

Becoming a televangelist and a pastor like one's husband: a new mode of social advancement for women in African independent Evangelical Churches in Togo

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Abstract

This paper aims at analyzing some aspects of a mode of power legitimation and social mobility in relation with the place of the media aura and religious marriage in the process of empowerment of women pastors on the basis of field surveys in Togo. Its objective is to question the processes underlying this phenomenon, the factors permitting its emergence, and the place of the “neo” woman pastor in the functioning of the Church and its institutional relationship with her husband, Head of the Church.

Full text

For some time, a new mode of accession to the pastorship has been seen among the televangelist pastors' wives, within the African Churches of Evangelical and Pentecostal denominations. Several charismatic pastors use these resources to expand and retain their aura beyond their circle of influence. It is not uncommon that the benefits of the popular legitimacy gained through the media fall on their wives, to the point that, without specific training or assistance from any process of institutional legitimacy predetermined, they reach the status of pastor and televangelist – or vice versa - as their husbands. We can see several examples existing in Togo, in the Democratic Republic of Congo and within the African Churches in France. What often appears as a personal company of a charismatic self-proclaimed pastor, and who often initially tested this charisma in the media, slowly becomes a family affair, the wife always acquiring more responsibilities until the ultimate level: a substitute of her husband. Subordinate pastor, filling the role of the husband's successor, she nevertheless has some power and a specific charisma in tandem with her husband. The new Evangelical communities introduce in the field of gender changes in discourses and practices that somehow contrast with the provisions of the social history of African societies. Highlighting the idea that spiritual equality takes precedence over differences in "natural" attributes (even in practice it is difficult to apply), they firstly led women, who previously were confined to the domestic sphere, to become complementary to their husbands in their public responsibilities, then to assume these responsibilities. We can see a double change in

the status of those women who are engaged in an evolutionary process that propels them from the margin to the center.

However, what it seen as a revolution is the result of a combination of five circumstances. The gender ideology of these churches is the first element. Whilst Africa's mainline churches tend to share the conservative approach to women and the family, they operate a little evolution, which is sufficient to engage in social changes. The transfer of the American model of televangelism is the second source of this mutation. This model imposes the co-presence and presidency of the pastoral couple in the public sphere. The third is the stakes of religious pluralism: concurrency and individualization of churches tend to make them "family affairs" and pastors' wives assume the responsibilities that the head of the Church does not want to give to external persons. The forth is the influence of the religious communication for social change which impulses new gender ideologies and modernity examples. The last but not the least source is the contemporary context of gender situation in Africa. Several dynamics of change pre-exist and make easy the introduction of new family models.

This study aims at analyzing some aspects of a mode of power legitimation and social mobility, in relation with the place of the media aura and religious marriage in the process of empowerment of women pastors as a result of these three factors. The material proceeds from the field surveys in Togo (June-August 2010). My analysis is based on the discourses gathered by interviews and on little observation of four personal itineraries of women within "Zion-To", "Allez les chercher", "Parole de Vie" and Jericho Churches in Lomé.

New charismatic Churches and the empowerment by media in Togo

In the early 1990s, the new charismatic churches model has been transferred from Ghana and Nigeria to Togo, especially in Lomé (Damome, 2007)¹. Suddenly, Togolese religious space crawled with new small and personal institutions. They made an important impact on Lomé city when they occupied many disused buildings, transformed homes into churches, built ephemeral buildings for their celebrations, planting signs to indicate their locations, displaying posters and distributing flyers inviting for charismatic conventions, public prayers, evangelization campaigns, etc. Among the first churches few survived because it was necessary to adapt the model to the local situation. They underwent the adaptations and adjustments even transformations to give a new model in which all types are now merged.

¹ Over 60% of pastors engaged in Lomé have a route that passes through Ghana or Nigeria (Kamasse [1998], Noret [2004]). Either they have at one time attended a Pentecostal Church in one of these two countries, or they had biblical training, or else they are missionaries from just one of those two countries and settled in Togo.

They showed great ability in taking into account the ground realities and expectations of the population. And what seemed to them as a priority was prayer, at the time where Togo was experiencing socio-political unrest and economic destabilization. The phenomenon of prayer camps and the reality of “prophet-healers” or “doctors-healers” practicing in these camps now seem to be the hallmark of the model that emerged. In that model, organizing the faithful is not a priority: churches are opened to all those who need prayers and healing. This does not prevent the establishment of parishes for the faithful who come to them. Moreover, the change did not go up to the de-canonization of the old system, since they remained charismatic. The pastors preach the theology of salvation and prosperity on earth. They make the fight against the devil their ‘warhorse’ and promise healing and deliverance. On the other side, they attend to many media, buying space to preach, or founding their own media. Most of them try to replicate the U.S. televangelist model. Even if some of them have been trained to become a pastor, most forged their legitimacy through the media. Prior to becoming pastor and Church founders, several individuals firstly came forward on the radio and through it acquired legitimacy before going into action. It is the case of William Tetteh who was revealed to the public through the media and then merely created an ecclesiastical structure (*Yesu le Agbe* which means ‘Jesus is alive’ in Ewe) to manage the crowds generated by the media coverage of his speeches. This is also the case of Pastor Luc Russel Adjaho who began preaching and installing religious media before creating his Church-camp (*Zion-To* which means ‘Zion Mountain’ in Ewe). The Centre for Evangelization and Prayer Zion-To has been founded in 1998 by Luc Russel Adjaho, a former English teacher, Jehovah's Witness, bailiff and realtor. He now has twenty parishes, a health center, school, three radios and one television stations. As Noret (2004) says, the concentration of Pentecostal media in the hands of this one man obviously changed the balance of power within the Pentecostal world, making Zion-to a structure that particularly weighs on the Togolese Pentecostal scene, because of its technological capital rather than its demographic weight or symbolic capital of its leader. In many other cases, the media served as a showcase for the development of their business. To announce miracles campaigns and to advertise for the crusades, these entrepreneurs had recourse to the audiovisual media. Radio and TV stations sold the image of a new religious order promising a better situation at all levels.

We can say that these media made visible these institutions and, at the same time, legitimized the spiritual power and moral authority of these new religious leaders. This legitimization of power by popular approval through the media is a hallmark of the democratization of the sources of religious power. It is not surprising that it is the same way that pastors’ wives won

their own legitimacy as pastors: as the legitimacy of their husbands as Church leaders is not necessarily the result of a prior institutionalization or a Church hierarchy that would have power over a population, their own legitimacy did not come either from it. It comes from the authority of their husbands received from God (they proclaim themselves as directly inspired by God) and the faithful (through the excitement generated by their sermons on the media).

Becoming pastor like one's husband in these churches

As Soothill (2007) outlines in her work on Ghana, the ordination of women into leadership positions as pastors and evangelists is not new within the evangelical and holiness movements. According to her, they were remarkably innovative in their ordination of significant numbers of women. Although the number of male pastors far outweighs the number of female, there are no barriers to women becoming pastors, prophets, healers and founders of their own Churches. It is the same thing about the roles and positions opened to women in the organization of Church life. Women are probably less marginal in charismatic Churches than in many other denominations, at least in terms of the variety of functions they fulfill, in particular within the women's fellowships and women's conventions. It is thus a fortiori true for the pastors' wives. In the fifth chapter of her book entitled 'Big Women, Small Girls' Soothill (2007) presents the real place of pastors' wives and the temptation they have to assume the first lady's role. She argues that parallels exist between the roles of politicians' spouses and the wives of successful Church founders as they exist too between the leadership styles of African male politicians and charismatic pastors. That said, Soothill probably did not identify the cases that I present here, that is to say, the acquisition of supreme power that elevates the wife to the same rank as her husband, making her an even more powerful woman among women. In the progressive invention of the model of these local Churches, the ordination of the pastor's wife is now included. There are several examples: Rose Adjaho (the wife of Luc Russel Adjaho the founder of Zion-To), Caroline Sevon (the wife of Christian Sevon the founder of Parole de Vie), Blessing Nyah (the wife of Bishop Paul Nyah the founder of "Allez les chercher" and Patience Sodji (the wife of Pastor Gossou Sodji of Jericho), etc, were elevated to pastorship and they share with their husbands the responsibility of their institutions. As for William Tetteh, if his wife did not become a pastor, it is clearly the number two of the Church. She assists him in everything. The role and status of the pastor's wife is trying to move from margin to center. She goes from being a collaborator to be a full partner. As First Lady or responsible for women's groups, she is

acquiring power over all the faithful, including male employees of her husband and Head of the Church.

Different itineraries but one way

Four personal routes lead pastors' wives to become a pastor as well as popular in the media. The usual itinerary is: firstly pastor and televangelist in the second time. For others the passage is inverted: they become popular in the media and then pastors.

First itinerary: from Church to media

The position of first lady earned her to be considered as a mother and called "Mom Pastor". This affective status almost automatically grants her the power over women and she becomes their manager. In the second step, she learns how to lead the prayer and deliver biblical messages and exhortations. This allows her to practice gradually the important roles of preaching and prayer. The emotional attachment the women naturally devote to her leads her to perform even the role of spiritual guidance for them, in parallel with her husband, Head of the Church. She somehow becomes pastor without consecration. Gradually, she takes assurance on behalf of the legitimacy internally gained and starts a second process: the conquest of media. She generally does it in two ways. Either she hosts a show of praise during which she illustrates her charisma of preacher by delivering messages, exhortations before or after songs, in order to facilitate or guide their understanding. Or she starts to lead public prayers and prayer vigils on line. They are two safe ways to reach popular audiences and gather popular support. That is the case of Pastor Patience Sodji.

Second itinerary: from media to Church

As a first lady, she begins as the impresario of the pastors who come to replace her husband when he is absent. Her role often is introducing the pastor by prayer and "warming" the atmosphere of the room, in order to make the audience ready to accept the message of the pastor. The assurance and compliments internally received may be sufficient to induce her into taking a show she co-hosts with a journalist in a question-answer format about different issues: advices to women, youth, children, etc... Then, she progressively assumes the sermons on the air. From that moment, she preaches as her husband and begins to carve out a reputation that will retain a number of his listeners. This will be enough to convince her husband to ordain her as a pastor. From this moment, she can preach in the presence of her

husband, perform all the charisma, and take over the leadership of the Church when he is away. That is the personal itinerary of Rose Adjaho.

Third itinerary: from Church to media and art

The route of Mrs. Sevon is at first a sort of combination of the two previous routes: contrary to Rose Adjaho who married Luke Russell when he was already a pastor and founder of both Church and media, Caroline and Christian Sevon were already married when Christian became a pastor and founded his Church. These two projects were prepared within the family, the wife thus being beside her husband from the start as an important figure in the company. Undoubtedly, they represent the model of American religious leaders always "shown" with their wives. Therefore, she does not need to give proof of her capacities internally and externally because her husband always associated her to him in his activities. Then, she was first lady, known by the media, and pastor "in practice" before becoming a pastor by ordination. She can stand in for her husband, instead of inviting other pastors during her husband's absence. Knowing that he could now be replaced on all fronts by his wife, Christian devoted himself to his passion: music. He got invested in the gospel, like the Rev. William Tetteh. However, he did not realize that his wife would follow him everywhere and in everything! She also became an artist, and they compose and sing together. Caroline Sevon is now known by the popular audiences as Essenam, her artist's name.

Fourth itinerary: becoming a pastor when one's husband becomes a bishop

Blessing Nyah's route somehow is like Caroline Sevon's one. From Nigeria, the couple Nyah came to settle in Togo in the late 1980s. Soon the husband founded the Church "Allez les chercher" (which means "Go and fetch them" in French) initially installed in Kadjivakopé before being transferred to Bè. Here too, we feel that it is a business driven by both husband and wife, coming forward by the media, in particular through several private television stations from the mid-1990s. However, the woman was not a pastor. She became a pastor later, just before her husband became a bishop (2008). Meanwhile, the Church had thrived: it was therefore necessary to multiply the places of worship. The husband ordained his wife pastor to help lead them.

In these cases there is a constant: the status of the pastor's wife is decided on the level of interaction between mom pastor and the faithful within the Church, and with listeners. The first process leads to the status of the pastor and the media popularity will then come thereby.

In the second path, she becomes popular in media and became a pastor thereby as her husband. There is always the need for an external confirmation through the recognition of her status in the media's audiences. Sometimes the process is not successful, like in the case of Mrs. William Tetteh: she never could equal her husband in terms of the popularity of his sermons on the air, he whose nickname is "Golden Mouth". So, she must be content with her first lady's status, and exercises her responsibilities to the best as her husband's assistant. There is no harm in that since in most cases, partnership does not mean real parity. In most cases, women remain somewhat subordinate to their husbands. Taking their power from their husbands, they are called to exercise a personal charisma in complementarity with their husbands' and they can not fight on the fields of rivalry. How can we understand this?

The status of the woman pastor towards her husband: spiritual equality and the concept of submission

I was unable to interview these women directly; they were unwilling to answer my questions. But the point I made myself and my interactions with some of the faithful show that the status of a pastor does not significantly change the relationship between the pastors' couple as well as in their family life as in the management of the Church. While being a pastor, a woman dares not take the lead of the Church, a place naturally attributed to her husband: "He is the lieutenant of Christ", explains one of the faithful. Accordingly, the woman become pastor continues to assume the same responsibilities as those which were in her office when she wasn't one yet. She fully plays her role as a substitute pastor of her husband and can not have a charisma in competition with him. In the Church she continues to lead the women, associations, holds accountancy, to support her husband's work. Indeed, there is a fundamental paradox in the gender relations within the charismatic Churches. They ally innovation and conservatism. In their discourse, they resume, as mainline Churches, the universality of equality between humans proclaimed by St Paul in Ga 3/28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus". Two biblical references are quoted to explain women's status in the spiritual order (Genesis 1: 27) and her place in the social order (Genesis 2: 21-4). Women, as well as men, were made in the image of God. Both man and woman are blessed by God. Women share with men all the fruits of creation and an equal heritage with all men in the Royal Priesthood... Yet, in practice, it is different. Few African instituted Churches give equal status to men and women. Men and women may be "one in Christ" on a spiritual level, but within the social order, the sexes are perceived as being imbued with certain inherent

roles, which distinguish one sex from the other and govern social relations between them. They do not hesitate to remind women of their duty of submission, reading in a literal sense the famous quotation from Ephesians 5: 22-4². These fundamentalist beliefs are continuous with indigenous gender ideologies which tend to share this conservative approach to women and the family.

Yet there is a shrewdness which makes the difference with the other African Churches beliefs. This difference is at two levels: firstly, whilst ideally women are expected to submit to men at home, in the church, and in society, female submission within the charismatic Churches applies only to women in marriage. Even within the marital relationship women retain their spiritual independence. Secondly, whilst Africa's mainline Churches tend to consider the female submission as a feminine virtue, in the charismatic Christianity this reality is linked to the concept of "success". About that, Jane E. Soothill explains that in these Churches, the submission of women in their domestic relationship is presented, not only as a feminine virtue, though it is so, but also as a strategy for achieving individual success (2007: 115). For Soothill, the wives of charismatic ministers tend to present themselves as the epitome of selfless service, submission and self-sacrifice, in relation not only to their husbands but also to their husbands' congregations (2007: 116). This makes the woman reach the summit of power, but feel compelled to submit to the authority of her husband because she believes that her personal glory and the holiness of wives come from this acceptance. That said, it remains an evolution in gender relations. What does this innovation explain in social relationships between men and women?

The factors behind this social innovation

When seeking the sources of this social innovation, various assumptions come to the observer's mind. There is a global dynamism of change in that field in Africa and the transfer of the televangelist's model comes and grafts on this prior dispositions. It is reasonable to emphasize the role of "waiting stones", in other words, everything that made it possible. However, it is not sufficient to explain this complex evolution in the gender relations. Manifestly there is the attraction of the televangelist's model. But there is also the influence of religious communication for social change and religious pluralism.

The relations between this phenomenon and the dynamics of change in African societies

² "Wives submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church... Now as the church submit to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything".

Africa has his own feminism. Several women's associations struggle for women's rights and gender equality. It even seems that the principal objective is to restore the social place of women that the history written or told by men tended to marginalize over the centuries... The assumption is that this phenomenon also depends on the dynamics of relationships changing between men and women walking in African societies. I would like to observe over time how the structuration of women's relations to society, family and man came. The objective is to determine firstly how the position of women is new and, secondly, how, while she shoulders more responsibilities, the woman continues to assume an inferior position whether in the facts or representations.

Several anthropologists raised the great modifications which affected the family in sub-Saharan Africa. According to them, the status of women was marked by extraordinary changes within a century. Women are thus found at the confluence of various trends which are sometimes quite divergent. Raynaut (1997) says that the current position of women in African society is highly dependent on changes in the modes of organization of production and developments in terms of land production systems and the organization of the work force. These transformations tended to give more autonomy to women particularly in the economy domain through trade and shared the roles which affect social relations, especially those between the sexes. Coquery-Vodrovitch (1994) adds the factor of migration: firstly, the migration of men. In many regions in Africa, men leave their villages to go to town, or their country to another one "in adventure". Women are thus obliged to assume all responsibilities to ensure the survival of the family. Secondly, the migration of women. Thereafter, women themselves began to leave their villages for the town. Fleeing the country life where they were exploited and dependent, they met the novelty which has probably precipitated changes in attitudes and behaviors. Again the situation of women evolved to the status of head of the family they acquired in the village (Calpas, 1996; Bop, 1996). However, Coquery-Vodrovitch also highlights the role of education as a powerful factor of social change. Education is likely to contribute decisively to the emergence of the subject. Oso and Catarino (1996) note that all these factors have led to the emancipation of women in the private sphere but did not affect their status in the public space. For them it is the integration of women in the workforce which signs the consideration of its place in public space. Several other anthropologists insist on changes occurring at the level of representations of sexuality, marriage (Ngondo A Oitshandende, 1992; Barden and Gobatto, 1995) and the family system (Dozon, 1986). Anyway, as Grenier-Torres (2009) says, what is striking is the overload of domestic responsibilities that weighs on women's shoulders and at the same time those will and strength

they bring to conquer new lands. It is clear that women do not wait for the arrival of the new evangelical movement for their emancipation. Instead, we see that all routes of Pastors women and their position in the Church comply with the provisions that anthropologists relate. It seems that the general trend is going in the direction of an ever more central position of women within society. This does not mean that it is a regular movement. There are resistances, those of women themselves who are still hesitating to take responsibility for governance. This is the case of Blessing Nyah who is nevertheless co-founder of the Church. Then, those of men who continue to believe that these responsibilities belong to men. Here lies the role both important and ambiguous of Churches. They show that men can make more room for women without being stripped of their power. At the same time, they do not go far enough to make a revolution. They give women room, provided they respect their precedence.

Religious communication for social change

Although its action is not as important as other factors, the social communication of religious groups certainly plays a role in these social changes. Religious media have always addressed to women. Lenoble-Bart (1996) shows that the Catholic weekly 'Afrique Nouvelle', which was regularly published between 1947 and 1987, had a special section for women's issues. New Africa dedicated to the defense of the wife in countless articles, mostly between 1960 and 1969. The ideology put forward is Pope Pius XII's one, emphasizing equality in difference and the transcendent value of motherhood, although it is not an absolute foundation of her dignity. Several articles addressing the theme of wife, that is to say the report of the woman to a man show that woman should no longer be a "goat": The woman is encouraged to be the equal of man, to go to school like him and work outside the home. Considering a political commitment is even encouraged. She must become an equal partner of man in fulfilling her role in society. The example of Algerian women during the war in Algeria is given as an example to women in sub-Saharan Africa. "In Algeria, the war brought the woman of tomorrow (...). Whatever the political solution to the Algerian tragedy, men inevitably will remember what women were able to do (...). All indications are that, consequently, they want to change their marital relations and no longer treat women as inferior."³ "An article in No. 95 (May 29-June 4, 1949) said: "African women must dispose of their reserve, out of their political lethargy. Of all the national and international problems, they should give their views, their priorities, and their specificity in the context of national and social demands." Yet, the

³ Cf. N°339 (3 February 1956).

editors stress that they do not promote women as a duty dictated by feminism: "Far be it from us to be the spokesperson for feminism noisy and without real foundation". They say also they do not obey the injunctions of Western modernism: "Away from us also resolve to defend modernism came from elsewhere and who strives to renovate for to renovate." It is rather with new eyes they want to look at the case of these traditional practices as not justified at this time ... (Lenoble-Bart, 1996: 113-118). Even today there are many programs on religious broadcast media (Damome, 2011). The fights are no longer on the same level but they still remain. Their greater access gives them more popularity than in the past. Women themselves seize the radio media as a means of control and affirmation of their place in society (Damome, 2010) and to be a cons-hegemonic group. It is then clear that the land and the environment were well prepared for any innovation in the advancement of women and changes in social relations.

Religious pluralism's effects

During the past two decades, the religious landscape of Togo has incorporated a multitude of new groups of evangelical and Pentecostal denominations. The exuberant proliferation of Churches and ministries sometimes leads the Togolese authorities to suspend (temporarily) the formal registration of new religious associations, letting many Churches evolve into illegality. It is therefore difficult to get an accurate idea of their number at present. For the most part, these Churches are the personal property of people who invest in the religious field, as they would in the private school or health. Former lawyers, teachers, pensioners, traders and students suddenly felt called to found a Church. If no one is allowed to judge their sincerity, reliability and their vocation, God calls those whom he wants when he wants and people from all walks of life... However, we can not deny that the management of their Churches is much like the way you drive a business. The first consequence of this situation is that the Church becomes a family affaire. The pastor is surrounded by loyal employees including members of his own family and close friends co-opted. In these circumstances, you have to count really good friends among the college of pastors to find one who accept to come and take care of your business when you are absent, because the development of the Church often forces the pastor to travel to other cities. In addition, several Churches are involved in trans-national networks (Fourchard, Mary and Otayek, 2005) and pastors are forced to travel. It is thus important to have someone ensures daily tasks of the Church, in management and preaching. Some pastors who do not associate pastors have naturally given this responsibility to their wives. The wife manages daily tasks but brings in a pastor to preside Sunday worship.

This is the case of mainline pastors' wives. However, some of them accept to become pastors in order to assume the tasks relevant to pastor roles, above all if there is nobody to help her. For the competition that exists between Churches abolishes solidarity and mutual aid among Churches leaders. Concerning Adjaho, he is so "insolent" and intractable vis-à-vis other pastors that he will find it difficult having friends ... Furthermore, drawing from the source of marketing, corporate advertising and primary proselytism, they have exacerbated competition between Churches. In fact, the communication of these Churches borrows a lot from marketing: the product to sell is the spiritual charisma in which the Head of the Church was dedicated: prophecy, prayer, healing, exorcism, miracles, etc.. Each one estimates that he has the most useful charisma, and uses the media not only to proclaim it but sometimes scratch the exercise of the charisma of others. The others are 'false prophets, charlatans, liars and illusionists who abuse the credulity of the faithful', while 'I'm the true prophet, healer, intercessor'... These Churches also borrow from institutional advertising. In a context of plurality, each Church is trying to assert its specificity. Pastors are enjoying their time preaching to the radio or television for selling the merits of their Church and invite listeners / viewers to visit them. Pastors compete among themselves rentals antenna to broadcast commercials on their Church and to show their singularity compared to other Churches. Finally, these Churches use a ferocious proselytism, poaching in the field of each other. The well-known pastors in the media like William Tetteh and Luc Russel Adjaho denigrate continuously other Churches in courting their faithful. They even manage to pretend to be 'pastors of everyone' so that the faithful of other denominations including the Catholic Church go to them without suspicion. It is evident that this context can not facilitate help, solidarity, ecumenism, or friendship among pastors. Each manages his business very lonely or chooses who he want among his faithful to help him. In these conditions the wife is the first person to whom he offers to become the co-manager or the manager in chief when he is away.

Transfer of American televangelists' model?

Transnational crusades and evangelization campaigns organized in the early 1990's in Western Africa have mobilized foreign great leaders (Osborn, Yongi Cho, Bonke). They sold the dramatic style of preaching which has shown its worth by the number of people who came to listen them and the excitement aroused by their sermons. Several local pastors who speak easily have undertaken to imitate them, preaching like them and organizing evangelization and miracles campaigns like them. Togolese's pastors imitate perfectly the tone, gestures, enthusiasm and strength of conviction of these pastors and evangelists who promote their

image as much as the Gospel in the media. They have so well imitated them that they even drag some Muslim preachers. The use of English as the first language of preaching in a French speaking country participates in the absorption of this model. In fact, speaking English seems to be the proof that one is good preacher. Thus pastors prefer to be translated into local languages even when they could very well go directly to their followers in those languages. However, it is the American model that was carried by several media and digital media that gradually imposed itself. It is evident that the American televangelist model charms people: one proof of this fascination is the number of images and audio conferences of great evangelists who are broadcasted on the Togolese media. In terms of gender relations, this model establishes – in local view - that the woman will appear as a partner and the first supporter of her husband's work. So she must attend to him and bring with him the workload. Sanctifying the concept of gender mutuality and the inter-dependence of the sexes, this model, in its local version, associates the pastor's wife in the management of the Church. She manages the institutions of the Church, keeps accounts. She chairs the group of women and animates women's associations. She monitors the operation of the choir and oversees the conduct of worship jump. She animates prayer groups, moving into homes and families at the request of the faithful to pray, solve problems... she participates in retaining and recruiting for the Church. She preaches in that sectors and accomplishes an important work in managing the Church. In this model, the woman is valued for her usefulness to man, including his image. The wife will appear constantly with her husband, smiling when they are photographed and approving when he preaches. The unity of the couple will be the proof of the success of the model. For some of them the adoption of this model stops here: however, others go up to the end of the imitation and oblige their wives to become pastors, although they do neither have the desire nor the competence. Some have the courage to refuse. It seems that this is the case of Mrs. Tetteh. But others accept it as a promotion even if to be secondary pastor, subordinate pastor, serving the cause of their husbands and Church leader.

Conclusion

The prominence of pastor's wives in African Churches is not exclusive to the Togolese charismatic Churches. Jan E. Soothill notes that in Ghana's charismatic Churches the "Big Man syndrome" has created the "Big Woman syndrome". The status of the founder's or of the Head of Church's wife is endowed with her own spiritual status, and considered as a co-head or co-founder of the Church. She enjoys the prestige of her husband and her status within the Church stems from her marital relationship with the Head of the Church. However, this model

did not result in a co-leadership of the whole Church, as the First Lady governs only a part of the faithful, emotionally exercising a power over the rest. In Togo, the model went further, giving more power to women though again their status stems from their marital relationship with the Head of the Church and its media popularity. While most of all explicative factors mentioned above – spiritual equality, cultural and social evolution, religious pluralism... - apply to both cases, the religious mutations occurring during the transfer of the independent Church model in Togo makes the difference. The strong attraction of the American model of televangelism which tends to share dual-sex role leadership pattern explains this fact.

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