THE PROSPERITY ETHIC

Neoliberal Christianity and the Rise of the New Prosperity Gospel in the Philippines

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The prosperity gospel

Material and spiritual provisions are a result of faith-driven obedience to divine commandments.

01 PENTECOSTAL CHRISTIANITY
Having a personal relationship with God and encountering the work of the Holy Spirit

02 NEW THOUGHT MOVEMENT
Individuals have extraordinary powers to access 'multiple cosmic worlds' and 'psychic energy' to attain healing.

03 WORD OF FAITH MOVEMENT
God, through the death of Christ, has already provided all the needs of humanity including spiritual, physical, and economic successes.

04 ECONOMIC TURN
Individual mobility, economic development, and marketization of society. Case in point: Joel Osteen and the theology of consumption.
TEACHING FILIPINOS TO BECOME WEALTHY & DEBT-FREE!

My goal is to teach you how to get out of debt, budget, save, and invest so you can achieve the wealthy and debt-free life.

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COMPANIES I’VE SPOKEN FOR

Thousands of people have achieved the wealthy and debt-free life. Are you ready for your turn? Invite me for one of your company events and let me guide you through the process of financial success, and help you achieve the life that you deserve.
The Prosperity Ethic is a work ethic that marries Biblical principles and financial management. The new prosperity gospel, in other words, is not only about believing, confessing, and giving. Bo and Chinkee are among the 'new prophets of capital' who provide ethical frameworks to make capitalism acceptable (Aschoff 2015).
Believing right

In order to be rich, 'we must start with a healthy, right mindset with regard to money.' To have a right mindset is to use the 'Bible as a reference for the wealth of wisdom it holds about money and success.'
Wealth is part of God’s blessings and must never be self-serving; it must be used to help or 'bless' other people. Citing 1 Timothy 5:8, both underscore wealth as a means to 'serve and enrich others,' 'to bless the poor,' and 'to prosper others.' To be mindful of such purpose is to avoid materialism.
Having a positive attitude is what attracts favorable opportunities to be successful. Sanchez thus claims that 'when you send out a wish, you move the universe to action.' Tan echoes this point by calling on his readers to renew their 'thought-life' by adopting a 'money mindset.'
The battleground, in other words, is not with the confession per se but with what goes on in a person’s mind. While the prosperity ethic is on the surface an aspiration to be wealthy because it is God’s will, it is at its core a longing for redemption not from sin but from the poverty of the mind.
Poor people, unlike the rich, value entertainment more than education. When they are invited to a financial seminar, the poor always complain for the expensive seminar fees. Rich people, on the other hand, always find a way to attend these events even for a cost. For Tan, the cost of learning valued by the rich is still less than the cost of ignorance shown by the poor.
For these authors, employment, paper investments, businesses, and activities that generate profit are God-sent 'money machines.' Sanchez, in particular, believes that profit is encouraged in the Scriptures. He cites the Parable of Talents (Matthew 25: 25-26). Biblical scholarship explains talents in terms of spiritual insight about the state of the world and what could be done to make it better. Thus the parable validates neither capitalism nor profit-making. But in his book, the Catholic lay preacher instructs his readers to 'monetize' their God-given gift to overcome financial difficulties.
So, is it new?
At the turn of the century, Tan and Sanchez have taken the prosperity gospel to the next level by targeting the aspirational middle class with a religious message that banks not only on faith but also financial management skills. The new prosperity ethic—catered specifically for the aspirational middle class—refracts, authorizes, and legitimates the neoliberal habitus that has accompanied the rise of the educated youth, the growth of a highly skilled labor force, and the liberalization of the Philippine economy.
The prosperity ethic is emblematic of neoliberal Christianity, which places Tan and Sanchez among the ranks of the new prophets of capital, who, while troubled with the harshness of poverty, nevertheless place the burden back on the individual to navigate their lives and economic fortunes. The prosperity ethic, therefore, is a novel technology that governs the contemporary individual, who is both religious and entrepreneurial.
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