

THE RHETORIC OF THE CHURCH: THE CASE OF CAMEROON

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20th July 2015

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INTRODUCTION

- The old churches already implanted in the country are vying to survive in the midst of the new churches' strategies to dissuade their members and attract them to their assemblies.
- Innovative techniques and strategies of persuasion and motivation techniques employed by the new churches ranging from texts, sermons, bracelets, prayers with linguistic manipulations and persuasive tones making it difficult for the catholic and Presbyterian Christians difficult to resist their call.
- Christian TV and radio stations have also witnessed and increase with the Pentecostal churches owning a majority of them. Programmes and prayer sessions are now broadcasted.
- The mainline churches are losing their members to the new churches due to their high profile rhetoric.

Background information

Definitions

Rhetoric

- * Scott (1972) states that trying to rely on one definition of rhetoric is “apt to be gravely misleading” we are therefore going to try to define it.
- * According to Aristotle, rhetoric is the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion.
- * Corbett (1990) says it is the art of discourse that aims to improve the capability of writers and speakers to inform, persuade or motivate particular audiences in specific situations.

In our context, we will describe rhetoric as all the available linguistic strategies and techniques used by pastors that is intended to influence attitudes and beliefs of other participants successfully hence convince, persuade or motivate them

- * **The religious situation of Cameroon**

According to statistics released by MINATD in 2002, there are 38 religious denominations most of which are Christians. The registered denominations include: Christians, Muslim and the Baha'i.

New generation church Vs mainline church

New generation church

- * New generation church is used here to refer to the modern Pentecostal church (Akoko 2007) or the neo – Pentecostal church (Lauterbach 2008) such as : Redeemed Christian Church Of God, Arm Of God Church, New Generation Church, The Celestial Frontiers Millennial Church, United , The Church Of God, Go And Tell Ministries, SCOAN, Come And See Ministries International

Why are they flourishing?

- * Spiritual healing that Pentecostalism claims to provide, employment opportunities, lively worship services, and the aggressive evangelisation strategies adopted by Pentecostals in the form of crusades, rallies, free distribution of literature; door to door teachings and stickers etc

Old /Mainline Church

- * Old or mainline church is used to refer to the oldest churches implanted in Cameroon. For this study, we are going to study the following mainline churches
- * Roman catholic church
- * Presbyterian church in Cameroon (PCC)

What are the specificities of these churches?

They have a similar order of worship characterised by calmness, solemnity and the insistence in the preaching and teaching of the word of God rather than on signs and wonders or miracles

Motivation

The urge to study this domain of research stemmed from the work of Akoko (2002) who wrote an article on “new Pentecostalism in the wake of the economic crisis in Cameroon”. In his article, he affirms that the proliferation of new generation churches is due to the devastating effects of the economic crisis in the lives of Cameroonians. He declares that for survival, the pastors have drifted from the traditional doctrine to that of preaching and promulgating what he calls “prosperity doctrine”. Due to poverty, people are constantly in search of ways and means to forget their frustration and therefore run to the church for solace.

Objectives

The present study seeks to

1. Study the linguistic constructions incorporated within the spoken and written productions of the new Generation churches and the mainline churches while portraying the differences in their rhetoric hence their power of persuasion.
2. Compare the language use of the mainline and new Pentecostal churches thereby bringing out the stylistic features particular to both and the strategies employed to achieve the persuasive, informative and motivational effects.

Problem

The church use to follow a strict doctrine, employing simple and straight forward language, solemnity and calmness were strategies employed in the order of worship, all this aimed at informing Christians about the word of God. But what seems to be the problem? The language of the new church seems to be more convincing and persuasive that is why the mainline church is losing its members

Questions

- * This study will revolve around the following fundamental questions
- * What rhetorical strategies are identifiable in the language of the new churches?
- * What major linguistic elements are incorporated within this discourse community?
- * At what level is there deviation from the traditional church's linguistic construction?
- * What major conclusions can we retain from this new form of rhetoric?

Thesis statement

The rhetoric of the church has undergone several linguistic transformations given the high level of competition going on in this sector hence deviating from the traditional church's linguistic standards

Related literature

- * Several works have explored religious rhetoric in the world and in Cameroon in particular
- * Mforteh (2005) analyses lexical choices of religious leaders and their influence on the aspirations of their listeners
- * Swiri-Tumasang (2012) analyses the style of Christian crusade themes and brings out their specificities.
- * Kouega and Baimada (2011) analyses sermons, announcements and prayers in the Islamic faith and conclude that the choice of a particular language is determined by a variety of factors
- * Lauterback (2008) talks about Pentecostalism in Ghana and beyond pointing out that messages are used by pastors to redefine and transform established ideas, values and practices
- * Pernot (2006) in a paper talks about the rhetoric of religion. He says rhetoric itself possesses a religious dimension in the power of words, the effectiveness of speech, and the magic of persuasion.

Framework of Analysis

- * Two theories will be used for the analysis in this work :

At the heart of theories on rhetoric is:

The Rhetorical theory what Bitzer 1968 called the rhetorical situation

- * **Invention** - Selection of the best pattern for one's purpose:~analogy, cause and effect, classification or division, comparison and contrast, definition, example or illustration, process analysis
- * **Arrangement** - Organization of writing or speech: cause and effect, chronological, comparison and contrast , flash back or flash forward, general to specific(or specific to general), least to most important(or most to least), spatial
- * **Style** - Artful expression of ideas: lexical semantics, detail, diction, figures of speech, imagery, syntax, tone etc
- * **Memory** - Devices that make speech or writing memorable:, acronym, pattern of three, repetition
- * **Delivery** - Conscious use of gesture, expression, and pacing, images, voice.

Nevertheless, aspects of the **General Stylistic Theory** by (Crystal and Davy 1969 completed by Simpson 2004) will be used to complement the analysis the linguistic elements of the texts and speeches.

Data types

Written discourse:

- * Crusade themes
- * Church names
- * Flyers / rally posters
- * Stickers (bracelets, messages on cars, houses etc)

Sample flyers



CBC / CATHEDRALE DE LA FOI

(CIF 2012)

CONVENTION INTERNATIONALE DE LA FOI

THEME: CHRIST IN YOU

THE HOPE OF GLORY

Col. 1:27

DATE: Du 30 Juillet au 05 Août 2012

LIEU: Ancienne-agence le car, face Stade Omnisports

PROGRAMME:

06h - 7h :	Miracle Matinal
09h - 12h :	Ecole de la Gloire
16h - 17h 30 :	Healing School
18h - 21h :	Grande Croisade

autres orateurs:

Bishop Chris Raymond N.
Bishop ONDOA Robert
Proph. AYUK Raymond
Proph. King Gedeon
Proph. Leslie Nsame
Dr. Votio Laurent
Dr. Pepin NOUMANA
Rev. T.G Sonffo
Proph. Ayuk Joseph

Infoline

70	14	86	88
75	71	67	99

Hôte

Rév. Dr KAMDEM Dieunedort
Le Général de Dieu

Bishop AMAZOU Alexandre
De la Côte d'Ivoire



THE REDEEMED CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF GOD

in collaboration with the churches in Cameroon

Presents

3 days of **PROPHETIC ENCOUNTERS**

THEME " "

Let the wind blow " "

with **Pastor E.A. ADEBOYE**
General Overseer RCCG

AND OTHER MINISTERS OF GOD

Date
26 - 28
March 2012

Time
5PM
daily

Venue
**YAOUNDE SPORTS
COMPLEX**
Carrefour Warda

MINISTERS CONFERENCE
Wednesday 28 at 10am

Infoline : 237 75 23 31 62 - 77 68 19 47



Light World Mission Int'l

présente

P.C.C 2012

PASSION
OF THE CHRIST
CRUSADE

THEME : De la Croix au Trône

DU CHAQUE JOUR
22nd - 29th
April 2012
17H00

QUARTIER BISCUITERIE
DERRIERE

BOULANGERIE
FRANCAISE

Past Rodrigue Ndeffo

Past [ONTSI] Samuel

I am the apple of
GOD'S
EYE

Holy Ghost Zone

Spoken discourse

- * Sermons
- * Prayers

* **Sample prayer**

One pentecostal and one mainline church



Sermon new church.mp3

Towns under study

Yaoundé and Bamenda



Sermon old church.mp3

Methodology

Data collection

- * Stratified and judgemental sampling techniques
- * The researcher will make use of personal observation,
- * Tape-recording of sermons and prayers which will then be transcribed following the prescriptions of crystal and Davy (969)
- * Flyers, stickers and themes will be directly collected from the church premises

Data analysis

- * Qualitative and quantitative approaches of data analysis
- * Both linguistic and paralinguistic features will be analysed and results recorded on frequency tables

Linguistic features

Phonology /phonetics, Graphology/graphetics, Vocabulary,
Grammar, Morphology, Linguistic strategies, Modality

Paralinguistic features

Mood, pitch, loudness, speed, pause, rhythm, voice,
tone, stress, tension, gestures, images etc

Projected findings

Linguistic findings

Field	New church	Traditional church
Church names	Flexibility in creation/ intuition	Static
Themes	Short	Long
Lexicology	High use of figures of speech Frequent use of 1st person singular Capitalisation of themes	Moderate use of figures of speech Frequent use of 1st person plural Normal case letters

Para-linguistic findings

Field	New church	Traditional church
Mood	Active/ lively/noisy	Solemn/ calm
Pitch	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- High pitch range- Ascending pitch range	Low pitch range
Loudness	Fortissimo and crescendo	Pianissimo
Speed	Clipped syllables (very fast)	Drawled syllables (normal)
Pause	Brief pause (one beat)	Unit pause
Rhythm	Arhythmic	Rhythmic
Voice	Falsetto	whispery
Tone	Complex and compound	simple
Stress	Strong	weak
Tension	Tense	Lax

Linguistic Strategies Employed

- * Public speaking
- * Presupposition
- * Hedging
- * Use of assertions
- * Use of affirmation
- * Figurative language
- * Textual evidence etc

Contribution

- * This work will fill an existing gap in the field of rhetoric in Cameroon.
- * It will be of aid to public speakers such as politicians, motivational speakers, pastors who will like to improve on their persuasion strategies.
- * Useful to doctorate students who will be interested in carrying out studies in discourse analysis or comparative discourse analysis
- * Useful to those interested in rallying people behind them especially politicians and businessmen since it will inspire them to develop their own slogans, campaign themes etc.

Conclusion

All the above linguistic explorations we can conclude that the rhetoric of the church in Cameroon is that of economic growth, personal uplifting, accumulation of wealth, healing from illnesses, breakthrough, miracles, giving and receiving and spiritual penance to gain heaven as preached by the new generation church on the one hand and that of peace, community development, salvation of the soul by the old church.

We end with this question: what will the rhetoric of the church be in the next 25 years? We leave you to reflect on this

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THANKS FOR YOUR
KIND ATTENTION