

## FURTHER THEMES IN CHRISTIAN DRAMA IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*This paper continues the exploration of themes in Christian drama in Nigeria beyond the scope we treated in an earlier paper: "A Study of Selected Themes in Christian Drama in Nigeria". In the paper we discussed three important and common themes in Christian drama in Nigeria, namely: the theme of suffering, the theme of steadfastness under difficult conditions and the theme of love and forgiveness. Moreover, we recalled not only the definition of Christian drama, but also its classificatory schemes which we have presented in another paper "Definition of Christian Drama and Theatre". We have made a case for the recognition of Christian drama as a distinctive subset within the general corpus of plays in Nigerian drama in English in an earlier paper, "A Survey of the Taxonomy of Contemporary Nigerian drama". The purpose of this paper is to treat the additional themes: demonology, worldliness and materialism, and syncretic practices in the church. These themes which are interrelated are relevant in Christian literature. Before discussing the themes in question, we have provided a conceptual framework, from the general to theological perspective, for looking at the notions: demonology, worldliness, materialism and syncretism. We have used the following plays to illustrate the themes we are going to discuss in this paper: *Cold Wings of Darkness and The Living Dead* by A.E Anigala, *Trial of the Beautiful Ones* by Catherine Acholonu, *The Secrets of the Devil*, *The beginning of the End* and *The Last Generation* by Mike Bamiloye, *The Church is the Problem* by Samuel Ayodele and *Evangelist Jeremiah* by Sonny Oti.*

### Introduction

Our attempt in this paper is to discuss the themes demonology, worldliness, materialism and syncretic practices in the Church in Christian Drama in Nigeria. We shall do this against the background of an exploration of these concepts as they appear in general usage, and within given scriptural or theological premise. It is instructive for us to approach the subject under discourse in this way because the validity and appropriateness of our thematic exploration will be judged against the presentation of the operative concepts that will guide us in this discussion. The first concept we shall examine is demonology. Our intention here is not to engage in any in-depth theological debate. We shall endeavour, however, to present a brief outline about demons and their activities as contained in the scripture and see how the artists whose creations we are considering in this paper have drawn inspiration from the Bible in their treatment of the subject.

Though our concern here is to discuss demonic manifestations in some plays it is appropriate to start by looking at the story of Satan as it is revealed in the Bible. The story of the origin and fall of Satan and his demons is well documented in the Bible. The Bible presents Satan, otherwise known as Lucifer as an angel God created but who later rebelled against Him when he coveted God's position (Isaiah14:12-15). Following his rebellion he was thrown out of heaven to the earth. Satan knowing that his time is short has come to establish a counterfeit kingdom with the intention of doing battle against mankind - the prime of God's creation (Revelation12:7-12). It is in keeping with his desire to oppose the programme of God that he does battle against believers. He goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he will devour (IPeter5:18), and sometimes he translates himself as an angel of light (II Corinthians11:4), making use of deceit to undo the programmes of God in the Church. The devil has instituted a system of wickedness against mankind which is made manifest in many ways, some of these we shall later identify in our texts. In fact, Woodson (1972) has observed that the devil and his angels:

Are responsible for the demonic control of masses of people in the modern world. It is the task of these spirits to create strife and unrest, to harass and destroy God's creation (121).

Worldliness is one item of the satanic arsenal against the church. Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English explains it as being "concerned with the ways of society, especially social advantage, not spiritual" (271). In the same dictionary materialism is defined as a "state of mind or way of life which enjoys the pleasures of the world, objects which can be bought etc. and activities of the mind or spirit, in art and religion" (670). We would define worldliness as love of the world and the things in it, while materialism would be looked at as the aggressive pursuit and possession of material things for their own sake. It is tantamount to idolizing material things which is a form of covetousness. Materialism and worldliness are anathema to a true state of spirituality. The shallowness of a life that is devoted to the pursuit of material things is unveiled by Jesus Christ in his warning in (Luke12:15): "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed: a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions". Paul in (Romans 12:2) also warns against a style of life which compromises true spiritual worship of God with the involvement with worldly standards. He says: "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind". James indicts materialism and worldliness when he observes in (James 4:4) "you adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God". Demas, however, made himself an enemy of God as he deserted Paul and went to Thessalonica because he loved the world (II Timothy 4:10). He became materialistic and guilty of the love of the world which is characterized by the "craze for sex, the ambition to buy everything that appeal to you, and the pride that comes from wealth and importance" (The Living Bible I John 2:16).

The history of the church from Biblical times is full of instances in which the people of God abandoned the true worship of God and introduced syncretic elements into their religious system. The first of such instances was when the Israelites demanded that Aaron make them a god in the wilderness while Moses, had gone to receive the Ten Commandments from God (Exodus32:1-6).From that false start, the history of the Christian faith has been punctuated with several instances in which there was apostasy and the introduction of the elements in the worship of the pagan gods of the surrounding nations into the true worship of Jehovah. The king of Israel and the priests failed God woefully in this regard. The punishment they suffered in the land of Babylon was on account of their idolatrous ways.

The church in this dispensation too is not entirely pure in its worship system. According to Jesus Christ, the worship of God should be in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).But now there is a lot of falsehood and insincerity in the church. Not every "miracle" that is advertised is done at the instance of the power of God. Hence in the church we find people who are members of secret cults who derive their powers from the devil. The church in these last days is susceptible to spiritual contamination as Paul writes in (I Timothy 4:1-2):

The Spirit clearly says in later times some will abandon the Faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by Demons, such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with reed hot iron.

Leslie Woodson observes that as we anticipate the end of the age during which the Anti-Christ would be revealed, "there will be the mass mergers of churches and eventual syncretism of religion" (142).Emmanuel Kure, in a sermon preached at the Faith Clinic, Ibadan, on 10th September, 1992, however, believes that even as the church anticipates the rapture (an eschatological event which would involve the sudden translation of believers from earth to heaven at the blast of a trumpet by an angel of God),two distinct churches are already emerging. Basing his interpretation on his study of the book of Revelation, he observes that prior to the rapture there would be the Glorious Church in which the saints of God live consistent Christian lives and practice true holiness. The other church will be the Harlot church, which will be dominated by the spirit of Jezebel. The Harlot Church would be characterized by lawlessness, practice of abomination, fornication and adultery, false teaching in the realm of faith and prophecy, lowering of the standards of God, misinterpretation of the scripture, commercialization of the church, adoption of worldly standards, hence compromise with the world, and haggling of the gospel of the kingdom of God. Woodson agrees with Kure that the church would undergo a process of separation as the coming of Jesus Christ draws near. He says:

Real Christians will make their exodus in great numbers from the apostate church. The hierarchy will place intolerable pressure on clergy and laity to conform to the pseudo-mission of the so-called Christian church...strong hostility will be meted out to Christians who cannot "go along" with the anti-Christian program (143).

We have provided what we consider to be the necessary background information to enable us to do a proper appreciation of the three themes we are considering in this paper. For a discussion of the themes we shall begin with demonology.

### **Demonology**

In *Cold Wings of Darkness*, Satan is known as Ekwensu. His nature and activities are revealed in his interaction with Ojuma, his initiate, who is a Satanist. Ekwensu sends Ojuma on two assignments. Firstly, he is to brainwash Ngozi his friend to disbelieve in the existence of God so that she will never be saved any day. She will then lose her soul to him. His second assignment is to hate his father and bring him down to ruin. He would be given power as he achieves those objectives. But Ojuma defaults. He suddenly has the urge to sing a song of praise to God. He does that and earns the hatred of Ekwensu who destroys him.

But before Ojuma's death, in one of his encounters with Ekwensu we learn about the following schemes and activities of Satan. Satan's scheme against mankind includes creating war out of the fact that nations would remain at variance. He is the author of hatred, confusion and war. He has other schemes besides these. He has made sure that there is no peace in Nigeria. Furthermore, he creates greed in people, which makes them easy preys to him as they would willingly and thoughtlessly sell their mothers and even their souls for anything. Ekwensu confesses: I will continue to provide them with false wealth while at the same time siphoning such wealth through my demons (24).

Other activities of Ekwensu involve luring people into fraternities, spiritism, black orders and secret societies and using tricks, cunning to deceive people. Ekwensu brags that, he also works for the destruction of marriages, one instance of which we find in the case of Odogu and Ite.

In Enumah Anigala's *The Living Dead*, demonic activities are seen in the diabolical action of Satan through witches and wizards who falsely parade themselves as benevolent factors in secret cults. Akobo and Omur make plans to kill Eze in order to spite his father Uche. Uche himself dabbles into spiritism in search of power. He is a member of the Nkpirishi-cult, Igbagwu-cult, and Ebuetor Society. But on the long run, through the cooperation of the witches and wizards in the Okponka village, they are able to lure Uche into their membership. In the course of preparing a protective charm for his son Eze, however, they are able to invoke the spirit of Eze into an object which they bury. Eze dies in a mysterious way. Only then does Uche realize that he has been fooled. In this play, the notorious activities of witches and wizards and the part they play in the wilful destruction of human lives is shown. It is obvious they cannot exhibit any power for good; neither can any truth come from them. Uche later finds out his folly in putting his confidence in Satan's powers.

Catherine Acholonu in the *Trial of the Beautiful Ones* dwells on the theme of demonology. Its manifestation is through the medium of transmigration of souls, a process whereby spirits enter into people and control their earthly lives. The life span of people and the quality of lives they live are dictated by the kinds of spirit that inhabit them. But such spirits are never benevolent as they always destroy the lives of people they possess. Evil spirits lure and seduce mortals by some seeming good qualities like beauty, wealth and power. But in each case of possession the human will would not be violated. Man always makes the contact. He initiates the bargain, but once the bargain is struck, it is irrevocable. It would take a greater power to break the link. Even at such time, exorcism is the only way out. In this play, it is the power in name of Jesus Christ and his blood that breaks down the stronghold of the devil over its victim, Nwanma.

The power of darkness exploits a situation of desperation in the lives of people to lure them into an unwholesome union. This is borne out clearly in Mother's case. She has only one child, Sister. She needs another child badly. Since she has prayed and prayed to the Christian God without an answer, she forsakes her faith. She goes to the sea goddess and asks for a child. She is given a child who is possessed by the spirit of the sea goddess. She is born beautiful. But since she has a strange spirit in her she possesses a dual personality. Her earthly mother is unable to understand her. Her dual personality manifests in the wandering spirit which torments her. She cannot be helped except by exorcism. In order to get her child delivered, Mother again goes to the church and through the help of Evangelists Michael and Gogou, prayers and sacrifices are made on Nwanma's behalf. To be delivered, Nwanma denounces every link with Ezenwayi, the sea goddess and her mates, in the spiritual world. There is the battle to free herself from the domination of the sea goddess. Nwanma is constantly reminded about her position of power and the privileges she has in the spirit world. Her deliverance would mean that for all time life would only be earthbound. She would be cut off from the ethereal domain. Nwanma agrees to be set free. She denounces Ezenwayi and as the spirit is rebuked in Jesus' name, she is delivered. Nwanma's mother learns the bitter lesson not to align with wicked spirits. Their intentions and activities would always be evil towards mankind.

The *Secrets of the Devil* by Mike Bamiloye is devoted to the exploration of some manifestations of demonic activities. Satan is cast out of heaven because of his secret plans to exalt his throne over the stars of God. He vows to revenge against God. He, therefore, summons all the principalities and powers under him and informs them about God's intention to confine them to perpetual bondage in hell. They would, therefore, attack mankind whom God has made in his image. All the demonic arsenal of sin would be unleashed against mankind. The goal would be to make man a lawbreaker and by so doing offend God. He gives each principality a definite assignment in connection with the attack on humanity. Their work would be to deceive and misdirect the lives of human beings. Belial's assignment would be to induce stubbornness, obstinacy and disobedience in people. He

would always cause disagreements between people. This would provoke fighting and other evils. Dagon's job would be to storm the world with drunkenness. Through drunkenness, poverty, fight and accidents would result. Lives would be shattered on account of it. He is to carry out his commission with the host of demonic agents under him.

Dele is one of the victims of these demonic strategies. Under the influence of Dagon he almost beats Titi, his daughter, to death as he comes in, drunk. He also throws down Wura, his wife. But when he wants to beat her, she rebukes the demons at work in him in Jesus' name. A demon that comes in with him into the room falls down to the floor and scurries out. Belial is able to induce Baba to try to kill his wife, Mama, over the argument against his marrying another wife. Beelzebub is able to harden the heart of Bimpe from accepting Jesus Christ into her life. Sodomy, another demon, brags about his destructive powers. His weapons against mankind include fornication and adultery.

The matter of demonic attacks against Christians is the subject of many books. Some people who have been used by the devil to oppress Christians have confessed their deeds on deliverance (Eni, 1987). What we have done here has been based on the information obtained from the texts we have discussed. Satanic activities are responsible for the degree of worldliness and materialism in the church. Worldliness and materialism in the Church are tools of the devil to divert the attention of Christians from God.

### **Worldliness and Materialism in the Church**

Materialism is a factor of a society that has suffered from decline in its values. To get what people want they are ready to offer themselves cheaply to the devil. In *Cold Wings of Darkness*, Ite becomes wayward because she wants contracts. The men who commit adultery with her are themselves debased, men without any compunction. Odogu indicts Ite in the following words: You misuse yourself, help to plunder public wealth and enrich those who callously award you such contracts (10).

But Ite who is not remorseful blames her misdemeanour on society. She queries Odogu this way:

How else do you think one can win a contract in a society that is so materialistic, where people want quick riches without labour, a society where you must submit in cash or kind, without which, no contract (10).

But Ite's problem is not a matter of survival. She becomes wayward not because she must offer herself for a loaf of bread as it were. She blames society in order to avoid personal accountability. Society may be corrupt but the individuals in it would have to determine how to react to the mess in it from a personal perspective.

In fact, Ite would like to keep up with the status quo. She has always been materialistic in her attitude. When she marries Odogu it is because of what she thinks she can get out of him. She confesses:

When I first met you in the fellowship, you were a very hot and promising young man. That was why I cunningly trapped you into marrying me. I was not one of you and will never be (13).

Ite is disappointed in marrying Odogu as he never turns out to be promising financially or in the materialistic sense as she expects. Since she must acquire wealth by hook or crook she must keep her husband away from her circle of lovers in order not to cause him embarrassment. But he knows all the same. She therefore puts the blame on him for her wayward life style which is borne out by her pursuit of materialism.

Yes, think what you like of me. If you were a man, respectable and affluent for that matter, you think people will kick me about, pass me from hand to hand, defile me and make me suffer before achieving my aims (12).

One would think that Ite is repentant. But she is not; she only finds an excuse for what she does. She is so engrossed with materialism that she has thrown morality to the dogs. That is exactly the attitude she exhibits as she questions Odogu thus:

Who talks about decency or moral values these days? They are things of the past. What matters now is conscience. The slogan is, "if your conscience does not condemn you in all your actions, then go ahead" (11).

Odogu, however, indicts the materialistic attitude of people in a society. He seems to speak for the author. The way people go for things in life is graphically presented by Odogu in the following words:

Nearly everyone is enslaved by money, yet no one goes into the grave with even a kobo. People are so selfish. They own hundreds of houses but crave for more, have fleet of cars but cannot drive them at the same time. Worst still when they die they leave all behind and go into the grave empty-handed. When will man learn his lesson? (11).

Anigala is critical of materialism. He shows how endemic it is in the society. He also portrays its corroding and corrupting influences on society. Materialism weakens the fabric of society as people without moral fibre are pulled along to do things that would offend their consciences and affect the equilibrium in society. The family structure is affected as the love for people is directed to material things. Materialism diverts attention of

people from God to things. People elevate things to the level of God. No wonder materialism which is love and pursuit of the acquisition of things is equated with idolatry. Materialism even colours the kind of prayer people offer in the church. Chume's prayer in *The Trials of Brother Jero* by Wole Soyinka is a classic example of one that is rooted in materialisms (29). Commenting on the side effects of materialism this writer once stated.

Materialism has bred currency trafficking, embezzlement impersonation, armed robbery, car snatching, kickbacks, the ghost name phenomenon in voucher schemes etc (Agoro, 208).

Materialism is a manifestation of a declining spiritual state. It is a form in which worldliness is glorified. The love for God is replaced by the love of things. A materialistic approach to life is invariably tantamount to an idolatrous life style. In this deep sense, anything that is capable of commanding and retaining the affection of an individual has become an idol and as well as a god to him. A religious attitude to life abhors idolatry or anything associated with it. That is why Mike Bamiloye in his treatment of the theme of materialism and worldliness sees in the two ill-culpable points of detour from the kingdom of God.

In *The Beginning of the End*, one of Bamiloye's eschatological plays (Agoro, 2), Bro. Jide warns Sis. Peju against her worldly tendencies to no avail. When the rapture takes place she is left behind because her garment of righteousness has been stained by the spot and wrinkle of the sin of worldliness. She does not benefit from the warning of Bro. Jide when he admonishes her:

Sister Peju, do you realize that now the second coming of the Lord is... approaching and the rapture of the saints is imminent, a great demonic spirit of compromise and worldliness is attacking the church of God that in many churches it becomes difficult to distinguish the saints of the Lord from the sinners of the world? (15).

She is guilty like Tolani in *The Last Generation* whom Baba upbraids for worldliness in the way:

You have combined your Christian life with lustful pleasure and worldliness. You and others like you now share in the pleasure and worldliness of the world. You and others like you now cherish the fashions, tastes, styles and pleasure of the perishing world when the Lord had instructed in 1Jonn 2:15... "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world if any man love the world the love of the father is not in him" (4).

Worldliness and materialism are deadly weapons unleashed by the devil against the church to weaken it. In *The Beginning of the End*, Dagon, one of the principalities, reports to Satan about his plan to attack the Church with worldliness and materialism. He has delegated Captain Icabod with the assignment:

to storm the church of God with a great spirit of worldliness and compromise. To make the "sisters" in the Lord to dress in the fashion that is invented in the spirit world under the sea. To make them wear heavy make-ups and hair fashion that will make it absolutely difficult to differentiate the believer from the unbelievers. To make them dress in the ways that will confuse the sinners and make the propagation of the gospel unacceptable to thirsty souls. To make sure the world is reigning in the church and the church is getting into the world (25).

Dagon's commission to another demon prince Mammon is to "cause a great love of money in the hearts of the servants and ministers of God so that they will esteem materialism greater than evangelism" (26). In the end, their plans are successful against some members of the church: Bro Martins and Sis. Peju, two worldly and materialistic Christians, are left behind as the rapture takes place.

In *The Last Generation*, Baba is really worried over the state of the church, which he fears has been undone by worldliness and materialism. The manner, in which Bride allows her garment of righteousness to be soiled by the stain of sin without knowing, is the way many Christians are defiled without taking notice of it. They may appear to be God fearing but as much as their hearts have become worldly, Jesus Christ would not accept them as he returns back to earth.

In fact, worldliness and materialism, because they could rob people of true spirituality, are capable of predisposing Christians to spiritual aridity. Spiritual aridity breeds all forms of secular practice in the church. The void that is created because of the absence of true spiritual practices in essence would need to be filled otherwise. This leads logically to the theme of syncretic practices in the church developed in two of the plays being discussed in this paper.

### **Syncretic Practices in the Church**

Members of the Apata Fraternity are hostile to Makinde in *The Church is the Problem* by Samuel O. Ayodele. They would want him to go along with them in their anti-Christian programmes. As leaders of the church, they have dictated the pace of events in the church. They have used their diabolical powers to exert an unwholesome influence on almost everybody apart from the youths. In their activities, we find the problem of syncretism in the church. Syncretism in the church is therefore, not a preserve of a distant eschatological era. As treated by Samuel O. Ayodele in *The Church is the Problem*, syncretism in the church is a contemporary problem

in the body of Christ in Nigeria. If it was a topical issue when the play was written and produced in 1973, we cannot say that the church has purged itself of the spiritual deadwoods, some of whom may still be occupying enviable positions of authority in the church.

Makinde assumes pastoral care of the church and comes in conflict with Chief Begunde and colleagues in the Apata Fraternity who woo him to join their rank and file. But he declines their overtures. They want to blackmail him. Because they have contributed towards his university education in the United States of America, they feel they must bring him under control. Makinde, however, determines to resist them and expose their cultic practices in the church. But they would not repent from their nefarious activities. Rather they would want the pastor to recognize the cult as an arm of the church. To legitimize their existence in the church, Chief Begunde makes a donation of a piano in the name of the Apata Fraternity which Makinde rejects. They decide to get even with the pastor. But they cannot intimidate Makinde. In rejecting the gift he observes:

...I refuse, most especially, to be the tool of men of two worlds who serve the Lord and bow secretly to another deity in the dark... We need a piano perhaps, in addition to the organ we already have. But we would prefer that such a piano comes through people whose souls are not divided, who are committed to a yet unknown god (viii).

Makinde is critical of the Apata Fraternity from the beginning to the end of his speech at the ceremony at which the piano is rejected. He even warns members of the church to dissociate themselves from those who belong to groups that operate in the dark. About such secret groups he warns:

And let all who are here know that should such groups attempt to frighten me with their perfidious mask, I will be ready to slap it to pieces (ix).

One factor, which is very critical in Makinde's speech, is the issue of people who have adopted double faces in the worship of God. They have a public side to their service of God and a "hidden agenda". As it is always the case, whoever serves any god other than the living God commits idolatry, which is a kind of spiritual whoredom. Since members of the Apata Fraternity would not accept any rebuke nor learn from their pastor, they embark on plans to destroy him, and each time they try, it backfires on them. Chief Begunde suffers mostly in this regard. At first they bring a bundle of charm, which they hide in Makinde's pantry. But Rev. Makinde burns it without coming to any hurt. Later, they invoke demonic powers against him which try to strangle him to death. But then he only suffers from a nightmarish experience. He is relieved as he meditates on the word of God. Chief Begunde sends a poisoned jug through his wife, Janet, to Makinde and she kills herself as the jug is used in serving her water first. Finally, Begunde hires Agoro and other assassins to kill Makinde, but they end up murdering Bakare.

In the end, Makinde's life is preserved. But members of the Apata Fraternity do not learn their lesson. They want the adulterated method of religious worship they had introduced in the church to continue. They would not repent and change even as they are confronted with the truth. They would want to persist in darkness even as they are exposed to light. The coming of Makinde, however, forestalls the great disservice they would have continued to do to the cause of Christ. In this way, their nefarious influence over other members of the congregation is curbed. But prior to the era of Makinde, it is obvious that members of the Apata Fraternity enjoyed the power they held over others. Their real pleasure in possessing extra powers perhaps lay in the havoc they could wreak on others. Evangelist Jeremiah had other reasons for combining idol worship with his office as an evangelist.

The life and ministry of Evangelist Jeremiah is full of contradictions. When we first meet him, ironically, he is conducting a catechism class in his church on the Ten Commandments. He, however, emphasizes the first Commandment which warns against idolatry, his own secret sin. Evangelist Jeremiah, though he wears a religious cloak, is vulnerable to some vices. His real nature is revealed in the face of his confrontation with Elder Nwafor who would have him retired from the services of the church. Elder Nwafor says that people are deserting the church because of the un-Christian activities of Evangelist Jeremiah. He also accuses him of killing pastor Pius Eze.

When Evangelist Jeremiah makes some incantations as he takes snuff, we see a traditionalist in an evangelist. His behaviour is an anathema to his calling. But Jeremiah would do more than this. The incantations are to ward off the spell that he alleges that Elder Nwafor cast on him. He agrees to forget about his exalted position as the church Evangelist and goes to lead the dancers in the Eke-Ekpe dance at the Ikeji festival. To prepare himself to lead the dance, Jeremiah is fortified against occult charms. A medicine man performs a sacrifice on behalf of all the dancers including Evangelist Jeremiah. Because of this incident, he is retired from active service.

It is after Evangelist Jeremiah is retired that we find him exhibit his true colour. The retired evangelist has his idols, he secretly worships on a daily basis. While he is in the church he is a man of God. But who would have known what Jeremiah was doing? Ndubuisi, as he falls in love with Rebecca, Evangelist Jeremiah's daughter, decides to go to him to seek his consent for her hand in marriage. He is surprised to stumble on him in his juju room. He catches Evangelist Jeremiah red-handed worshipping his gods. Initially, Evangelist Jeremiah shows remorse but later he justifies his action in the following words:

I'm ashamed you caught me, my son. But we can't survive in this village without being like the rest. I don't want to die now. I still have many years ahead, I hope (61).

There is no excuse Jeremiah would give for what he does. As a man of God who is already seventy-two years old, the fear of death should not have been allowed to come between him and the true service to God. Although, he is used to confessing the protective powers of God, he does not truly show real faith in God. In real life, Jeremiah has his confidence in the tangible idols he could lay his hands on and on the charms he could carry along.

Evangelist Jeremiah adds several dimensions to the worship of God which are outside the scope of the church. Some churches may be bedevilled by the likes of Evangelist Jeremiah presiding over several sacraments. The likes of Chief Begunde and his colleagues in the Apata Fraternity, Ogubor, Apesin and Bakare may even be deacons or members in some church council. All such cases would equate with the proverbial situation of the blind leading the blind. But since in Christian belief system, judgment or accountability is required of every human action; people who mix other things with the worship of God would be liable to judgment some day.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has been an attempt to present the treatment of the themes: demonology, worldliness and materialism and syncretic practices, in the church in Nigeria. The treatment of all the themes has demonology as the bedrock. People, who look at life from a spiritual perspective, define all events in their lives in the light of the conflict between Satan and God. We have depicted the conflict between Satan and God and how it is manifested in the theatre of human lives. We have also depicted the essence of Christian literature by explicating relevant themes in the plays chosen for this discourse.

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