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## **SPIRIT POSSESSION IN EVANGELISM**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

Spirit possession is associated with good and bad Spirits. The good spirits comes in loving relationship while the bad is to be cast out. There has been confusion concerning the manner of casting out or healing in the churches. Those who practice it, want to link their practices to the ministry of Jesus. There are frequent testimonies to divine healing at evangelism campaigns, however, there are small number of definite miracles of healing compared to the great numbers who were prayed for. The healing may be termed ‘miraculous’ in the sense of being a wonderful sign of God’s activity. The findings from the research, was that the healing was real. Some miracles were instantaneous, others take some time to manifest. The miracles lead to conversion of the individual. The method adopted in the research is critical analysis and socio-religious.

**Key Words:** *Evangelism, Spirit and Conversion.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The concept of Spirit possession exists in many religions, including Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and African religions. Depending on the cultural context in which it is found, possession may be considered voluntary or involuntary and have beneficial or detrimental effects (Clarke, 2006). Spirit possession is a paranormal or supernatural event in which it is said that spirits, gods, demons, animas, extraterrestrials entities or other disincarnate beings take control of a human body, resulting in noticeable changes in health and behavior (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia). Spirit possession can be mild or violent depending on the occasion in which it occurred. In the Bible context Acts 9:4-6 show violent possession while Acts 10:3, and 11 show mild possession.

In the Bible context, John Gospel 6:44-69 the spirit draws one to itself. In 1 Corinthians 3:16-23 the spirit dwells in believers because they are his temple. The woman with issue of blood for twelve years was drawn to Jesus, she said, “if I can touch even his garments, I shall be made well”. Immediately, she touched the garment the hemorrhage ceased, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease Luke 8:43-48, Mark 5:25-30. Again, in Mark 5:22-23 Jairus one of the rulers of the Jewish Synagogue was drawn to Jesus saying, “my little daughter is at the point of death. Asking him to come and lay his venerable hands on her, so that he may recover. Report came shortly that the child had died Mark5:35-42 but Jesus went with him and he spoke to the dead child spirit and it came back to life.

Spirit possession can be categorized under subjective research. On the subject of ritual healing, spirit possession is both a symptom and a cure for various types of illnesses that descend mostly upon women, men can sometimes fall victim. The women who become possessed are usually either married or prostitutes. Once both native and Western treatments have failed to cure a woman’s illness, it is commonly recognized that some supernatural force must be the cause rather than a natural, physical phenomenon (Cruz cited 12/23/2011). Other possessed women

then help her use the treatment of trances in order to control her symptoms, just as they themselves received aid when their own illnesses could not be cured in any other way. Those symptoms, depending on the type of spirit present, may be any sort of unexplained illness from headaches to violent vomiting.

The purpose of the trance is for the women to “enter into a contractual relationship with the spirit responsible for her lapse in health. In order to control future attacks from the spirits, trances must be used continually to prevent relapse into sickness, which requires regular attendance to meetings with other possessed members, and hence the formation of various spirit possession cults (Boddy, 1988).

The possessed person is in a state of dissociated personality, part of his consciousness is in abeyance. Spirit possession is different from ‘loss of memory’, the dissociated state in spirit-possession (often called ‘trance’) is of brief duration. When the normal consciousness is regained the subject has no recollection of what he did, said, observed or felt while possessed. The dissociated closely resembles that which operates in sleep-walking and hypnotism (Field, 1969).

The possession fit, or trance first exhibits a daze, mute inaccessibility and second excitement leading to dancing, singing, running and prophesying. The excitement aspect is conspicuous and dramatic. It does happen that the spirit comes upon someone in the act of dancing, there is no cessation of this activity, leading to sudden burst of energy. Diviners, priests and mediums often have some control over the duration of their trances and to come out of them conveniently (Field, 1969). The one often possessed becomes capable of answering questions, he is the channel of communication with the divine. When it is discovered that an individual is often possessed, he/she will be invited for training. The training will move him from the state of being a novice to an adept.

The difference between the novice and the adept is that the former is usually incapable of any speech except perhaps a meaningless babble. After weeks, months or even years of mute trances, the power of speech gradually arrives. The subject is then regarded as the mouthpiece of unseen powers. When he becomes capable of answering questions he is the channel of communication with the divine

## **RELIGION FROM SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH**

Faith is universal. Whether one is a Christian, Muslim or Buddhist simply depends on where the person is born. There is religious diffusion around the globe (Dan Brown, 2001). Ordinary religious believer follows the conventional observances of his country, whether it be Christian, Mohammedan or Buddhist. His religion has been made for him by others, communicated to him by tradition, determined to fixed forms by imitation, and retained by habit (William James, 2013).

Sociologists classify social institutions as primary and secondary. The primary social institutions are the economy, the political system, and the military establishment. According to conflict theory, these three social institutions dominate our society.

The secondary social institutions are the others: family, education, religion, sports, medicine, law, science, and the mass media. As the name implies, they are secondary in power, and, as conflict theorists stress, these secondary social institutions exist to serve the primary ones. Education socializes children (and adults) into values that support the current social class arrangement and train workers to serve the ruling elite. The religious institution instills patriotism and acceptance of the current arrangement of power (Henslin, 2005).

Religious field can be divided into institutional and personal religion. One branch of religion keeps the divinity, another keeps man most in view. Worship and sacrifice, procedures for working on the dispositions of the deity, are the essentials of religion in the institutional branch. William James said, “were we to limit our view to it, we should have to define religion as an external art, the art of winning the favour of the gods”. In the more personal branch of religion it is on the contrary the inner dispositions of man himself which form the center of interest, his conscience, his deserts, his helplessness, his incompleteness. And although the favour of the God, as forfeited or gained, is still an essential feature of the story, and theology plays a vital part therein, yet the acts to which this sort of religion prompts are personal not ritual acts, the individual transacts the business by himself alone, and the ecclesiastical organization, with its priests and sacraments, and other go-betweens, sinks to an altogether secondary. The relation goes direct from heart to heart, from soul to soul, between man and his maker (William James, 2013).

The name ‘religion’ should be reserved for the fully organized system of feeling, thought, and institution, for the Church, of which personal religion is a fractional element. Personal religion can be called ‘conscience’ or ‘morality’. Churches, when once established, lived at second-hand upon tradition; but the founders of every church owed their power originally to the fact of their direct personal communion with the divine. Not only the superhuman founders, the Christ, the Buddha, but all the originators of Christian sects have been in this case; - so personal religion should still seem the primordial thing, even to those who continue to esteem it incomplete (William James).

There are other things in religion chronologically more primordial than personal devoutness in the moral sense. Fetishism and magic seem to have preceded inward piety historically. And if fetishism and magic be regarded as stages of religion, one may say that personal religion in the inward sense and the genuinely spiritual ecclesiastics which it founds are phenomena of secondary or even tertiary order. But, quite apart from the fact that many anthropologists- for instance Frazer- expressly oppose “religion” and “magic” to each other, it is certain that the whole system of thought which leads to magic, fetishism, and the lower superstitions may just as well be called primitive science as called primitive religion. The question thus becomes a verbal one again; and our knowledge of all these early stages of thought and feeling is in any case so conjectural and imperfect that farther discussion would not be worth while (William James).

William James define religion as: “the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine”. Since the relation may be either moral, physical, or ritual, it is evident that



out of religion in the sense in which we take it, theologies, philosophies, and ecclesiastical organizations may secondarily grow.

According to James, we escape much controversial matter by this arbitrary definition. But still, a chance of controversy comes up over the word “divine”, if we take the definition in too narrow a sense. There are systems of thought which the world usually calls religious, and yet which do not positively assume a God. Buddha himself stands in place of a God; but in strictness the Buddhistic system is atheistic or another traditional religion.

The term “divine” applies to an object that is “godlike”, whether it be a concrete deity or not. Gods are conceived to be first things in the way of being and power. They overarch and envelop, and from them there is no escape. What relates to them is the first and last word in the way of truth. Whatever then were most primal and enveloping and deeply true might at this rate be treated as godlike, and a man’s religion might thus be identified with his attitude, whatever it might be, toward what he felt to be the primal truth. For common men “religion”, whatever more special meanings it may have, signifies always a serious state of mind (William James, 2013),

### **Functions of Religion**

Religion made man not to be disenchanted with ordinary life.

Christianity and Buddhism are essentially religions of deliverance, the man must die to an unreal life before he can be born into the real life.

Religion divides the world into two, the natural and the spiritual or sacred and profane.

Unhappiness will take the form of moral remorse and compunction, if the individual be of tender conscience and religiously quickened. Religious melancholy and “conviction of sin” have played a large part in the history of Protestant Christianity.

Religion made one to be morally upright.

Religion is one of the ways in which men gain happiness.

Since mankind has existed, wherever life has been, there also has been the faith that gave the possibility of living. Faith is the sense of life, that sense by virtue of which man does not destroy himself, but continue to live on. It is the force whereby we live. If man did not believe that he must live for something, he would not live at all. The idea of an infinite God, of divinity of the soul, of the union of men’s actions with God- these are ideas elaborated in the infinite secret depths of human thought. They are ideas without which there would be no life.

God is conceived as what life is, God is the supreme Spirit or power, selfhood, good will. The nature of the deity (God) is rational. Belief in this God is possible in contrast to feeling. The name stands for conception or thought. Christian knowledge of this God comes by faith (Russell, 1999).

### **CONVERSION AND MELANCHOLY**

If change be a religious one, we call it a conversion, especially if it be by crisis, or sudden. Man possesses certain habits or ideas whether central or peripheral before conversion. To say

that a man is “converted” means, in these terms, that religious ideas, previously peripheral in his consciousness, now take a central place, and that religious aims form the habitual centre of his energy. What brings the changes about is the way in which emotional excitement alters. Conversion among adolescence in evangelical circles normally takes place between fourteen and seventeen. The symptoms of the conversion as was observed by Prof Starbuck of California are: the sense of incompleteness and imperfection; brooding, depression, morbid introspection, and sense of sin, anxiety about the hereafter and distress over doubts. And the result is the same- a happy relief and objectivity, as the confidence in self gets greater through the adjustment of the faculties to the wider outlook.

In spontaneous religious awakening, apart from revival examples, and in the ordinary storm and stress and moulting- time of adolescence, there may be mystical experiences, astonishing the subjects by their suddenness, just as in revival conversions. The analogy, in fact, is complete; and Starbuck’s conclusion as to these ordinary youthful conversions would seem to be the only sound one. Conversion is in its essence normal adolescent phenomenon, incident to the passage from the child’s small universe to the wider intellectual and spiritual life of maturity (William James).

“Theology”, says Starbuck, “takes the adolescent tendencies and builds upon them; it sees that the essential thing in adolescent growth is bringing the person out of childhood into the new life of maturity and personal insight. It accordingly brings those means to bear which will intensify the normal tendencies. It shortens up the period of duration of storm and stress”. The conversion phenomena of “conviction of sin” last, by this investigator’s statistics, about one fifth as long as the periods of adolescent storm and stress phenomena of which he also got statistics, but they are very much more intense. Bodily accompaniments, loss of sleep and appetite, for example, are much more frequent in them. “The essential distinction appears to be that conversion intensifies but shortens the period by bringing the person to a definite crisis (E.D.Starbuck: *The Psychology of Religion*, pp.224,262) in William James.

The conversions which Starbuck has in mind are of course mainly those of very common place persons, kept true to a pre- appointed type by instruction, appeal, and example. In Catholic Lands, for example, and in the Episcopalian sects, no such anxiety and conviction of sin is usual as in the sects that encourage revivals. The Sacraments being more relied on in these more strictly ecclesiastical bodies, the individual’s personal acceptance of salvation needs less to be accentuated and led up to.

Prof Leuba, in a valuable article on the psychology of conversion (*Studies in the Psychology of Religious Phenomena*, *American Journal of Psychology*, VII. 309 (1896) subordinates the theological aspect of the religious life almost entirely to its moral aspect. The religious sense he defines as “the feeling of unwholeness, of moral imperfection, of sin, to use the technical word, accompanied by the yearning after the peace of unity”. The word ‘religion’ Leuba says, “is getting more and more to signify the conglomerate of desires and emotions springing from the sense of sin and its release”; and he gives a large number of examples, in which the sin ranges from drunkenness to spiritual pride, to show that the sense of it may beset one and crave relief as urgently as does the anguish of the sickened flesh or any form physical misery. This conception

covers a number of cases, a good example is Mr. S.H.Hadley, who after his conversion became an active and useful rescuer of drunkards in New York (William James).

He joined alcoholic anonymous association (AA) to help save victims of heavy drinking or those who want to recover from drunkenness.

The two main phenomena of religion, namely, melancholy and conversion, are essentially phenomena of adolescence. The word melancholy is defined by Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary as 'sadness or low spirits'. The adjective of it is low-spirited condition or condition causing sadness such as mental illness. Melancholy is a traditional term for the contemporary expressed word 'depression' (Donald Capps, 1997). Melancholy situation allows the young adult for a return to his origins, especially a revisiting of the separation process. The young or mature adult look back on earlier struggles he went through in life. As a young adult he struggled with grievances relating to the commitments he made in young adulthood, especially commitments that were religious in nature. The adults have a tendency to blame their early decisions on mothers or fathers for poor outcomes (Capps, 1997).

This reflection of Rev. Obuna will be considered under melancholy "I entered junior seminary at the age of 13. It was my father's idea, not mine. For a man with a family of nine, I could see his reasons: the seminary was the nearest post-primary institution around, the fees were low compared to an ordinary secondary school, and the staff was first class. I had vague ideas in my head about the kind of career I was going to choose after school but the priesthood was not top of my list. Since I still had five years in which to make up my mind, I decided I might as well accept my father's decision and so I went. Eleven years later, the reverse became the case. He wanted me out but I wanted in. He had a big plan for the family and had carved out a major role for me to play in it, but I wasn't playing. The decision he took as a matter of convenience to send me to the junior seminary, concerning which, I was indifferent at the time, had now crystallized into a vocation of life-time commitment.

All that makes me want to sit back and reflect about all the young boys whom we admit into our seminaries all over the country today. Here you are with a couple of hundred of young lads from various family backgrounds who are probably here for various reasons quite other than the priesthood. Some are from pagan families strongly opposed to the idea of their son becoming a priest but wise enough to tolerate it until he obtains a suitable certificate to go somewhere else. The other side of the coin is those from very Christian parents who are here because their parents want them to be. The problem of course is that it is the parents who have the vocation. Then of course you have those who start off so full of zeal and so intense in their efforts that you almost feel they should be ordained overnight. For anyone who wishes to classify these young lads into groups and label them, the list is endless"(Emmanuel Obuna, 1983).

Comments on the above reflections: he said his father sent him to the seminary, but at the age of thirteen could he make much choice? He couldn't because he was too young. His father's idea was to receive education, whether in the seminary or elsewhere. He was not sure of what seminary education was about, but it was education. His father wanted him out later but the Holy Spirit wanted him to remain. However, this author knew of somebody who was a priest, left after ten years, studied in Europe with a Doctorate Degree. He claimed it was his father who sent him

to the seminary. Therefore, saying his father sent him to seminary is a kind of regret, which is melancholy.

Here is another melancholy case, Maggie was a nun for twenty-one years before she asked for dispensation of vow. During that period she claimed to be the bride of God having taken vows in the religious order. She had never fallen in love in all her adult life, since she had entered convent. She kept on praying to God not to allow her love any man. Nuns don't fall in love in principle. They are already married to God. However, some nuns leave the convent. Nuns were not ordinary women, they were under God's protection. They wear habits to remind other people of who they were and to keep a distance. However, Everett touched something in Maggie that she had no idea would ever happen. She didn't want to get too attached to any man. There was no distance between Maggie and Everett. She was willing to be Everett's friend. Everett claimed he loved Maggie since the moment he met her. Everett was a journalist, photographer floating around the world and was recovering alcoholic. Maggie was a nun and nurse, she had a brother who left priesthood after ten years. His brother never had as strong vocation. The minute he met his wife, he was out of the hood (or habit). He was never disturbed that he left the ministry. She said, if God put her on his brother's path, it was meant to be. She wonder if a recovering alcoholic and a nun can be happy together. She blame her failure to her brother 's loss of vocation (Danielle, 2007).

John G. Lake (2009) writes, "one day, as a young man, God brought me in to see my own need when I needed healing from heaven. There was no body to pray for me, and I was not even a Christian in the best sense of being a Christian. I was a member of a Methodist Church, but I had seen God heal one dear soul, who was very dear to me. As I sat alone one day, I said, "Lord, I am finished with the doctor and with the devil. I am finished with the world and the flesh, and from today I lean on the arm of God". I committed myself to God; and God almighty, right there and then, though there was no sign of healing or anything else, accepted my consecration to him. That disease that had struck on my life and almost killed me for nearly nine years was gone. It was chronic constipation. The place of strength and the place of victory is the place of consecration to God. John G. Lake later became a church minister and a powerful healing evangelist in the twentieth century. His life's work included countless conversions, healings, and deliverances, as well as the establishment of hundreds of churches and ministries (Liardon, 2009).

As Goethe at the age of 75 in 1824, affirm, "against the course of my existence, at the bottom it has been nothing but pain and burden. I have not had four weeks of genuine well-being. It was but the perpetual rolling of a rock that must be raised up again forever" (William James, 2013). It is human to look at the past, Paul of Tarsus recollected his conversion as a defense in Acts 21:38-40, 22: 1-16. Augustine recognized his mother, Monica, and not his father, Patricius, as the strong counter player in his religious struggles. The young Martin Luther also blamed his mother for his "poor outcomes" (Capps, 1997). He said the mother was a strict disciplinarian, his mother caned him for stealing a nut, until blood came. Such strict discipline drove him to the monastery (Bainton, 1960). Man's nature has three departments: spirit, soul and body. The secular person thinks of working hard all his life, building something, and while he's doing it thinks that some day he will pass it on to his child. His daddy passed his business on to him and



he will figure passing it to his son or daughter (Nora Roberts, 1998). This is the way to keep body and soul together.

The spiritual man thinks of certain experiences he encountered that change his nominal religious life to an ardent or zealous one. As John G. Lake (2009) wrote, “God has let me see healings in every way that human eyes can see them. I have seen the Spirit of God flash around the room, just like the lightning. I have seen God come as the tender bud when nobody knew He was there. I have seen people healed in the audiences when cancers would melt away.

Globally in all Christian sects people are claiming to have experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit in their life. Apostle Samuel E. Ogbonmwan the founder of Christ Apostolic Church of God Mission became blind when he was in the primary school. His parents took him to different fetish healers in the 1940s. When he was fed up with fetish healers, he decided to join the near by Church, the Christ Apostolic Church. He was very good in singing and playing band, so he joined the choir. The church member were interested in his melodious voice, he was baptized in 1957.

After few years in the ministry, he decided to fast because of his visual impairment. On the third day of the hunger strike, he felt a hand touching his eyes. He heard a voice telling him it did not matter, if his sight was not restored. The voice was so soothing that it gave him joy. On the sixth-day of the fast, the invisible person came to meet him. He touched his eyes with both hands. He fell into a trance, became enticed by prayer. A miraculous conversion had taken place. He was now much more than a mere church member. A few days after this incident, a man who had stomach ache was brought to him for prayer. He prayed for him, he came the following day to say that he had been healed. A lot of other miracles were daily being wrought by this man of God. God works miracles through his children (Mark 16:17-20, Isaiah 8:18). Obakpolor (2007) indicated that Samuel Ogbonmwan was touch by an invisible person or by a mysterious person. This invisible person came to him in a dream and the Church members interpreted it as a holy spirit. The real healing was that something occurs that releases the faith of the individual, a flash of divine power was observed (Liardon, 2009).

### **Spirit Possession and Evangelism**

There are two types of possessive spirits, the good and the bad. The good spirits are: God, Angels, the gods, and ancestor spirits, while the bad are: demons, earthly spirits, sky spirits and magical spirits. C.S. Mueller (1965) divided evangelism into three parts; preparation, evangelism and post-evangelism. Preparation of the message is the first step. Evangelism is sowing, telling, confessing and applying. Post-evangelism is the business of the evangelism board. They can at least encourage other congregational boards, committees, and members to reach out in love to those who share their faith. The word gospel means “Good News” and the word evangelism derives from the Greek word ‘evangelion’ which means to proclaim the good news with authority and power (Osagiede, 2005).

In the field of evangelism, pre-evangelism is everything that gets a person ready to hear the reconciling and redeeming word. There are many lumps, rocks, and patches of hard soil that resist the seed of God’s word. A man may have to experience many things before he is

personally ready to receive the seed and profit from an evangelism encounter. He may have to be shown much before he is prepared to profit from God's good word (Mueller, 1965).

Spirit possession is identified in evangelism when Pastor midway through the sermon felt a force/energy or Holy Spirit rise up in him. He may lose control or move away from the message prepared from home, they (congregation) always knew when it happened as was reported by Rev. Johnson. At that moment he would get hot, hotter than normal. Even his voice changed. Then the words would just pour out of him. The pastor come from behind the pulpit and stared out at the congregation. The people knew the Spirit was upon him (Michael, 2008). This was like what happened to Zechariah in (Luke 1:13-22).

Spirit is defined as, the animating or vital principle in man, the breath of life (Ogbenika, 2011). The words for spirit and breath were the same in Greek 'pneuma' and in Hebrew 'ruach', an independently existing non-material being. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines "spirit" as 'soul', immaterial, or moral part of man. A common expression in English is, 'The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak'. In the Christian tradition, the third person of the Trinity is the Holy Spirit.

All Christians receive Holy Spirit through baptism and confirmation (or regeneration). According to John G. Lake (2009: 160) there are degrees of the measure of the spirit of God in men's lives. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a greater measure of the spirit of God, but every man has a degree of the Holy Spirit in his life. It is the spirit in one's life that gives him faith in God.

Geographical area is a primary concern in evangelism, churches should serve area they can readily cover. When a congregation tries to cover an overly large area, the regular close contact will be lacking. When the geographical area of primary concern is overly large, it takes more time to see fewer people (Mueller, 1965). Some preachers wanting to cover a large area embark on itinerant preaching, both in the churches and open air. John Wesley was ecstatic and invigorated by the experience of preaching either in the church or open air. The early Wesleyans were referred to as "enthusiasts", the Greek interpretation of "enthusiast" was "possession by a divine spirit" (Liardon, 1984).

Media-evangelism is not limited to one geographical location. It is one of the wonders of the contemporary world. In this contemporary time almost all the churches are airing their programme on the television (Kennedy 1969). The goal of Tele-evangelism is primarily to show how mass media could be a veritable instrument for modern evangelism. Evangelism means exposure to the world. Tele-evangelism is one of the technological devices to actualize this exposure (Mueller, 1969). Tele-evangelism takes the gospel via satellite, making it an electronic church. The other evangelism methods are revival, crusade, retreats, seminars, workshops, conferences, conventions, handbills, posters, magazines, billboards, journals, tracts and the preacher delivers his message from the pulpit while the seat in pews. Different messages comes from the pulpit, message of the cross (1 Cor. 1 :17-18), prosperity message and messages about healing 'miracles' depending on the personality of the preacher. There are stage-managed and make believe 'miracles' of healing (Olawale, 2010). Howard (1997) proved the some healing miracles are fake as observed in the Cerullo healing crusade in India in October 17<sup>th</sup> 1993. John

G. Lake believe very much in miracles and to him the days of miracles are not past. He said some miracles are instantaneous (Acts 4: 3-31) but others are not like (Luke 17:14) healing of ten lepers. Lake has healed many people and his ministry has divine healing Institute (Liardon, 2009). The spirit is the part that contacts the Lord. Faith is the product of your spirit.

Spirit possession in the form of ecstatic experience happens mostly in dance, dramatic, expressive or theatrical aspect of worship (1 Samuel 10:5,10). The spirit draws one to the Christian life John 6: 44. The spirit filled God's loved ones Luke 1:15,67, Acts 2:4, Isaiah 6:2, 4. The Biblical editors preferred the term 'filled' to possession. Spirit possession in evangelism in this paper is mainly about people coming out for healing during revivals and crusades. In the ancient time, there were no hospitals so almost all sickness was attributed to demons. The Bible editors referred to those sick as being possessed by demon (Acts 8:7,11-12). The spirit took possession of the woman or the spirit drew he to Jesus, she said, "if I could touch his garment (Mark 5:27-29, Mat. 9: 20-21). The demon went out of those possessed of a devil (Mat. 19:12, 32-33).

God is a Spirit. Jesus received from the father the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33). He was empowered to administer the transcendent glory-power to all who would receive the saving power. The empowering of the Christian soul from on high is the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit by Jesus Christ (Liardon, 2009).

The negative aspect of spirit possession: A Christian should not simply live by gratifying his appetite by eating and drinking ( 1 Cor. 9:27) If one continue to satisfy the flesh, he will lose out spiritually. A Christian should not practice harlotry (1 Cor. 6:15-16). This passage could refer to more than sexual affair, it could mean money, gluttony and some other things. The use of bad magic or hypnotist technique to deceive other people like Elymas, the magician (Acts 13: 7-10 and Simon who practiced magic Acts 8:9-24)

Some denominations tolerate the use of medicine, because medical Doctors and healers are seen by them as God's instruments. The Missionaries opened hospitals in the 1940s in Africa as part of modernization and evangelization. Syncretistic practices are common in Africa, a situation where people mixed Christianity with African traditional ideas or philosophy.

As was written by J.P. Timmons some Christians seeking for worldly power visit magicians, who possesses dark kingdom power. He gave example of testimony of Evangelist Emmanuel Omoobajesu who went to Ikare in Akoko area of Ondo State to a man who knew about making money and who claimed he could help him. They were six in number who went to consult this man on the same issue. The man asked them, "what type of money do you wish to have? He then began to show them the different methods by which men get rich quickly in the dark world. It was Satan's ways of keeping man in bondage by enticing them. Some of them said, 'Any type would do'. "He brought out something, and asked each of them to swallow"(Timmons 2008). This is not an attempt to repeat all in the story. It is simply to say there are Christians looking for power outside the faith. The Christians should learn to live their life by practicing the spiritual gifts (ICor. 12:1-25).

Some Christians want to still from the church; a group of church officers approached their Pastor and gave him some money stolen from their church collections, money that was expected to be surrendered en-bloc to the church authority. Their argument was that it was God's money and that they and the Pastor are children of God. Any action that one cannot perform before others falls short of holiness and should be avoided (Rom. 2:2) Osagiede (2004). They decided to return the money because their conscience disturbed them or did not agree with their decision to remove it.

Ngugi Wa Thiongo gave a tale of Nding'uri who exchanged his soul for possession of property in Kenya. Nding'uri was a farmer and also had goats. He had a soul that was richly endowed. He was much respected because of the wisdom of his heart and tongue. Many a time he would sacrifice to the good spirits, asking them to deliver him from evils. He was not a lazy man, and he was able to provide enough food to eat and clothes to wear for himself and his family. Hands make a man: this was what he believed.

One day, a strange pestilence attacked the village. The pestilence destroyed all his possessions and struck at his goats in its special pen. He didn't know what to do, even when he sacrificed to good spirits. He said, 'he will not sacrifice to good spirits again, instead he went in search for the demonic spirits. Early one morning he went to a certain cave where evil spirits dwelt. At the cave he saw an Ogre, a strange creature which

h asked his mission and why he did not come with a gift. He told the demon it was poverty that brought him there. The bad spirit told him, he was aware Nding'uri possesses a rich soul. Nothing good is ever born of perfect conditions. The demon promised to give him riches. But he must give him his soul, and never sacrifice to the good spirits. He told the demon, what is a soul? Take my soul. The demon said to him: I have taken possession of it. He was told to home and observe certain conditions. He became rich, mean and cruel afterwards. His character and behaviour altered (Wa Thiongo, 1982). This story is comparable to Job in the Bible, but Job did not sell his soul to the evil spirit but trusted the good spirit of God.

**Religious Mysticism and Varieties:** this concern experiences that defies expression, no adequate reports of its contents can be directly experienced. Mystical state merely add some meaning to the ordinary outward data of consciousness. They are excitements like the emotions of love or ambition, gifts to our spirit by means of which facts already objectively before us fall into a new expressiveness and make a connection with our active life. From philosophical perspective; mystical region or supernatural region is unseen or unreal. The presence of wraiths in human dreams and observed through magical power. Wraiths have been observed to dance circling dance in the night, they do not keep one position long, they dance from place to place. Every wraith moved and changed places constantly. Wraiths are fiery dancers, if one do not disturb the air with anger we will see the dance of the wraiths of Andelain (Stephen, 1977).

#### **Pantheon:**

It was built by Marcus Agrippa in 27 B.C and rebuilt by Hadrian in 119 A.D. .It was the world's largest free-standing dome until 1960. The Pantheon was the oldest Catholic Church in Rome. It got its name from the original religion practiced there- Pantheism- the worship of all gods,



specially the pagan gods of the mother Earth. The Pantheon was the first altar of science. The Vatican had all the statues in the Pantheon removed and destroyed in the late 1800s. The statues were pagan Olympian Gods. A fifth-century theologian once called the Pantheon the House of the Devil' warning that the hole in the roof was an entrance for demons. Demon's hole- mean the oculus, the famous circular opening in the Pantheon's roof. Venerable Bede had written that the hole in the Pantheon's roof had been bored by demons trying to escape the building when it was consecrated by Pope Boniface IV (Brown, 2001).

William James view some religious leaders as “geniuses” in the religious line. Such leaders often show symptoms of nervous instability and they are subject to abnormal psychical visitations. Invariably they have been creatures of exalted emotional sensibility. They have led a discordant inner life and had melancholy during a part of their career. They have known no measure, been liable to obsessions and fixed ideas; and frequently they fallen into trances, heard voices, seen visions, and presented all sorts of peculiarities which are ordinarily classed as pathological. Often, moreover, these pathological features in their career have helped to give them their religious authority and influence (James, 2013).

The Quaker religion was founded by George Fox (1624- 1691), a mystically minded man. He was one of the spiritual seekers of the seventeenth –century England, he renounced the outward forms of religion for a personal, inward quest, inner experience and conscience. George Fox religious genius initiated an important new movement, the society of friends, more generally known as Quakers. Fox was born into a pious Puritan weaver family living in Leicester shine, in England (Ursula king, 2004)

He was an itinerant preacher, traveling on foot, his vigorous prophetic ministry was soon joined by men and women preachers, leading to the founding of local congregations. He opposed nominal Christianity and preached that to be a Christian, one must live like Christ in the world. He taught that there is a light within, open to all, wherein one can experience unity on earth. Salvation involves turning to this light, to Christ, which is both within and transcendent. Thus Fox stressed immediacy and realism in Christian experience. Christ is no figure of the past, of whom we read in a book or whose presence is found in sacramental forms, but is experienced in fellowship, in spiritual communion, “which makes perfect”. He said, “Christ is within thee, the hope of glory”(Ursula, 2004).

Fox went to Lichfield where the word of the Lord came to him. He stood still, for it was winter: but the word of the Lord was like a fire in him. So he put off his shoes and left them with the shepherds; and the poor shepherds trembled, and were astonished, he then worked on about a mile, and as soon as he got within the city, the word of the Lord came to him again, saying: cry, ‘wo to the bloody city of Lichfield?’. Possessed by the spirit he went up and down the streets, crying with a loud voice, ‘wo to the bloody city of Lichfield?. It being market day, he went into the market-place, and to and fro in the several parts of it, and made stands, crying as before, wo to the bloody city of Lichfield? And no one laid hands on him. As he went about crying through the streets, there seemed to him to be a channel of blood running down the streets, and the market –place appeared like a pool of blood. When he had declared what was upon him, and felt himself clear, he went out of the town in piece; and returning to the shepherds gave them some

money, and took his shoes of them again. But the fire of the Lord possessed his feet, and all over him, that it did not matter to put on his shoes again, and was at a stand whether he should or not, till he felt relief from the Lord on what to do: then, after he washed his feet, he put on his shoes again. He called the city, the bloody city for much blood had been shed in the town during the wars. During Emperor Diocletian's time a thousand Christians were martyred in Lichfield. The vision was, he was to go, without his shoes, through the channel of their blood, and into the pool of their blood in the market-place, that he might raise up the memorial of the blood of those martyrs, which had been shed above a thousand years ago, and lay cold in their streets (William James, 2013). William James referred to this as pathological aspects of the study of religion.

### **Conversion**

Early studies in the psychology of religion tended to deal mainly with conversion as a sudden and radical acceptance of Christian faith. The incidence of sudden conversions seems to be less today than it was fifty years ago and recently more attention has been given to the processes underlying gradual changes which culminate in a decisive turning point. Both 'sudden' and 'gradual' conversions are now normally regarded as having a history in the life experience of the concerned individual which extends back beyond the crisis itself. Recent studies have also paid more attention to adult conversions and some have dealt with conversions to other than religious faith (Macquarrie, 1967).

William James said conversion signifies to be regenerated, to receive grace, to gain an assurance, to experience religion, the process could be gradual or sudden in which the self hitherto divided becomes unified. There are some persons today who were in the Catholic Church practicing their faith but after some years converted to Pentecostal churches and after some years again return back to Catholic Church. There are others who move from one Pentecostal Church to another. James gave an example of Stephen H. Bradley who had special conversion experience, at the age of fourteen he saw the saviour (Jesus) by faith, in human shape for about one second in the room. Nine years after 1829, he attended Methodist Church revival, after the revival he experienced the power of the Holy Spirit. The heart beat increased, the spirit took possession of his soul. He felt as if Paul's letter to the Romans 8:26-27 was opened before him. After the experience, he went round to converse with their neighbours. James referred to this experience as transformation (William James, 2013).

Benny Hinn reported apparition of Jesus in his dream while sleeping at the age of eleven at Jaffa in Israel. He said, "the Lord didn't say anything to him. He just looked at him. And then he disappeared. God allowed him to experience a vision that would create an indelible impression on his early life". In the morning he told the mother about the experience, and she said, "he must be a saint". That is, the Lord must be singling him out for a higher calling (Hinn, 2004). He joined the Christian sects when the family moved to Toronto, Canada where he received baptism of the Holy Spirit. As he associated with the Christian sects the Holy Spirit began to manifest in his life in a special way (Hinn, 1997).

Kenneth Hagan said, after being in the ministry for fourteen years, he told his wife what has he been preaching? He went to pray for understanding to be enlightened. Six months after he received revelation from the word of God that it seemed like he was a new brand person. He got

an insight into the knowledge of Jesus as was emphasized in Ephesians 1. It was in the winter of 1947 and 1948 that understanding in line with God's word by the Holy Spirit began to manifest in him. From 1950 through 1959, the Lord Jesus appeared to him eight times, Jesus talked to him for an hour and a half, and brought him further revelation concerning the word of God. One revelation the spirit of God brought to him was the believer's authority in Christ over Satan (Hagin, 1993).

Conversion has the meaning of changing one's route, turning about. In the religious context, it means to be turned away from what is bad and to be turned toward God. That implies a change of conduct, a new orientation of the whole being (Leon Dufour, 1967). The most perfect expression of these sentiments is the Miserere (Psalm 51) where the prophetic teaching of conversion runs through as a prayer: an admission of faults (Ps. 51:5ff), a demand for interior purification (51:3F, 9), a plea for grace which alone can change the heart (51: 12FF).

The call to conversion is one of the basic demands in the New Testament. The summons to conversion is at the heart of the preaching of John the Baptist (Luke 3:3). The call to conversion equally stands at the very beginning of Christ's preaching, "Repent and believe the gospel (Mark 1:15). Humility is the prerequisite to true knowledge of self, to true penance and conversion. Only the humble man has the courage to admit his guilt. "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted" Luke 18:9-14. Conversion entails personal effort and combat against the powers of evil and against everything that may be described as "the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life"(1 John 2:16). Therefore anyone who accepts a slothful peace with the spirit of the world cannot have part in the kingdom of God. "He who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me"(Mat. 10:38), (Peschke 1986).

## Conclusion

William James defined religion as is in this article from his psychological spectacle. He discussed religion from behavioral perspective and was more interested in the people he called "mind cure movement". This "mind cure movement" from my understanding is the Pentecostal Christians. He did not have personal 'religious experience' but was sympathetic toward the testimony of others who claim to have felt God's presence directly (Capps, 1997).

Melancholy and conversion was treated in this article. Melancholy is a psychopathology which refers to chronic- depression. Melancholia is rooted in a boy's loss of his mother's unconditional love. Melancholy was treated in relation to people in religious life having feelings of sadness or discouragement. Conversion was viewed from experience to normal. Some claim to special religious experience before conversion. James cites the religious experience of others to support his argument, but he does not refer directly to any of his own experience of the holy. Other author cited in this article like John G. Lake discussed his conversion experience and the miracles of healing performed in his ministry.

'Healing' is a broad term, its range of meanings includes the restoration of bodily, emotional or mental functioning appropriate to a person's age, the restoration of a subjective sense of well-being in a person, the enabling of a person to handle their relationships constructively and to fit

in acceptably to their society. The 1958 Report of the Archbishop's Commission on The Church's Ministry of Healing was a major Church of England survey recognizing that doctors and priests could both Minister in their different ways to the whole person. It suggested that healing should be understood as 'the enabling of a person to function as a whole in accordance with God's will for them' (Atkinson, 1986). The Pentecostal churches, from their beginnings at the turn of the century in the Holiness movements and the Welsh revival of 1904, have always included the ministry of 'divine healing' as part of their teaching. There is at present a considerable interest in Christian healing.

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