

## NATURE AND USAGE OF THE DOCTRINE OF SEED PLANTING IN THE MODERN CHURCH: A CASE OF NEW CHRISTIAN MOVEMENTS IN KENYA

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### Abstract

This paper presents the usage of the doctrine of seed planting (DSP) in the modern church, a case of new Christian movements (NCMs) in Kenya. The study sought to identify the meaning of DSP and to determine the nature and usage of the DSP in churches in Kenya. The study posits that the DSP has gained popularity in the NCMs in Kenya, and in the last two decades, other denominations have started adopting it. This is occasioned by the upsurge of preachers who present it as a unique way of giving that replaced tithing and as a special way to attract the blessings of God in the life of believers. Although the advocates of the DSP postulate religious reasons, this study has established that it is used as a strategy to raise money in the church. Its usage has blurred the image of the church from being an institution existing for the plight of the needy and the suffering to becoming a commercial institution. This study concludes that its usage in the church is inconsistent with the teachings in the Bible and, therefore, a false doctrine. Clergy, whether or not advocating for the doctrine of seed planting, ought to sensitise their believers on the true nature of God, a compassion-loving God who cannot be bribed, manipulated or hand-twisted by man. The study contributes significant knowledge in the area of church and society.

**Key terms:** Kenya, New Christian Movements, Prosperity Gospel, Seed Planting, Usage of the Doctrine of Seed Planting.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The last two decades have been marked by growing literature on the doctrines preached by PG preachers. The PG theology is understood to encompass such doctrines as positive confession and the exercise of faith in God that will bring divine healing and material prosperity. The immense literature covering different parameters of PG contained few discussions on DSP, yet it is believed that material prosperity is actualised through planting a religious 'seed'. This study, therefore, explored the meaning of DSP, its nature and usage in the churches in Kenya. The emergence of the DSP in the NCMs in the 1950s among PG preachers and its continued spread into other denominations, including the Mainline, Pentecostal and African Independent churches, has been a major concern and a challenge in the church in Kenya. Despite the efforts of scholars to castigate it as a ruse and faulty doctrine in the church, preachers have continued preaching it to the extent that it has been categorised as the main doctrine in PG theology. Yet its nature and usage remained unexplored systematically. Despite being a vogue doctrine, information on how it was initiated and spread in the church in Kenya needed to be documented. Thus, the study examined the nature and usage of DSP in the church in Kenya.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The Doctrine of seed planting has gained its roots in the church, though it is highly debated as to whether it qualifies to be called a doctrine, whether it is established and whether it is true or not. That is why the word 'seed', which is metaphorical in this study, needed to be extrapolated. The word 'doctrine' entailed in the coinage of the DSP concept also needed to be explained. And the scholars' argument on the meaning of DSP elaborated. To inform the study, various scholars' arguments were sought.

According to Verbit (1970), a doctrine is a body of teachings in a given system of beliefs or a branch of knowledge. The Latin word for doctrine is '*doctrina*', and in Greek, the equivalent term is '*didaskalia*', which is equivalent to 'instructions' in English (Stewart, 2018). The three terms refer to teaching or instruction offered by the church which also includes dissemination of such principles and positions upheld to the members (Stewart, 2018). Stewart (2018) further posits that doctrinal teachings can be new or old, established or un-established. Doctrines are distinguished from dogmas by the fact that doctrines carry two facets. They can be authentic or unauthentic, true or false, acceptable or unacceptable. The dogmas, on the other hand, are the truths, the acceptable teachings of the church supported by the scriptures (Pediaa, 2016). The word doctrine in the Bible is used 52 times to indicate the true and the false doctrines. Stewart's (2018) ideas buttressed the concept by expounding on the nature of 'doctrines', which he espouses as being new or old, established or un-established, authentic or unauthentic, true or false, all of which can be found in the church. These traits reinforced the use of the term in this study.

The second important word that the researcher sought meaning was the term 'seed'. According to Gifford (2006), a 'seed' in the church context is an equivalent word used to refer to a substance or an item in the form of money or other valuable materials. It is symbolically used to imply that a believer's special giving or particular offering given in the church is equivalent to a seed planted in the soil that germinates and grows to produce many more seeds. The Greek word for seed used in the New Testament (NT) is "Sperma," which indicates the potential borne in it to reproduce. This is in the same way a 'seed' planted in

the church is believed to have in-borne potential and is expected to grow, produce and be reaped. The church members are compelled to give a 'seed' in addition to the usual forms of giving. Gifford (2006) has not expounded on how a seed can do what is unique from other forms of giving. The essence of this study was to ascertain the uniqueness of DSP above other forms of giving.

The DSP has been used differently in the NCMs and the other churches adopting it. Koch (2009), writing a thesis on "PG and economic prosperity," describes DSP as presented by PG preachers as an expression of faith that helps a believer acquire wealth. The Bible teaches that 'faith can move mountains' (Matt 17:20-21), and other scholars to affirm that 'faith brings miracles' (Herbert et al., 2019). However, the expression of faith, according to Koch (2009), is particularly through the act of planting a seed with the conviction that the 'seed' will do something (be repaid back in large amounts). Koch's (2009) claim of prosperity attained through the planting of religious seeds fails to explain why there are poor people who are faithful in seed planting in the church. The arguments by Koch (2009) are that the poor in the church are poor because they have insufficient faith and have failed to faithfully plant their seed faith in God to cause His blessings to flow in their lives. This study explored this pertinent idea in the Kenyan church, that is, whether the poor in the churches are poor because they lack faith in planting a religious seed.

Koch (2019) gives another perspective on this doctrine: "The more seed one sows, the more harvest one is likely to get. "And that the believers' prayers are not solely adequate to open heavenly doors of blessings, an idea they share with Magambo (2016); thus, they must combine faith, prayers, and planting a seed to get their blessings from God. He identifies the common Biblical scriptures that are quoted to support the sermon. An example of such Scripture is 2 Corinthians 9:6-11, which entails Paul's exhortation to the Corinthian church in which he urges them to prepare a generous gift to give to the servants of God according to what they had promised. Although such Scripture is used to support preaching, there is an outright deviation from the Orthodox meaning that cannot be ignored. This study did not aim to delve into exegetic and hermeneutics studies, though the study sought further investigation of DSP in Kenya.

Several scholars like Jenkins (2006), Nkonge and Muguna (2014), Shorter and Njiru (2001) have analysed DSP. They refer to it as a "pulling agent" for church members practicing the doctrine. From the understanding of the DSP, a believer gives a special offering to the church, the pastor, or a needy case so that the offering will act as a seed planted to bring forth an expected blessing at the appropriate time by faith. It is believed that once offered by faith, they will have a causal effect on God; through the seed planted, they believe that God will automatically be obliged to authorise a blessing to the giver who will become rich, be healed of sicknesses, be forgiven, attain protection and others provision of jobs just to cite a few examples. This kind of teaching pulls many people into those churches seeking riches and other forms of blessings. Ehioghae and Olanrewaju (2015) agree with this claim that "DSP" practising churches are swelling with multitudes of people running into them because they are attracted by the promise that they will prosper upon planting a seed in the fertile soil of God". However, Ehioghae and Olanrewaju (2015), Jenkins (2006), Nkonge and Muguna (2014) and Shorter and Njiru (2001) do not say why we still have poor people in the churches despite being actively involved in giving seed offerings to the church. A close examination of the usage of DSP in Kenyan churches was pertinent to this study to establish the extent to which it pulls believers to the church.

Cramptom and Bacon (2000), espouse on the need for church members to give to the church. They claim that “to carry out the work of the church and the advancement of Christ's kingdom, the church must call on the members to give”. Ehioghae and Olanrewaju (2015), commenting on the need to ‘plant a seed’ in the church, concur with Cramptom and Bacon (2000). They allude to the fact that seed planting was used to finance church activities including pastor's upkeep. However, this seems questionable in our churches today. First, there was the normal giving and the additionally developed doctrine of seed planting that is being emphasised with the potential to do more than a mere form of giving. Secondly, these scholars failed to explain the specific needs of the church, making the Clergy constantly overemphasise the doctrine. This displayed a dissonance between the invention of DSP and the purpose for it, which prompted an investigation. The main question probed was whether there were underlying factors that made it necessary to invent the new doctrines. This study explored how proceeds from DSP were utilised to meet different needs in the church. Encapsulated to DSP proceeds utilisation, there were challenges faced which were also investigated.

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

#### Research Design

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

#### Target Population

This study targeted a population in Christian churches in six regions in Kenya, namely: Nairobi, Nyanza, Rift Valley, Central, Eastern and Western. According to the Population and Housing Census (2019), the overall Christian population totalled 47,213,282, but the study relied on a total population of 40,177,816 (Kenya Population and Housing Census, 2019) based in the mainline churches, AICs, Pentecostals and NCMs which are the main categories of the Christian churches in Kenya as indicated on Table 1.

**Table 1: Summary of Population in the Main Categories of Churches in Kenya**

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

Source: Population and Housing Census (2019)

#### Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

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

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

where n = Sample size,

N = Population of study

e = Margin of error

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

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

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

$$n = 399.996 = 400$$

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

**Table 2: Summary of Population Characteristics**

Region	Church Category	Church Name	Total Questionnaires Dispatched	Number of Clergy sampled	Number of lay Church leaders sampled	Total respondents
Nairobi	African Independent Churches	Milimani	46	1	1	48
	Pentecostal	Christ Is The Anser Ministries	82	1	1	84

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

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

## 4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Nature of the Doctrine of Seed Planting in Kenya

To investigate and understand the nature of DSP, the researcher sought to know the type of giving practised in NCMs in Kenya, which are believed to attract special blessings from God. Table 3 shows the results.

**Table 3: Types of Giving in the NCMs, which are Believed to Attract Special Blessings**

Type of Giving	Frequency	Per cent
Offering	11	3.0
Tithe	9	2.5
Offering and Tithe	87	23.9
Seed Faith	143	39.3
All	110	30.2
Others	4	1.1
Total	364	100.0

The data findings indicated that offering had 11 (3.0%), tithe 9 (2.5%), offering and tithe 87 (23.9%), seed faith 143 (39.3%), all 110 (30.2%), and others 4(1.1%). This showed that majority 143 (39.3%) of the respondents aver that 'seed faith' also known as 'seed planting', or just as 'seed' or 'Mbegu" in Kiswahili has the ability to attract special blessings from God. All types of giving came second with 110 (30.2%) respondents. Both offering and tithes came third with 87 (23.9%) respondents. Offerings came fourth with 11 (3.0%) respondents while tithe followed with 9 (2.5%) respondents. The respondents who had other opinions had 4 (1.1%) responses. Seed faith type of giving had gained acceptance in the church as a type of offering that is believed to attract the blessings of God. It is an additional type of giving to tithe, offering. When a believer tithed or gave an offering or any other type of giving, in the context of PG, it is believed that that believer had planted a seed. Sometimes, the preachers called out for giving to be done, and the 'Giving' done by faith attracts God's blessing.

Tithe is the act of giving one-tenth of one's belongings to God. Whereas in the Jewish culture, the Jews did it occasionally and at the stipulated times, the modern society has varied ways of earning; daily, weekly, monthly and several months. Christians are expected to be faithful to the church on this matter. An offering in the church today is the collection of money and other items on Sundays during meetings and fellowships. Offerings are meant for church welfare activities. When asked to rate their awareness of DSP in the church, the respondents responded, as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: Respondents' Awareness about the Doctrine of Seed Planting**

Statement	Frequency	Per cent
Excellent	57	15.7
Above average	129	35.4
Average	151	41.5
Below average	13	3.6

Not aware	14	3.8
Total	364	100.0

Majority 151 (41.5%) of the responses rated average. The responses rated above average were 129 (35.4%), excellent was 57 (15.7%), below average were 13 (3.6%) and from those who were not aware, 14 (3.8%). The information obtained indicated that members in different denominations are aware of what DSP is. This is illustrated by the majority of respondents, 337 (92.6%), who rated their responses as average and above. There were 13 (3.6%) respondents who had little knowledge on DSP, and their responses were rated below average. And only 14 (3.8%) who were not aware of it. The ratings on the awareness of DSP were correlated with the church category to find out the rating in the specific churches. Table 5 indicates the findings.

**Table 5: Church Category versus DSP Awareness Rating**

Church Category	Rating awareness of the Doctrine of seed planting					Total
	Excellent	Above average	Average	Below average	Not Aware	
Mainline Churches	9(2.47%)	18(4.94%)	51(14.01%)	3(0.82%)	1(0.27%)	82(22.53%)
African Independent Church	17(4.67%)	23(6.31%)	39(10.71%)	3(0.82%)	0(0.0%)	82(22.53%)
Pentecostal Churches	29(7.97%)	33(9.07%)	34(9.34%)	7(1.92%)	12(3.30%)	115(31.59%)
New Christian Movements	2(0.55%)	55(15.11%)	27(7.42%)	0(0.0%)	1(0.27%)	85(23.35%)
Total	57(15.66%)	129(35.44%)	151(41.48%)	13(3.57%)	14(3.84%)	364(100%)

Majority of the respondents from mainline churches 51 (14.01%), AICs 39 (10.71%) and Pentecostal churches 34 (9.34%) rated average awareness. In the NCMs, the rating was 55 (15.11%), which was above average and also the highest rate. In comparison, more of the respondents in the NRMs confirmed that they knew what the doctrine of seed planting is as compared to other churches where it was rated average. As was proposed earlier in this study, the DSP is prevalent in the NRMs; their high-rated awareness substantiated the proposition. This also confirmed that the findings about DSP were collected from reliable sources where 337 (92.6%) of respondents' awareness was average and above; that is, respondents who knew what DSP is. Only a small percentage, 27 (7.4%) of all respondents rated lowly; that is, 13 (3.6%) below average, and 14 (3.8%) had no idea of what DSP is. This means DSP is well known in all denominations.

To establish the nature of DSP, the researcher correlated the type of giving believed to attract special blessings and the church category item and compared the results with the rate of awareness as per the church category (table 5). The results are presented in Table 6.



**Table 6: Church Category versus Type of Giving**

Church Category	What type of giving practised in your church is believed to attract special blessings						Total
	Offering	Tithe	Offering and Tithe	Seed Faith	All	Others	
Mainline Churches	3(0.82%)	0(0.00%)	25(6.87%)	20(5.49%)	33(9.07%)	1(0.27%)	82(22.53%)
African Independent Churches	1(0.27%)	6(1.65%)	23(6.31%)	25(6.87%)	24(6.59%)	3(0.82%)	82(22.53%)
Pentecostal Church	3(0.82%)	0(0.00%)	37(10.16%)	43(11.81%)	32(8.79%)	0(0.00%)	115(31.59%)
New Christian Movements	4(1.99%)	3(0.82%)	2(0.55%)	55(15.11%)	21(5.77%)	0(0.00%)	85(23.35%)
Total	11(3.02%)	9(2.47%)	87(23.90%)	143(39.29%)	110(30.22%)	4(1.99%)	364(100.00%)

The results show that DSP is believed by the majority to be a type of giving, which is believed to attract blessings in three out of the four categories of churches: The AICs 25 (6.87%), the Pentecostal churches 43 (11.81%) and the NCMs 55 (15.11%). The majority, 33 (9.07%) of the respondents in the mainline churches believed that 'all' types of giving attract special blessings from God. From the four categories of churches where awareness of DSP is rated average and above, 'Seed planting' or 'Seed faith' is confirmed as the type of giving which is believed to attract special blessings from God. Offerings and tithes that are based in the OT law are an obligation, demand from the law as inscribed in Leviticus 27:30-32 that;

"A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruits from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord. If a man redeems any of his tithes, he must add a fifth of the value to it. The entire tithe of the herd and flock - every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd's rod - will be holy to the Lord (NIV)".

Olford (2000) described DSP as an obligatory tool to please God to cause blessings, a concept inferred by the researcher to insinuate DSP is in the same category as tithing inscribed in the Bible. However, Kasera (2012) disapproved of DSP as an obligatory tool while expositing 2 Cor 9:6-11. He distinguished an obligation of giving, which is a demand by law, and generous giving, which an individual does at will. He, therefore, declined to support the argument that DSP is an obligatory tool for pleasing God, as Olford had alluded. The DSP, which is at an advanced stage in its spread and awareness, is an intrinsically motivated practice by those purporting to seek special blessings. It is totally different from the usual traditional giving practices of the OT and NT, like offerings and tithing. It is based on the premise of 'belief' other than a direct biblical practice.

Thus, this study confirmed that the dominant nature of DSP, which makes it prevalent in Christian churches in Kenya today, is the 'belief that DSP attracts God's blessings'. Kiogora Magambo, a charismatic Bishop in Jesus House of Praise Ministries in Meru, advocates for DSP as a channel for attracting God's blessings and a source of prosperity. In his book *Kingdom Covenant Giving*, DSP is espoused as a source of dominion prosperity, which is a 'guaranteed spiritual law'. He claims that "planting a seed in church precedes blessings just as sowing precedes reaping" (Magambo, 2016). This understanding is postulated by other scholars such as Coleman (2000), and Gbote and Kgatla (2014).

The clergy and the lay Church leaders were asked in the interview about the nature of DSP in the Christian church. They identified various features that the researcher analysed. Other than the efficacy of blessings, the DSP encompasses an element of faith. This is confirmed by Magambo (2016), Anderson (2004), Mahoney (1993) and Brockway and Rajashekear (1987), that the advocates of DSP do it as an exercise of faith. Brockway and Rajashekear (1987) describe faith as a means through which God fulfils the desires of the believers who are willing to plant a seed. Osteen (2004), supports the element of 'faith' and suggests to believers that; "If they can dare to take a step of faith and start honouring God in their finances, He will increase their supply in supernatural ways". Mahoney (1993) describes the act of giving a 'seed' in church as the most practical way of expressing one's faith in God. He claims it is out of faith that a believer believes that once he or she gives a portion in church, the remaining portion in possession of the giver possesses the blessings of God. Magambo (2016) describes faith as a sure bet to believers that propel the powerful force encapsulated in the seed sown in the church to produce immense blessings. He says that;

The law of DSP is a powerful force. It is in its principle that everything is governed in the kingdom of God, and it is fundamental to godly prosperity. Faith in DSP always produces a harvest of prosperity. ...The spirit calls believers to step out in faith by sowing before planting. (P. 12). On earth, men receive money, but there in heaven, our high priest Jesus Christ receives our faith. All return of blessings is based on faith (P. 20).

Koch (2019) further underscores the element of faith that is significant for believers to heed DSP, which leads to wealth and prosperity. The believers plant seed by 'faith and hope to prosper', while failure to plant seed by faith 'leads to poverty'. As to whether the poor in the churches in Kenya are in that state because they lack faith in planting a religious seed, a number of clergy and lay church leaders in the interview sessions gave varied responses, and few of them were sampled. Examples of some of these responses include;

Faith is a necessary value for all believers. But not a weapon to manipulate God to achieve one's desires. By faith, God gives His favour by Grace. Whether rich or poor, God reaches out to His people at the right time in His own ways. There is no amount of money or material that can change God's plan (Kinoti, OI. 2022).

Faith is a core ingredient in religious matters. But to use faith to condition God is selfishness. That is why many are disgruntled when they miss what they hoped for after planting a seed. Their intentions were not right (Sorobi, O.I. 2022).

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Faith as an outward expression applies to all religious beliefs and practices. But blessings and prosperity are God's own doing and design. He will give to whom he wants to and deny anything to people for reasons well known to Him. Riches and poverty are well known by God, and in His own plans, he comes through for His people (Mugambi, OI. 2022).

From these opinions, it is clear that faith is important in religious matters. But faith with a hidden agenda is misleading to believers. When people practice faith in planting seeds in the church to attain their desires, they deny the very faith its characteristic nature of hoping without any tangible thing or even having knowledge of the means to attain one's desires ( Phil 4:17b).

The interviewees provided more features of DSP borrowing from the agrarian concept (agrarian refers to the concept related to agricultural practices, and in this case, it is related to a farming concept). From their responses, a religious seed possesses five more features; namely, it requires patience and time, proper preparation, fertile ground or soil, possesses the innate power of multiplication and reproduction, and is a continuous practice.

Like an agricultural seed, religious seed requires time to germinate, grow, ripen and be harvested. This calls for patience on the part of the believer. As informed by Nyarieko (O.I. 2022), the seed requires proper preparation just like an agricultural seed is selected, sorted and best classified for planting. The seed, in this case, is believed to be in the form of money and other items like food or clothing or services like visiting the sick, the aged and the inmates.

The seed requires fertile soil for best yields (Mutembei, O.I. 2022). This is a confirmation of Magambo (2016), who claims that a seed requires the soil and, at the same time, it should be planted. He says that; "upon planting a seed, where it is sown becomes a garden. What a believer keeps does not grow; what grows is what one plants". In this case, the garden or the soil is not limited to the church and church clergy alone, but it can extend to the needy, poor, hungry, the sick and the like. How do the sick, the poor, and the destitute become fertile ground? Kinoti (O.I. 2022) elucidates this aspect using the words of Jesus Christ: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (Matt 25:40). He, therefore, expounded that the least brothers are the needy and the destitute and what 'we do' meant the help they are given. If then it is doing it for Christ, Christ is a rewarder of good deeds. This means the needy are fertile soil where a reward is reproduced. Buttressing Kinoti's arguments, Kimanzi (O.I. 2022) quoted Proverbs 19:17 which states that; "He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and He will reward him for what he has done".

The study further interrogated how a church Clergy becomes fertile soil. Mugambi (O.I. 2022) and Mutembei (O.I. 2022) were of the opinion that the Bible recommends the servants or clergy to get support from the church proceeds. They cited Saint Paul's words explaining to the Corinthian church the rights of an apostle who posed a question;

If we have sown spiritual seeds among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? If others have the right to support you, shouldn't we have it all the more? (1 Cor 9:11-12a), "Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve

at the altar share what is offered at the altar? In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the Gospel should receive their living from the Gospel (1 Cor 9:13- 14) (NIV)".

From this argument, it is clear that the clergy have the right to be supported. The DSP teach that when the believers bring their monies and other materials to church, it is not in vain. They bring it to the right ground, fertile soil that they will receive back. The 'ground', 'the soil' emits blessings. The responses are in line with Sabblah (2017), whose view is that the clergy or the servants of God deserve support from their congregants. He argues that; "Men and women of God bless congregants spiritually all the time, so it is only right for these congregants to bless their clergy materially". When the clergy receive the materials, the material becomes the 'seed', and the clergy becomes 'the fertile soil'.

The seed, as it was argued by Gifford (2006), Wilson (2007) and Koch (2019), is believed to possess an innate power that makes it reproduce and multiply. The amount and type of 'seed' planted determines the type and amount of harvest received by the believer. This is in line with Galatians 6:7b that 'a man reaps what he sows' and 2 Corinthians 9:6: 'Whoever sows sparingly will reap sparingly and whoever sows generously will reap generously'. It also resonates with Luke 6:38: 'Give it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you'.

## Usage of the Doctrine of Seed Planting in Kenya

The term 'usage' refers to how DSP has been utilised in church. The concept is explored not only in line with 'how' it is used but also investigated the people 'who' use it and for what purpose. To understand the usage of DSP in the church, several statements were formulated in the questionnaires, interview guide and observation guide. The statements captured responses on a scale of 1-5. Further, the respondents were asked for any additional views, and their responses were analysed and discussed. Table 7 shows the responses captured using formulated statements.

**Table 7: Usage of DSP in the Church**

Statement	SD	D	A	SA	NA	Total
Proceeds from the Doctrine of Seed Planting are used to advance the Gospel of Christ	17	18.7	31.6	23.6	9.1	100
	62	68	115	86	33	364
The Doctrine of Seed planting is used to encourage those who need miracles to seek divine intervention	8.8	11.3	63.2	12.9	3.8	100
	32	41	230	47	14	364
Proceeds from the Doctrine of seed planting are used as alms to the less fortunate in society	10.7	62.9	12.4	10.2	3.8	100
	39	229	45	37	14	364
The Doctrine of Seed Planting is used to raise funds towards various projects in the church	8.5	13.2	61.3	13.2	3.8	100
	31	48	223	48	14	364
The doctrine of seed planting is meant to encourage sacrificial giving from members	11.0	13.5	53.6	17.3	4.7	100
	40	49	195	63	17	364
Members contribute more as seed planting to gain	11.3	12.1	53.8	15.7	7.1	100

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favour and recognition from the clergy	41	44	196	57	26	364
Proceeds from the doctrine of seed planting are reserved to meet the personal needs of the clergy	7.7	17.6	61.3	10.4	3.0	100
	28	64	223	38	11	364

Key: A- Agree D – Disagree NA- Not Aware SA – Strongly Agree SD - Strongly Disagree

The first statement was posed to the respondents that the proceeds from DSP are used to advance the Gospel of Christ. The majority, 115 (31.6%) of the respondents, agreed that the proceeds from DSP are used to advance the Gospel. 86 (23.6%) strongly agree, 68 (18.7%) disagree, 62 (17.0%) strongly disagree, and 33 (9.1%) were not aware. From these findings, the researcher delved deeper to find out how proceeds from DSP are used to advance the Gospel. Gitonga (O.I. 2022) argued that the pastor's role is multifaceted. They preach they pray for the sick, they comfort the bereaved, and they engage in all spiritual, social, physical and psychological matters that concern their members. On the managerial level, the pastors need finances to carry out evangelism; some through the radio, television, door-to-door, open-air crusades, public address system and transport costs incurred while doing evangelism work, among others. Therefore, in the church, people are made to hear the Gospel of Christ. Kinoti (O.I. 2022) claims that the *ecclesia* (gathering) provides an opportunity for many people to hear the Gospel of Christ. It provides what Gitonga (O.I. 2022) termed as the ministry of presence. The sermons, the songs, and the words of exhortation delivered in church gatherings contain messages that tell about Jesus Christ and His ministry, life and purpose.

To understand the usage of DSP further, the researcher asked the respondents' opinion on another statement that The DSP is used to encourage those who need miracles to seek divine intervention. The majority, 230 (63.2%), agreed with the statement. 47 (12.9%) strongly agreed, 41 (11.3%) disagreed, 32 (8.8%) strongly disagreed, and 14 (3.8%) were not aware. The findings here confirmed that DSP is used to motivate believers who need miracles to seek divine intervention through SP. Coleman (2000) and Shorter and Njiru (2001) allude that the preachers organise meetings on weekdays, where special prayers are offered to those who need special miracles. The miracles hoped for would be financial, healing, protection and provision, among others. The 'seed' in this case is taken to be the master key to open divine doors for these miracles (Ngige, O.I. 2022). To motivate believers further, preachers teach that prayers accompanied by fasting alone are not enough to change difficult situations, but planting a seed does (Magambo, 2016). The teachings of encouragement given are derived from such scriptures as Malachi 3:8-11, which says that the believers who willingly and bountifully plant their seed will be rewarded;

God will open the floodgates of heaven to pour his blessings to those faithful to Him in giving valuable substance to Him until there will not be enough room. The Lord will rebuke the devourer. The Lord will be their insurance against all (NIV).

These kinds of statements motivate the hearers to put their faith into action by planting seeds in the form of money and other substances. They are encouraged to focus on the divine power for divine miracles of blessings and protection, among others, but uphold DSP as a prerequisite. Thus, the findings in this research confirm that DSP is used to encourage those who need miracles to seek divine intervention. As to whether the miracles indeed happen, an article in Standard Media on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023 detailed two

believers who were disfranchised after they failed to get a miracle of a job they were promised after SP (Diseko, 2023).

The researcher also probed whether the proceeds from DSP are used as alms for the less fortunate in society. Those who disagreed were 229 (62.9%), 45 (12.4%) agreed, 39 (10.7%) strongly disagreed, 37 (10.2%) strongly agreed, and 14 (3.8%) were not aware. The majority, 266 (73.1%) of the total respondents (those who agreed and those who strongly disagreed), were of the opinion that DSP does not serve as alms to the less fortunate in society. Whereas the mission of the church is geared towards helping the less fortunate, the study established that DSP proceeds do not meet this mandate.

Jenkins (2006) and Parsitau (2014) allude to the fact that in Kenya and generally in the whole of the African continent, there is poverty, and many people require aid or support not only from the government but from the church as well. Indeed, the church is vested with the responsibility of transforming society as her core business, and it is expected that one of her agenda would be to deal with the poverty and other needs of the people. However, the NCMs are individualised personalised congregations, concentrating on their individualised activities planned by the founders, who happen to be the clergy in charge and assisted by the spouse or children (Shorter and Njiru 2001), and they operate their movements as individual enterprises. They appeal to the congregation to support their planned agenda, which rarely includes touching people's needs outside their congregations. This probably explains why the majority of the respondents, 229 (62.9%), disagreed with the statement that the proceeds from DSP are used as alms to the less fortunate in society.

Ehioghae and Olanrewaju (2015) describe DSP as a mere pulling agent to attract multitudes in the congregations where they are promised to prosper upon planting a seed. Yet the congregations still had poor people despite continued adherence to the planting of religious seeds. This was confirmed through the biographic information on members' sources of income. The findings revealed that 193 (53.0%) were in the category of the unemployed, the peasant farmers and the casual labourers. Such a category of people occupies the lower level of economic status and needs support. Failure of the NCMs to administer to peoples' needs, especially the poor, means they fail to fulfil their God-given mandate. The situation of the poor people worsened when they carried what they had to the church in the name of a religious seed.

Kinoti (O.I. 2022) disagreed with the statement that the proceeds of DSP are used as alms to the less fortunate. Despite the fact that he is a pastor in NCM, he was of the opinion that the proceeds are purely for usage in the church or the movement asking for them. He was of the opinion that the presence of NCMs has not been felt in touching people's lives. He argued that;

There are many churches, movements and ministries all over today. In less than 500 meters, there is a structure occupied by a Church. If these churches would reciprocate to the needs of the people, there would be less suffering in society. But that is not the case.

The study investigated whether the DSP is used to raise funds towards various projects in the church. The respondents who agreed were 223 (61.3%), 48 (13.2%) disagreed, 48 (13.2%) strongly agreed, 31 (8.5%) strongly disagreed, and 14 (3.8%) were not aware. This shows that the majority, 271 (74.5%) of the

respondents, agreed with the statement that DSP is used to raise funds towards various projects in the church. Such projects identified included the purchase of musical instruments, church and/or clergy vehicles, church land, choir uniforms and construction of the church building.

The statement is also supported by interviewees; 20 (90.91%) out of the 22 were of the opinion that the church, like any other institution, undertakes different projects that require funding. The two interviewees with dissenting views argued that the work of the church ought to be preaching Christ and be distinguished from the secular society. The view that the church ought to distinguish itself from the secular world and being denied the obligation of carrying out development projects may not be applicable in the modern world. According to Okullu (1984), the church is a carrier of the biblical mandate to be actively involved in the development of the country. According to Okullu (1984), it is not a sin for the church to participate in matters of the development of society. For the church to develop the society, she needs to develop herself first.

The needs of the church that require funding range from acquiring items like seats and musical instruments to acquiring land, construction of church structures, paying for TV programmes and, in addition, remuneration of clergy. All these requirements need funding, yet many churches lack reliable sources of funds. The churches rely on the contributions of members. The church leadership organises how to raise funds for the welfare of the church. Before the moratorium was adopted by the European Missionaries in 1975 (Nthamburi, 2000; Makafone, 2009) to promote the three selfhood of the church that is, self-propagating, self-supporting and self-governing (Shenk, 1993; Makafone, 2009), the mainline churches received international funding. The early PC also received international support from their mother ministries (Gifford, 2009). However, many of the upcoming NCMs are locally founded, and their financial support wholly comes from their members. According to Crampton and Bacon (2000) and Ehioghae and Olanrewaju (2015), 'The church members have the obligation to bring money and other materials to support the work of God in the church'. Ehioghae and Olanrewaju (2015) are of the view that DSP helps in supporting ministry work. However, funding church projects using proceeds from giving like DSP alone may not be enough. The church needed to come up with income-generating activities that would raise funds to be used in project funding.

The study investigated whether the DSP is meant to encourage sacrificial giving from members. Sacrificial giving, in this context, means giving valuable items beyond one's means or limit. From the results of the collected data, 195 (53.6%) agreed that DSP in the church is meant to encourage sacrificial giving from the members. 63 (17.3%) strongly agreed, 49 (13.5%) disagreed, 40 (11.0%) strongly disagreed, and 17 (4.7%) were not aware. Both the respondents who agreed and those who strongly agreed form 258 (70.9%), supporting the statement that preaching on DSP is meant to encourage sacrificial giving. As discussed earlier, the churches have budgets to fund, bills to settle and projects to undertake. The same institutions operated under the mercies of their followers. This meant that to be able to raise enough money, sacrificial giving was inevitable. Sometimes, the churches subjected the members to exaggerated budgets that demanded a lot of sacrifice. Thus, the DSP preachers make demands from their followers to give, even beyond their means.

Muheria (2023), in an interview on Citizen Television, agreed with this view and alluded that advocates of DSP manipulate the minds of their believers to impress on them the importance of sacrificial giving. In the same interview, Gitau (2023), a counselling psychologist, observed that “there is a tendency in the Christian church to play around with members’ psychology to be able to control their actions”. Once the minds of believers are captured, they adhere to their preachers’ messages at ease. This explains why DSP fits as an instrument to coerce members to uphold sacrificial giving in the church.

The DSP is understood to mean ‘wanting to win God’s favour to gain something’ (Gbote & Kgatla, 2014; Coleman, 2000), but this study went a notch higher to investigate the usage of DSP considering the relationship between the preacher and the members. The study investigated whether members contribute more as a ‘religious seed’ to gain favour and recognition from the clergy. The respondents who agreed that members contribute more as a religious seed to gain favour and recognition from the clergy were 196 (53.8%), 57 (15.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 44 (12.1%) disagreed, 41 (11.3%) strongly disagreed, and 26 (7.1%) were not aware. Gaining favour and recognition is another psychological dimension established in the usage of DSP that was positively confirmed by 253 (69.5%) of the respondents, who both agreed and strongly agreed. According to Kimanzi (O.I. 2022), those members who seek favour and recognition from the clergy are of different categories: those who have visited the church for the first time and want to be heard, those who are desperate with their issues and want the clergy to pay attention and those who want the clergy to recognise that they give a lot.

The study investigated whether the proceeds from DSP are reserved to meet the personal needs of the clergy. ‘Personal needs of the clergy’ as used in this study referred to all the requirements of the church clergy, not limited to food, clothing, shelter, access to health and education. The findings showed that 223 (61.3%) of the respondents agreed, 64 (17.6%) disagreed, 38 (10.4%) strongly agreed, 28 (7.7%) strongly disagreed, and 11 (3.0%) were not aware. From the findings, the majority, 261 (71.7%) of the respondents, agreed that the proceeds from DSP are reserved to meet the personal needs of the clergy. This is a confirmation that DSP does not promote the mission of the church. As discussed earlier, the proceeds of DSP were not used as alms to the less fortunate, yet this cannot be separated from the mission of God. It was confirmed that the needs of the clergy are made a priority by the advocates of DSP over engendering the mission of the church.

According to Cramptom and Bacon (2000), and Ehioghae and Olanrewaju (2015), church activities require financial support that is accrued in different ways. This would include monies acquired from proceeds from DSP. However, they did not specify the particular needs of the church, which would include the needs of the clergy. This motivated the researcher to find out whether the proceeds from DSP are meant to meet the personal needs of the clergy and was positively confirmed by 223 (61.3%) who agreed with the statement.

The personal needs of the clergy in the church needed thorough attention to be investigated as one of the areas of DSP usage. Like any other person, the clergy have similar needs that require finances. According to Mutembei (O.I. 2022), the clergy are human beings who have needs. Mwangi (O.I. 2022) argued that the church is the workplace of the clergy, where they ought to be remunerated. According to Gitonga (O.I.



2022), meeting the needs of the clergy in the church is a biblical mandate. This is evident in the Bible. Saint Paul in the NT advises Timothy to teach the church in Ephesus that there was nothing wrong if they met the needs of the ministers among them. He writes;

The elders directing the church affairs are worthy of double honour, particularly those whose work is teaching and preaching. For the Bible says, 'do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain', and the worker deserves his wages (1 Tim 5:17-18) NIV.

However, Paul never wanted to be a burden to the church and hinder the progression of the Gospel. Therefore, he taught the church in Thessalonica the importance of working hard with one's own hands and meeting one's needs (1 Thes 5:12). He argued that this would lessen the burden of the church, which is struggling to meet the personal needs of the clergy. He gave his own testimony of how he worked hard with his own hand to meet his needs (2 Thes 3:8-9).

According to Kinoti (O.I. 2022), the clergy are human beings with needs; however, he lamented over the needs raised in some churches today, which were not targeted to further the work of mission but individual fulfilment. These include building big bungalows, buying sleek cars and going out for holidays with their children, where a lot of money is spent at the expense of the church kitty. Kinoti's (O.I. 2022) lamentation was not on this exorbitant lifestyle per se but on the fact that these pastors lived their lives at the expense of their followers, who parted with a lot of money to finance the pastors' needs.

From the findings obtained, it was established that the proceeds from DSP were not reaching the needy in society. The majority of the clergy perpetuating the DSP were motivated by the desire for self-gain and not for the benefit of the work of God. How, then, was DSP initiated in the church?

#### How DSP was initiated in the church

This section explores how DSP was initiated in the church in Kenya. This was important to this study since it helped to relate the knowledge acquired to its nature and usage. The Respondents provided various views that were discussed under various themes.

The DSP started as a way of giving back to the ministers of the Gospel.

This opinion was received from 258 (70.8%) respondents who averred that DSP was started as a way of giving back to the ministers of the Gospel. The open-air crusades (gathering of many Christians in an open-air meeting in a Stadium, public gardens and public parks) were the initial arena where DSP was preached. Sometimes, the preachers who presided over the crusades came from other countries and would need to be facilitated back (Wanjala, O.I. 2022). Even the local preachers needed financial support to settle bills incurred in the organisation of the crusades (Omondi, O.I. 2022). Televangelism was an expensive activity that preachers undertook. Hence, the financial support given was used to facilitate the Minister's fares, accommodation and meals, among others.

Giving money in crusades in the late 1990s was investigated by Samita (1998). He did research to investigate why there was an upsurge of Christian crusades in Nairobi. Among other factors, he established that preachers encouraged crusadees (people in attendance at the crusade ground) to give money in support of the ministers. He says;

The crusades appealed to the cognitive and affective levels of the crusadees... many attended to get spiritual nourishment, emotional support and social connection. The preachers took advantage of the crowds and asked for monetary support, which many gave (p.11).

Magambo (2016) supports a religious principle that is upheld when people gather for religious purposes that preachers relied on to ask congregants to plant a religious seed. The Bible teaches Christians not to go before God empty-handed (Exod 23:15), but according to Magambo (2016), once in the presence of God, if the hands are holding something, there is no more space left to receive God's blessings. They must give out in the presence of God to allow God to add more to them. Their giving in the church was alleged to be in support of the ministers who represent God, and therefore, they were obliged to give out freely (Deut 16:16-17).

## **The DSP was Popularised by the Need for PG**

Gitonga's (O.I. 2022) argument that the congregants gave to receive multiple blessings supported the statement that the DSP was popularised by the need for PG. Many 283 (77.7%) responses received showed that, indeed, DSP was popularised by the need for PG. The definition of PG by Koch (2009), Asamoah-Gyadu (2005), Kwateng-Yeboah 2016; Gbote and Kgatla (2014), and Coleman (2000) reveal that DSP was alleged to be the cornerstone to realise 'prosperity'. Koch (2009), states that;

PG is the ... doctrine that God wants His people to be prosperous, especially financially ... and the adherents believe that wealth is a sign of God's blessings and compensation for prayer and giving beyond minimum tithe to the church, televangelist or for a religious cause (p. 1).

According to Asamoah-Gyadu (2005) and Kwateng-Yeboah (2016), the theory underlying PG is that; "God rewards faithful Christians with wealth, financial success and good health when they give". According to Gbote and Kgatla (2014), "PG is the accumulation of wealth and good health based on one's good works or according to giving power to the church".

The premises contained in the definition of PG show that DSP was popularised by the need to prosper. Examples of these premises include: to prosper, one ought to give 'beyond minimum tithe' or give extra (Koch, 2009). The accumulation of wealth and good health according to giving power (Coleman, 2000; Kgatla, 2014) and when one is faithful in giving, there is a reward from God, as alluded to by Gyadu (2005) and Kwateng-Yeboah (2016). The need for prosperity was in two ways. The giver believed the theory that "I give more, I get more blessings". Kwateng-Yeboah (2016) calls this a "Transaction Theology", which refers to;

Theology in ritual exchange of goods and services played out in the lives of church members in contact with God, Men of God (pastors) and the church and involves the literal understanding of give-to-get, *hic et nunc*, here and now (p. 70)

In the process of craving for multiplication of their money, flourishing in businesses, indulging in good health and attaining prosperity, the members of the church had to give more and more. This affirms the statement that DSP was popularised by the need for PG.

## **The DSP Began as an Expression of Faith in God's Divine Providence**

The statement that DSP began as an expression of faith in God's divine providence was affirmed by 282 (77.5%) respondents. The action of SD was a response to preachers' message that faith was important if they were to receive anything from God. The respondents interviewed were also in agreement that DSP began as an expression of faith in God's divine providence. According to Kinoti (O.I. 2022), many people run to church because it is a place where they are comforted and consoled when faced with many problems in the world. They believe in the ability of God to rescue them from their predicaments. Those who sought provision exercised their faith, which they put into practice through SP because the Bible teaches that faith without actions is dead (Jam 2:26). So they put their faith into action by offering their 'seed'.

## **The DSP was not a Thanksgiving Offering to Retain God's Blessings**

Giving in the church is a common practice to demonstrate gratitude to God. However, the study established that DSP did not begin as a thanksgiving offering to retain God's blessings among givers in the church. This was supported by 275 (75.6%) respondents. The nature of DSP is centred on the clergy rather than on God, as these findings revealed. God, in the case of DSP, is used as a conduit for the benefit of the clergy who receive the proceeds from DSP. It would be centred on God if the proceeds were for the purposes of *missio dei* (the mission of God). As to whether the believers who give are really blessed, this study established that the proceeds from DSP were for the benefit of the clergy. The believers got emotional relief from the promises and prayers offered. The study probed whether the clergy gave back to thank God for the proceeds they received from DSP and other types of church giving. Kimanzi (O.I. 2022) doubted whether the clergy giving back to the church, especially in the independent movements, would be classified as giving to God. He argued that if everything goes back to the clergy, how could that be for the benefit of God? The assertion that DSP was not for thanksgiving is much confirmed. The perspective held by the rich and the poor believers alike is that of 'want'. The rich givers plant a religious seed to sustain their riches and for good health and protection. The poor, on the other hand, are driven by the desire to 'get' what they do not have. There was no room for expressing one's gratitude in the preaching of DSP then and even now.

## **The DSP was Initiated to Increase the Material Well-being of the Givers**

The preaching of DSP provoked peoples' emotions, who were made to believe that upon planting a 'seed', more would be given in a bigger proportion. If one had to get more, then their well-being would be enhanced. 278 (76.4%) responses from members confirm the statement that DSP was initiated to increase the material well-being of the giver. This explains why the DSP was initiated over 30 years ago, and up to today it is being preached.

The world today is materialistic, and people are struggling to better their lives. Society, on the other hand, is full of challenges like unemployment, lack of basic needs like clothes, food and shelter, and lack of medical and educational funds, among others (Samita, 1998., Kalu, 2000). Gitonga (O.I. 2022) agreed with the statement and attributed the decision of believers to look for a church solution to hopelessness in society. He argued that in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, Kenyan society went through a lot of challenges. This was the time when there was 'ElNino', which lasted for months destroying food crops. 'ElNino' was followed by

'LaNina', which caused drought and famine that was so severe in the year 2000. In the same period, Kenya received the worst-ever terrorist attack that disoriented not only the social but also the economic life of the country. During the same period, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund initiated structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), which forced the government to remove subsidies from education, health and agriculture, yet these were important sectors directly influencing the common citizen. The 'cost sharing' policy implemented then met Kenyans unprepared, and this led to a lot of suffering. Many graduates left the Universities and went out to search for jobs that were not there. It is against this backdrop that DSP was introduced, a message of hope that "plant a seed, and God will multiply it", and many believed in it and practised it (Samita, 1998; Parsitau, 2014).

## **The DSP was not an Initiative to Improve the Productivity of Farm Yields**

The respondents gave input regarding the productivity of the farm yields. This was informed by the agrarian concept used in the coinage of the DSP, in which the 'seed' is planted, it grows and produces a bumper harvest. The majority, 251 (79%) of the respondents, said that the SP was not initially a practice that aimed to secure improved productivity of the farm fields. This is because DSP initially began in towns and cities where agricultural practices are rare. The members who sought DSP were basically in need of money, good health, jobs, children, spouses and protection, but not for farm productivity (Heuser, 2015). The informants in the interview sessions explained that the DSP had since spread to many areas, including agricultural practising areas, where people sought the productivity of their animals and farms. But initially, DSP was not exercised to ensure the productivity of animals and crops.

## **The DSP was Introduced as an Additional Giving to Tithes and Offering**

Of the respondents, 273 (75%) confirmed that DSP is an additional type of giving to tithes and offerings, and it is believed to attract God's blessings. The Christian church depends largely on the giving system that has lasted all along in history (Mahoney, 1993). All churches practice giving. The Bible contains different types of giving that the church carries on, as expounded by Kwateng-Yeboah (2016). In his Thesis entitled *I Wish You Prosperity: Analysing the Social Effects of the Prosperity Gospel on Poverty Alleviation in the neo-pentecostal church in Ghana*, he analysed various categories of church giving, such as paying tithe, offering first fruits of farm produce and first-born male of livestock and thanksgiving offering. This provides the evidence of an established system of giving in the church. Thus, the study confirmed that DSP was introduced as an additional giving to tithes and offerings in the Church in Kenya.

## **The DSP was Introduced as a Point of Contact to Invoke Miracles from God**

The study established that DSP was introduced as a point of contact to invoke miracles from God, as confirmed by 270 (74.2%) respondents. This concept was elaborated by Kimanzi (O.I. 2022), who argued that invocation took place during prayer. This happened after a believer had given a 'seed faith', after which the preacher pronounced miracles on his or her behalf. Scholars such as Parsitau (2014) and Gifford (2009) claim that PG preachers called people for miracles in their gatherings. These preachers combined prophecy and the special power of performing miracles to convince congregants that they were the true 'Men and women of God'. But the miracles were not for free. The person in need of a miracle was supposed to plant a seed. The more money given in the church, the greater the miracle a giver would expect. This was different from the classical Pentecostalism, which also advocated for miracles. Their

theology espouses the power of the Holy Spirit and that performing miracles in the church was a special gift from God (Gifford, 2009). As taught by Saint Paul in 1 Corinthians 12, the Holy Spirit's gifts are freely given and ought to be executed freely (Buria, 2023). But instead of PG preachers making miracles free, they conditioned them to monetary gain. This happened from the time DSP was begun. Hence, this study confirms the statement that DSP was introduced at a point of contact to invoke miracles from God.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

This section explored the nature and usage of DSP, as well as justifying how it was begun in the church. The findings revealed that the DSP is believed to have the efficacy of attracting blessings from God. The DSP is a doctrine which requires faith and hope and is a continuous, endless process. The believer is required to offer a well-prepared seed item(s) and choose wisely to whom or where to give or plant the seed. Preachers teach the essence of patience to allow time to gain from the action of faith. The proceeds from DSP were used to spread the Gospel through paying for such activities as airing TV programmes, hosting crusades, production of Gospel songs and writing books. The proceeds are believed to act as an avenue to raise funds for different projects in the church and remunerate the clergy. In their preaching and teaching, the preachers dwell on the importance of DSP and encourage givers to seek miracles from the divine. The preachers encourage sacrificial giving among their members. It was also established that some members use SP to earn favour and recognition from their clergy. The proceeds from DSP were not used to help the needy and the destitute in society.

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