diaspora churches and online networks. The traffic no longer moves in one direction.

The church's response must therefore be theological, pastoral, economic, and institutional. Seminaries should teach biblical theology of wealth, suffering, healing, and giving. Churches should establish financial accountability. Pastors should understand trauma, poverty, labour markets, and medical referral. Believers should be trained to read promises in covenantal and canonical context. Economic discipleship should include work, savings, debt, generosity, justice, and mutual aid.

Africa does not need a gospel that tells the poor they are poor because they did not pay enough. Nor does it need a theology that treats poverty as permanent destiny. It needs the whole counsel of God: Christ crucified and risen, the Spirit's power, truthful lament, diligent work, just institutions, generous communities, healing prayer, responsible medicine, and eternal hope.

The Strongest Case for Prosperity Teaching

A fair judgment must hear the strongest defence.

Advocates begin with the goodness of God. A loving Father cares for His children. Jesus teaches believers to ask for daily bread and says the Father knows their needs. Scripture records healing, provision, deliverance, fruitful work, agricultural blessing, wisdom, and wealth. Poverty, disease, and oppression are not presented as creation's ideal. The kingdom confronts evil in body and society as well as soul.

They point to Abraham, whom God blessed materially; Joseph, who prospered in slavery; Israel's covenant blessings; Solomon's wealth; Job's restoration; Jabez's request; the Proverbs; and prophetic promises of restoration. They read [Galatians 3:13-14](#) as redemption from the curse and participation in Abraham's blessing.

They argue that [Isaiah 53](#) and [Matthew 8](#) place healing within Christ's work. [John 10:10](#) promises abundant life. Jesus tells disciples to ask and believe. [Mark 10:29-30](#) promises a hundredfold to those who leave possessions for the gospel. [3 John 2](#) expresses a desire for health and prosperity.

Advocates also raise pastoral concerns. Defeatist preaching can make poverty appear virtuous, discourage initiative, and spiritualise injustice. Colonial and missionary traditions sometimes taught Africans to endure deprivation while outsiders controlled wealth. A theology of expectation can restore agency, discipline, and confidence. Positive speech may counter despair. Testimony may strengthen hope. Generous giving may fund missions, schools, clinics, media, and relief.

Contemporary prosperity teachers often reject caricatures. Some define prosperity as wholeness, peace, sufficient resources, strong relationships, and the capacity to bless others rather than luxury. Creflo Dollar Ministries, for example, now publishes teaching that rejects transactional giving and describes prosperity in relational and spiritual terms (Creflo Dollar Ministries, 2026). A critic who ignores such nuance may attack a movement frozen in an earlier decade.

These arguments contain important truths. God is good. He provides. Healing matters. Poverty is not holy. Economic passivity is not faith. Speech affects action. Generosity can produce real social fruit. Christian theology must care for bodies, households, work, and institutions.

The decisive question is whether these truths support the prosperity system.

They do not. God's goodness does not mean each child receives the same earthly path. Abrahamic blessing is fulfilled in Christ and extends to the nations through justification, the Spirit, and the promised inheritance, not a universal guarantee of affluence. Healing belongs to redemption but reaches fullness at resurrection. Abundant life in John concerns life in the Shepherd who lays down His life, not consumer abundance. The hundredfold promise includes persecutions and the new family of the church. Third John is a personal greeting, not a covenant formula.

The strongest critique therefore does not deny prosperity teaching's biblical fragments. It shows that fragments have been reorganised around a false centre. The issue is not whether the Bible contains blessing. It is whether blessing has replaced the Blessed One.

The Whole Counsel of God

Five governing texts expose the prosperity system and construct the biblical alternative.

Treasure, Anxiety, and the Father

[Matthew 6:19-34](#) joins treasure, vision, mastery, anxiety, provision, and the kingdom. Jesus first commands His disciples not to store treasures on earth, where decay and theft expose their fragility. The issue is not a universal prohibition of savings or property. Scripture elsewhere commends provision and prudence. Jesus addresses the location of ultimate treasure because the heart follows it.

The eye then becomes the lamp of the body. Desire shapes perception. A person organised around wealth does not merely own money; money teaches the person how to see. This prepares the declaration that no one can serve both God and mammon. The rival is not merely greed as an occasional vice. Mammon becomes a master.

Jesus then addresses anxiety about food, drink, and clothing. Prosperity preaching often treats "seek first the kingdom" as a formula by which material additions are secured. The order is reversed. Jesus liberates disciples from anxious service to provision because the Father knows their needs. The added things are not the kingdom's definition. They are the Father's care according to His wisdom.

The passage therefore rejects both consumerism and fearful deprivation. The disciple does not hoard as though life rests in wealth, nor panic as though life rests in the self's control. Birds work without becoming anxious entrepreneurs of providence. Flowers receive beauty without branding themselves. The Father remains Father in abundance and scarcity.

The Rich Fool

The request that begins [Luke 12:13-21](#) concerns inheritance. Jesus refuses to become an instrument in a property dispute and warns against every kind of greed because life is not defined by possessions.

The rich man's problem is not productivity. His field yields. His planning is efficient. The deception lies in the absence of God and neighbour. He speaks only to himself, about himself, for himself. The barns grow while the soul shrinks.

Prosperity preaching often interprets expansion as validation. Jesus interprets expansion as a test. Abundance increases accountability. The decisive question is not how much entered the barn but whether the owner became rich toward God.

Simon and the Price of Power

Simon sees the Spirit's work and offers payment. Peter identifies a heart not right before God. The passage destroys the idea that money can purchase spiritual capacity, access, office, or favour.

It also warns the ambitious convert. Simon has entered the visible community but still interprets power through the old economy. Baptism has occurred; the imagination requires repentance. Churches today may baptise people while leaving consumer assumptions untouched. The member then approaches prayer, giving, and leadership as instruments of advancement.

Godliness and Gain

[1 Timothy 6:3-19](#) identifies teachers who imagine godliness as a means of gain. This is perhaps Scripture's most direct description of prosperity religion. Paul does not answer with romantic poverty. He answers with contentment, warning, and stewardship.

The desire to be rich is not presented as neutral motivation awaiting good methods. It is spiritually dangerous because it reorganises love. People wander from faith and pierce themselves with grief. The man of God must flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness.

The wealthy are not excluded from the church. They are commanded to relocate hope, practise generosity, and store treasure for the age to come. Christian wealth is therefore eschatologically accountable. It is not proof that the owner has mastered faith. It is a temporary trust that will testify at judgment.

Grace, Equality, and Generosity

[2 Corinthians 8-9](#) presents the church's economic life as grace. Christ's self-giving creates a generous people. The poor can give without shame. The wealthy can give without superiority. The purpose is not enforced sameness but burden-sharing and equality.

Paul handles money transparently. Representatives travel with the gift so that no one can criticise administration. He takes care to do what is honourable before the Lord and people. Spiritual integrity therefore includes financial process.

The harvest of giving includes supplied needs, thanksgiving, strengthened fellowship, righteousness, and further generosity. The receiver does not become a customer, and the giver does not become an investor. Both become participants in grace.

Together these texts present a coherent alternative. The Father provides. The disciple seeks the kingdom. Wealth is uncertain. Greed is lethal. Spiritual power cannot be bought. Ministers must flee gain-seeking. Giving flows from Christ and moves toward need, worship, equality, mission, and thanksgiving.

What Prosperity Theology Produces

Ideas become institutions, emotions, habits, and wounds.

Theologically, prosperity teaching reconstructs God as predictable provider, Christ as guarantor of desired outcomes, the Spirit as power for acquisition, faith as force, prayer as technique, atonement as present exemption from weakness, and eschatology as earthly triumph.

Spiritually, it trains people to love God's gifts more than God. The worshipper may become intensely religious while remaining unconverted from greed. Prayer increases, but surrender decreases. Scripture is memorised as contractual language. The heart approaches God with an invoice.

Pastorally, the system burdens sufferers. The sick ask not only, "Why am I ill?" but, "What is wrong with my faith?" The unemployed wonder whether they spoke failure. The infertile woman searches for hidden sin. The bereaved family is told not to grieve too openly. The poor give beyond prudence and then blame themselves when nothing changes.

Psychologically, the system can produce cycles of expectation, disappointment, shame, and renewed investment. The believer is told that breakthrough is near. Failure proves the need for greater faith, a larger seed, a different confession, or closer loyalty. The promise survives because the person carries the failure.

Economically, transactional giving can transfer resources upward from vulnerable congregants to influential ministries. It may increase debt, delay treatment, weaken household provision, and reward unaccountable leadership. Not every prosperity church produces these harms, and not every giver is coerced. The risk arises from the theological asymmetry: the leader announces divine promise while the donor bears financial consequence.

Ecclesially, the congregation becomes a market. Sermons are designed around felt needs. Testimonies advertise outcomes. Leaders become brands. Loyalty is measured through giving and attendance. The full institutional analysis belongs to Chapter 12, but doctrine has already begun redesigning the church.

Socially, prosperity teaching may obscure injustice. If every outcome is spiritualised, corrupt systems escape scrutiny. It may also weaken solidarity by treating another person's hardship as evidence of spiritual inferiority. The successful believer becomes a model; the suffering believer becomes a warning.

Missiologically, prosperity preaching can gather crowds quickly but prepare disciples poorly. A convert promised health and success may collapse under persecution, delayed prayer, or economic loss. The apostolic church prepared believers through many hardships to enter the kingdom ([Acts 14:21-22](#)). A gospel unable to interpret suffering cannot sustain mission where faith becomes costly.

Eschatologically, prosperity teaching attaches hope to a passing world. It can produce intense interest in blessing while weakening readiness for Christ. The foolish virgins were not condemned for lacking ambition but for lacking oil. The rich fool was not condemned for insufficient manifestation but for planning a future God did not grant.

Eternally, the danger is grave. A person may use Christian vocabulary, fund ministry, testify publicly, and remain a lover of money. [Matthew 7:21-23](#) warns that impressive works do not replace obedience. The question is not whether Christianity improved circumstances. It is whether the sinner has been reconciled to God through Christ.

Correction, Rebuke, Exhortation, and Restoration

To the teacher who knowingly exploits the vulnerable: repent. Stop attaching God's name to promises He did not make. Stop using fear, urgency, numbers, and testimonies to obtain money. Open the accounts. Submit to independent oversight. Correct public error publicly. Return funds obtained through demonstrable deception where restitution is possible. Care for those whose trust you injured. A ministry protected by secrecy is not protected by God.

To the sincere pastor who inherited these teachings: correction is not humiliation. You may have repeated what mentors taught, witnessed genuine answers to prayer, and desired to give people hope. Return to the whole counsel of Scripture. Teach blessing without guarantee, healing without blame, giving without transaction, and faith without presumption. Let the pulpit become a place where disappointed people can tell the truth.

To the wealthy believer: do not treat abundance as proof that God approves every decision. Wealth increases responsibility and exposure to temptation. Hold it with open hands. Pay workers justly. Provide for family. Give quietly. Support truthful ministry. Build institutions that outlive applause. Prepare to account for every trust.

To the poor believer: your bank balance does not measure your standing in Christ. Poverty can contain temptation, but it does not make you spiritually inferior. Do not borrow to purchase a miracle. Do not neglect children to prove faith. Seek counsel before selling assets. Receive help without shame. Work where you can, learn, plan, resist envy, and remember that Christ calls the poor rich in faith.

To the sick, disabled, infertile, bereaved, or mentally distressed: your suffering does not prove that God has rejected you. Ask boldly for healing. Seek competent care. Permit the church to carry you. Refuse the burden of manufactured guilt. The body may remain weak while faith remains strong. Resurrection is not a consolation prize. It is the promised victory of Christ.

To Christian entrepreneurs and professionals: build, innovate, invest, employ, profit, and serve beneath the Lordship of Christ. Reject corruption and exploitative shortcuts. Do not call personal ambition "kingdom" merely because you tithe. Measure success by faithfulness, justice, usefulness, family responsibility, and eternal accountability.

To congregations: prosperity markets exist because audiences demand them. Do not gather teachers who promise preferred desires. Do not reward every testimony and ignore endurance. Do not turn pastors into performers of constant breakthrough. Honour faithful exposition, quiet service, accountability, and leaders who can say, "I do not know."

To scholars and sceptics: do not answer prosperity excess with antsupernatural unbelief. God is not imprisoned within ordinary causation. Miracles can occur. Prayer matters. The abuse of healing does not disprove healing. The correction is biblical testing, not materialist dismissal.

To those leaving prosperity churches: you may experience grief, anger, embarrassment, financial damage, and fear that abandoning the system means abandoning God. Separate the false promise from the faithful Lord. Find a church where Scripture is taught in context, money is accountable, weakness is welcomed, and Christ is central. Rebuild financial habits. Seek pastoral or professional support where manipulation has produced trauma. Forgive without pretending harm was harmless. Trust can be restored slowly.

To those whose prayers were not answered as expected: denial is not proof of divine cruelty. Delay is not absence. Mystery is not betrayal. Some answers arrive differently, some later, some in resurrection. You may lament without insulting God and hope without lying to yourself. The cross shows that God's love can be present where circumstances appear to deny it.

To all readers: repent of greed, envy, presumption, manipulation, fear, materialism, and using God as a means. The prosperity teacher may preach these sins publicly; the rest of us may practise them privately. The same Word judges every heart.

The Biblical Economy of Grace

The answer to transactional Christianity is not an anti-material gospel. It is the biblical economy of grace.

God is the sovereign Father who knows what His children need. He may provide through work, community, gift, miracle, state systems, family, or unexpected mercy. His care is real even when His wisdom refuses our timetable.

Christ is the supreme treasure. In Him believers possess forgiveness, justification, adoption, reconciliation, the Spirit, communion with God, a new family, sanctification, resurrection, and an inheritance kept in heaven. These riches do not make material needs imaginary. They prevent material conditions from becoming lord.

The Holy Spirit is a divine Person, not an impersonal energy activated by technique. He glorifies Christ, convicts of sin, forms holy fruit, distributes gifts, empowers witness, comforts sufferers, and helps believers pray in weakness.

Faith is trust in God. It receives promise, obeys command, waits through delay, and perseveres through contradiction. It can move mountains when God wills and endure mountains when God does not remove them.

Prayer is dependent communion. It includes praise, confession, thanksgiving, lament, petition, intercession, listening to Scripture, and submission. It asks boldly without pretending to control the answer.

Work is vocation. It serves God and neighbour through skill, diligence, creativity, justice, and responsibility. Work cannot justify the sinner, but redeemed work can cultivate creation and provide for others.

Wealth is stewardship. It is temporary, morally dangerous, and potentially fruitful. The wealthy believer should plan, save, invest, give, employ, and build without placing hope in uncertainty.

Poverty is suffering that may require justice, relief, training, employment, protection, or reform. It should not be romanticised or blamed mechanically upon the poor.

Giving is grace. It supports faithful ministry, relieves need, expresses worship, advances mission, strengthens equality, and produces thanksgiving. It is not a payment for favour.

Contentment is freedom from slavery to gain. It enables gratitude in abundance and faithfulness in need. It does not forbid lawful aspiration.

Healing is a real work of God. The church should pray, anoint, verify responsibly, and celebrate mercy. It should also refer, treat, accompany, and refuse to blame.

Medicine is providential skill. It must remain ethically accountable but should not be opposed to prayer.

Lament is faithful speech. It names the world as fallen and appeals to God because His character remains the measure.

Suffering is neither inherently virtuous nor automatic evidence of abandonment. God can use it for endurance, witness, discipline, compassion, and conformity to Christ, while remaining opposed to evil and promising final deliverance.

The church is a burden-bearing community. [Acts 2:42-47](#) and [Acts 4:32-35](#) do not create a simplistic economic blueprint, but they reveal fellowship strong enough to meet needs. The church should not tell the poor to manifest what the body is commanded to share.

Resurrection is final healing. It guards Christian hope from both despair and premature triumph. The believer may receive remarkable deliverance now. The believer may also die in faith. In either case, death will not keep what belongs to Christ.

Biblical blessing is therefore larger than money and deeper than comfort. It includes reconciliation, wisdom, daily bread, friendship, usefulness, chastening, endurance, generosity, holiness, suffering faithfully borne, resurrection, and the presence of God. The blessed life may contain tears. It cannot contain separation from Christ.

In the Last Second Before Midnight

The hour is late, not because human beings can calculate the date of the rapture, but because every generation stands near eternity and Scripture commands watchfulness. The church cannot prepare for the Bridegroom by learning to desire the present world more efficiently.

There is still time to repent, but there is no time to delay repentance.

Teachers, stop selling what Christ gives by grace. Stop calling greed faith. Stop making the sick carry your failed promises. Stop placing a price beside prayer. Stop announcing that God owes donors a return. The silver and gold in ministry accounts cannot purchase one drop of the Spirit.

Churches, stop measuring divine favour by money, crowds, buildings, property, influence, travel, visibility, and platform reach. These may be tools. They are not verdicts. A small faithful church may be rich before God. A celebrated ministry may be poor, blind, and naked.

Believers, stop using giving to control God. Give because Christ gave Himself. Work because vocation is holy. Plan because stewardship is obedience. Pray because the Father hears. Ask for healing because He is merciful. Submit because He is Lord. Hope because resurrection is certain.

Wealthy saints, become generous stewards. Poor saints, reject shame and false promises. Sick saints, trust God without accepting blame for remaining ill. Disappointed saints, lament without abandoning the Father. Pastors, make room for the testimony that says, “The Lord sustained me,” not only the testimony that says, “The Lord changed my circumstances.”

The prosperity gospel offers gold that death will take. Christ offers Himself, and death cannot take Him.

The church must recover the cross. At the cross, the Son did not manifest an easier path. He obeyed the Father through suffering. At the resurrection, God did not vindicate consumer desire. He vindicated the crucified Lord and inaugurated the world to come. Christian victory is therefore not the uninterrupted control of circumstances. It is union with Christ in life, suffering, death, and resurrection.

The last second calls for lamps trimmed by truth, hearts freed from mammon, hands open in generosity, mouths cleansed from manipulation, and eyes fixed upon the returning King. Faithfulness, not visible success, is the measure. Resurrection, not permanent comfort, is the hope. Christ, not prosperity, is the treasure.

Yet doctrine does not remain in the sermon. Once blessing is measured by revenue, expansion, visibility, property, influence, and platform reach, the teaching begins to redesign the institution that carries it. The pulpit becomes a brand engine, the congregation becomes a market, the minister becomes a celebrity asset, and the church learns to operate like an industry. The next chapter must therefore examine what happens when ministry is not only used to promise prosperity but is itself built as a commercial system.

References

- Asamoah-Gyadu, J. K. (2018). “Your miracle is on the way”: Oral Roberts and mediated Pentecostalism in Africa. *Spiritus: ORU Journal of Theology*, 3(1), 5–26. <https://doi.org/10.31380/2573-6345.1047>
- Bowler, K. (2013). *Blessed: A history of the American prosperity gospel*. Oxford University Press.
- Coleman, S. (2000). *The globalisation of charismatic Christianity: Spreading the gospel of prosperity*. Cambridge University Press.
- Creflo Dollar Ministries. (2026, May 4). *Shalom prosperity*. <https://www.creflodollarministries.org/blog-post/shalom-prosperity/>
- Ibrahim, M. (2023). Pentecostalism and media in Africa: Theoretical explorations of power and agency of media platforms and their users. *Religion Compass*, 17(1), e12452. <https://doi.org/10.1111/rec3.12452>
- Kenneth Copeland Ministries. (2026). *Faith is the creative force of God*. <https://www.kcm.org/watch/faith-is-the-creative-force-of-god/>
- Lausanne Theology Working Group. (2010, January 16). *A statement on the prosperity gospel*. <https://lausanne.org/content/a-statement-on-the-prosperity-gospel>
- Ma, J. (2021). Three unique theological themes of Oral Roberts’ preaching. *Spiritus: ORU Journal of Theology*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.31380/2573-6345.1192>

- Mashau, T. D., & Kgatle, M. S. (2019). Prosperity gospel and the culture of greed in post-colonial Africa: Constructing an alternative African Christian theology of Ubuntu. *Verbum et Ecclesia*, 40(1), a1901. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v40i1.1901>
- Meyer, B. (2004). Christianity in Africa: From African independent to Pentecostal-charismatic churches. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 33, 447–474. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.33.070203.143835>
- Nel, M. (2020). *The prosperity gospel in Africa: An African Pentecostal hermeneutical consideration*. Wipf and Stock.
- Omavuebe, A. I. (2021). Evaluating Nigerian prosperity gospel as a mixed ideology. *Missiology*, 49(4), 389–401. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00918296211011732>
- Pew Research Center. (2025, June 9). *Christian population change: Regional patterns*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2025/06/09/christian-population-change/>
- Sangwa, S. (2024a, May 28). *Are we truly meant to achieve anything we want in life?* <https://learn.openchristian.education/blog/sangwa/success-God-s-way>
- Sangwa, S. (2024b, May 7). *Has Christianity been hijacked by prosperity gospel?* <https://learn.openchristian.education/blog/sangwa/prosperity-gospel>
- Sangwa, S. (2024c, June 30). *Is the teaching of “name it and claim it” biblical?* <https://learn.openchristian.education/blog/sangwa/name-it-and-claim-it>
- Sangwa, S. (2024d, February 27). *What perils lie beneath the gloss of the prosperity gospel’s biblical claims?* <https://learn.openchristian.education/blog/sangwa/perils-of-the-prosperity-gospel>
- Sangwa, S. (2025a, July 22). *Does “holistic transformation” heal, or has the prosperity gospel simply changed its wardrobe?* <https://learn.openchristian.education/blog/sangwa/the-material-gospel>
- Sangwa, S. (2025b, January 21). *How can we biblically discern truth from error in modern prosperity teachings?* <https://learn.openchristian.education/blog/sangwa/the-dangers-of-prosperity-gospel>
- Unity. (n.d.). *Unity prosperity teachings*. <https://www.unity.org/en/article/unity-prosperity-teachings>
- Williams, D. U. (2022). “Prosperity theology”: Poverty and implications for socio-economic development in Africa. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 78(1), a7818. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v78i1.7818>
- World Bank. (2025, October). *Africa’s Pulse, No. 32: Pathways to job creation in Africa*. <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099553010072527291>