

DIVINATION OR DISCERNMENT: A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE
TO THE PROBLEM OF SPIRITUAL ADULTERY AMONG
AFRICAN CHRISTIANS.

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ABSTRACT

This research work examines the problem of spiritual adultery among African Christians, and aims at providing a solution to this problem. Most traditional Africans turn to their traditional religion practices for solution when they are faced with existential problems of life. One way of responding to this problem is by Christian divination.

The study comprises of five chapters. Chapter one presents the general introduction, Background to the study, the thesis statement, motivation for the work, the purpose and scope of the work, the methodology of the work and definitions of key terms used. The second chapter examines the traditional African worldview, the concept of God, humanbeing and the world, and the effect of this worldview on African Christians.

Chapter three deals with the problem of spiritual adultery among African Christians, it examines the factors responsible for the problem, the effect of the problem and the approach of indigenous churches and its shortcomings. Chapter four discusses divination in Africa, the reasons for divination and the art of divination. Chapter five presents the concept of Christian divination in the scripture, the relevance of Christian divination or discernment in the counselling process and guidelines on how to become a Christian diviner or discerner. The work ends with conclusion and some challenges.

CONCLUSION

Christian divination is a response to the problem of spiritual adultery among African Christians. It has been established that culture and religion are inseparable in Africa. Cultural renewal among Africans has caused many people to rediscover their cherished heritage and past by returning to traditional religious practices.⁷⁹

The art of divination in Africa has a lot to offer us despite its superstitious elements. Scriptures condemn divination and its associated practices because of the spirit behind it (Satan and his cohorts), Nevertheless, the understanding of its concept will enhance the skills of the individuals who are involved in care-giving ministry. In Christian divination, the true and living God is the one giving guidance and direction to his people through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Bible is the textbook for all matters of life, however, it should not be used as a magic book.

This writer agrees with Abraham A. Berinyuu's view that Christian leaders by ordination are diviners. Christians in our established churches are looking up to ministers of the gospel who will be type of traditional diviners to whom they can share their lives experiences and receive guidance, direction and solution to their problems.

⁷⁹ O .Donovan, p. 255.

Since a traditional African is conscious of the fact that his existence is derived from certain positive forces which sustain each person, therefore, his activities are guided by these invisible powers. As a result, only a traditional counselor (diviner) is there to inform, guide, and counsel him for success and failure.⁸⁰ In the same vein, members of the church should be able to have the same confidence in their leaders. They should be encouraged to share their life experiences with their pastors with the view of helping them to overcome through counselling, guidance and prayer.

Ministers of the gospel should prepare themselves for this challenge. Member of the church should have free access to their pastors. No signing of books, in just the same way a traditional African will walk to a diviner at any given time and he will be welcome. Pastors should not deny the realities of Church members' problem whether physical or spiritual in an attempt to shy away from their responsibilities. Cases of spiritual attacks should not be taken as figment of people's imagination.

⁸⁰ Anselm Uba, "Counselling in the present African Context". African Christian Studies 7, No. 4, p. 55.

The activities of witchcraft and wizards are more than psychological maladies to traditional Africans. It is a reality. The understanding that traditional African worldview is radically different from the Western worldview has prompted the writing of this work. Christians in Africa can be fully committed to Christ if the gospel message is made more relevant to their needs. Christian divination is culturally relevant, and it will help members of the church to appreciate and appropriate the total Salvific work of Christ into their lives. Members will no longer be running helter-skelter in time of crisis looking for help elsewhere because nobody is ready to listen to their stories in the church. It is therefore, a challenge to the ministers of the gospel in Africa to move from the realm of being preachers of the Word alone to that of Christian diviners. It is then that the "Word" will become "flesh" and live among us in Africa.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that further research be done to see to the implications of the African thought pattern and philosophies on Christianity in Africa especially in our mainline churches. Also workshops and seminars should be organised for ministers by the Christian bodies and organizations where some of these issues will be discussed and challenges given to the ministers to rise up to their task of care-giving ministry.

It is only when Africans are understood as African and treated as such can Christianity take firm root in our continent. Without this, half-hearted and lukewarm Christians will fill our churches with one leg in the church and the other in the African Traditional Religion.