

## **God, Wealth Provider and Healer: Experiences from Pentecostal Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa**

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*This proposal focuses on* Pentecostal/Charismatic Expressions in World Christianity. The vitality and rapid growth of contemporary Pentecostalism remains an astonishing phenomenon **in sub-Saharan Africa**. Against the metaphor of the God for whom piety is often associated with material poverty and suffering, which was strongly emphasized in Western mission Churches in sub-Saharan Africa, contemporary Pentecostalism is proclaiming the God of power and success in all areas of life. This paper will discuss traditional concepts of God in Africa and perceptions of God in Western mission Churches regarding wealth and health. Then a critical review of an ever growing literature on contemporary Pentecostalism in sub-Saharan Africa, paying much attention to its prosperity teachings and the perceptions of God they undergird, will be applied. The data from my personal observation of the phenomenon and my own experience of many years in a Pentecostal tradition will enrich the debate.

The paper argues that Christian giving is a spiritual duty that believers need to uphold especially to sustain mission in its broader sense. It also maintains that the issues of wealth and health are part of scriptural teachings needed for every believer's spiritual and physical well being. The question is whether the view that makes Christian giving a medium of material prosperity can cohabit with the Reformation principles of *sola gratia* and *sola fide*, and proves to be biblically, ethically and morally defensible.