

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY: APPLIED BUSINESS AND EDUCATION RESEARCH

2021, Vol. 2, No. 3, 202 – 212

<http://dx.doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.02.03.04>

Research Article

Decoupling African Traditional Religion and Culture from the Family Life of Africans: Calculated Steps in Disguise

Ebenezer Boakye*

Departement of Arts Education, University of Cape Coast, Ghana-West African

Article history:

Submission March 2021

Revised March 2021

Accepted March 2021

*Corresponding author:

E-mail:

ebenezerboakye991@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Even though African Traditional Religion and Cultural family life seem to have been detached from the indigenous Africans, with many reasons accounting for such a detach, the attempts made by the new wave of Christianity is paramount, under the cloak of salvation and better life. The paper focuses on the steps taken by Pentecostal-Charismatics in Africa to decouple African Traditional Religion and Culture from the family life of Africans in a disguised manner. The paper begins with the retrospection of African Traditional Religion as the religion with belief of the forefathers concerning the existence of the Supreme Being, divinities, Spirit beings, Ancestors, and mysterious powers, good and evil and the afterlife. It then walks readers through the encounter between Christianity and ATR and come out that Christianity from its earliest history has maintained a negative attitude toward ATR. The paper again explores that the traditional understanding of the African family system is portrayed in the common believe system and the functions of the family components. Again, the paper further unravels decoupling measures such as reaching the masses for audience, demonization of African the world of the spirit, demonization of African elders, pastors assuming the traditional position of elders of African families are the factors that are being taken to ensure the taking away of African traditional religious and family life from Africans. The paper again discusses the adverse effects of these decoupling factors on Africans. The paper concludes that Traditional African family patterns are slowly but progressively being altered as a result of the process of the decoupling strategies.

Keywords: Family, African Traditional Religion (ATR), Pentecostal-Charismatics

Introduction

Since its advent on the soil of the African continent, one of the core mandates of Christianity has been to annihilate the African Traditional Religion and culture and make Christianity the solo religion in Africa. As a result, Christianity has waged wars of conquest since the

traditional Religion and culture and make Christianity the solo religion in Africa. As a result, Christianity has waged wars of conquest since the

How to cite:

Boakye, E. (2021). Decoupling African Traditional Religion and Culture from The Family Life of Africans: Calculated Steps in Disguise. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research*. 2(3), 202 – 212. doi: 10.11594/ijmaber.02.03.04

colonial era through their activities, with various religions, especially African Indigenous Religion. Amanor (2009) asserts that Christianity seeks to war with any other religion that seems to contest for audience and adherence in the world and the African content to be precise. According to Hasting (2007: 60) as quoted in Muyingi (2014), the pursuits of initial Christian preachers in DR. Congo were in two folds; iconoclastic and ethnocentric in its behaviour to the Congolese cultural and Traditional religions. Consequently, the impact of the Western missionaries' behaviour concerning the Congolese Traditional Religions, which played and continue to play a vital role to the integration of Christianity, has succeeded in side-lining the aboriginal cultural and religious systems (Muyingi, 2014). In their quest to fully grasp the knacks and complexities of African Traditional Religion and were not forthcoming in the early eighteenth and nineteenth centuries through their exploratory and colonial activities, Christian scholars sought to blacken the African Indigenous Religion by branding it with various names like, Barbaric, Savage, just to mention few.

From then on, the topic of Christianity and African Indigenous Religion's continuous tensions never seem to be quenched and no amount of inter and intra religious dialogues have been able to reach a consensus. To begin with, Western scholars such as E. B. Tylor, Emile Durkheim, etc., who began the decoupling process in their pursuit to relegate ATR from Africans, in their strategies described African Traditional Religion all sort of derogatory terms as well as meaningless. They also gave negative attributes to the gods of African Traditional Religious. Yet, the likes of Mbiti, Idowu, Awolawu met them with equal meter, explaining the beauty and appreciation of what African Traditional Religion and Culture are all about. Even though, through the changing scenes of religious revolutions and dynamics, Christianity whether consciously or unconsciously seem to have changed its tactics towards this goal of doing away with African Traditional Religion and culture from Africans, the underlying motive cannot be undermined. However, it is worth noting that this cohesion has served both challenges and benefits (Muyingi, 2014).

Even though, Amanor (2009), quoting Ali (2000), state that the conflict has not been African Christians who do not have problem with Christianity mingling with the Traditional religion, because they find some things in Christianity that make them believe that Jesus Christ is the one who fulfills the utmost religious and spiritual ambitions of their ancient believes; rather, the conflict involves Africans who are against what, in their view, constitutes an attempt by Christianity to supplant the African traditional faith. As a result, the modern era of technology and the changing scenes of times has rendered Christianity a new wave of tactics to deal with African Traditional Religion by many steps which I see them as conscious efforts to utterly collapse African Traditional Religion from the family life of Africans.

This work seeks to highlights Christianity's news ways to swipe away or decouple African Indigenous Religion and Culture from the family life of Africans in the face of modern technology and how those decoupling steps affects Africans.

African Traditional Religion in Retrospection

Attempts to describe the phenomenon Religion have existed over the years. These efforts have come from diverse backgrounds; from philosophy, sociology and anthropology to philosophy and theology (Momen 1999:52-73) and, currently essential are biological concepts (Hammer 2005: 10). These efforts to describe the nature of religion cannot only be organized in respect to experiences but can again be done in respect to meaningful ideologies (Crosby 1981:5). The ideas and meanings, although different, were set in stereotypical types. There have also been calls to abandon the often-prevalent Western word 'religion' entirely because of the uncertainty created by the multitude of meanings (Asad, 2003:71). For that cause, Western historians have theorized it from its cultural and historical settings in their effort to explain the place of African Traditional Religion in the world (Maluleke, 2001:59).

Magesa (2002: 14) notes that Western scholars established African religions in Western philosophy. The Western scholars characterized African faith in terms of animism, magic

or fetish. Western scholars' aim in this context was to 'distancing it from its origins and do away with it' (Westerlund, 1993: 60). He also cites the multiplicity of ceremonious events of natural objects as gods (Ibid). The difficulty in explaining African Traditional Religion tends to be that it is expressed by experience and not preaching (Denis, 2006:312). Denis further stipulates that ATR followers have more to do with African Traditional Religion's behaviour than with the explanation and clarification theory of African Traditional Religions. African Traditional Religion plays a small role in the lives of its followers in dogmas and doctrine (Denis, 2006, 314). Owing to its fundamental or holistic existence, the idea of African Traditional Religion gets even more dynamic. There is no division of the spiritual (sacred) from the secular according to Mbiti (1990: 1). African Traditional Religion's influence covers all aspects of life, from the moment the individual is born to the time he or she dies. Existence is at its heart, and it's a way of life. It is life and how it can be preserved and improved. This is why "religion is indeed life for the African and life is religion" (Mbiti, 1997: 1-2).

African Traditional Religion is the aboriginal faith of the Africans which was orally given from one generation to another until recent efforts at documentation (Paul, 2004: 2). In other words, Traditional African Faith is a characteristic of the African legacy (creeds, customs, rituals and festivals, philosophy, beliefs and moral ideals, church officials or leaders) (Mbiti, 1997: 11-13). The African traditional religion may thus be identified by the ancestors of the present generations as the ancestral religion of Africans (Muyingi, 2014). It is defined as a religion which grew out of the sustained faith of the ancestors of this generation of Africans and is practiced by the present generation of Africans over the ages (Awolalu, 1991:111). It's faith without founding because "the founders can't find it regardless of how far we go back to history" (Awolalu,1991:111). The belief in the Supremes, Goddesses, Spirit spirits, ancestors, and mystical forces, good and ill, and the after-life was the belief of forefathers. These are the main aspects of the African Indigenous faith which should be accepted and put in the universe as a mother religion (Thorpe, 1996: 9).

Encounter Between African Traditional Religion and Christianity

According to Muyingi (2014), Christianity was met with negative contentions Traditional Religions in the since the beginning of their evangelistic endeavours in DR Congo and Africa as a whole in the fifteenth century through to this twenty first century. Truth can be told that some people, particularly Christian missionaries, are so violent about ATR that they also see ATR as the animist religions of primitive men in the twenty first century (Pollitt, 1996:25). The mindset of Christians towards ATR is mainly deleterious in Africa. ATR and other indigenous communities therefore have no place in international inter-religious dialogue or political dialogue (Muyingi, 2014).

As Blyden (1994:14) articulated it, Christian ministers have a negative and less than tolerant conduct against African society and faith. He also states that the DRC is exclusive and uncompromising in Christian teachings. The explanation was that, in the past, missionaries, voyageurs, anthropologists and historians in the DRC did not recognize anything recognized as Congo (Doherty, 2008:1). Again, the traditional Congolese faith and culture were ignored, condemning what they felt never happened. Thus, without history, faith is not possible (Denis 2006:312). Africans were not entirely human to the missionaries in their early days; Polygamy, initiation rituals, ancestral belief and other indigenous traditions were banned (Doherty, 2008, 2005: 19). The ATR was commonly practiced, although secretly, throughout the time of colonization. The explanation was that by the 19th century, missionaries were vigorously opposed to traditional African rituals in the DRC that they considered primitive and superstition-driven, whether Congregational, Methodist, Anglican and Lutheran or, Catholic, (Nez 2006: 310-323).

This indicates that Christianity has been pessimistic towards African Traditional faith in the country from its early existence (Muyingi, 2014). It was historically held that there was no salvation outside the Christian church during the reign of Cyprian of Carthage (Gort 2008:748). He wrote that 'for his Father who has no church for his mum' he can't have God' (Ibid). That is why the traditional Congolese

religions are considered 'non-Christian.' They are known as 'heathen incredulity and bad superstition' and are viewed as a world beyond the church, which is known as the 'kingdom of darkness' (Gort 2008:748).

And if the following 1500 years or more were dominated by the above view of Christians thinking of other religious practices, there were a few who questioned their present thinking and proposed a more accommodating model of meeting other religions. Any of the few who preached lodging were Papa Gregory the Great (c. 540-554), Raymond Lull (c. 1235-1315), Bartholomew of the Houses (1474-1566), Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) and Robert de Nobili (1577-56), (Gort 2008:749). Sadly, even now these demonstrations unabated and 'un-ordered thoughts of dominance' still contribute to the notion that ATR is still oppressed in the DRC (Ibid).

Traditional Understanding of the Family

People are idiosyncratically identified from other human societies by their culture. Traditional African faith, like any religion, is a significant part of people's religious traditions, but there is also some local origin that gives it the distinctive fragrance (Kofi Asare Brako), the "family. In Africa, the family plays a vital role. It is considered a core unit of culture in Africa. Both social and cultural behaviours are related to or skewed by a definition of family (Mwizenge, 2018). "All people in traditional African life live in or as part of the family," articulates Mbiti (1975, p. 175). In the same vein, Kisembo affirms that "the family group was an integral part of the African societal life.

According to Shorter, kin, blood and/or marriage and similar classes are a minimally successful group of relatives. (2009, p83). Murdock (1949) further argues that family is a social community marked by shared residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. The presence of participants not related by blood or marriage is comparable here. Murdock further stressed that "the group includes two genders, one or more children, owned or adopted by adults living with each other" (pp 326). Murdock contributes to this point that the family is not universal nor is society independent. Parents and their own offspring will be the nuclear

family. Shorter (1998, p. 83) finds such a family to be distinct and to operate without any association. They will also be neolocal where they live.

The traditional understanding of can be seen in the common belief system and practices, the functions of the elders in the family and the general function of the family. Extended family comprises more people. Mbiti says that "for African people the family has a much wider circle of members than the word suggests in Europe or North America. In traditional society, the family includes children, parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters who may have their own children and other immediate relatives" (1969, p.106). The connections of the broader family will be based on maternal partnership (or biological relationships) and affinity (relationships between one marital partner's blood relationship with that of the other) (Mwizenge, 2018).

Believe in Supreme Being, Ancestors, and other Deities

According to Amponsah (2009), African families have a common believe in the Supreme being, ancestors and other divinities. In African societies, every family has ancestors, and other deities they believe to have alter their everyday lives. It is believed that the deities are sanctioned by the Supreme being to regulate their daily activities as well as giving them protections. In that regard, they believe that their ancestors live with them in their homes and in their communities. Furthermore, the believe goes a long way to affect the future fortunes of their lives. If a person offends the deities, special rituals are done to pacify them. This therefore place on family members the urge to live a morally upright life to the expectations of the society and the deities of the family. Because of the strong connections with the deities and their living with the families in the African settings, The African Temple or shrine, worship may be distinguished by the drumming, singing and dancing method, incantations, sacrifices, aspersions, medicinal rubbing, consecration (foodstuffs, amulets, priests, mediums, communions).

The Leadership Roles of Elders

The leadership position of elders in African family goes beyond the usual role of leading a community under the usual circumstances. The leadership and social duties further entail unique positions with respect to kinship concerns. Studies show that much of the essential positions of elderly people in the indigenous system of family life are mostly centralized in the traditional framework of leadership, the legal system, and the family. Sotho elderly people have leadership and partnership positions, particularly in Lesotho, where gerontocracy in families and parents is experienced, implemented, and accepted as a source of authority. Grandparents are the patriarchs in families (Mwizenge, 2018). Like other cultures, the patriarchal family systems are controlled by the eldest male member of a big family, who has the last say on family decisions, who may be a grandfather or an elderly uncle. Elderly persons, particularly males in this situation, are true sources of authority since in their respective families they have the domains of authority and influence. Their authority empowers them to determine whether or not they send a young family daughter to another family or receive a woman who is a member of another family on behalf of the younger men. Their common basis is that the elders also give the marrying family a blessing during the marriage ceremony. They are also interested in marriage contracts surrounding the agreements over what material resources the spouse family can pay for the "*bohali*" family of the bride. During weddings, they perform ceremonies to please the gods to recognize and acknowledge the marriage arrangement between their children (Mwizenge, 2018).

Socialisation and the Educational Roles of the Elders

Their marriage functions do not end after the wedding ceremony they preside over and the blessing they give, but rather extend these roles to ensure that the marriage is stable and successful. The settling of dispute between couples was considered a niche for elderly specialization, with all the wisdom, experience, and patience necessary to achieve peace between couples and particularly young and unfamiliar

partners. In this process, they extend their wealth of experience and knowledge to the younger members of the family through various mediums, mainly the use of folklores and folk tales, teaching young boys and girls the proper ways of behaving, the good virtuous persons they have to be in the future, the kind of credibility, integrity, value, honour, and responsibility they should develop. The recognition and appreciation of this noble role by the elderly compels many young families to keep a strong link with their aging parents for the purpose of culture transmission (Mwizenge, 2018).

The elderly's socialization responsibilities go beyond the extended families of young members. Matobo says that the elders expand their socialization role in the Sotho community and initiating practice in these schools of initiation where they teach people about sex, marriage, family problems and goodwill (Matobo et al. 2009). Their socialization functions go beyond conventional concerns, instead the elders are active in the dissemination of religious doctrines because they are key players in religious institutions. In certain cases, they teach mainstream religious principles and convictions to all members of the society.

Quality knowledge is also a very critical factor of socializing and instilling ideals into society for the younger generation. Normally the aged who have endured more years are believed to be experienced rather than comparatively younger in cultures with an oral history. The elders help to preserve the traditional structure of society and to provide essential but not physically recorded knowledge, which is a crucial feature of their socialization work in their communities and societies. Such material is, of course, not normatively published on paper or on a regular basis, but rather information and awareness about the identity of the people, which is archived by the elderly who are the repositories for such kinds of information and knowledge as well.

Believe in Protection and Spiritual Roles of the Elders

Mwizenge (2018) noted that the protective roles of the elders are the two key dimensions in his discussions on the protective and mystic role of elders. Firstly, defending younger family

members and the world against dishonest conduct, and secondly, protecting them against bad damage by supernatural and mysterious means. The latter existed in many African societies such as the Ashanti people of Ghana, where it is believed that the father owns a mystical protective shield, called "ntoro" over his descendants. Without elderly people's protecting positions in most Sotho communities, or without elderly people with such roles, various unethical and unwanted activities may be present. Some Sotho people agree that the elders protect the family since they are the "backbones" of the family and that they have a very strong family presence. When children are adults, it is the grandparents' duty to keep an eye on the behaviour of those children when they live or that of other close relatives (Mwizenge, 2018).

Once again, the task of the elders protection requires different methods to guarantee that no one in their families is injured. Elders are used as essential point of medication, curing and bruising agents. They are connected to the execution of such divine acts. At this point in hand, only good witchcraft is taken into consideration. In the Culture of Sotho, the elders safeguard their communities and defend them by 'good witchcraft' or white witchcraft, which are considered only defensive and protective rather than offensive and bad. This includes the elders' engrossing powerful, ancient magic (muti) to shield their families from adverse incidents such as lighting, curses, misfortune, plague and disease within their families. This may entail an old individual flying on a rescue mission from one location to another with a sweeping spawn. In the magical protective actions, such chemicals are incised and implanted in children's bodies. The elders are particularly identified with such witchcraft and sorcery in African cultures in general, as was adequately shown in the Italian pre-Christian culture, as Baroja (1994) had described.

Medicinal, Healing and Ritual Functions of the Elders

The elders are very well-known in the area of wellbeing. Elders also serve as physicians and nurses, because between family members

and families, they cure many diseases. In periods where children and other family members suffer pain and sickness, the elderly also have home remedies and syrups locally prepared. In the ministry, the seniors even used their medical expertise. During childbirth they deliver their professional jobs. Their position is not only limited to pregnant women during childbirth, but also provides pregnant women with health and awareness during pregnancy. Most reproductive-age Sotho women value and practice their culture, especially in relation to reproductive and childcare issues. They agree that disobedience to the older people's prescriptions and rules for birth may have unfortunate implications. In other words, Elderly women continue to be revered and respected in many Sotho cultures in their position on the topics of fertility, birth and parenthood.

There are other rituals, ceremonial performances and traditions related to wellbeing, which elders must follow. As noted by Mair (1969: 11), the administration of enhanced medicine, sacrifices and ritual dances and certain orders are exclusively ordered by the elderly in individual puberty ceremonies which entail the reclusion of the child. The Sotho families have a practice called pitiki when a baby is born, which makes it exclusively appropriate for elderly people to receive the new-born baby. Both of them are expected to be nude without either a suitcase or bra on their bodies. This is only permitted for female elders. The explanation why they are naked is because they obtain the new-borns that also come naked to them from their native location, the '*Ntsoanatsatsi*' clothing that may hurt the new-born. They all hold ceremonies in remembrance of the child, to protect and preserve the child. The elderly frequently teach these rituals and execute them. The authenticity of this ritual is apparent also in the present society and community of Sotho people in Lesotho and South Africa in particular and can be deduced from continued respect for the traditional school of introduction for girls.

Provision of Support to Family Members

As a form of social help the extended family plays yet another crucial role. Since "one is because others were," members of the extended family mentally and physically helped each

other, for example planting, child raising, helping elderly people and the sick. A person could rely on help in his extended family if appropriate. It is also a method for maintaining protection, as a number of family members typically lived in or near to the same compound. The family is less impacted in rural areas – families are working together, often physically close to one another, support one another and are relatively well off as having cattle and farms.

New Wave of Christian Movement

The fast-flowing stream of Christianity in today's culture is Pentecostalism. Indeed, in the 21st century, the revolution is reshaped faith (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2006). In Cox's (1996) argument, Pentecostalism can be described as a stream of Christianity which underlines in Christ's personal redemption as "the transformation of the Holy Spirit." Post-experience such pneumatic events as "language speech" are embraced, valued and encouraged, including prophesies, dreams, healing, miracles, signs, and wonders.

Charismatic refers in general to the historically younger Pentecostal independent and parachurch movements, many of which operate in non-Pentecostal denominations, as defined by Asamboah-Gyadu (2006). St. Paul's referrals to the charismatics pneumatics, 'Gifts of the Soul' in 1 Corinthians 12-14, was used to convey the charismatic charisma itself. St. Paul thus used the term "extraordinary divine graces" which, because of their knowledge of the Holy Spirit, the believers manifest.

Today in Africa we have not only large Pentecostal and Evangelical groups with western missionaries such as God's Assemblies from the United States, but also African-initiated ones, popularly called 'One Man Churches' in Ghana. Healing and deliverance ministries have thus become some of African Pentecostalism's most significant manifestations of Christianity. Many world views, in particular the belief in supernatural causality, which underlie the practice of healing and distribution resonate with African philosophical thoughts. Today in Africa, all big cities are found Pentecostal and evangelical churches.

Decoupling Tactics/Factors/Measures

Several factors account for the decoupling of African traditional religion from the family life of African. Such factors as globalization, technological advancement and rural-urban migration contribute immensely to the taking away of African traditional religious practices from the indigenous people. However, those above-mentioned factors can be said to be the natural order of life that the control can be very minimal. The emphasis of this paper is to highlight how the new wave of Christian movement (Pentecostal Charismatics) has consciously sought to annihilate from the very people whose religion they have long lived and shaped their lives with.

Reaching the Masses for Audience

Pentecostal-Charismatics have sought a way of reaching the African masses for audience. The first step of decoupling strategy by Christianity is to seek for audience and dominance through the media and technology. Muller (2018) reveals that the filmmakers Akan and Yoruba, who control the Ghanaian and Nigerian film industry, make up the pre-dominantly Pentecostal and Islamic networks of religious institutions. They facilitate the dissemination of religious teachings that encourage the hierarchy of sex and the erosion of equal opportunities for women. These organisations fund filmmakers. Film makers use fairly affordable European and Asian digital film cameras, and a basic textual film layout to present ordinary Africans everyday problems. These video films have been regarded as a common medium by many academics, including Karin Barber. But new media reception research show that their viewers are universal and that film makers produce video clips for specific religious and ethnic communities in their community and diaspora. It serves as a publicity for Yoruba's other miracle movies and for the Pentecostal-Charismatics which spreads the religious message that the Holy Geist alone assures God's blessings in the material world. It also serves as a publicity. This and other Yoruba miracle movies are God's, according to online critics. Miracle films are an insightful way of entering the spirit world and eliminating the presence of re-

ligious teachers in the social world, such as traditional priests and priests, pastors and imams (Müllen, 2014).

Aside the fact that the charismatic churches have sought to reach the masses through the movie industries in Africa, a whooping number of these churches have also entered into the media for audience. In Ghana, almost every charismatic church owns a television stations on which they perform their religious activities. Example of such television stations are; Power T.V, OB T.V, Prophet One T.V., Obofour T.V, Pent T.V etc. others too have resorted to the radio stations in the country on which they preach, pray, prophesy, make deliverance even perform miracles. They give directions to where they worship and always appeal to the audience to come and get freedom to their many problems. Many of the evangelical churches have a "media office," a church office dedicated to radio, television, audio and video and advertising services. The general negative outlook towards the African orthodox faith has been fuelled by public domination of the Charismatic-Pentecostal Churches, according to Witte (2005). Shrines and priests have fuelled widespread fear and mistrust and hatred toward shrine priests and followers as cruel, reverse or even demonic. This isn't recent, but the product of a long history of Christianity in Ghana which began about two centuries ago with the advent of Christian missionaries.

Demonizing the World of Spirits and Desacralizing the African Cosmos

Coulter (2014) claims that Pentecostal experience of redemption in Africans means delivering people free from sin and death and that the devil, along with British and American charismatic teachings, has gained influence in the light of traditional African faiths. Orthodox African views about the world of the Spirit or different gods were Christianised by their mapping of Christian ideas on the devil and demons. Birgit Meyer described it as "the translation of the devil," by which means the re-describing of the African realm of spirits in the Christian world of devils by African Pentecostals These advances in Africa have also been influenced by many inspirational scholars, particularly Derek

Prince, who has written a series of work on demons and emancipation that remain popular in Africa (Coulter, 2014). In addition, Catholic Charismatic Deliverance of the Evil Spirits Francis MacNutt, the Deliverance of Don Basham from the Evil and the Overcoming of Dark Angels by Charles Kraft have all been significant. The Ghanaian Pentecostal scholar Opoku Onyina (2019) named "witch-demonology" to mean the fusion of African and Western ideas, since Western conceptions of demon-pathic ideas revolved around Afro-writing as discussed by Augustine in his book "On the City of God". In this way, he followed in Psalms 96:4 of the Septuagint that "all gods of people are demons." By introducing Greek conceptions of demons into a Christian tale, Augustine both sacralised the world and enchanted it. No devils, only less so, called demons, fell from the only real God, and had to be distinguished from holy angels.

Similarly, African Pentecostalism compromises the African cosmos by claiming that the traditional gods are just no gods. It's definitely muted because of the emphasis on the ministry of deliverance, but it points to the need for a strong account of the Triune God and the Christian narrative of this God to facilitate a desacralization initiative. A sacrificed world in which only one God is present is not the same as a disenchanted universe, in which everything remained material constructs. (Coulter, 2014). Coulter further posit that there are three broad ideas of which two are of essence to this synthesis:

1. African Pentecostals should draw a sharp contrast between the world of conventional African theology and the Christian world, while recognizing the existence of the world of the spirits in the Christian discourse of the devil and demons. African Pentecostals just rename these ghosts as devils, talking about their power or possession needing to be delivered.
2. "Translating the devil" is a means to domesticate the African cosmos by offering rituals in which the ghosts and the devil are exorcised from people. Owing to the near relationship of demons and witches, people who have received transmission rituals are seen in many cases as exempt from witchcraft.

The principle is often about "generational maledictions" where people are to be rescued from their parents' or grandparents' sins.

Pastors Assuming the Leadership Role of Family Elders

Pastors are now the immediate family elders/parents to whom people resort to in times of challenges confronting the individual in the society. Pentecostal/Charismatics pastors have become the fathers of their church members with whom they discuss all their life problems and challenges, with the believe that they can help them solve them. These were the major roles of elders in the African family. Again, Pentecostal and charismatic pastors have assumed the social responsibility of elders such as performing the rites of naming ceremonies, funerals and even in marriages. Many church members emphatically states that their pastors are their parents, hence shunning the importance of their real parents in the affairs of such members.

Mbewe (2013) noted that the "man of God" has replaced the witch-doctor in the charismatic realms of Africa. He is he who oozes with mystical force to crack through these two unequivocal barriers that we, lesser mortals, cannot penetrate. Post-Church pastors have acted as supernatural protectors of lawmakers trying to consolidate power by seizing of office, not only by individuals but also according to Asamoah-Gyadu (2006). Many government officials have seen themselves as dishonest people who depend on shrine medication to retain their offices. The image of such Christian "prophets" has often suffered greatly by offering "Christian alternatives" to such shrine services. Thus when blessings, despite their prayers, do not pour, they are making their communities or their church beeline for support. There is also a crowding in these rings. The masses are not following someone to demonstrate how to follow the love of God. No! No! No! No! You want to pray for 'Heaven's Man.' This is also why 'men of God' have stranglehold in these circles in the minds of their devotees. In an early generation's evangelism 'man of God' were mainly preachers of God's Word, but in the modern setting they were primarily priests

who came into the centre of the sanctuaries to bless us. "For this reason it is taken for granted that the nonsense of spirits who become spiritual men and women and who wreak havoc in marriages! This is why the heretics of curses from generation have become so popular. In the centre of men.

Asamoah-Gyadu (2006) says that the items that satisfy their religious needs have been considered significant in theology. Meetings with the supernatural world as malevolent forces trying to kill humans are important aspects of African religiosity, and marine spirits ignore attempts to uphold civic morals and conduct ceremonies to obtain aid from charities. Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity has seen popularity in Africa, in continuity with the African religious paradigm, due to its openness to the divine forms and through its interfering, oral theological forms resonating in conventional African piety. On the opposite, Pentecostal/Charismatics may often be thought of as a cunning/subtle means of meeting those desires and fears of the African people, so as to eliminate what they deem to be a barrier to conquest.

In his third point, Coulter (2014), the demons become part of the world's causal matrix and thus contribute to sickness explications, physical disorder, actions etc. In the third point of the three syntheses, he says. That is why priests and church leaders try to uncover the spiritual roots of the issues or to get rid of the individual in different kinds of exorcisms, which they are able to do. It's a peculiar African species of the Christian concept of spirit discernment.

Demonization of African Elders in Families and Societies

The Pentecostal-Charismatics have sought to devastate films and crusades, deliverances and so on for African women. The evangelical churches appeared to lead Africans to believe that the work of the negative spirit of their mothers resulted in certain people's unproductive lives. It is a recognition that the moral and material component of the individual takes African Pentecostalism seriously in accordance with Christian tradition. Nothing new to Africans remains the concept of devils and the labour power of mischievous minds. But, amid

certain conflicts between the family members, the problem has been complicated by the conduct of certain pastoral ministers and men of God today.

The substantive causes of sickness, body infirmities and mortality are not disputed by African Pentecostals. They stress instead metaphysical factors and the interrelationship of the material with the spiritual. They are a more intensive Pentecostal variant than most types. In some types of Pentecostalism (not just African), what I find challenging is the degree of faith that some of the Pentecostals diagnose their disease. The very concept African Pentecostals seek to preserve, believing anything as nuanced as the human actions would be the product of a single source, is that all the facets of the human being and interaction between human beings and their world must be considered. Through praying and going to the doctor Christians fight the devil because they know the interrelationships of the material and the divine.

Effects of the Decoupling Measures on Africans

The effects of such attempts on the African family is enormous. First, these attempts can lead to the alienation of many African as time go by. Even as of today, many African have lost and continue to lose touch with their aboriginal religious ideas and practices. Respect to elders has become an option because the elders in the family are no more revered and are regarded as mere humans as any other.

The ideas of African religious practices may gradually be in extinction since these ideas are no longer being passed on from elders to the younger generations. The elders served as those who keep the histories of our families, telling the myth of and stories of our descents and ancestors, yet the attention of many Africans are gradually shifting to miracle seeking and quick ways of getting wealth and freedom from the attacks of malevolent spirits.

Poverty and laziness may continue to hover over the heads of African people. This is because many of these Pentecostal-Charismatics members are always seen attending prayer camps and other services for many reasons, leaving their businesses to collapse and even

the little monies they get, they give them out to pastors for the services they render to them.

Furthermore, the effect that comes out of these attempts is that it can generate enmity among relatives and even societal members as a whole. Many people who are being told by charismatic pastors that their unsuccessful life is a result of their militating power or malevolent spirits of their family members which has been used to bewitch them. It thus turns out that for them to be free and break through such misfortunes, they renounce their people of which most of the victims are family relatives, and hence enmity may erupt in the family. Gradually, it will lead to individualistic life among African people. Breaking the cohesion, strong bond, togetherness and solidarity that existed as the hallmark of African Family life.

Finally, a conglomerate the effect also has to do with the psychological, emotional, and the physical assault that victims of these attempts may go through. People who are accused of being witches and demons in the families are sometimes taken to the prayer camps, which pastors subject them to whips and some are bound in chains with the claims that they are taking away the evil powers that have possessed them. Some too are brutally beaten and are left at the mercy of harsh weather conditions (like the scorching sun, and heavy rains) to forcefully confess, for even what they did not or have not done. These actions have many psychological and emotional traumas that finally lands some of them in madness, sickness and even finally some die out of such treatments.

Conclusion

The paper sought to unravel the ways through which Christianity, by its activities decoupling African Traditional Religion and culture from the family life of Africans. It explained the Traditional Understanding of African Family and how the African family unitedly believed their common and differing ancestors, and the important roles of their elders as special people through which the supreme being seeks to pass on their believes and cultural practices to the younger generations. The paper further established the decoupling measures which are taken by the Pentecostal

Charismatics in their quest to do away with African Traditional Religion. Furthermore, it was established that a number of effects could emanate from such decoupling steps. It can be concluded that, even though the importance of Christianity cannot be ruled out in the affairs of African religiosity, caution must be taken in such attempt to annihilate African Traditional religion and cultural heritage from their family life. The efforts by the new wave of Christian movement should be to look at how to get the best of African Traditional believes and cultural practices and bringing back the detached people to their root in uniting African Family.

References

- Amanor, K. D. (2009). Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Ghana and the African culture: confrontation or compromise?. *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, 18(1), 123-140.
- Amponsah, S.E., (2009). Christianity and Traditional Religion in Kumasi: A comparative study. Art and Culture (Master's thesis).
- Asad, T. (2003). *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. Stanford: Stanford, University Press.
- Asamoah-Gyadu, K. (2014) African Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity: An Overview. <http://www.lausanneworldpulse.com/64%3Fpg>
- Awolalu, J.O., (1991). 'The encounter Between African Traditional Religion and other Religions in Nigeria' in J.K. Olupona (ed.). *African Traditional Religion in Contemporary Society*. Paragon House: St. Paul, MN. pp. 30-40.
- Baroja, C. J., (1964). *The World of the Witches*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Blyden, E. (1994). *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*. London.
- Coulter, D. M. (2014). The Demons of African Pentecostalism. [http://www.firstthings.com/blogs/firstthou ...](http://www.firstthings.com/blogs/firstthou...) (accessed December 24, 2014).
- Crosby, D.A., (1981). *Interpretive theory of religion*, Mouton Publishers, New York.
- Denis, P., (2006). The Rise of Traditional African Religion in Post-Apartheid South Africa: in *Missionalia*. 34(2/3). 310-323.
- De Witte, M. (2005). The spectacular and the spirits: charismatics and neo traditionalists on Ghanaian television. *Material religion*, 1(3), 314-334.
- Doherty, M., (2008). The Congo Balolo Mission and the Indigenous Christian Community: The Agency of Locals' in *Evangelists of Empire: Missionaries in Colonial History*, ed. Amanda Barry, Joanna Cruickshank, Andrew Brown-May and Patricia Grimshaw. University of Melbourne scholarship Research Centre: Melbourne.
- Gort, J.D., (2008). The Search for Interreligious Convivence, ongoing challenge and charge: *Verbum et Ecclesia* 29(3), 744-763.
- Hammer, D.H., (2005). *The God gene: How faith is hard-wired into our genes*, Anchor Books: New York
- Kisembo B. Magesa L and Shorter A. African Christian Marriage, (2nd ed.). Nairobi: Paulines Publications
- Magesa, L., (2002). *African religion: The moral traditions of abundant life*, Orbis Books: Maryknoll.
- Mair, L. (1969). *Witchcraft* (Vol. 41). McGraw-Hill.
- Maluleke, T.S., (2001). 'Identity and integrity in African theology: A critical analysis', *Religion and Theology* 8(1), 26-39.
- Matobo, T. A., Makatsa, M., & Obioha, E. E. (2009). Continuity in the traditional initiation practice of boys and girls in contemporary southern Africa society. *Studies of Tribes and Tribals*, 7(2), 105-113.
- Mbewe, C. (2013). Why is the Charismatic movement thriving in Africa? <http://www.conradmbewe.com/2013/07/why-is-charismatic-movement-thriving-in.html> , 02-06-2018
- Mbiti, J.S. (1997). Dreams as a point of Theological Dialogue Between Christianity and African Religion. *Missionalia* 25 (no. 1): 511-22.
- Momen, M., (1999). *Understanding religion: A thematic approach*, Oneworld Publications: Oxford.
- Müller, L. (2014). On the demonization and discrimination of Akan and Yoruba women in Ghanaian and Nigerian video movies. *Research in African Literatures*, 45(4), 104-120.
- Murdock, G.P., (1949), *Social structure*. The MacMillan Company, New York.
- Muyingi, M. A. (2014). The Place of African Traditional Religion in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since the Advent of Christianity. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(14), 539-539.
- Onyinah, O. (2019). *Pentecostal exorcism: Witchcraft and demonology in Ghana*. Brill.
- Paul G. (2004). Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalising African Economy. London: Hurst
- Pollitt, H. J. (1996). The Inter-faith movement: in the New age enters the Church. Spartan Press.
- Thorpe, S.A., (1996). *Primal religions worldwide: An introductory descriptive review*. University of South Africa: Pretoria.
- Westerlund, D. (1993). The Study of African religions in retrospect: From Westernization to Africanization: in Religious Plurality in Africa: Essays in Honour of John S. Mbiti, edited by Jacob K. Olupona & Sulayman S. Nyang, Berlin; New York: Mouton De Gruyter.