

The Spiritual Marketplace in Contemporary Ghana



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In the past, I used to feel hungry often; hungry to the point where I had to eat 2–3 times a day. One day I came across a TV programme where I heard that Angel Obinim’s stickers can perform wonders. I bought one and put it on my stomach. Since that day, I have not felt hungry [and hence no need to eat].

In the past when I would go to the brothel, the prostitutes there would charge me a lot – 200–300 Ghana cedis. Then I bought Angel Obinim’s stickers and slapped it on my member. Now when I visit the brothel, they compete for me and grant me their services at no charge.

It used to be that when I got on line, I would see many potential clients and I would chat with all of them nicely. They would tell me they were big time real estate people, some even had constructions firms and things like that. When it gets to the point in the conversation when I ask them for money, they become difficult. But, since the day I put Angel Obinim’s sticker on my laptop, I am able to defraud a lot of people; I can confirm that I get at least US\$5000 every week.

These vignettes are social media trolls of a controversial Pentecostal pastor in Ghana by the name of Daniel Obinim. Obinim is a self-proclaimed Angel of God, who is living on earth. These incredulous claims are clearly false but are intended to satirize the gullibility of adherents to pastors and other self-styled spiritual experts—that we call spiritual consultants—in Ghana. We call them spiritual consultants because they promote themselves as experts of spiritual matters that are believed to principally affect material outcomes. Spiritual consultants like Obinim sell car stickers, posters, handkerchiefs, holy oils and other items, which are legendary in their purported ability to grant adherents all their wishes. Adherents seem to nurse a strong sense of hope that their material and spiritual needs will be met by using these objects and

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seeking counselling from the numerous spiritual consultants such as Obinim who produce these objects.

The success of the spiritual consultants rests in part in the average Ghanaian belief that s/he cannot exist without God and that eschatological salvation as well as material pursuits are all matters of the Divine (Meyer 2004). Many of these spiritual consultants employ mass and social media to market their services and products (de Witte 2003; Meyer 2004). The Ghanaian airwaves are thus filled with spiritual consultants of all sorts, including Christian preachers (Pastors), Muslim spiritualists (Mallams), traditional fetish priests (Akomfo) and juju men who broadcast testimonies of adherents to indicate their spiritual powers to heal all ailments and grant material wealth to supplicants. Each of these brands of consultants reflects an enduring worldview of spirits and supernatural powers that are believed to mediate in the material world (Onyinah 2002). Religious consumption and selling hope for material success through spiritual practice have become norms in contemporary Ghana—religion has been marketized!

Marketing and consumer research has only recently been considering the growing marketization of religion, with the consumption of religion and spirituality becoming very topical in the field in recent years (Husemann and Eckhardt 2019b; McAlexander et al. 2014; Rinallo et al. 2013). Inspired by Durkheimian sociology, this research interrogates how the marketization of religion is blurring the boundaries between the sacred/religion and the secular/market. This secularization of the sacred/religion and the sacralization of the secular/market have enabled religion to permeate and appropriate market(ing) processes and practices (Belk et al. 1989; McAlexander et al. 2014). It has also allowed religious objects, services, persons, practices and institutions to be branded, advertised and sold as a commodity in the marketplace (Carrette et al. 2015; O'Guinn and Belk 1989). Much of this research focuses on the processes of marketization, the practices and institutions that support marketization and how this affects consumption and consumers. However, we know little about the important role of individuals who market themselves as experts of religious (spiritual) matters—pastors, seers, astrologers, soothsayers, witches, necromancers, gurus and so on—and why consumers patronize their services. This is especially important in contexts like Ghana where religion has never been separated from the market, and people, therefore, have always accepted and consumed the services of these spiritual consultants.

In this chapter, we explore how the historicized marketization of religion has supported and been supported by the practices of contemporary spiritual consultants and the market in which they operate. We ask then, *what specific value do spiritual consultants offer to authenticate their selling proposition and sustain their role in the marketization and consumption of religion (spirituality)?* In a context like Ghana where spiritual consultants have always existed, we seek to understand how contemporary spiritual consultants marketize their services to sustain the continuity of their role and the faith of those who consume them. Using Horton's (1997) shared teleological function between traditional African religion and modern science—to explain, predict and control, we argue that unlike the Western religious institution

whose mere adoption of market logics defines its success (Twitchell 2004), spiritual consultants in Ghana succeed because they understand and use local cultural heritage within the marketing logics to offer hope to their adherents for competitive advantage.

The Marketization of Religion: Betwixt and Between the Sacred and the Secular

Religion and the belief in supreme beings (God) is as old as humankind itself; it is present in one form or another in every society, having evolved along different trajectories since the dawn of humankind (Bellah 2011). The anthropological record will show that religion was initially a communal activity but evolved, especially in Western society, to be considered as a private space outside the market, with a clear separation between the sacred and the profane (Durkheim 1915; Taylor 2004). Indeed not too long ago, few accepted that religion can be conceived of as a product or service and its adherents as consumers (Gauthier and Martkainen 2018). Some still don't accept it. But in what has come to be accepted as the marketization of religion in marketing and consumer research, any supposed boundary between religion and the market has been blurred in contemporary times (Belk et al. 1989), if ever they were indeed separate. Religion and the market are now locked in a marriage where we observe religious organizations employ marketing practices and media to promote their services (Appau and Churchill 2017; Bonsu and Belk 2010; McAlexander et al. 2014). Conversely, religious objects and places are also consumed and evaluated like any other market offering, without the need for such consumers to subscribe to a religion (Husemann and Eckhardt 2019a; van Laer and Izberk-Bilgin 2019).

Some commentators condemn the marriage between the sacred and the profane as an emblem of moral corruption that is incompatible with religious piety (e.g. Clapp 1998; Kenneson 1993). For instance, the perceived commercialization of Christianity was a major fuel for Martin Luther's Reformation. Others take the opposite view, recognizing secularization as a necessary path toward the postmodern quest for meaning and transcendence (e.g. Detweiler and Taylor 2003; Lyon 2000; Taylor 2004). This situation portends a secular world that would challenge assumptions about religion's role in society. Theories of secularization are rife and grounded often in the idea that as a society becomes more economically prosperous, it abandons religion for rationale science suggesting an inverse relationship between economic prosperity and religious belief (Berger 1967; Durkheim 1915). Several other perspectives have argued for an effective blend of religion and economic prosperity that has a symmetrical effect on each other (e.g. Taylor 2004). Opposing views notwithstanding, contemporary thinking seems to recognize a trend that indicates that (institutional) religion and (deinstitutionalized) spirituality are now sold and consumed as "ordinary" products in the market (Carette and King, 2005; McAlexander et al. 2014; Rinallo et al. 2013; Redden 2016).

An attempt to explain the seemingly increased marketization of religion in Western societies points to a re-enchantment of the West due to the failure of modernism and scientific rationality to satisfactorily explain social reality (Firat and Venkatesh 1995). Disillusioned by science's inability to explain all things, people now seek a return to the spiritual for existential answers, sometimes through the market and its logic. Another explanation for the supposed re-enchantment in the era of consumerism is that spirituality (and magic) never really disappeared (Asprem 2014; Thomas 1973) but was exiled into latency while people experimented with scientific explanations for all things human. That is, while religion may have lost its socio-structural power, its established influence on social thought and practice remained intact. Science and secularization transformed religion but did not replace it (Taylor 2007).

Economic theories suggest that the deinstitutionalization of religion in Western contexts may have fueled the marketization of religion, offering a plurality of religion and spirituality options in the marketplace from which the consumer of religion could make a choice based on perceived value (Berger 1967; Stark and Finke 2000). McAlexander et al. (2014) suggest, however, that the marketization of religion may rather be responsible for the detraditionalization of religious institutions. Still, others point to the hegemony of the neoliberal market and its relentless power to subsume all other socio-economic structures including religion (Carrette et al. 2015). The phrase "marketization of religion" anchors the market and suggests that it is the market that is usurping and appropriating religion. But considering the historical and continued impact of religion on the market (Graeber 2011; Taylor 2007), it is unclear whether it is the market that is taking over religion or the other way round, or simply an inevitable marriage of the two domains.

In many non-Western contexts like post-colonial Africa where the market was never separate from religion, Appiah (1993) argues that the continued consumption of religion and spirituality over time may be due in part to religion's ability to adapt to changing conditions and offer some value to adherents. For example, in these contexts, religion provides insurance against difficult life events such as unemployment, death of a loved one and consumption hardships (Chen 2010). Active participation in religion and spirituality may reinforce the effects of positive experiences (Mochon et al. 2008) and mitigate negative effects (Brickman and Campbell 1971; Di Tella et al. 2010). Especially in poor non-Western countries, religion offers a hedge against the negative aspects of life and presents hope for the good life (Bonsu and Belk 2010). However, the globalization of religious and market practices has further bridged any supposed boundary between local and non-local religions, and how the marketization of religion manifests locally/globally (Appau and Churchill 2017). In summary, it appears that across the contemporary global world, religion remains or has emerged as an important marketplace offering and consumption field that offers some value to justify its consumption, and also shapes consumer attitudes, relations and marketplace actions (Izberk-Bilgin 2012; McAlexander et al. 2014).

Certain individuals have always been perceived to be experts of religious and spiritual matters and people who share the beliefs of these experts rely on their ideas, counsel, admonishment and authority on such religious and spiritual matters. In institutional religions, these individuals include the Catholic Pope, bishops and priests,

Jewish Rabbis, Muslim Imams and clerics and Buddhist monks. Outside institutional religion, astrologers, seers and soothsayers, necromancers, witches, magicians and gurus purport to offer some spiritual service of which they have great expertise and knowledge. These are the individuals that we collectively refer to as spiritual consultants because they portend to be experts on spiritual matters and people consult them as such.

Although research on the marketization of religion recognizes the role of such individuals, the literature falls short of properly characterizing their unique role in the sale and consumption of religion/spirituality, the value they offer and how they sustain their roles through the veracity or otherwise of their market offering. Our goal in this chapter is to problematize this gap in the literature, by formally characterizing these seemingly unconnected individuals as spiritual consultants and interrogating their role and their value proposition (if any) in the marketplace of religion. In this regard, Ghana's very vibrant religious marketplace of Christian, Muslim and traditional spiritual consultants offers a rich context to address this research objective.

Religion and Spirituality in Ghana

Long before colonization and the arrival of Christian missionaries, the many tribes in Ghana subscribed to various indigenous or traditional religions. Most of their practices were preserved through oral tradition and were only documented when Islamic and European traders and missionaries—and later colonizers came to Ghana. Religion—and spirituality—were tied to politics, war and economic functions like food production and resource distribution (Rattray 1927). Many spiritual consultants operated among the many tribes, including priests of tribal gods, soothsayers, diviners, sorcerers and herbalists (Onyinah 2002).

Although Islam and Christianity arrived in Ghana long before colonization through Arab and European traders and missionaries, Christianity, in particular, gained momentum in Ghana with colonization. Early attempts to convert locals to Christianity did not succeed because missionaries were confined to coastal areas and lacked political support (Groves 1948). With British colonial support for Christian missionaries, however, they gained roots, advancing a campaign against traditional religions as primitive and demonic (Parker 2011). Importantly, missionaries built schools and provided formal education to local people, often on condition of conversion to Christianity (Horton 1971). Missionaries also trained locals to become priests so that local people would front the conversion of their own (Groves 1948). These strategies seem to have worked as by the time Ghana gained independence in 1957, Christianity was the dominant religion in Ghana (Nunn 2010).

The growth of Christianity was also due in part to traditional religion's failure to quickly adapt and respond to the rapid economic, social and political change brought about by colonialism (Ward 1956). Old gods and priests who helped control social life and consumption in small settlements could no longer account for the complex life of growing cities, unfamiliar technologies, new institutions like schools and law

courts, and colonial authority and structures (Parker 2004; Ward 1956). Christianity was privileged under colonialism and was granted the technologies of power to gain attention and traction. Robin Horton notes: “Europeans came to be seen as symbols of power, and Christianity itself came to be seen as part of a larger order, comprising Western education, colonial administration, commerce and industry, with which everyone had henceforth to reckon. These changes created a much more favourable climate for conversion.” (Horton 1971, 86). Christian preachers thus replaced traditional priests, diviners, herbalist and mediums as the new spiritual consultants. However, the demise of traditional religion was only formal, rather than in practice. Many practices and beliefs of traditional religion were adopted into local Christianity in efforts to address the African Christian identity crises (Bediako 1995).

Post-independence, a more conscious effort was made to Africanize Christianity in Ghana—mixing Christian and traditional religious practices and symbols—most notably by Osofo Komfo Damoah and his Afrikaania mission. This push for religious self-determinism was aimed at erasing what locals perceived as Western demonization of traditional religion as primitive and evil (Bediako 1995). The effort to marry traditional religion and Christianity did not really gain many converts, but it did pave the way for a new breed of African Pentecostal Christianity—imported from America and adapted for African context (Robbins 2003). Pentecostalism can be traced to the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles at the turn of the twentieth century (Anderson 2010).

Pentecostalism’s strong emphasis on a relationship with a spirit dovetailed perfectly with traditional Ghanaian spirituality of dealing with spirits (Meyer 1998). Similarly, the veneration of charisma in Pentecostal leaders resonated with the local veneration of charisma in a spiritual consultant (Gifford 2004). When American and European Pentecostal preachers like Kenneth Copeland, Kenneth Hagin and Reinhard Bonnke arrived in Ghana to propagate their brand of Christianity, they found a local population who were radically open to such a religious orientation (Gifford 2004). Unlike Catholic and Protestant priests, these Pentecostal preachers advanced that God is able to meet “all the needs of people, including their spiritual salvation, physical healing and other material necessities” (Anderson 2000, 27).

Additionally, the 1970s and 1980s when the Pentecostal movement began in Ghana was a period of deep political instability, teeming youth unemployment and unprecedented mass poverty that negatively affected people’s macro and micro consumption conditions. Ghana was under successive military dictatorships who poorly mismanaged the economy and looted the national wealth. Gifford (2004) has argued that these political, economic and social failures created the breeding grounds for the Pentecostal movement who advanced a prosperity gospel that promised material wealth on earth and spiritual salvation for all believers.

The enduring enchanted worldview of Ghanaian spirituality that traces all events and experiences to supernatural causes fertilized the Pentecostal movement’s offerings, and people turned in droves to these Pentecostal spiritual consultants. The other spiritual consultants of traditional religion, Islam and Catholic and Protestantism still operate, but the demand trickled towards these Pentecostal spiritual consultants. Pentecostalism became a viable entrepreneurial venture as (mostly) young men started

churches, offering spiritual solutions to poverty, sickness, business failures, impotence, bareness and premature death (Kalu 2008). Although more than 90% of people in Ghana are religious, Pentecostalism is now the largest religious movement in Ghana (Ghana Statistical Service 2012). On every street corner in Ghana, in the market squares, on public transport, radio, TV and on the internet, and in neighbourhoods, Pentecostal churches and preachers—as well as their ads—dominate the local landscape in Ghana. Thus, Ghana’s modern spiritual consultants are largely Pentecostal but there are many others of *akomfuo*, juju men and other spiritualists.

Unlike the form of spirituality consumed in Western contexts, the consumption of religion in Ghana is underlined by a metaphysical worldview where spirituality concerns spirits, gods and demons (Ozanne and Appau 2019). In Ghana (and most of Africa), where no indigenous secularization project was pursued consciously, many—including the most educated and seemingly enlightened—still live in a world that is enchanted by spirits and gods (Appiah 1993; Meyer 2012). To the Ghanaian, spirits “elude confinement to the category of religion and appear in all kinds of settings, including politics, economics and entertainment. Spirits, in other words, are not just there, as signs of a traditional past, but are reproduced under modern conditions” (Meyer 2012, 88). Ghanaian spirituality is therefore canvassed by a religious cosmology where a spiritual world exists and influences the physical world [see Danquah’s (1968) *The Akan concept of God*]. These foundational beliefs include the view that spirits:

1. are immortal and they exist in their own unseen worlds
2. wield and exert significant influence in our physical world
3. are not the same: some are good, others are bad
4. can disrupt an individual’s predestined good life and cause misery for the person, and
5. have CHOSEN people (herein labelled consultants) to serve as their earthly agents, for good or harm to humans.

That the spirits are non-human suggests the need for human translators—the spiritual consultants—who have historically offered and currently offer spiritual services to adherents for fees (Onyinah 2012). The market for spiritual consultancy services is propagated and sustained by the general Ghanaian belief that her lived experiences are managed by spirits and gods—both good and evil. We observe that many spiritual consultants—pastors, mallams and fetish priests—in contemporary Ghana promote these beliefs, indicating their tremendous similarity to the same historical role played by indigenous fetish priest (*Okomfuo*) and herbalist (*Odunsini*) in precolonial Ghana. These indigenous consultants dominated the spiritual landscape of Ghana and most of Africa until the Christian missions presented alternatives. The Christian God is now seen by many as God above all gods. Yet, behaviour patterns suggest that the Christian God is deemed to merely lead a pantheon of indigenous gods who were once venerated. This is evident in the fact that many Christian and Islamic adherents also visit fetish priests and may attend more than one church, expecting different benefits from each of these associations. Thus, it is not unusual to see a Muslim openly attending church, evidencing the plurality of choice in the marketization of

religion. Many adherents note the “expertise” of different spiritual consultants and seek advice appropriately from these diverse sources for complete coverage of all their needs. But what specific value do these spiritual consultants in Ghana offer their consumers? Towards this end, we employ the explanatory lens of teleology.

Teleological Value of African Spirituality

Teleology refers to the end purpose of things, actions and experiences (Woodfield 2010). They concern those implicit “ought to” expectations of human action, events and experiences that are discursively expressed as purpose, destiny, fate and *raison d’être*. Teleology suggests that there are certain predefined outcomes or purpose of human action, and anterior actions are set towards meeting or addressing this posterior end (Moore 1903; Portmore 2005). Actions are, therefore, evaluated in light of their end purpose, but not in and of themselves; the end specifies the means. Teleological values have existed since Aristotle, and although they have been criticized by many Renaissance thinkers—like Francis Bacon who branded it as “sterile”—they still underlie modern thoughts in the physical and social sciences (Woodfield 2010). Some anthropologists have suggested that teleology provides important cultural value to many people across cultures (Daswani 2015). In this paper, we consider *teleological value* to reference the lived value of understanding and acting towards a predefined end purpose or meaning. Even though not directly recognized in marketing and consumption studies, the teleological approach is commonly used by motivational speakers, religious preachers, politicians and marketers who offer products and discourses premised on idealized consumer goals. The Ghanaian religious context is made more interesting by the belief that the end result can be altered by appeals to the relevant principalities through spiritual consultants.

Ghanaian spirituality is conditioned on the premise that there is an end purpose, which will occur if no spiritual intervention is applied; consumption and life are geared toward these ends (Onyinah 2002). For example, many Ghanaians operate on the cultural assumption that they are predestined by the gods (God) and spirits to attain long life, happiness, wealth, marriage and be virile (Appiah 1993; Onyinah 2002). For the Ghanaian, failure to achieve any of these ends is unnatural. Thus, the death of a young person, for instance, raises spiritual questions. Such death indicates spiritual interference in the natural order by another who does not want a good life for the dead one, because young people are not intended to die. Spiritual consultants will be sought to help identify the source of this “evil” and to deal with it mercilessly. Even so, there is also the belief that an unfortunate few are predestined towards negative ends like premature death, material impoverishment and barrenness as the will of the gods (Danquah 1968). Necessary anterior actions may be taken to alter such destinies, assuming a flexible teleology.

The preceding would suggest that Ghanaian spirituality concerns those actions that can help achieve (prevent) a certain or unknown desired (undesired) predestined life. Ghanaian spiritual consultants, aware of this need, package services that offer

such teleological value in three interlinked functions that Horton (1997) has identified as fundamental to traditional African religious thought: to explain (current events), to predict (future events) and to control (current and future events).

Explanation

One major function of the teleological perspective is to provide explanations with a causal narrative for lived experiences. It addresses the question of “why”, leading to the plausible point that there is a spiritual cause to every outcome in life experiences. The consumption of spirituality services is animated by this teleological function for explanations of life experiences and the bigger questions of life (Carette and King 2005). The quest for meaning, purpose in life and one’s place in the cosmos are all geared toward explaining the “whys” of life. Daniel Batson and his colleagues have argued from this perspective that everyone is religious because the function of religion is to provide such existential explanations (Batson et al. 1993). However, Foucault’s (1988) technologies of the self would negate this notion of pre-destination especially because of his argument that self-reflection, meditation, self-narratives and other personal practices guide various outcomes in one’s life. That is to say, the locus of control in any life rests with the individual—this individual has the power to take certain actions that will chart her destiny. This may be so in the Western world where life projects are believed to be within the control of the individual. In societies like Ghana and many others in Africa where identities are communally constructed and enchanted, even the ability to reflect on one’s actions are managed by other key actors in the physical and spiritual realms.

Prediction

As a function of teleological value, prediction is linked with the ability to understand what is yet to happen, often based on an explanation of present events and experiences. It is the primary currency of science to make predictions of future events based on an explanation of an experienced (empirical) event (phenomenon). Teleological value is similarly derived from this extension of explanation of current events to extrapolate possible future events. For example, consumers who explain the success of their sports team as an outcome of their consumption of Doritos chips believe that their team will win their next game, if only they eat Doritos chips (Hamerman and Johar 2013). In science, however, the uncertainty of prediction is acknowledged with probabilities of outcomes. Teleological perspectives offer possibilities, instead of probabilities, and then provide alternate explanations when the prediction fails. This is observed in Ghana’s spiritual market when a spiritual consultant makes a prophecy that does not come true and the spiritual consultant has to provide a reason why the prediction failed.

Prediction is an important manifestation of teleological authenticity. For example, the purpose of a chair is mainly to provide seating; that is its teleological function. But the chair's authenticity as a chair hinges on its ability to function towards this end now, and in the future. If it fails to fulfill its teleological purpose at some point in the future, it is no longer a chair. A consumer thus purchases a chair, an insurance policy, a car and observes religious requirements because of the linked teleological value it is predicted to provide in the future in the form of seating, asset security, transportation and eternal life in heaven respectively. These predicted teleological values have varied empirical guarantees but they are all nonetheless logical in linking predicted ends to anterior actions. The point, once again, is that teleological value is not constrained to religious practice but extends to various aspects of life and markets.

Control

Being able to explain and predict events leads to the confidence that one can manage present and future events. The teleological function of control concerns matters on "how to ...?". This function assumes that once a person can explain and predict events, they can influence the desired or undesired ends by manipulating the anterior actions. Being able to explain (and predict) what enables a chair to function towards its teleological purpose of seating, also enables the consumer to control the chair in this manner, for example, by not breaking one leg of the chair. For consumer behaviour, a useful illustration of the teleological function of control is the consumption of hope (MacInnis and de Mello 2005). Hope is "omnipresent in marketing contexts" (Poels and Dewitte 2008: 1030) as advertising is used to create hope of achieving certain desired ends if the advertised products are consumed. Thus weight loss products and services, lottery tickets and investment products, self-help books and so on are presented as the necessary anterior actions to the teleological ends of the ideal body, material wealth and happiness (MacInnis and de Mello 2005). Hope is therefore about control or the desire and agency to achieve certain teleological ends (Snyder 2002). But this is premised on an existing explanatory linkage between the ends and specific means, and the certainty that manipulating the means will most likely lead to the desired end.

Collectively, these three functions—explanation, prediction and control—are the shared functions between (Western) modern science and (traditional) African religions, albeit with different contextual motivations and expressions (Horton 1997). We extend Horton's work, first by situating these functions as value outcomes in the commercial practice of spiritual consultants in Ghana. We anchor our analysis of modern spiritual consultants within the historical (traditional) roots of their practices and services, drawing attention to moments of continuity and discontinuity between them and their traditional predecessors in their contemporary marketization of their roles and services.

Methodology

Like Mbiti (1969), we believe that the intricate weave of religion into African lives leads one to conclude that any “study of [African] religious systems is, therefore, ultimately, a study of the peoples themselves in all the complexities of both traditional and modern life” (p. 1). Thus, trying to understand the consumption value of modern spiritual consultants in Ghana calls for a complex review that requires a multi-method approach to experiencing religious life in all its forms. Our data sources include news media coverage, viral social media videos, books and roadside (outdoor) advertising by Ghana’s many spiritual consultants.

Media Coverage of Celebrity Consultants

A major source of data for this study was mass media news coverage of popular spiritual consultants in Ghana. Many spiritual consultants in Ghana enjoy celebrity status, partly because of their accumulated wealth from their services, and the veneration of their role in the cultural imagination (Gifford 2004; Piot 2010). The extent of coverage that the media gives to their practices and utterances underscores their legitimacy as cultural and marketplace institutions (Humphreys 2010). We engaged in a convenient sampling of news media headlines on celebrity spiritual consultants in Ghana over the five-year period spanning 2013–2018. These celebrity spiritual consultants often headline the news for their comments or actions regarding important macro consumption issues such as sports, politics and the broader economy.

Examples of headlines in our data include several of Pastor Mensa Otabil’s often critical commentary on government’s economic policies, and Archbishop Duncan-Williams leading his church in prayers to arrest the decline of the national currency against the dollar (cite). Our sample also includes headlines on controversial practices by spiritual consultants like Nana Agradaa’s doubling of people’s money and her subsequent claims by some who said they were duped by her; the open rivalry between Bishop Obinim and Rev Owusu Bempah (and also with Kwaku Bonsam) that was to culminate in a direct contest at the Accra Sports Stadium to decide on who was more powerful; Obinim’s claimed erasure of material troubles through the burning of used underwear; Rev Obofour’s claimed healing of those afflicted with HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis with a red substance he described as “the Blood of Jesus” and Prophet Nigel Gaisie’s prophesy regarding the death of popular dancehall artiste Ebony Reigns, which actually occurred in February 2018. Osofo Kyiri Abosom (literally, the pastor who hates traditional gods) and some of his antics are also captured. Many others (e.g. Alhaji Baba Fear God; Nana Sika, Mallam Black Power; Ogyaba; Prophet One) also present data worthy reviewing for our purposes.

Roadside Advertising

Ghana's roads and streets are indiscriminately littered with outdoor ads by spiritual consultants, particularly Pentecostal pastors and juju men. We refer to these as roadside advertising, following Ukah (2008). We used a combination of photography from fieldwork and internet search to collect over 100 images of billboards, posters and banners of spiritual consultants advertising their service offerings—time and place of service—special events, and generating brand awareness. We reviewed all the roadside advertisements. Even though only a few (See Appendix for example) are featured in this paper, the core essence of these adverts and their implications for spiritual work among adherents are the same. What we present therefore are for illustrative purposes only and not because they are the only ones that capture the relevant spiritual work.

Viral Videos

The third source of data includes videos of spiritual consultants that go viral on social media and social messaging apps—mainly Whatsapp. These videos include TV and radio ads and infomercials by spiritual consultants, and clips of TV broadcast of spiritual consultants during moments of their service delivery and interviews they grant to journalists. The videos often go viral due to their controversial and/or comedic content. For example, one TV ad that went viral on Whatsapp showed a traditional spiritual consultant named Nana Agradaa who promises to magically double any amount of money a customer brings to her shrine. She also has other videos shared on Youtube and Facebook showing her magically doubling money on live TV. Indeed, many of the issues captured in the traditional media would tend to have a social media equivalent. To avoid double-counting where there were multiple versions of the same story, the more detailed version was included in our data and counted only once.

Books

Many spiritual consultants—particularly Pentecostal pastors—author books covering a wide range of theological and secular topics. Authoring books serves as a mark of possessing the cultural capital of the educated elite that has been at the forefront of managing Ghana's globalized post-colonial image. It is authentication that situates Ghana's Pentecostal pastors within the league of other celebrity Pentecostal preachers around the world who also author books to advance their ministries. Books also serve as a means of diffused consultancy, enabling spiritual consultants to codify and distribute their value offering in print and digital text. Pastor Mensa Otabil, for example,

has a number of books available for purchase on Amazon, with titles like *Four Laws of Productivity, Endurance, Goal Setting and Goal Getting* and *How To Have A Lasting Marriage*. Bishop Dag Heyward-Mills, founder of Ghana's biggest conglomerate of churches—Lighthouse Chapel—has a website (<http://dagewardmillsbooks.org/eng/>) dedicated to the sale of his many authored books. Our data included a review of over 50 books authored by the celebrity pastors that we included in our sample.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was an ongoing process that began during initial data collection and continued throughout the research process (Emerson et al. 1995). The earlier analysis was considered preliminary, intended mainly to guide data collection with a focus on grounded spiritual consultant practices and their adherents' participation in their activities. Analytical categories emerged from the data. Detailed analysis began after data collection with a complete review of all the data gathered. Such a holistic review of the data allowed for thematization at the global level within the data (Giorgi 1997). Our approach was one that required travel back and forth between personalized accounts and analytical structures in the process of developing theoretical points of interest (Emerson et al. 1995; Strauss and Corbin 1990). Literature on the socio-cultural background of African religions and spirituality provided further bases for interpretation (Thompson 1997). Our diverse data sources allowed for cross-integration of interpretations. After evaluating several possible frameworks derived from our analysis, we settled on one that seems to offer a strong contribution to theory without compromising the integrity of the ethnographic experience.

Spiritual Consultants and the Marketing of Teleological Value

We begin our findings by locating the practices of spiritual consultancy within its precolonial roots and mapping the historical events that shaped its practice and subsequent influence on modern spiritual consultants. We then examine how modern spiritual consultants produce and sell teleological value as consultancy services to the Ghanaian consumer using the same template as their precolonial predecessors, but with adaptations to suit modern consumer needs. We use several illustrations to show how spiritual consultants have remained relevant in Ghana because of their ability to help the Ghanaian explain, predict and control structural changes and lived experiences that affect people's consumption and livelihood.

Explanation: The Teleology of Enchanted Rationalization

Arguably, religion is antithetical to rationality. Marx, Freud, Weber and many scholars have reduced the function of religion to fanaticism and magical thinking. However, to the extent that religion, for the most part, is not falsifiable, it cannot even be considered irrational; it is non-rational (Alcock 1992). No one can prove that God exists, and no one can prove that God does not exist. Nonetheless, by assuming certain ends—like a place in heaven or hell after death—religion produces its own “logic” by ordering anterior lifestyles towards these ends. If God will send you to hell for premarital sex, then it is only rational that you do not engage in premarital sex. This will be true if God exists—which we cannot prove or disprove—but for the millions who believe that God exists, this “makes sense”.

The teleological function of explanation here is, therefore, a discursive rationalization of such religious beliefs. Religious teachings have power over adherents because they are ordered towards certain ends that believers hold to be true, rooting explanations on *why* such ends are met or unmet. Spiritual consultants in Ghana serve as experts in these domains, proffering explanatory links between experience and ends that are held to be true. Such truths are more palpable when they are anchored in historical cultural practices. In traditional (precolonial and colonial) Ghana, when people experienced an event that affected their lives, they consulted a spiritualist for explanations. Such consultations were especially pertinent for experiences that deviated from expected teleological ends like the death of a young person, inability to bear children, or constant crop failure when those of others yield successful harvests. The traditional Akans of Ghana referred to such consultations as *abisa*, which literally translates as ‘an enquiry’ (Onyinah 2002). The host of spiritual consultants—priests, herbalists, sorcerers—specialized in different areas of spiritual services, either by training or ordination. Using a combination of magical allusions to gods, spirits and ancestors, and deep social wisdom of relational structures, dynamics and community living, spiritual consultants then offer prognosis of the matter to determine why such an event happened to this person to disrupt their expected attainment of wealth, health, childbirth, life and happiness (Appiah 1993; Horton 1997; Onyinah 2002).

The prognosis tended to be one of enchantment, enamored with magical permutations and allusions to spiritual matters and agents. Witchcraft, an evil spirit within a person that is used to cause harm to others, for example, was an important explanatory phenomenon in the practices of traditional spiritual consultants in precolonial and colonial Ghana (Onyinah 2002; Parker 2004). In many African tribes, witchcraft was used to explain relational conflicts, material wealth imbalances, illness, accidents and death. Ward (1956) observed a service encounter in a witch-finding shrine in colonial Ghana. A man who had a car accident in addition to losing his business consulted a shrine for explanation. His misfortune was attributed to his sister who had used witchcraft against him. The sister was brought to the shrine, where she confessed that she had done so because the man did not support her financially when he was rich. Such confessions authenticate the witch finder as an expert on spiritual matters and justify belief in the enchanted worldview that frames the practice. As many in

post-World War II colonial Ghana experienced economic hardships, they attributed their misfortunes to witches and other principalities and employed the services of spiritual consultants (Ward 1956; Piot 2010). Witchfinders became popular as they offered what was deemed to be the spiritual antidote to the economic system's failure. Their marketization mechanics relied mostly on word-of-mouth, and the public performance of their services to communicate their authenticity in delivering on the teleological value of explanation.

Like their precolonial predecessors, modern spiritual consultants in Ghana provide teleological value by proffering prognostic explanations via an enchanted reality for consumers. They focus on perceived deviations from the expected teleological norms of long life, marriage, children, wealth and good health. It is not uncommon for the average Ghanaian who encounters any "abnormality" to consult a pastor, *okomfo* or *mallam*; some consult all three. In Pentecostal parlance, such consultations are called "counselling", and often involve pecuniary contributions by way of consultation fees, offerings and compulsory purchase of "anointing oil". For a consultation, the consumer makes an appointment with the pastor through telephone, social media or other means, which are pre-advertised by the consultant. For example, Pastor Kyriabosom in his TV adverts clearly explains that his counselling services attract a set fee for a fixed period of time during the agent's regular hours. A fee schedule is available for customized times and enhanced privacy for clients. Many use a prepared questionnaire to investigate the consumers' family history, lifestyle and affiliations to other spiritual consultants like traditional priests, Islamic spiritualists and other pastors. Typical explanations for 'abnormalities' include witchcraft, problematic ancestral ties to indigenous gods, spirits and deities, spiritual contamination and "sinful" lifestyles that open the person to spiritual attacks on their "God-given destiny".

To attract those who seek to believe witchcraft is the source of their problems, a popular pastor, Rev Obofuor calls out witches during his services. The practice reinforces the adherents' belief in Obofuor as a true agent of God on earth. Many charismatic pastors (e.g. Kyriabosom, Nkuto, Obinim, MOGPA) engage in such acts. A variation of the act includes situations where, on invitation, a constrained evil spirit will manifest its presence by possessing another person (most likely, the afflicted) and speak plainly about the harm it has caused. Following the confession, the spirit is commanded out of the person's life with a lot of fanfare. The witch may be "killed" spiritually in the process. Testimonies abound to suggest that the killing in the spiritual world is also manifested in the physical world. With the benefit of modern marketing media, these services and the testimonies of satisfied customers are broadcast live on radio and cable TV, and/or shared on Youtube for mass awareness and consumption.

One of the most trending prognostics offered by spiritual consultants—like Rev Isaac Osei-Bonsu of the Moment of Glory Prayer Army (MOGPA)—to explain negative consumer experiences is a Pentecostal phenomenon known as *spiritual marriage*. Spiritual marriage infers a marital relationship with a spirit, evidenced most often by consistent sex dreams with this spiritual spouse. Other evidence of spiritual marriage includes wet dreams or dreams in which the person is pregnant

or breastfeeding a baby. Many Ghanaians believe that dreams offer a glimpse into the spiritual realm and the spiritual consultants know this. Rev. Osei-Bonsu employs these beliefs to suggest that seeing oneself having sex with another person in a dream infers a spiritual sexual relationship (Osei-Bonsu 2013). Rev Osei-Bonsu argues that spiritual marriages are caused by “sinful” lifestyles of fornication, pornography and provocative attiring. For example, watching pornography makes the consumer susceptible to contamination by sexually perverse spirits that enter the person and marries them spiritually.

In his books and many of his sermons, Rev Osei-Bonsu has posited spiritual marriage as the explanatory cause for a considerable list of negative consumer experiences. These include problems like chronic generational poverty, failed businesses, poor academic performances, joblessness, health problems like candidiasis, adult bedwetting, mental health problems, excessive menstrual pains, alcohol and drug addiction (Osei-Bonsu 2013). He explains that the spiritual partner afflicts the person with these negative experiences in the physical world to make living a joyless experience so that the only pleasure they can have is spiritual sexual experiences. For this same reason, a jealous spiritual spouse also causes relationship problems for the person in the physical world. These include spousal abuse, financial hardships in marriage, death of betrothed just before wedding, lack of interest in marriage and persistent opposition of preferred partners by parents. Using this enchanted prognosis of spiritual marriage, he problematizes consumers’ lived negative experiences as a derailment from their predestined claim on good health, marriage, childbirth and wealth. The function of such prognoses situates a social institution—marriage—in the realm of the spiritual concretized in manifest experiences. Like the use of witchcraft by traditional spiritual consultants, the use of such prognostic deepens a cultural discourse of enchantment that governs consumer imaginations, further providing a cultural frame that legitimizes the relevance of modern spiritual consultants and their services.

Prediction: The Teleology of Foresight

Through explanations, modern spiritual consultants link events and ends to explain consumers’ lived experiences. Based on this teleology of rationalization, they attempt to predict future events that may affect consumption and livelihood. One such mechanism of prediction is prophecy, a foretelling of future events based on spiritual insights. As a practice, prophecies are a relic from traditional spiritual consultants of precolonial Ghana that shaped Ghanaian spirituality assumptions that events first occur in the spiritual world before they manifest in the physical world (Appiah 1993). Hence the belief that spiritual consultants who possess the “eyes” or expert insight into the spiritual world are able to foresee and predict outcomes. The uncertainty of future events renders the teleological value of prediction highly desirable as it enables the consumer a look into events that may derail their trajectory to their expected teleological end of long life, wealth, marriage and childbirth.

Prophet Isaac Owusu Bempah of the Glorious Word Power Ministry International has gained celebrity status in Ghana for his famous prophecies, which people believe often come to pass. Prophet Bempah gives multiple prophecies to individual consumers in his church pertaining to their health, business, families, marriage and material prosperity. He is most famous for his often-anticipated new year's eve prophecies pertaining to events that would occur in the coming year. Much of these prophecies pertain to local and global political events, the fate of the national currency, and the performance of the national football team in continental competitions. Most notably, his prophecies center on death, especially impending deaths of celebrities and former or current politicians who would die in the coming year, and major road accidents that will claim many lives and where they will occur.

He predicted in 2015 that the then opposition party leader, Nana Akufo-Addo would win the 2016 election (Ansah 2015, citifmonline), even though this was a long shot. Akufo-Addo won the election and Prophet Bempah cemented his celebrity status. Akufo-Addo spent his first Sunday as President of Ghana visiting and delivering a speech at a thanksgiving church service to celebrate his election victory in Prophet Bempah's church—excellent publicity to reinforce his connection to spiritual powers and establish his link to tangible power by virtue of his involvement in the spiritual realm. Prophecies define Prophet Bempah's profession, in name and in function, and the market and cultural value of getting a glimpse of otherwise uncertain future events give authentication to his spiritual services.

Prophecies, like those offered by Prophet Owusu Bempah reduce consumer agency to subjectivity, with lived experiences situated as occurring in a space beyond a person's control. In other words, a person's fate is already written, like Achilles' death in Troy, and if the person takes no deliberate action to change the script, they will meet this end. Thus, Akufo-Addo is assumed to have won the Presidency in 2016 not because he campaigned well but because he was destined to become President. All electoral efforts and active public exercise of their voting rights to bring him to power were only props in a prewritten script. Owusu Bempah apparently knew this all along and encouraged the President-to-be as he campaigned on the slogan "The Battle is the Lord's". In this case, agency is redirected to the image of the consultant and the market in which he and his colleagues (competitors) operate.

Prophecies do not always come to pass, even those by Owusu Bempah. Several celebrity deaths he predicted for 2017 did not occur. When prophecies fail, explanations are marshalled as post-rationalizations for the failure. It is on such occasions that the prophets point to the view that prophecies are meant to offer the affected consumer a chance to change the expected outcome by rewriting the script if the expected end is not desired. It is presumed then that the spiritual agent intervened to change the script in those instances where a prophecy does not occur. Prophet Nigel Gaisie's prophecy about the death of music sensation *Ebony Reigns* in a car accident was no news until the artist died in February 2018 as predicted. *Ebony* was 20 years old; clearly too young to die and especially at the height of her musical career. The prophet went out of his way to let the world know that he had prophesied accurately. Nigel also prophesied the emergency health challenge that would be

faced by Ghana's Vice President; that has also occurred. There is no better way to fame in Ghana's spiritual space than to give accurate prophecies.

Through prophecies, spiritual consultants situate the pre-ordained future in the realm of an otherwise inaccessible spiritual world and then provide people liminal access to experience the future (spiritual world) in the present (physical world). The teleological value of prediction—like prophecies—to consumers who pay for them lies in the hope that they can control their predestined future if they can bypass the temporal order, and glimpse into the future in the present.

Control: The Teleology of Agency

The most important teleological value offered by modern spiritual consultants is control. Explanations and predictions are often the foundations to elicit and justify the teleological function of control. This is evident in Prophet Nigel Gaisie's supposed invitation to *Ebony Reigns* and his family to see him for an intervention after the prophecy about her impending death. *Ebony's* manager published private messages between him and *Ebony* on social media that showed that they had received multiple prophecies from Pentecostal pastors that the star would die in a motor accident. The narrative that emerged from this in the national media was that it was the singer's inevitable destiny to die at that time, and nothing could have prevented it.

Prophet Nigel was supposedly in control of the situation and would have "removed" the accident from her path. Information on social media suggests that *Ebony Reigns* believed the prophecy and was concerned for her life. She was discouraged from seeing the prophet by her management team. Responding to Gaisie's call would have meant *Ebony* would have taken control of her life through the prophet. Such control indicates an insurrection of consumer agency towards correcting a derailment or maintaining a trajectory towards desired ends. Indeed, many people visit modern spiritual consultants to get directions (*akwankyere*) on how to achieve (avoid) a desired (undesired) expected end. In addition to counselling and prophecies that link cause and effect for present and future events, modern spiritual consultants offer services and products to give consumers (a sense of) agency in their lives. Adherent agency is derived from the consultant's presumed power over events in the mortal and material worlds inhabited by supernatural beings. The adherent's first step towards control is to accept the authenticity and power of the consultant.

Here, we find moments of discontinuities of practices between modern and traditional spiritual consultants, despite continuity in teleological functions. Unlike traditional spiritual consultants who rooted control over events within the continuity of ancestral veneration, modern spiritual consultants like Pentecostal pastors affect a "break from the past", casting ancestral ties as malignant ties that derail people from achieving their desired end (Meyer 1998). Instead, they root control within an intricate web of (neoliberal) marketplace orientation, practices and objects (and substances) that requires deference and reference to themselves. The adherent should offer loyalty and absolute obedience to the consultant in order to be protected from

the evils of the world. Pentecostal preachers maintain a schedule of “deliverance” services that may be used as a hook to keep the adherent in the fold of believers.

Deliverance is a systematic and ritualistic ‘special prayers’ intended to sever ties between the consumer and evil spirits (Maxwell 1998) emanating from spiritual marriages, other spiritual consultants, and ancestral and personal transgressions. Severing these ties untethers the consumer from evil spirits that derail the desired teleological end, and bond them with the Pentecostal God who will lead them to ‘an expected good end’. These evil spirits do not easily yield nor disappear after the ties have been severed, thus deliverance must be a continuous activity to ensure the evil spirits do not reconnect those ties. This provides the basis for frequent patronage of church services, prayer camps and services and consulting sessions with pastors to remain ‘alert and be in self-control’.

In many cases, just like their traditional predecessors, modern spiritual consultants offer products (protective objects and substances) to ward off evil spirits. However, unlike their ancestors who used charms, amulets and talismans, modern spiritual consultants use a mix of plain marketplace objects like water, olive oil, handkerchief, salt, porridge and church-branded artifacts. For example, Osei-Bonsu’s adherents use his branded wristbands to ward off spiritual marriage partners. Some even testify on his TV/radio stations of using his book—putting it under their pillows when they sleep—to the same effect. Indeed, a lot of things done by some of the contemporary spiritual consultants in Ghana do not follow what is documented in the Bible, Quoran or other Holy Books, thus appearing to be creations of the consultants. But many of them claim their advice and actions are direct instructions from God.

Designed by God, the products sold by spiritual consultants are patronized heavily and are often sold at prices many times more than its market value. The products do not serve as fetishes because the objects themselves offer no spiritual value unless they are filled with the power of the Spirit through the pastor’s prayers. The adherent must activate the residual power in the object through prayers to achieve the desired control. Thus, the value consumers buy is the spiritual infusion by the pastor which they can activate at will to take control of their own lives.

Much of the marketplace advertisement by Ghana’s modern spiritual consultant’s centers on this teleological service of control. Through mass and social media and outdoor advertising, pastors promise to give consumers control over their businesses, health, marriage, childbirth and material prosperity if they consult the pastors and use their services. Some pastors do take this to its most capitalist extremes. For instance, Bishop Daniel Obinim who was cited at the start of the chapter has built a celebrity reputation for selling spiritual services that appear fraudulent. For example, he claimed that he can spiritually alter a person’s body parts to give the person their desired or ideal body, including penile enlargement, increasing or decreasing height, reducing stomach fat and increasing breast and buttocks sizes. American comedian, Jimmy Kimmel spoofed Bishop Obinim’s claims on his late-night show, saying, “I think we just found Trump’s nominee for the new Surgeon-General”. But unlike his disenchanting American audience who saw the comical side of it, Bishop Obinim’s congregants were truly elated at the prospective teleological value of taking control of their bodies.

Bishop Obinim is not alone in making what appears unreasonable and outrageous spiritual service offerings to consumers. Another Pentecostal pastor, Rev Chris Asante, nicknamed pastor Abruku Abruka publicly advertises his *Solution Water*, which he claims gives consumers control over many important teleological goals. Below is a (translated) transcript of the TV ad for his spiritual product.

Woman 1: My brother, didn't you go to church today?

Man: No. I have given up going to church. I have prayed on end but I am still struggling in life.

Woman 1: Is this why you are dejected? Then cheer up because I have good news for you. I also used to struggle with problems in my marriage. Then someone kindly came to recommend a special water to me. They call it Solution Water, being produced by the man of God, Prophet Abruku Abruka.

Man: Oh, I have heard about this water. Isn't this the water that people have testified that if someone owes you money and you write the person's name on a paper and put it in the water, the person will sprint to come and pay back your money?

Woman 1: Oh, it's not just for debt collection. If people promise you but do not follow through, or if you are expecting a gift from someone but the person is being stingy about it, or you have a relative abroad who does not support you, or you want to travel abroad yourself, or even land litigation. You just have to write all you want on a paper and put it in the water, and everything will turn around to work in your favour.

Woman 2: My sister, you forgot to tell him the best thing about the Solution Water. It can put money in your bank account. And if you owe the bank, it can cancel your debts. If you are suffering from any ailment, regardless of the name, it will cure it.

Man: Can I have some of your water?

Woman 1: As for mine, I can't give you any just like that. I would suggest you look for the man of God, Prophet Abruku Abruka at his Kingdom Embassy Church in Sowutuom (a suburb in Accra) to get some of the water. As for Solution Water, I know what I am saying!

What shall we make of these magical promises of debt cancellation, marital bliss, spectral monies in bank accounts, curing diseases and others strewn through this ad? There are consumers who give testimonies in churches, on TV and radio to support such claims. Some question the authenticity of such testimonies, and others wonder why such an ad is being allowed to circulate in the first place without any regulatory check. Perhaps, the logical question is whether these spiritual services and products do indeed deliver such desired control? Because teleological ends are predestined implies that efforts to control them do not guarantee success, and this is a risk consumers accommodate. This is captured in the local proverb that says "that which will burn when roasted will still burn even when it is boiled". Such cultural discourses set aside pertinent factors and suspend agency and social accountability. The consumer agency is not in the equation here. However, when a consultant intervenes and the

negative prophecy is averted, he takes the credit, but if he fails, it is because the undesired teleological end of the person is inescapable.

Such was the story of Ebony Reigns. In Ebony's case, such discourses helped overlook actual factors that caused the accident: the poor state of the road, the contractor who left a heap of sand on the road which the driver was trying to avoid and run into another car, and that the driver was over-speeding. By such similar logical derailments, if a consumer's use of spirituality products and services like the *Solution Water* does not yield the desired control, the locus of explanation is placed in the teleological space rather than on the performance of the spiritual consultants and their services. Control then remains in the hands of the consultant and the gods. This flexible attribution that accompanies teleological value propositions makes them the more valuable to the spiritual consultants and their adherents, in being able to adapt modifiable narratives to different situations (Appau and Churchill 2017; Appiah 1993).

Discussion

In the popular marketization of religion in Ghana where religion and the market have eternally been married, we have examined how contemporary spiritual consultancies in Ghana rely on entrenched cultural teleological beliefs and practices that have informed religion in Ghana. This belief in the supernatural is widespread within developing countries in general, and in Africa in particular, and can have implications for behaviour (Gershman 2016), such as one's resignation to waiting for a miracle from the Divine instead of seeking meaningful employment. This is indeed the case in Ghana where people seek spiritual consultants for guidance as to what actions to take in order to live a good life. Belief in spiritual consultants who are deemed to have been granted direct access to spirits and the Divine dominate the spiritual landscape. Consequently, the market for religion and spiritual consultants is taking a hegemonic control over consumer agency and local imaginations. In sum, spiritual consultants play a dominant role in contemporary marketization of religion in Ghana, having embraced significant elements of the traditional into their practices. The rather flexible form of Ghana's religious marketplace—where a Muslim may seek the guidance of a pastor or a Christian visiting a mallam or okomfo—seems to suggest some kind of religious identify crisis, unless it is viewed as religious pluralism which ultimately leads to serving the same one and only God (market).

Like magicians and spiritualists in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Europe/North America (Bueschers 2014), spiritual consultants in Ghana compete among themselves for market and audiences. The public display of rivalries among them (Agradaa versus Kyiriabosom; Obinim versus Prophet One, etc.) offer a tabloid-like hold on audiences, even those who do not subscribe to the services of these spiritual consultants. While there may be true animosity among these spiritual consultants, their "fights" engage the public as entertainment, while ironically rooting

their continued salience in place; there is nothing like bad publicity for these spiritual consultants.

The pervasive spiritual space in Ghana reaffirms Berger's (1963) religious market theory which regards religious organizations as business units competing among themselves for adherents. The aggressive advertising noted suggests that such competition exists in the Ghanaian religious market space. Relevant institutions (e.g. churches, mosques) and individuals (those we label as spiritual consultants) operate in spaces informed by market logic (Stark and Bainbridge 1990). Twitchell (2004) argues that the popular megachurches of America are successful because they have fully embraced marketing principles such as branding and customer relationship management. Religion is thus an object of consumer choice (Iannaccone 1991, p. 159) in a market, with a set of entities competing to attract or maintain adherents (Stark and Finke 2000, p. 193). Religion and spirituality then are commodities that have little or no privileged meaning outside of market relationships. The work of the spiritual consultants that we observed reinforces these arguments.

Our goals, in this chapter, are to formally characterize and examine the role of spiritual consultants in the marketization of religion. In Ghana, we advance that value that local spiritual consultants offer manifest through teleology, which has been modified through time to suit contemporary consumer needs and marketing trends. Future research can examine the role of other spiritual consultants in other contexts where the history and process through which religion is marketized may occur differently. Certainly, we invite ethical interrogations of the role of spiritual consultants in embodying and profiting from the marketization of religion. Lastly, there is scope to examine the specific structural factors that afford the emergence and legitimization of actors, practices and the consumer subject for the sale and consumption of religion and spirituality.

Appendix

See Figs. 1 and 2.

GREAT FIRE PENTECOSTAL INTERNATIONAL MINISTRY
PRESENTS **4 DAYS POWER PACKED**
THEME **TAKE IT BY FORCE**
DATE: **WED. 23RD - SUN. 27TH AUGUST, 2017**
TIME: **6:30AM - 1PM** Each Day
VENUE: **MISPA CITY (BONEGAS JUNCTION)**
BISHOP DR. **BONEGAS**
APOSTLE AHMED USA-VIRGINIA
Nicholas Oduane Acheampong
Bro. Sammy Young Supt. Kofi Sarpong
CONTACT: 0248-644 776 / 0277-243 193

Fig. 1 Outdoor ad by Bonegas, a Pentecostal pastor in Accra, Ghana

A POWERFUL TRADITIONAL PRIEST
NANA KWAKU BONSAM
KOFI 'OO' KOFI: POWERS!
NANTE YIE
LOCATIONS:
KUMASI: Akomadan-Afrancho (Off Techiman Road)
Tel: 024-2232671, 024-6205462, 027-2404006
ACCRA: Sarpeiman-Alafia
Tel: 024-6076448, 027-7752869, 027-2404007
Website: www.kwakubonsam.com Email: kwakubonsam@yahoo.com

Fig. 2 Outdoor ad of Traditional Religion Priest (Okomfo) in Accra, Ghana

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