



“Kejetia Preaching”: An Analysis of Contemporary Phenomena of Street Preaching in Kumasi, Ghana

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ABSTRACT

Street preaching/evangelism is one of the activities undertaken by Christians to broadcast or spread the gospel. It is one of the forms of making disciples of all nations and winning souls for Christ in accordance with the Great Commission of making disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:18-20). In Ghana and some other parts of Africa, street preaching is a common phenomenon. Arguably, street preachers have a larger audience than “pulpit preaching” at the Sunday service. While Sunday service preaching is mostly confined to the chapel and focuses on members of a particular church, street preaching targets and reaches people of varied denominational and religious backgrounds. Though a common practice, street preaching comes with a number of theological, ethical and pastoral issues which need scholarly analysis. The purpose of this paper is to critically assess street preaching from theological, ethical and pastoral perspectives and to recommend ways in which potential pitfalls may be addressed. The paper employed qualitative and historical-descriptive research designs to describe the current state of the exercise and its impact on the soul-winning ministry and Christianity in general. In addition to the data collected from the field through interviews and participant observation, the paper used secondary sources such as books, journal articles and dissertations. After a careful analysis of the subject matter the paper established that even though street preaching is a legitimate and effective way of spreading the gospel, it may contribute negatively to the qualitative growth of the church due to the lack of proper theological/ministerial training of most of these preachers and the resulting unbiblical and unethical practices that sometimes characterize this enterprise. To avert the situation, the paper made recommendations for the nation (Ghana), church and preachers to enhance the qualitative growth of the Christian community through effective and biblically-sound preaching.

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INTRODUCTION

For many years now, many souls have been won into Christianity through open-air evangelism or street preaching by pastors, evangelists, Christian organizations and churches. It is, therefore, not new in the contemporary society to spot some Christian brothers and sisters in the streets, on football pitches and in some other open spaces proclaiming the gospel to win souls. This practice is evident throughout the world whereby zealous individual Christians aggressively proclaim the gospel in any available open space. These preachers are motivated by Jesus’ command in Mathew 28:18-20, which demands that Christians preach the gospel to humanity and baptise all those who believe. The command further requires discipleship through teaching converts God’s word. The new convert in turn proclaims the gospel to win souls for Christ. Thus, the cycle of evangelism (soul winning) continues. William Temple’s definition for evangelism is adopted for this paper.

Temple defines evangelism as presenting “Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit so that humanity will have faith in God through him and to receive him as their Lord and saviour, and to serve him as their king in fellowshiping with the church.”¹

Street preaching is one of the common methods used for evangelism; and it is as old as preaching itself.² In the contemporary Ghanaian context, street preaching involves preaching the gospel at such places as lorry stations, streets, markets, community centers and so on. Whether the preacher uses public address systems (such as microphones, speakers and megaphones) or not, they speak very loud.³ Street preaching usually starts early in the morning (at about 5:30am) and ends before noon. Their ministrations generally start with songs and thanksgiving and then proceed to preaching the word of God, after which they ask for financial help in support of their ministries. In most cases, two people are engaged in the enterprise. Whilst one reads the Bible, the other proclaims the message after subjecting the text through ‘hermeneutical’ lens.

The expression “Kejetia Preaching” may be used in the narrow sense to refer to the street preaching that is observed in Kumasi (Ashanti Region) or in the broader sense denote street preaching in any part of Ghana. The narrow sense is used in this paper. The reason for this nomenclature is that apart from higher concentration of street preachers in the Kejetia area, Kejetia is the place where street preaching seems to have started in the Greater Kumasi metropolitan area before it spread to other parts of the city. The reason for this observation is that Kejetia is arguably the busiest area in the metropolis. Currently, street preachers are found across the length and breadth of the Kumasi Metropolis. These preachers operate at advantageous locations/vantage points in order to have encounters with many people. Consequently, they sometimes “fight” over preaching posts. Over the years, “Kejetia preachers” have received criticisms from the general public over the authenticity, effectiveness and ethical validity of some of this Christian enterprise. It is against this backdrop that this paper critically assesses street preaching from theological, ethical and pastoral perspectives and recommends ways in which potential pitfalls can be addressed.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A Brief Account of Christianity in Ghana

Christianity was introduced in Gold Coast (now Ghana) in the 15th century when the Roman Catholic missionaries came with the Portuguese traders.⁴ These missionaries and their successors from Europe (including those from such organizations as the Church of England Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, The Wesleyan Christian Mission, The Bremen Mission and the Basel Mission) lived and worked tirelessly to ensure the planting and growth of the Christian faith in Ghana. The missionaries demonstrated a high level of commitment which resulted in the spread of the faith throughout the country. The evangelical wave began in the coastal areas and spread to other parts of the country. Evangelism, therefore, became the basis for the spread of Christianity in Ghana and in other parts of the West African sub-region.⁵ When the missionaries started establishing churches, they restricted their new converts from involving themselves in traditional festivals which required drumming, clapping and dancing. All such activities (like drumming, clapping and dancing) were banned in mission churches, and new converts were made to adopt “Christian” names at baptism, to enhance their new life in Christ. Most of the missionary strategies contradicted the traditional Ghanaian worldview and practices. Consequently, the missionaries attracted a lot of criticisms from the indigenes who began to search for Ghanaian-brewed Christianity.

This situation led to the search for an African-brewed Christianity that could better cater for the needs of African/Ghanaian converts. The desired brand of Christianity was expected to address the health, spiritual, economic, socio-political and other existential needs of the converts. This search resulted in the emergence of a new strand of Christianity emerged in Africa which emphasized the merger between African religious worldview and the Christian faith. Thus, Ghana experienced massive widespread prophetic and spiritual movement activities between 1900 and 1950, which aimed at addressing the Ghanaian quest for spiritual fulfilment.⁶ Not only did these movements allow indigenous African practices like clapping, drumming and

¹ Michael Green, *What Is Evangelism?* (United Kingdom: Asbury Theological Seminary), 34-47.

² Spurgeon, as cited by Stuart Blythe, “Open-Air Preaching: A Long and Diverse Tradition,” *Perichoresis* no. 1 (2018): 61–80, accessed June 3, 2023, DOI: 10.2478/perc-2018-0004.

³ Michael Temitope Ajayi, *Generic Structure Potential Analysis of Christian Street Evangelism in Southwestern Nigeria* (Department of Linguistics and African Languages University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria), 146-157, accessed June 3, 2023.

⁴ Jones Darkwa Amanor, “Pentecostalism in Ghana: An African Reformation,” *Cyberjournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research* no. 13 (2004): 2-34, accessed June 6, 2023.

⁵ Isaac Boaheng, *A contextual theology of atonement for the Akan community of Ghana* (PhD diss., University of the Free State, 2021), 21-346.

⁶ Amanor, “Pentecostalism in Ghana: An African Reformation,” 14.

dancing, but they also attended to the spiritual needs of the members through the healing and deliverance ministry. The African Initiated/Independent Churches (AICs which were founded by Africans and for Africans),⁷ and *Sunsum Sore* (spiritual churches) attracted a large following. Barrett defined the African Independent/Initiated churches as “A temporary or permanently tribal Christian religious movement with an organized congregation which is either a separatist from the Mission Churches, or already existing African Independent Churches, or founded as a new kind of religious organisation under African leadership who believes in Jesus Christ as Lord.”⁸ These churches were led by charismatic figures who possessed unique spiritual gifts and had significant influence on the society. The *Sunsum Sore* placed substantial emphasis on healing and deliverance, laying of hands, and casting out evil spiritual forces. These churches built pyramidal leadership around their leaders and—as their name suggests—were autonomous in terms of pastoral, theological and hermeneutical practices. However, they had a relationship with the Mission Churches, in the sense that some of these AICs complemented the structure and management of the Mission Churches. Some of the *Sunsum Sore* also had affiliations with the Mission Churches where their ministers were trained and financed. The *Sunsum Sore* were short-lived due to the lack of proper theological education by their leaders, lack of succession plan and extreme practices.

Pentecostalism was the next wave of Christianity after the emergence of AICs and Spiritual movements. J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu considers Pentecostalism as a divine spiritual movement which has gained global and local status. He defines this movement as: “Christian groups who believe in the salvation Christ offers as a transformational experience empowered by the Holy Spirit characterised by spiritual manifestations such as speaking in tongues, prophecies, visions, healing and miracles as historic continuity experiences of the early church led by the apostles in the book of Acts.”⁹

Pentecostalism arrived in Ghana in the early 20th century and gained momentum through the rise of charismatic leaders and the establishment of Pentecostal churches. The movement was motivated by the ministries of such forerunners as William Wade Harris and Sampson Oppong whose ministries demonstrated how African indigenes could be used mightily by God. They emphasized the works of the Holy Spirit and led many to Christ. Pentecostal Christianity has shaped the growth of Christianity in Ghana since the early twentieth century till now.¹⁰ This brand of Christianity emphasizes experiences of the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts, and personal transformation. Pentecostals place higher emphasis on passionate worship, speaking in tongues, physical healing and deliverance from evil spirits. They have become very visible because of their rapid growth, intensive use of media and aggressive evangelism.¹¹ Pentecostal Christianity has had a significant impact on Ghana’s economy and development. For example, the Apostolic Church which was introduced in Ghana by James McKeown in Gold Coast (around 1937) has provided educational scholarships, healthcare services, support for the vulnerable and community development.¹²

Another religious movement that emerged in the 20th century was the Neo-Pentecostal (or Charismatic) movement which came as an offshoot of the Pentecostal movement. This movement emerged in the 1970s, and gained momentum with the leadership of prominent individuals like Archbishop Nicolas Duncan-Williams, Bishop Charles Agyin-Asare, Pastor Mensah Otabil, Eastwood Anaba, Sam Korankye Ankrah and Dag Heward Mills, to mention but a few.¹³ Like the Pentecostals, the Neo-Pentecostal churches demonstrate the power of the Holy Spirit, and the importance of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the life of every believer. Olupona describes this movement as “Evangelical churches founded and led by African leaders, who succumb to radical spiritual conversion usually known as ‘born again’ through Holy Ghost baptism in reference to the day of Pentecost in Acts.”¹⁴ These churches also place emphasis on the speaking of tongues, healing, prosperity, deliverance, and miracles. Today, the Neo-Pentecostal movement continues to flourish through the establishment of charismatic churches, ministries, technology and social media which attract large congregations. These renewal movements are characterized by regular prophetism by their prophets/prophetesses, massive prayer meetings with deliverance services and vigorous singing, clapping and dancing during worship services.

⁷ Amanor, "Pentecostalism in Ghana: An African Reformation," 22.

⁸ As cited in Cornelius A. Olowola, "An Introduction to Independent African Churches," *East African Journal of Evangelical Theology* 3, no. 2 (1984): 21-49, accessed June 15, 2023.

⁹ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 9.

¹⁰ Ogbu Kalu. *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 179.

¹¹ Matthews A. Ojo, "Pentecostalism and Charismatic Movements in Nigeria: Factors of Growth and Inherent Challenges," *The WATS Journal: An Online Journal from West Africa Theological Seminary* no. 1 (2018): 74-94, accessed June 15, 2023.

¹² Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana*, 25.

¹³ Victor Washington, "Neo-Prophetism and the Contemporary Presidential Elections in Ghana" *Afribary* (2018): 1-112, accessed June 15, 2023.

¹⁴ Olupona as cited in Washington, "Neo-Prophetism and the Contemporary Presidential Elections in Ghana," 24-25.

In recent times, a new brand of Christianity has emerged, which may be referred to as “Newer Prophetic Christianity.” This prophetic movement focuses on providing people with spiritual directions. Leaders of this movement flamboyantly dress, and are usually surrounded by security personnel (bodyguards). They frequently visit the spiritual realm and are charismatic figures who have little or no formal theological education. They use indigenous languages (sometimes mixed with little English) to preach. One of the key theological emphasis of this group is prosperity theology which emphasizes material blessings as a sign of God’s favour; this message serves as motivation and encouragement to members.

The various Christian movements take part in street preaching. However, the Pentecostals and Charismatic churches seem to be more involved in this enterprise. Having placed the study in the historical perspective, the next section provides the biblical foundation for preaching by exploring what the Bible says about the act of preaching.

Biblical Perspective on Preaching

The first human beings were ostracised from the garden of Eden as a result of disobedience to God’s command, which boded the relationship between humankind and God (Gen. 3:1-19). It was, however, God’s ultimate agenda to bridge the gap created through sin and to reunite himself with humankind. This agenda of reconciliation is mostly divulged through the proclamation of God’s word (commandments, instructions and messages) to humanity, by his chosen or ordained people (prophets, priests, evangelists and apostles, among others). Preaching is a religious activity that dates back to the Old Testament era, as a means of instruction and communication to God’s people (Israel) and the world at large. Prophecy among Hebrews in the Old Testament serves as a root for Christian preaching, as a medium of communication and proclamation of God’s salvific agenda. Although the pre-monarchy prophets (Noah, Abraham, Moses and Joshua) were transitional administrators, they engaged in the proclamation of the divine truth to other people. In the Old Testament, these words were used in reference to the proclamation of God’s word;

qohelet, “preacher;” *basar*, “to tell good news;” *qara*, “to call or proclaim;” and *qeria*, “preaching.” However, the New Testament (NT) uses the following words; *euangelizo*, “to announce good news;” *keryx*, “herald;” *kerysso*, “to proclaim as a herald;” *diangelo*, “to proclaim or publish abroad;” and *katangelo*, “to proclaim solemnly.” It is therefore the obligation of the preacher or the prophet to communicate the message he/she has received from God. Early evidence in the OT [Old Testament] includes; Enoch’s prophecy (Jude 1:14), and Noah identified as a ‘preacher of righteousness’ (2 Pet. 5:2)¹⁵

Moses proclaimed the word of God to the elders of Israel, concerning the salvation he intended for them, and then declared God’s command to Pharaoh (Ex. 4:21-5:1-2). This is a historical example of “Christian” preaching. After Moses led the freedom campaign of the Israelites and secured their liberty, he frequently met the Israelite congregation and delivered God’s word (instruction and commandments) to them (Ex. 19:1ff, 20:1-26, Deut. 4:1-31; 5:1-22; 28:1-68; 31-33).

Joshua, who took the leadership mantle from Moses, also exhibited a high level of preaching in the form of issuing instructions to the people of Israel, demanding the fear of the Lord and faithfulness to serve him. He exhorted the Israelites to choose and serve the God of Israel over the gods of other nations (Josh. 24:14-16). Subsequently, the Old Testament witnessed a number of prophets who delivered divine revelation from the Lord, and priests who spoke the word. In the dispensation of the Judges, many prophets emerged from the school of prophets who were taught and nurtured by Samuel into the prophetic ministry.¹⁶

In the ninth century BC, a new face of prophets arose in ancient Israel/Judah, who were classified as writing prophets. Their ministry began from the Southern kingdom, and then to the Northern kingdom. The phenomena of Hebrew prophecy, the spoken words of the priests and their counsel prepared the way for Christian preaching. The ability of the prophets and priests to discern and predict events points to the fact that, God had divinely called them and endowed them to proclaim divine word. This does not, however, mean that making accurate prediction is necessarily an evidence that one has been called by God. Each of the prophets had a specific divine call which influenced them to stick to their intended task. Their main task was to proclaim God’s word to the people of the day as antecedent, which served as a foundation for Christian preaching.

Jeremiah was one of the major prophets who was remarkably known for his aggressive proclamation of the word of God. The Lord touched his mouth in a vision and said “I have put my words in your mouth” (Jer. 1:9). He was indeed appointed to proclaim the word of God without fear and trembling, and it is therefore not surprising how he passionately delivered God’s message to the people (Jer. 18:1-17). Prophet Isaiah also

¹⁵ J. S. Baird. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (United States of America: Baker Academic, 2001), 948.

¹⁶ Dennis Phelps, “The Biblical Basis for Christian Preaching” (2011): 10-23, accessed June 8, 2023, http://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/jbtm/06-2_011.

preached about God's readiness to forgive his people and reconcile with them (Is. 1:18-20). He prophesied the coming of the Son of God and the redemption he offers (Is. 9:6-7). In addition, Ezra also studied, and taught the people of Israel God's law, emphasising on the need to obey and do whatever the Law commands (Ezra 7—10).

In the New Testament, John the Baptist is considered a representation of the Old Testament prophetic era. He preached the word of God and baptised people into repentance, being the herald of the coming of Jesus Christ, he testified about Christ and his ministry (Matt. 3:7-12). His preaching won him a lot of disciples who sat under his feet to be taught. Hughes Oliphant Old summed up the ministry of John the Baptist in these words; John the Baptist did not preach because he had a responsibility or pulpit from the society, he was rather a charismatic preacher who was endowed with God's Spirit and raised up like the prophets to preach a unique message. John the Baptist preached in the streets and in the wilderness and people went out to hear him. His style of preaching was pictured in the preaching of the Methodist and the Orthodox churches and like the Pentecostal charismatic preachers of today. The voice crying out in the wilderness was with special intent because it was directly from the Holy Spirit.¹⁷

Jesus immediately stepped in as the greatest preacher of all time after John was imprisoned, he preached about repentance and mainly the coming of the kingdom of God (Matt.4:12-17). Jesus was remarkably engaged in active preaching marked with authority and confidence everywhere he went. Jesus, like John, was a renowned preacher and a voice shouting in the wilderness, Jesus preached in the marketplace, in the mountainous areas, in synagogues and on sea shores to both small groups and vast crowds alike. The preaching of John and Jesus had both similarities and differences in the sense that they both preached the kingdom of God. However, Jesus consciously made it clear that the promises were fulfilled in himself, he spoke of himself as the saviour, the way to God, the good shepherd who cares for the lost sheep, and the redeemer who gives up his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45; Luke 4:18-21; John 10:1-18).¹⁸ On two occasions prior to the Pentecost, Jesus sent his disciples in groups to preach the gospel with instructions on how to carry out the mission (Lk 10:1ff, 22:30ff).

The Christian church was inaugurated on the Day of Pentecost when the promised Holy Spirit fell upon many disciples of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:1ff). The outpouring of the Holy Spirit empowered the disciples for the fulfilment of the Great Commission. The disciples impacted people's lives with the gospel and won multitudes for the Christian faith. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter's preaching won about three thousand souls into the Christian community (Acts 2:13-41). Peter and John sometimes preached in Synagogues about Christ and the repentance of the Jews (Acts 3:11-26). Philip also preached to the Ethiopian eunuch and he was subsequently baptised into the Christian faith (Acts 8:26-40). After Paul's conversion, he did tremendously well in preaching, won a lot of souls and climaxed it with the planting of churches (Acts 12:24ff). After the death of the apostles and their associates, the proclamation of the gospel has continued with varying effects till now.

METHODOLOGY

The paper used a qualitative research approach based on both primary and secondary sources to gather data on contemporary phenomena of street preaching. The authors used participant observation and interviews to gather data on street preaching. The researcher interacted with twenty preachers. The purpose of the research was to discuss, suggest theological principles and make recommendations of preaching to the contemporary phenomena of street preaching. The research used literature sources obtained from journal articles, books, and theses/dissertations. The subsequent sections summarize the main findings, implications, and recommendations derived from the study, and reiterate the importance of studying the contemporary phenomena of street preaching and its relevance in understanding religious and cultural dynamics in public spaces.

ANALYSES AND DISCUSSIONS

Preliminary Observations on Street-Preaching Practices

As noted earlier, street preaching is one of the forms of public evangelism where individuals or groups proclaim religious messages in outdoor spaces such as city streets, parks, and other public squares. The effectiveness, efficacy and reception of street preaching can vary greatly depending on the society's values, beliefs, and attitudes toward public expressions of faith. In most cases especially in Ghana, street preaching is welcomed in Christian communities where a higher percentage of the natives are Christians and a lot of churches around. On the other hand, the case is different in Islamic and traditional communities where Christianity is not favoured by the natives. It is, therefore, presumed that the efficacy, effectiveness and reception of street preaching or public expression of faith in these two different communities would not be the same. Street preaching sometimes

¹⁷ Blythe, "Open-Air Preaching: A Long and Diverse Tradition," 63.

¹⁸ Baird, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 949.

evokes mixed reactions from the public, where some individuals appreciate the opportunity to receive messages about the Christian faith and morality, while others may resist and perceive it as intrusive, aggressive, or unwelcome, depending on the manner and tone in which the message is delivered. At Adum-Kumasi, pedestrians on many occasions engage in verbal confrontations with some of the preachers, because they perceive the preaching to be a personal attack on them. The researchers observed a gentleman who had a heated confrontation with an evangelist in Adum PZ, when the evangelist rebuked his girlfriend for ungodly dressing. Others also insulted the preacher because they perceive the message as flawed.

Preaching can be defined as a major divine means through which the early church communicates the good news to people.¹⁹ This definition collaborates with the idea that street preaching aims to engage a wide range of people who may not otherwise encounter traditional religious settings. It provides an opportunity for unmediated communication between preachers and the public, fostering dialogue, debate, and potential conversions. It is observed from the research that street preachers employ persuasive communication techniques, such as passionate delivery, storytelling, or scriptural references, to capture attention and convey their religious messages effectively.

The use of language, symbols, and nonverbal cues plays a crucial role in engaging and connecting with the audience. Street preachers should, therefore, be mindful of ethical considerations such as respecting personal boundaries, maintaining a peaceful environment, and avoiding the use of hate speech or discrimination. Preachers in Greater Kumasi, have recently adopted the idea of bringing out orphans on the streets to raise funds in support of the vulnerable children. In the course of ministration, they hand over the microphones to the children to plead for help from pedestrians which some deemed unethical.

Theological Education of Street Preachers

For every preacher to be equipped and efficient for ministry, theological education plays a vital role in their development. Theological education is not something new to contemporary Christians, because its evidence is found in the Bible. Education comes from the Latin word “educare” which means “to nurture or nourish,” it implies a conscious attempt to control, guide influence and manage scholarship footing to achieve a desired learning goal.²⁰ In Deuteronomy 6, God instructed every Hebrew father to teach his child the Law as soon as the child could walk and communicate, because presumably there were no textbooks, and the only primary education was the reading and studying of the Law. They were to teach, discuss and memorise the law everywhere they were.

Priests and prophets served as public teachers who taught, interpreted the Law and guided the people of Israel in the way of Yahweh. The Synagogues were used as classrooms for the study of the Torah (Law), where the priest, the scribe, or the prophet would read and interpret the Law to the congregation (who could be considered as students). The scribes served as lawyers and interpreters who settled difficult matters in schools, which were known as; ‘rabbinical schools,’²¹ Their education was more practical than theoretical; teaching God’s commandments is not just enforcing some set of rules, but it is also a guidance to an abundant life.²² Ezra 7 also provides evidence of a man who was a learner and a teacher well versed in the Law. Ezra had devoted himself to studying and observing the Law of the Lord and to teach it in Israel. Scholars in the history of Christian education believe that one cannot compromise on the Hebrew education system to discuss the Christian philosophy of education.²³ William A. Curtis states; “No other country, and no other system of general education, in the world, not even in Greece was endowed with an apparatus of intellectual, historical, literary, moral and spiritual instruction that could be compared with theirs [the Jews].”²⁴

The New Testament is not exempted when placing emphasis on theological education, it provides numerous examples of theological education either informal or formal. Jesus’ disciples once told Jesus to teach them how to pray as John the Baptist taught his disciples (Lk. 11:1-4). It presupposes that John was a Rabbi (teacher) who periodically had lessons with his disciples. Jesus the master teacher, worked widely as a teacher

¹⁹ Ernest W. Pettry. *Preaching and Teaching* (United States of America: Ernest W. Pettry, 2009), 90.

²⁰ Samuel Adetiloye Oloyede, “Exploring the Educational Roles of the Pastor as a Tool for Effective Church Administration” (2020): 1-23, accessed July 4, 2023, DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.24018.38082.

²¹ L. T. Renju and Lobin Linesh, “Religious and Education in the Biblical Times and Post-Biblical Times,” 1, accessed July 6, 2023, https://www.academia.edu/35194976/Religious_and_Christian_Education_in_the_Biblical_times_and_Post_Biblical_times.

²² Leadership Ministries, “Christian Education and Formation Ministry” *Pathways to Congregational Vitality* no. 2 (2011), 1-8, accessed July 4, 2023.

²³ Jeffrey S. McMaster, "The Influence of K-12 Christian Education on Leadership Development" *Dissertations* (2013): 548, accessed July 4, 2023, <https://dx.doi.org/10.32597/dissertations/548/>

²⁴ Liv Fønnebø, “A Grounded-Theory Study of the Teaching Methods of Jesus: An Emergent Instructional Mode” *Dissertations* (2011): 369, accessed July 6, 2023, <https://dx.doi.org/10.32597/dissertations/369/>

around 27-29 CE.²⁵ He had a series of lectures with his disciples, and his teachings have tremendously influenced the religious, social and moral thought of humanity throughout the world. Jesus was incessantly his own authority and interpreter, he could interpret the realities and experiences of life in his own right based on his inner resources and relationship with God, this makes him a unique teacher.²⁶ The reputation of Jesus as a master teacher is enormous, having his teaching methods perceived to be valuable for contemporary professional teaching. Jesus used many teaching techniques in his teachings, for example; hyperboles (Matt. 23:23-24), similes (Matt. 10:16; 12:40), metaphors (Matt. 8:15; 5:13), proverbs (Matt. 6:12, 34; Mk. 3:24; Lk. 9:62), paradoxes (Mk. 12:41-44; Matt. 23:27-28), questions (Mk. 3:1-4, 11:27-33), and parables (Lk. 15:8-10; Matt. 13:33; Mk. 4:26, 30-31; Lk. 18:9-14). His teachings provoked reactions and suffered hostility from authorities, but much more positive from the crowd. Evidently, the populace embraced and took delight in his teachings and healing sessions (Matt. 7:28; 22:22; 13:54), in fact, he was a teacher par excellent. Jesus' teaching was accompanied by training his disciples to observe his life and imitate his ministry. They witnessed his human relation abilities and emotions, and finally, he instructed them to teach others what they received from him when parting ways with them (Matt. 28:18-20).²⁷

The Bible does not give any evidence of formal theological education in the apostolic era, however, there is a record of theological training especially among the Jews. Believers in the New Testament underwent vigorous apostolic teachings in the temple and in houses (Acts 2:42; 5:42), just as the Jews used to do in the Old Testament as indicated above. Ideally, Christian education resembles the Jewish style of education in many ways. Paul was trained in the school of Hillel and Shammai under Gamaliel I, the grandson of Hillel as recorded in Acts 22:3. Paul further revealed that Gamaliel taught him God's law and was zealous toward it.²⁸ Paul's theological education and experience with Gamaliel made him appreciate the importance of education and strongly emphasised on doctrinal and practical teachings. He taught by the scriptures and through epistles (2Thess. 2:15), he also encouraged and mentored a lot of people in the faith to learn and teach others. Thus, to pass on what they have received from him (2 Tim. 2:2), he urged believers to teach and instruct each other with all wisdom (Col. 3:16).

The Reformation period is a critical period in the history of the church, particularly in Christian education. The period is characterized by the restoration of Christian doctrine, the priesthood of all believers and the justification by faith, which are significant for Christian education. It is believed that the first theological school known as the Catechetical School, was instituted by Mark the Evangelist at Alexandria around c. 100-500. Alexandria was a learning city, having one of the largest libraries in the world was known for producing a lot of theological scholars.²⁹ Martin Luther later emphasised on Christian education, he was an educational reformer who contributed to the contemporary system of education by insisting that, basic education should be available for all. His educationalism can be identified as Bible centred, with an objective of advocating literacy so that everyone could read the scriptures.³⁰ Jan Comenius was a theologian in the 17th century who is known as 'the father of modern European education,' he imitated Luther by choosing Jesus and his teaching of scriptures as the foundation of education. He also influenced the 'one school system for all children' in Europe and many other countries.³¹ To mention but few, the reformers extensively influenced and elevated theological education, which fundamentally became the stepping stone for theoretical and formal education.

The contemporary education system especially in Ghana, is dominated by Mission Schools which started basically from theological education and seminars through missionaries around the 16th century. The arrival of missionary groups in Ghana such as the Wesleyan, Basel, Bremen, and Roman Catholic Missions during the 1830s saw a great transformation of Ghana's education, the schools were established with the intention of helping children to write and read, especially in relation to the Bible.³²

Theological education helps street preachers develop a comprehensive understanding of their faith, including doctrines, traditions, and historical context. This knowledge enables them to communicate their message effectively and respond to questions. Theological training equips street preachers with the tools to interpret and apply scriptures accurately, this skill is crucial for presenting the teachings of the Bible in a way

²⁵ Fønnebo, "A Grounded-Theory Study of the Teaching Methods of Jesus: An Emergent Instructional Mode," 26.

²⁶ Douglas S. Hubery. *The Teaching Methods of Jesus* (Surrey, UK: National Christian Education Council, 2014), 3-4.

²⁷ Keith Ferdinando, "Jesus, the Theological Educator" *Themelios* 38.3 (2013): 360-74, accessed July 6, 2023.

²⁸ Domenic Marbaniang, "Historical Overview of Theological Education" (2018): 1-79, accessed July 6, 2023. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330514753>.

²⁹ Marbaniang, "Historical Overview of Theological Education," 9-10.

³⁰ McMaster, "The Influence of K-12 Christian Education on Leadership Development," 24.

³¹ McMaster, "The Influence of K-12 Christian Education on Leadership Development," 24.

³² Gideon Boadu, "Developments in History Education in Ghana" (2021): 1-4, accessed July 7, 2023. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17159/2223-0386/2021/n25a5>

that resonates with diverse cultural contexts. Street preachers often encounter ethical dilemmas and social issues in their interactions with the public, theological education equips them to navigate these challenges by providing a solid ethical framework, and an understanding of how their faith speaks to contemporary social concerns. Theological education is not just about acquiring knowledge; it also fosters personal growth and spiritual formation. It should be emphasized that, street preachers who engage in theological studies deepen their own faith and develop a stronger foundation to make their ministry effective.

Unfortunately, a survey of the educational background of street preachers indicates that most of them have no formal theological training. Twelve (12) out of twenty (20) preachers interviewed had no theological training. The rest had little training but not from an accredited institution. This situation has obvious consequences. A lack of theological education may lead to inadequate understanding of doctrinal principles, risking the dissemination of inaccurate or incomplete theological teachings among congregations. Also, without a solid theological foundation, preachers may struggle to navigate and address the diverse theological landscape, potentially leading to confusion and doctrinal inconsistency within the religious community. The emphasis on prosperity at the expense of holiness is one of the theological traditions commonly associated with street preaching. One may attribute the prevalence of this theology on the street to the lack of theological education on the part of street preachers. Furthermore, inadequate theological education may hinder the ability of preachers to provide effective pastoral care, as they might lack the necessary knowledge and skills to address complex spiritual and emotional needs within their congregations. Finally, inadequate theological education may result in unethical ministerial practices. The numerous quarrels among street preachers and the abusive language some of them use may be attributed to the lack of adequate theological formation.

Literal Approach to Hermeneutics by Street Preachers

The literal approach to hermeneutics adopted by street preachers involves interpreting biblical texts primarily at face value, focusing on the plain meaning of the word. This approach seeks to understand the scriptures as they were intended to be understood by their original authors and audience. Street preachers often prioritize direct and straightforward interpretations of biblical passages, emphasizing the practical application of teachings in everyday life. By adhering to the literal approach, street preachers aim to communicate the message of the Bible in a clear and accessible manner to their listeners on the streets. According to Ricoeur, the cardinal problem of hermeneutics is “The status of written texts versus spoken language, the status of interpretation versus explanation.”³³ One of the key aspects of preaching is the interpretation of the message and concern of the biblical text that can make a difference in the life of contemporary listeners. The literal sense in hermeneutics is the first sense that, God intended to put across His message to man and open spiritual senses. Again, the literal sense transmits God’s full revelation to man, which allows true understanding of the literal meaning of the scriptures and of the spiritual senses.³⁴ Advocates for biblical literalism (biblical literalist) give much attention to the Bible text having the belief that it carries a fixed and timeless meaning. Literalists and originalists argue that the text is available to control those who are authoritative interpreters of the scriptures and are particularly concerned about the loss of constraint that ensues from interpretation that is untethered to text.³⁵ Biblical literalism can be identified in three features; first, the authority of the Bible is as a result of the uniqueness of God’s word. Second, the Bible is unerring and unfailing. Third, through sound reason, the meaning of all biblical text is accessible to everyone, but wholistic interpretation demands acceptance of the divine character of the text.³⁶

Throughout the Bible God communicates with humanity, it should be emphasized that God’s mind occasionally constitutes biblical text in material form, and His communication with human beings consists of true propositions. Sometimes people ignore what the Bible literally says and state what they think the Bible is saying, they pick the text based on their own opinions and what it means to them. Obviously, scripture is not what humans think it says but rather what God plainly stated.

While the literal approach to biblical interpretation may be appropriate in some instances, there are many texts which must be read figuratively. Such texts, when interpreted literally, distort the message of the Bible. The researchers observed a number of literal interpretations that ended up distorting the biblical author’s intended message. Making reference to Mark 16:17-18, one street preacher at Kejetia told his audience that the

³³ Hennie Pieterse and Cas Wepener, “Preaching: An initial theoretical exploration,” *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* (2021): 1-8, accessed July 11, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i2.6501>.

³⁴ Ignacio M. Manresa Lamarca, “The literal sense and the spiritual understanding of Scripture according to St. Thomas Aquinas” no. 10 (2017): 341–373, accessed July 11, 2023.

³⁵ Peter J. Smith and Robert W. Tuttle, “Biblical Literalism and Constitutional Originalism” (2011): 693-764, accessed July 11, 2023.

³⁶ Smith and Tuttle, “Biblical Literalism and Constitutional Originalism,” 698-699.

believer can handle snakes and drink poison and yet, not be harmed.³⁷ These and others listed by the text, according to the preacher, is meant to prove the authenticity and strength of one's faith in Christ. The same preacher later on, urged his audience to cut their foot if it causes them to sin. This was based on a literal reading of Mark 9:45. A contextual analysis indicates that the text (Mark 16:17-18) is not encouraging believers to intentionally drink poison and handle snake and expect God to save them. Also, rather than serving as a litmus test to prove one's faith, the signs are meant to authenticate the message/faith proclaimed as stated in verse 20: "Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it" (Mark 16:20). Some street preachers even perceive God as a human being simply because of anthropomorphic descriptions seen in the Bible (cf. Lev. 20:6; Num. 6:25; Exod. 7:5; Isa. 23:11). Anthropomorphism involves attributing human characteristics to God in theology. This practice, found in religious texts, allows for the description of God's actions using human traits to enhance understanding. This does not, however, mean that God is a human being. By interpreting almost all texts literally, street preachers sometimes distort the biblical message.

Common Theological Themes in Sermons by Street Preachers

Salvation

One of the most common themes usually preached by street preachers is "Salvation." The following Greek words give an idea of salvation; *soteria* means "salvation," *soter* means "saviour," and *sozein* means "to save." The Hebrew name *Joshua* originally *Hoshea*, means "The Lord Saves," Jesus Christ bore this name to identify him as the universal saviour.³⁸ Salvation serves as the central theme for all the messages they preach and more emphasis is placed on it. Contemporary street preaching on salvation is preached in various forms and approaches, which aim to communicate the salvific message in an engaging and relevant manner. It often emphasizes the love, grace, and transformative power of Jesus Christ, while addressing the unique challenges and concerns of the present time. Through personal testimonies, interactive discussions, multimedia presentations, and artistic expressions, contemporary street preachers strive to connect with diverse audiences, promote dialogue, and inspire individuals to consider their spiritual journey. Propounding the possibility of finding salvation as a life-changing and inclusive invitation available to all who seek it and inviting people to experience the profound joy and purpose that faith in Christ can bring.

The word "Salvation" is used to mean God's redemptive work, through which sinners who have repented experience deeper joy and eternal blessings of freedom from sin, death, and Satan.³⁹ God chose messengers to carry out the task of preaching so that the good news about salvation would spread for listeners to demonstrate active faith in the word preached and after demonstration of faith in the word, continue to abide in the word for growth into Christ-likeness. The scripture says; there is no other name given to man on earth by which one can be saved than the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). Individuals receive the message of salvation through affirmation of certain doctrinal truths, especially those in connection with Jesus' death and resurrection, and applying them to oneself. Salvation cannot be secured without personal belief in Jesus; therefore, the message of salvation needs to be preached everywhere to as many lost souls as possible.⁴⁰ Street preachers are motivated to preach on salvation because: First, they have an assumption that the world is without salvation, and therefore, needs redemption through the blood of Christ. Second, there is the need for personal conversion which is consciously demonstrated in a change of lifestyle, regular fellowship with believers, personal and communal Bible studies and constant prayer life.

One of the street preachers in his salvific sermon used John 5:24 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life," as his anchor text. After reading the text he said: "Whoever rejects God's word is not wise, as well as those who say they have nothing to do with the word of God that is preached. He further argued that, those who fail to financially support the evangelists are equally unwise as those who reject the gospel."⁴¹ He therefore underscored that preaching on the street is a godly ministry worth supporting. From the text above, Jesus categorically emphasized on the consequences of not believing in both his word and his father as been judged and sentenced to eternal death. The preacher emotionally preached against people who are obstinate to the gospel, rather than prioritizing on the need for accepting the gospel and believing in the salvation

³⁷ Street Preacher II, Authors' observation at Kumasi Central Market on 18th July, 2023.

³⁸ David Ford, David Hart and Aloysius Pieris, "Contemporary approaches to Salvation" (2012): 1-18, accessed July 14, 2023.

³⁹ Samuel Olugbenga Akintola, "The Gospel as The Power of God for Salvation in Romans 1: 8-17:

A Wake-Up Call for Renewal of Commitment to Christian Service" *The American Journal of Biblical Theology* no. 16 (2020): 1-3, accessed July 14, 2023.

⁴⁰ Stefan Paas, "Soteriology in Evangelical Practice: A View from the Street" no. 51 (2022): 323-342, accessed July 14, 2023.

⁴¹ Street Preacher I, Authors' observation at Kumasi Central Market on 17th July, 2023.

Christ offers which is the idea behind the text. Thomas Barrett posits that “Salvation is the central motif of the scripture. The message of salvation is an urgent need for humanity and God’s solution for the problem of sin.”⁴² Street preachers haven the opportunity to communicate to the masses therefore, need to be passionate and stress on the importance of salvation.

Eschatology

Eschatology is also one of the popular themes preached by street preachers, eschatology often involves discussing end-time events and the second coming of Jesus Christ. Preachers engage with pedestrians to share their interpretations of biblical prophesies and urge people to prepare for the imminent return of Christ. They discuss topics like the signs of the times, the antichrist, the rapture, the tribulation, and the establishment of God’s kingdom under the eschatological theme. Their intention is to create awareness and encourage individuals to consider their spiritual journey and readiness for the future. In general terms, eschatology is derived from two Greek words ‘*eschatos*,’ which means “the last,” and ‘*logos*’ which means “word” or “study.” Eschatology gives an idea of “the study of the last things,” “end time,” or “final events surrounding Parousia” (the second coming of Jesus Christ).⁴³ Eschatology talks about the last things or the end times, to make the believer appreciate the love of God demonstrated by sending Jesus Christ to preach about the kingdom of God, present and future.⁴⁴

Street preachers aggressively preach on this theme at Kejetia-Kumasi, perhaps because of the fear of judgment and torment of hell fire which will befall the lost souls. Many preachers believe that we are in the end times and so preach end-time messages. One preacher the authors observed preached on the theme; “The Lord’s Day” (Matt. 10:12-15). In his sermon, he emphasized that it would be terrible for anyone who rejects the word of God than it was for Sodom and Gomorrah. He explained that the terrible day will be disturbing and horrible and cannot be compared to anything; therefore, everyone should accept the word of God and do as it says. The preacher established the fact that eternal punishment awaits all unsaved souls and sinners while eternal life awaits believers, who align with Jesus’ undying desire to save humanity.

The message of the Christian eschatology should be more concerned with ‘who’ is coming (the second coming of Jesus), than ‘what’ is coming (the occurrences). F.H. Henry once said; “Not dates and places, but Christ stands at the centre of the Bible and of biblical eschatology.”⁴⁵ Eschatology teachings provide believers with hope and assurance about their ultimate destiny and the fulfilment of God’s promise (Jn. 14:1-3). It emphasizes the importance of righteous living and ethical behaviour in preparation for the future, which can serve as a moral compass for believers in their daily lives. The belief in the imminent return of Christ or the realization of eschatological events, instil a sense of urgency in believers to actively engage in evangelism, social justice, and fulfilling their purpose in this world (Matt. 28:18-20). Eschatological preaching further provides a framework for understanding and finding meaning in suffering, offering comfort, and encouragement to those going through challenging times. Street preachers usually encourage their listeners to be watchful and ready, because the Son of God will come in an unexpected hour (Matt. 24:42).

Prosperity (Material salvation)

Prosperity or wealth is one of the themes that cannot be compromised when discussing the themes usually used by street preachers in Ghana. The concept of prosperity preaching is an all-inclusive theology with respect to success, and it is arguably the preferred theme for most preachers since it serves as the basis for generating funds in support of their ministry. Contemporary street preaching involves spreading messages related to the belief that, faith and positive confession can lead to material wealth and success. These preachers often encourage their audiences to donate money to support their ministry, in the hope of receiving blessings and financial prosperity in return. Advocates of prosperity gospel believe that wealth is a sign of God’s blessing, and the benefit of prayer and giving beyond tithe. They believe that poor people are poor because of their lack of faith concerning giving, and are to be blamed for living in poverty because they are stingy.⁴⁶ This form of preaching has gained currency in recent years, and it draws emphasis from biblical passages that highlight God’s

⁴² Jerome Siculo Buthelezi, “A Critical Analysis of The Doctrine of Salvation in Free Evangelical Assemblies in Swaziland: A Contextualised Theology” (2011): 1-12, accessed July 17, 2023.

⁴³ Jonathan M. Menn, “Biblical Eschatology” (2017): 731-5523, accessed July 19, 2023.

⁴⁴ Isaac Boaheng, Nicolas Abbam and Frank Agyapong, “Eschatology and Contemporary Ghanaian Christianity” *Biblical Studies Journal* no. 4 (2022): 39-56, accessed July 18, 2023. Doi: <http://doi.org/10.54513/BSJ.2022.4304>

⁴⁵ Norman R. Gulley, “The Battle for Biblical Eschatology in the End Time” *Journal of the Adventist Theology Society* no. 2 (1990): 22-36, accessed July 18, 2023.

⁴⁶ Bradley A. Koch, “The Prosperity Gospel and Economic Prosperity: Race, Class, Giving, and Voting” (2009): 1-171, accessed July 20, 2023.

blessings, favour, and promises of abundance (e.g., Deut. 28:11; Ps. 50:5; Mal. 3:10; Jn. 10:10b; 3 Jn. 2 and Phil. 4:19). The underlying idea of this preaching is that, by sowing financial seeds, believers can expect to reap a harvest of blessings and prosperity from God. T. D. Jakes argues in support of prosperity theology in the view that poverty is a barrier to living a Christian life, however, it is easier to make a positive impact on society when one is affluent.⁴⁷ Wealth is defined as blessings from God acquired through positive confession, visualization, and donations by engaging spiritual laws.⁴⁸ This type of preaching often resonates with individuals seeking financial stability, improved health, or solutions to life's challenges. It provides hope and assurance that their circumstances can change for the better through faith and dedication. Special prayers and the profession of blessings are made for those who contribute hugely in support of the ministry. However, in some instances, those who refuse to give are seen as evil and wicked toward the preachers.

An example is one preacher who was observed by the researchers. He was so passionate about giving in support of the gospel without quoting any biblical text looked disturbed and did not understand why pedestrians gave GHS 1.00 (one Ghana Cedi) as offerings. He wondered if such people are really aware of God's blessings through giving. He made reference to the death of Christ as a handsome price paid for the salvation of humanity as compared to the unwillingness of people to give handsomely in appreciation to Jesus' death. He stressed that if Jesus paid a handsome price by giving his life as a sacrifice for the salvation of humankind, why should people give as little money as GHS 1.00 in support of the gospel? He concluded that it is wickedness on the part of human beings not to give bountifully in support of evangelism as appreciation to the sacrifice Christ offered in order to experience God's blessings. The death and resurrection of Christ have no connotation with giving financially as a form of appreciation, rather, it demands total submissiveness, acceptance, obedience and believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and saviour.

Critics consider such practice as manipulative and a channel of exploiting vulnerable individuals, leading to financial strain. Critics also point out that the focus on material gain may detract the preachers from the true essence of spirituality and the message of compassion, love, and service found in many religious teachings. Contemporary preaching on prosperity has become a significant aspect of certain religious communities. While it offers hope and inspiration to many, it also sparks debates about the potential ethical implications and proper emphasis on spiritual values, amidst the pursuit of material success.

RECOMMENDATIONS

According to John Stott, "Preaching is central and distinctive to Christianity and has been recognized throughout the church's long and colourful story from the beginning."⁴⁹ It should be emphasized that effective ministry involves connecting with people on a personal level, understanding their unique perspectives, and offering messages of hope and inspiration that resonate with their lives. For effective street preaching it is recommended that: First, the preachers understand the demographics and cultural background of the area they preach, tailor their messages to resonate with the local community, and address their specific concerns and needs. Second, there is the need to maintain a friendly and non-confrontational demeanour while preaching. Respect the personal space of pedestrians and be open to engaging in respectful dialogue with those who show interest or curiosity. Third, since street preachers capture attention briefly, they should deliver clear and concise messages that are engaging and impactful, leaving a lasting impression in a short amount of time. Fourth, preachers are recommended to focus on the core message of love, understanding, and compassion found in many religious teachings. Avoid messages that may be perceived as judgmental or divisive. Fifth, preachers should be mindful of the noise level and local regulations when choosing the location and time for street preaching and also respect the community's right to peace and quiet. Six, it is recommended that preachers incorporate visual aids, such as banners or signs to attract attention and convey messages effectively. Seven, encourage the audience to participate or ask questions, fostering a sense of community and dialogue. This can also create a more engaging and meaningful experience for those listening. Eight, offer printed materials or online resources, such as websites or social media pages, where interested individuals can further explore the messages and learn more. More so, if possible, invest time in building relationships with people in the community. This can help establish trust and credibility, leading to a more receptive audience. Further still, street preachers are encouraged to continuously educate themselves theologically, on relevant topics and on current issues. Again, there is the need for street preachers to acquire some form of theological/ministerial training to help them better interpret the

⁴⁷ Moses Kumi Asamoah, "Penteco/charismatic worldview of prosperity theology" *African Educational Research Journal* no. 1 (2013): 198-208, accessed July 20, 2023.

⁴⁸ Asamoah, "Penteco/charismatic worldview of prosperity theology", 198.

⁴⁹ John R.W. Stott, **I believe in Preaching**, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1982).

Bible and then deliver biblically sound messages. Finally, they should learn from their experiences and feedback from their audience and other colleagues. This will help them improve upon their practices.

CONCLUSION

The contemporary phenomena of street preaching present a dynamic and diverse landscape within various religious communities. It serves as a platform for passionate individuals to share their beliefs, engage with the public, and spread messages of faith, hope, and spirituality. While some street preachers effectively connect with their audiences, fostering meaningful interactions and positive change, others may face challenges in striking a balance between inspiring messages and respecting the context in which they preach. As street preachers navigate this unique form of outreach, it becomes crucial to approach their ministry with sensitivity, understanding, and open-mindedness. Recognizing the diversity of beliefs and backgrounds within the public sphere, is key to building connections and fostering mutual respect. Moreover, emphasizing love, compassion, and a focus on community service, can enhance the impact of street preaching, making it a force for positive transformation within the society. Ultimately, the contemporary phenomena of street preaching evolve, with various theological perspectives, outreach strategies and social implications, shaping its role in the modern world. By engaging in responsible and thoughtful approaches, street preachers have the potential to contribute positively to the lives of those they encounter, enriching communities and promoting spiritual growth for generations to come.

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