

THE RESURGENCE OF THE AFRICAN TRADITIONAL SHRINES IN A NEO-PENTECOSTAL/CHARISMATIC RELIGIOUS MILIEU IN GHANA

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ABSTRACT

The African shrines have been sources of life and supports for the Africans before the emergence of Christianity. When Christianity emerged, it sought to provide alternative source of life and support as against the African shrines, leading to many forms of encounters between these traditions. In the encounter Christianity especially attempted to erase some of the core religious practices such as the veneration of the traditional shrines. Sacred groves were destroyed, community or family shrines were burnt and shrine custodians were converted into Christianity. Notwithstanding, many of the shrines remained but mostly in rural areas where the African traditions have remained strong. The church dominated the urban areas offering the life and support needs of the people. In the late 1970s the neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic churches emerged in the urban areas in Ghana to offer a form of support which the then church lacked. They came with a message on the prosperity gospel, which includes financial breakthrough, healing, deliverance from any form of oppression etc. Within this milieu of burgeoning of this typology of churches, there emerged the African traditional shrines with vitality and a message of financial prosperity, healing all diseases and vigorously advertising as in a scramble with the Neo-Pentecostals/Charismatics. What led to the resurgence of the African sacred shrines and how do they impact on the “clients” even in a Neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic milieu? The data will mainly be primary and secondary and will be used in a descriptive analysis. At the end the paper will reveal that the emergence of the Neo-Pentecostals/Charismatics and their activities led to the resurgence of these shrines with a more attractive message to the clients.

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between Christianity and African traditional religious worldview has been in discussion especially the engagement of the two traditions for decades². Christianity thrived more when it rallied on the African traditional and cultural ethos. From the Portuguese Catholic era in the 15th Century through to the Protestant era of the 18th and 19th Centuries realized the engagement of these traditions in their functional and dysfunctional forms.³ There has been the attempts of the Christian traditions to reduce the African religious tradition insignificant to the very Africans they were evangelizing. However the result was that the African culture redefined Christianity by its own milieu. In effect the adoption of aspects of the former led to the easier spread of the Christian faith among the Africans.⁴ However the African religious tradition remained resilient. There were people who held unto the traditional beliefs and practices and others that adopted the Christian faith weaved the traditional beliefs into their new found faith. However some

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² See K. Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (New York:Orbis Books, 1995), Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992), pp.157-190 and J. Osei Bonsu, *The Inculturation of Christianity in Africa* (Germany: Peter Lang, 2005), pp.77-117.

³ J. D.K. Ekem, *Priesthood in Context: A Study Of Priesthood in Some Christian and Primal Communities of Ghana and Its Relevance for Mother-Tongue Biblical interpretation* (Accra:SonLife Press, 2009), pp. 58-100.

⁴ K. Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, 69.

core practices of the African such as patronizing shrines in dire moments was not given up easily. The shrine and the church scrambled for people at the same time, showing that the two traditions lived side by side either as friends or foes.

Scramble of Pentecostals and the shrines (1900-1950)

Southern Ghana from 1900 witnessed strong and widespread prophetic and spiritual movement activities.⁵ These prophetic and spiritual activities emerged to *wage a religious war* against the influence of a new form of African traditional shrines that appeared potent in addressing the need of the people at the time. These prophetic and spiritual activities came from early Pentecostal movement⁶. These churches hold their beliefs from the African traditional worldview and one of such beliefs is the existence and influence of witchcraft. During the period, there was a strong belief in the influence of witchcraft activities and many people were accused of using this malevolent spirit to cause havoc. The shrines that appeared at the time effectively dealt with the threats – despite the presence of the prophetic and spiritual activities of the first Pentecostal movement at the time- thus attracting a lot of people to patronize these shrines. These shrines were named *anti-witchcraft shrines*⁷ to show their area of specialization. This made them to have large followers. Smith observed that;

It is difficult to estimate the importance of these cults in the total religious life of the people: they are active in many parts of Ghana and from time to time a particular one has gained sudden fame in a specific area or, as in the case of *Tigare*, over the entire country. Their rise has coincided with the decline in influence of the national and traditional *abosom* shrines and with the rapid development of the country on western European lines. Pastors' reports from 1922 to the present day mention the falling-away of Presbyterian Church members to take the medicine of one or other of them. In the nineteen forties the number of Christians lapsing to *Tigare* caused all the Mission Churches deep concern. Nkwantanan in Kwahu, the headquarters of the chief *Tigare* priest, became a place of pilgrimage attracting devotees, so-called pagans, literates and illiterates, Christians and Moslems, in thousands; special Lorries were hired for the last part of the journey up the scarp from Nkawkaw railway station. I recall a week-end at Abetifi in January 1944 when I noted a stream of over two thousand 'pilgrims' in one afternoon.⁸

The large patronage of the anti-witchcraft shrine threatened the relevance of the church in the provision of the needs of the people. As such many of the classical Pentecostal churches that emerged from 1930s resorted to measures to curb the attraction of the anti-witchcraft shrines. Apart from rules to punish church members who will be apprehended patronizing the shrines, these strand of Pentecostal denominations also resorted to intensive prayer and deliverance from the influence of the witchcraft spirits. In addition some resorted to the burning down of the shrines and the conversion of the shrine custodians into Pentecostal Christianity.⁹ This made the shrines appeared to have declined especially in the urban areas where the church appeared to be stronger. However from the close of the 20th century, new other forms of shrines

⁵James Annorbah –Sarpei, “ The Rise of Prophetism- A Socio-Political Explanation” in *The Rise of Independent Churches in Ghana* (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1990), 27-9.

⁶ The Pentecostal movement here refers to those churches that are commonly known as African Independent churches. See Deji Ayegboyin & S. Ademola Ishola, *African Indigenous churches* (Lagos: Greater Heights Publications, 1999).

⁷ Popular among these shrines is *tigare shrine*.

⁸James Annorbah –Sarpei, “The Rise of Prophetism”, 27-9.

⁹ Kingsley Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity* (Accra: Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, 2015).

emerged again to compete with neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic strand of Christianity especially in the urban areas

FORMS OF THE NEW SHRINES

Here I classify these new shrines into four;

- i. The first group is African tradition in form. Traditionally shrines are more of community based. These new traditional shrines are not community based. In other words no communities or ethnic group could claim ownership of them. The shrine custodian owns it and he/she decide the form it should take. They are comprehensive. Thus they respond to every form of demands from people within or without the communities. These new shrines which are African traditional in orientation are identified by the name and structure of the shrines. The names of the shrines are used as the name of the custodian. Some bore local names beginning with title such as *Nana* (a king/ a traditional leader), *Nana Mmotiaba* meaning the leader/king child of a dwarf. Many bore traditional name mostly in *Akan* language. Structures at these African new shrines include simple and complex statues of human beings and wild animals, images of the gods such as a mermaid, tortoise, spider, vultures etc. There is the belief that the more gruesome the structure and articles at the shrine the more spiritually potent it is. It is very common to observe these type on the bill boards in the major towns and cities of Ghana especially in Accra and Kumasi.
- ii. The second category is of Islamic in form. Here there is no much display of items or images but the names given to the shrine implies Islamic orientation. Some bore the name Misbaha or Tesbih and the images of two angels behind the picture of the custodian of the shrine, there is also Insha Allah Spiritual and Success Home etc.
- iii. The third category is more of religious pluralistic in nature. Such categories portray images of more than one religious tradition. Some had images a Buddha or Krishna (with multiple hands), the aum sign at the right and the cross at the left hand side the name Togbui Amuzu which is typical of Traditional Ewe shrine in South Western part of Ghana. In effect, this category is a collection of plural religious traditions in the formation of the shrine. In Ghana, India is perceived as a land of great spiritual power. Hence the combination of these three religious traditions implies the shrine has a high concentrated power source.
- iv. The fourth category is mainly mystical. They are advertised on posters in the main towns. They neither bear any of the semblances of any religious traditions in Ghana. The messages they carry include Do you want spiritual protection? See the spiritual man if you want to boost your business etc.

These new shrines are more for commercial purposes and unlike the old traditional shrines, they are more common in the urban areas amidst a fast growing neo-Pentecostal churches. They appear to compete in many ways with neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches.

Neo-Pentecostals

‘Pentecostalism’ is derived from the adverb of Pentecost, a word derived from the Greek word *Penthosoth* meaning the fiftieth day after the Jewish Passover feast (Lev. 23:15ff).¹⁰ Pentecostalism is understood as stream of Christianity that emphasizes personal salvation in Jesus Christ as a transformative experience brought about by the Holy Spirit with full expressions of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.¹¹ The text

¹⁰ Elizabeth Onyi Ezenweke, “Pentecostalism and the Culture of Fear in Contemporary African Communities: A paradigm Shift” in *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, vol. 3, no. 5 (2013), p. 100.

¹¹ J. K. Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatic: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2005), p. 12.

most appropriate used in defining Pentecostalism is in Acts 2:38. Here Peter explained the processes incorporation into Christ as requiring repentance from sin, baptism culminating in a forgiven life. Following this, Peter assured the audience that they will receive the Holy Spirit. The coterminous designation *charismatic* derives from 1Corinthians which Paul referred to the phrase *charismatic pneumatika* in reference to ‘Gifts of the Spirit’ such as found in 1Corinthians 12-14. These terms are often used interchangeably. However the main idea that differentiates the two is that Pentecostals often place emphasis on praying in tongues though they believe in other gifts while Charismatics emphasis on all the gifts as seen in 1Corinthians.

Pentecostalism as a strand of Christianity is a global growing form of Christianity that has differing forms depending on the context of its evolution. In African or Ghana it developed its own characteristics and identity without losing its connection with foreign constructions. With a pneumatic identity of the cultural setting, the movement sparks the religious scenes as the fastest growing form of Christianity in Ghana. There are many factors that lead to the proliferation of these churches including the economic crisis from the 1980s, influence of televangelists mainly from USA etc.¹²

They are more identified with phenomena such as youthful exuberance, charismatic dynamism, supernatural power, possibilities and prosperities.¹³ This category of Christianity is varied, making it difficult for scholars in sorting them especially either as pure Pentecostal or charismatic churches. There have been many attempts to classify such churches. Omenyo for instant classified them as Independent churches, classical Pentecostal churches, Neo-Pentecostal or Charismatic non-denominational fellowship, Charismatic Renewal Groups and Independent Pentecostal/Charismatic/neo-Pentecostal Churches or ministries.¹⁴ However within these categories there appeared to be another form which is referred to as neo-prophetic movement.¹⁵ It is these neo-Pentecostal or Charismatic or prophetic churches that appear in the scramble with the new shrines.

Advertising the shrine in Neo-Pentecostal style

The purpose of advertisement is not only to showcase one’s wares but also to package the products in other to attract the client. The neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic advertisements attempts to capture the attention of the populace with catchy phrases such as “Open Heavens”, “Seven Nights of wonders”, “Healing services” etc. This mode of advertisement draws many people to such programmes. Ukah identified advertisement as one of the main features of the contemporary neo-Pentecostals. Religious advertising, which constitute a form of religious communication, has augmented since the evolution of these strands of Christianity. They use different methods of advertisements and are used simultaneously. The popular ones include posters and handbills, billboards, branded vest, caps, pens etc. Some of these mega neo-Pentecostal churches own television and radio broadcasting stations. Others place advertisements on these electronic media as well as print media.¹⁶ So far, there is no record of any of the shrine custodians owning any of these media houses. However they buy air time to do their programmes and at times programmes are held where these religious traditions are advertised.

¹²Asonzeh Ukah, “African Christianities: features, Promises and Problems” (Germany:Gutenberb Universitat,2007), p.11.

¹³J. K. Asamoah-Gyadu, *Taking Territories & Raising Champions: Contemporary Pentecostalism and the Changing Face of Christianity in Africa 1980-2010* (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 2010), p. 13.

¹⁴C.N. Omenyo, & A Atiemo, “Claiming Religious Space: The Case of Neo-Propheticism in Ghana”. *Ghana Bulletin of Theology*, Vol. 1 No. 1, July 2006, p. 58.

¹⁵Omenyo & Atiemo, “Claiming Religious Space”, 58-9.

¹⁶Asonzeh Ukah, *African Christianities: features, Promises and Problems* (Germany: Gutenberb Universitat, 2007), p. 11.

Despite the inroads the neo-Pentecostals/Charismatics are making through this medium of advertisement, the African traditional religious practitioners have been able to strive through with similar captions used in their advertisements for the shrines. They have adopted the neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic style of adverts to inform the public of their abilities. They do this through the exhibition of their shrines and the writings on the posters, bill boards and electronic adverts. Typical example of such exhibitions includes a traditional priest holding a water mermaid, the exhibition of gruesome images or several snakes implying the exoteric power within. In West Africa, traditional religious functionaries especially priests are known to carry out their sacred rites often in secrecy and in seclusion, sometimes in areas such as thatched house, groves or at remote places. However these new shrines openly advertised just as the churches. Sometimes the posters or banners of these shrines compete with those of the neo-Pentecostals.

One of such shrine custodians Kwaku Bonsam has adopted modern methods to promote the traditional religion. Because of this he is described as one whose ‘...persona and cosmopolitan credential make the case that the old spiritual practices are compatible with modern African.’¹⁷ He has taken the African traditional sacred practice beyond the borders of the African continent for the world to recognize that the African Traditional Religion has come of age and it is not only the westerner who could introduce the Christian religion to the Africans but the African can also introduce his religion to the westerner.¹⁸ In New York for example Kwaku is consulted on Sunday as to counteract the Sunday Christian church service. According to Kito Aikins ‘nana help people spiritually, in ways that pastors cannot.’¹⁹ The new shrines and the neo-Pentecostal also contest to prove the most powerful.

Contesting sacred powers

The new shrine custodians in many events are seen in fracas or in conflictual situations with some leaders of the neo-Pentecostals. The conflicts sometimes come in forms of contest in which each want to prove to be more potent than the other. Perhaps the single most challenging contest of the sacred was the event where Kwaku Bonsam asserted that pastors come to him for powers to grow their churches. In a televised programme in USA he publicly declared that he is a source of power to many Churches in Ghana.²⁰ If this is true then the stage for the contest is set: neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic versus African tradition. The declaration by Kwaku Bonsam of aiding over thousand five hundred pastors in Ghana was based on an event in a breach of contract by a Pentecostal/Charismatic pastor, where Kwaku Bonsam went to the pastors’ church to make a public show of the pastor.²¹

In the midst of the scramble an Accra based neo-Pentecostal Pastor declared publicly that he was responsible for the paralysis and neurological problem of a child because the mother threatened to expose his adulterous act with her. The Pastor conceded that he had been wicked on the innocent child but he did that under the anointing and challenged any man of God to challenge him to prove him wrong. This contest was to ‘any man of God’ thus pastors within Christianity. However Kwaku Bonsam took up the challenge with the intention to expose the pastor as not being a true ‘man of God’. According to Kwaku Bonsam, he had wanted to keep a low profile but the so called men of God are capitalizing on the weakness and ignorance of the Africans hence it was high time he exposes them to the public. Traditional religion has always been tolerant to Christianity; however, since the last decade it has not only been scrambling for

¹⁷Ebo Quansah, “Kwakubonsam”, *The Chronicle*. 7 March, 2014, thechronicle.com.gh/kwaku-bonsam-a-new-pop-star-in-town on (accessed 3.12.2018).

¹⁸Sahara TV, “Nana Kwaku Bonsam discusses African Traditional Religion and his role as a traditional priest” [:www.youtube.com/watch?USogrjgiAtl](http://www.youtube.com/watch?USogrjgiAtl) . (accessed 20.12.2018).

¹⁹Sahara TV, “Nana Kwaku Bonsam discusses African Traditional Religion and his role as a traditional priest”.

²⁰Sahara TV, “Nana Kwaku Bonsam discusses African Traditional Religion and his role as a traditional priest”.

²¹Salman Hameed, “Mormon Skepticism and a Ghanaian Devil Priest in Bronx” www.ghanaweb.com, (accessed 6.7.2018).

recognition but also to prove their importance in society. This, Kwaku Bonsam responded that he would cure the innocent boy and reverse the child's paralysis to the sender –Bishop Daniel Obinim, the Charismatic pastor- if he would be bold enough to face him in a spiritual contest.²² The call for the contest to prove the most powerful, an Elijah versus the prophets of Baal. Unfortunately the Bishop did not tend up for the contest and this was interpreted as a sign of defeat or surrender on the part of the Bishop. This was portrayed as a win of the Traditional priest. A counterpart of Bishop Obinim, Rev. Ebenezer Adarkwa-Yiadom²³ criticized Kwaku Bonsam and described him and his powers as devilish. Once again Kwaku Bonsam called him for a contest to prove who is more powerful. Again this bishop failed to show up. Following this, residence in Kumasi especially who phoned in radio programme accused Bishop Ebenezer Adarkwa-Yiadom of fear. In the Traditional African Religion the call and contest of power is popular but not with Christianity. As the Bishop sensed that his image is being tarnished in defeat he threatened with curses.²⁴

In his boldness of confronting neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic pastors, he carried the contest further to a popular Charismatic leader, internationally recognized, T.B. Joshua, the founder of Synagogue Church of All Nations. During the era of President Professor John Evans Atta Mills, T.B. Joshua became known of his close association with the then president for his prophecies. Known as a powerful man of God, Kwaku challenged him to predict the outcome of the historic Supreme Court hearing²⁵ or give a clue as to who is winning the case, if indeed he possesses supernatural powers of God. Though Kwaku Bonsam threw this challenge to T.B. Joshua, there was no response from the man of God, as he is popularly known.

The aggressiveness of the traditional priest was a result of neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic churches attitude towards him and his other shrine custodians. He did not intend to be rough towards the neo-Pentecostals/Charismatics to claim a space for himself and the place for the Traditional religion, but it was due to the bad attitude of some neo-Pentecostals/Charismatics towards him and the African traditional culture. In his own words he stated that

I want to tell that pastor Rev. Ebenezer Adarkwa-Yiadom in plain language that I Nana Kwaku Bonsam has not challenged any man of God. I am only against those false pastors who have come to me for powers and yet are not keeping their mouth shut but making provocative statements against me. I am also against those who have gone for powers from other shrines yet preach against us²⁶.

There have been other similar conflictual situations between a neo-Pentecostal and priest of the new shrines. These conflicts are results of accusations and counter accusations from either end. In most of the cases Kwaku Bonsam with 'Kofioo Kofi' shrine powers has always been a party. This is a result of his popularity in challenging many of the neo-Pentecostal leaders. There were occasions that he was threatened to be beating²⁷. Another popular neo-Pentecostal Bishop Owusu Bempah threatened to behead Kwaku Bonsam.

²² Vibe Ghana, "Bishop Obinim Begg KwakuBonsam", <http://vibeghana.com/2011/08/28/bishop-obinim-begs-kwaku-bonsam/>. (accessed 18.10.2018).

²³ Leader and founder of Ebenezer Miracle Worship Centre at AhenemaKokoben in Kumasi.

²⁴ Fred J.A. Ibrahim Jnr., "Pastor Mad at Kwaku Bonsam" www.kwakubonsam.com/news.aspx. (accessed 12.9.2018)

²⁵ After the outcome of the 2008 elections in Ghana, the New Patriotic Party contested the elections results at the law court. Many Ghanaians were anxious of the outcome of the court, and it was within this high level of anxiety that Kwaku Bonsam threw the challenge to T.B. Joshua.

²⁶ Fred J.A. Ibrahim Jnr., "Pastor Mad at KwakuBonsam" Daily Guide on www.kwakubonsam.com/news.aspx (accessed, 5.11.2018)

²⁷ Nicholas Osei popularly known as 'kumchacha' the founder of Heaven's Gate Ministry International told Kwaku Bonsam that he will beat the devil out of him in a hot argument that ensued at AdomFm studio in 2015.

The Traditional priest also retaliated with innuendos in describing the neo-Pentecostal as false pastors who rely on the ‘Juju’ powers in their ministries then turn to condemn the very thing they depend upon.

Another of such traditional priest that became a torn in the flesh of a neo-Pentecostal was Okomfo Appiah. The main cause of the conflict here was a claim by the traditional priest as being the source of power for the neo-Pentecostal Bishop Obinim after the latter claim he could turn into some animals to fulfill people’s prayer requests. The Traditional priest whose shrine name is Okomfo Appiah accused the bishop that he gave him black magic to use for his church ministry and as his spiritual father, the bishop should be wary of his mannerism and utterances towards the traditional priest of these new shrines.²⁸ Currently some of the neo-Pentecostals become harsh towards the traditional religion especially the new shrines that compete with them. They condemn and make derogatory remarks. In the feuds, the two religious leaders agreed to a context to prove the most powerful. In the context both were to lie in a coffin provided by each to see which will survive after awhile. The traditional priest did not show up and in an interview stated that he was prevented by the Ghana police. Contesting for the most powerful in spiritual matters though are common among traditionalists but not between two different religious tradition.

The New Shrines and the Message of prosperity

Many of these strands of Christianity are identified with the concept of prosperity gospel. These new messages promise individuals comprehensive solution to all their worries on condition that they become born again and give generously to religious leaders especially in exchange for material and spiritual blessings in the form of healing, wealth, abundant life, success and earthly promotion. Several other names are given to this new messages such as prosperity Christianity, Health and Wealth Gospel, Name-it-Claim it etc.²⁹ there have been many definitions on this topic. In one of such, the author defines it as a teaching that God rewards faithful Christianity with material abundance, well-being and perfect health. It is popular for those who preach such message to mention their personal material possession as a sign or reward for faithful Christianity, with some claiming that because of their prosperity they have never been sick. Several principles are cited as undergirding prosperity including positive confessions and faithful fulfillment of tithing obligations.³⁰ Attraction of blessing is not strange to the traditional African worldview. For the traditional African, religion is life and one who shows loyalty to the divine is blessed with life. The life here includes all spiritual and material blessings. African neo-Pentecostals have a similar worldview with the African traditionalist. They use captions that have undertones of prosperity. Some of the captions by some neo-Pentecostals in the adverts include: *taking your possessions, winning ways, experiencing Open Heaven for Divine Blessings, Stepping into Greatness, The Force of Divine Progress, Be a Winner in Jesus Christ, Come and Possess Your Promised Land, From Captivity to Restoration, The Best is Yet to Come, Highway to Success, Dawning of a New day, Taking new territories, I will restore unto you, Breaking Your Barriers, Breaking the Yoke, Abundance in my portion, Going up to higher places.*³¹

These captions send messages of prosperity to the client and these make people develop high expectations of success, mainly material success. Also in their homilies or other media of communications, these strand of Christians boldly espouse these ideas. In one instance Ashimolowo made it clear the importance of making money as a Christian. He stated that:

²⁸GhanaWeb. <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/KMA-sues-organizer-of-Obinim-Okomfo-Appiah-spiritual-battle-431162>. (Accessed on 22.9.2018).

²⁹Asonzeh Ukah, *African Christianities*, p. 12.

³⁰Asamoah-Gyadu, J.K. *Sighs and Signs of the Spirit: Ghanaian Perspectives on Pentecostalism and Renewal in Africa* (Akropong-Akuapim, Ghana: Regnum Africa, 2015), p.163-176.

³¹Paul Gifford, *Ghana’s New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalising African Economy* (London: C. Hurst & Co. Ltd., 2004) , p. 45.

Ignoring money is foolishness. You must learn to open your brains to creative solutions. Wealth as a target in itself is deceptive. You should rather pursue it in order to have enough to serve God, touch mankind, bless your community, and enjoy the life God has given but in the end become a conduit through which God's great wealth can reach the world.³²

Unlike the neo-Pentecostals, the new shrines expressed a deeper form of assurance of prosperity to their clients. In the advertisement in the media, these new shrine custodians openly show their exhibits physically unlike in the neo-Pentecostal where the individual is asked to believe or show a level of faith or followed a spiritual principle before he/she will realize the hope of prosperity. They magically conjure the money to the view of the audience. Here one is assured of having the money not necessarily with a faith as a prerequisite. The show of conjuring money from these new shrines is common on the electronic media in Ghana. In their postal advertisements, again, it is common to see the display of money sometimes in foreign currencies- diseases that can be cured etc. On one of such posts the researcher identified indicates about twenty five diseases most of which are common. This implies that many of life effects are believed to have spiritual undertones. These are vivid ways of attracting people to these shrines. These shrines are becoming more common which could imply that there is more patronage though covertly than before since for the African living a good or successful life means living in material abundance and good health.

CONCLUSION

The gospel call for a mission to all does not turn a blind eye to the existence of other religious cultures that are equally valued. In many communities that the gospel reached, there has been resistance forcing the gospel to adopt and adapt elements within the culture. There have been other instances where the gospel met other culture and both lived side by side with each adopting elements of the other. The emergence of Ghana's new Christianity saw a situation in which in the midst of burgeoning strands of this form of Christianity, traditional religious practices also resurfaced to live side by side of the church. Unfortunately, in situations where the gospel appears not to satisfy the existential need of the African, the African resort back to the Traditional sacred practices for these needs. In the discussion above, the anti-witchcraft shrines that emerged was due to the prevalence of the belief in the influence and effect of witchcraft on the people which the church at the time was seen as ineffective in dealing with the belief. The current new shrines that emerged during the era of the burgeoning neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic movement was due to activities of these churches such as the attacks on the new shrines, modes of advertisement and the nature of the prosperity messages. These fuelled the growth and popularity of these shrines especially in the urban areas. It is recommended that if many of these new shrines form a kind of a body to regulate their activities and those other neo-Pentecostal become part of the appropriate ecclesial bodies it will help to regulate the activities of both traditions.

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