

Prosperity Gospel and Urban Inequality: An Intervention Study on Wealth Creation in Tanzanian Pentecostal Megachurches

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| Abstract

Background: The rapid growth of Pentecostal megachurches in urban Tanzania, particularly from 2021, has been accompanied by a pronounced

emphasis on 'prosperity gospel' teachings and church-led entrepreneurial ventures, termed 'gospelpreneurship'. This phenomenon occurs within a context of significant urban economic inequality, yet its ethical dimensions and socio-economic impacts remain under-examined in Arts & Humanities scholarship. Purpose and objectives: This intervention study aimed to critically analyse the ethics of wealth creation initiatives within Tanzanian Pentecostal megachurches and to assess their perceived role in addressing or exacerbating urban economic inequality between 2021 and 2025. Methodology: A mixed-methods design was employed from 2021 to 2025. It incorporated a survey of 300 congregants across three Dar es Salaam megachurches and in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 45 key informants, including church leaders, 'gospelpreneurs', and business development stakeholders. Findings: Findings reveal a complex duality. While 'gospelpreneurship' programmes foster individual agency, business skills, and a powerful narrative of hope, they often simultaneously obscure structural causes of poverty. The emphasis on personal financial breakthrough was found to legitimise economic inequality for some congregants, framing it as a result of individual faith or effort rather than systemic constraint. Conclusion: The study concludes that the 'prosperity gospel' and its associated entrepreneurial interventions in this context present an ethically ambiguous engagement with urban inequality, potentially reinforcing individualistic interpretations of economic disparity. Recommendations: Church leaders should integrate explicit ethical and critical economic literacy components into entrepreneurship training. Policymakers and researchers should seek collaborative partnerships with

churches to improve data collection and develop more context-sensitive frameworks for evaluating faith-based economic initiatives. Key words: Prosperity gospel, gospelpreneurship, Pentecostalism, economic inequality, wealth creation, Tanzania, urban studies, ethics Contribution statement: This study provides empirical evidence on the ethical and socio-economic implications of Pentecostal-led wealth creation programmes in urban Tanzania, contributing a critical humanities perspective to debates on religion, entrepreneurship, and inequality.
