

WHY IS THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT THRIVING IN AFRICA?

Excerpts

from the Berean Call Ministry – week of Sept 16, 2013

Many explanations have been given for the explosion of the Charismatic movement in Africa. Many have seen this as a powerful visitation of the Holy Spirit. Whereas there is probably more than one reason, I want to add my own observation to this for what it is worth. In this blog post, I do not refer to the old conservative form of Pentecostalism once represented by the Assemblies of God churches. I have in mind the current extreme form that is mushrooming literally under every shrub and tree in Africa. How can one explain this phenomenon?

I think that one reason why the Charismatic movement in Africa has been like a wild bushfire is because it has not challenged the African religious worldview but has instead adopted it. It has simply baptised it with Bible verses and Christian words that previously meant something totally different.

Let me explain what I mean. The African spiritual worldview consists of four tiers. 1. God 2. Angels and demons 3. Ancestral Spirits 4. Human beings

It is because of this reality that Africans do not question the existence of God, as is the case with many people in the Western world. To an African, God is there. He is the Creator and ultimate Governor and Benefactor of the whole universe.

So, although God is a benevolent, loving, and caring Being, unless the beings that dwell in these two layers that lie between him and us are appeased, his blessings cannot reach us. It is, therefore, important to appease the ancestral spirits and defeat the demons. Only after that will God's blessings come upon us.

This is where in African traditional religions witchdoctors come in. They are the people with the mysterious power to break through these two layers. They tell us what we must do in order to appease the spirits of our forefathers. They also engage the demons for us through their midnight trances, dances, and incense.

So, a person who is beset with perennial illnesses, failing to get a job, failing to find a spouse or to have children, whose business is failing to thrive, etc., simply goes to the witchdoctor who alone has the key to look into the spirit world. He is told that it is either a deceased person or an evil spirit who is frustrating him.

Sometimes the enemy is a person who is alive. However, the reason why this living individual seems to have a mysterious hold over your life is because he has plugged into those two layers (of either dead ancestors or evil spirits) and you have not. With the help of a powerful witchdoctor you can outsmart him in those two layers, and the blessings of God can once again begin to flow into your life.

Whichever way, the power of the witchdoctor is not in explaining truth but in mindless frenzy. His grip upon the popular mind is his eerie mysteriousness and his capacity to knock you out of your senses and then pronounce you delivered. Of course, this is never done by benevolence. You pay for his services.

I do not mean to be unkind, but what the modern Charismatic movement in Africa has done is to simply take this entire erroneous superstructure of African religious worldview and baptise it with wrongly applied Bible verses and Christian language. The only difference is that the layer of dead ancestors and evil spirits is now one hodge podge of confusion. This is why the nonsense of demons becoming spirit husbands and wives, and wrecking havoc in marriages, is taken for granted! This is also why the heresy of generation curses has become so popular. In our minds, bad luck can be passed on from that layer of dead ancestors.

<http://www.conradmbewe.com/2013/07/why-is-charismatic-movement-thriving-in.html>

[TBC: 3 John 2 is just one verse that is misapplied. It reads, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." The appeal of a teaching that promises wealth is certainly attractive in an area of great poverty. It also obscures the godly balance of Philippians 4:11, "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content."]