'Pay or Burn in Hell': Constitutive Rhetoric in the Sermon of a Ghanaian Charismatic Preacher

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Abstract
The study analysed rhetorical construction of identity in a sermon of a Ghanaian Charismatic preacher; where identity is understood as what people do rather than what they have. The sermon was purposively downloaded from YouTube and analysed for constitutive rhetoric using qualitative content analysis. It was found that the preacher crafted the sermon as deliberative rhetoric to call the Christian identity into being before reshaping it into 'others' identity for his audience to act on. Also, the preacher used logos, ethos, and pathos as rhetorical strategies to convince his audience to live the constituted identity. Finally, the preacher called on his audience to act by promising to will their wealth to the church before they die. The preacher's demand could not be supported by logical persuasion; therefore, he resorted to pathos through threats and inducing of guilt to manipulate the emotions of the audience to convince them. It is recommended that society examine preachers' demands critically to avoid being manipulated.

Key words: Constitutive rhetoric; Sermon; Charismatic; Persuasion; Manipulation

INTRODUCTION

This study is about identity construction through language use. One of the domains of language use is preaching. I will argue that preachers use language to constitute collective identity for their audiences and persuade them to act. This type of language use is described as constitutive rhetoric, which is the use of discourse to create an organized identity for an audience (Burke, 1950; McGee, 1975; Charland, 1987; White, 1985). Therefore, speakers or authors who use constitutive rhetoric tell their audience what they are and what to do because of what they are.

The popular connotative meaning of the term 'rhetoric' is that it refers to mere eloquence without substance or proof. This implies empty words without actions to back them up with the purpose of swaying hearers or readers to the side of a speaker or writer. Foss (2009) blames this negative connotation of rhetoric on the writings of Plato against the teachings and practice of ancient Greek sophists who were among the first theorists of rhetoric. Aristotle, however, defined rhetoric as the art of discovering all the available means of persuasion (Foss, 2009). This definition forms the foundation of classical and contemporary meaning of rhetoric as the persuasive use of language (Bitzer, 1968).

Aristotle taught that a speaker's ability to persuade an audience depends on how effectively the speaker can appeal to that audience in three ways: logos, ethos, and pathos. In the area of logos, the speaker must make truth apparent through reasonable arguments. Ethos refers to the character of the speaker: the speaker must demonstrate in the speech that they can be trusted; that the audience can take the speaker's word for the claims being made. For appeal to pathos, the speaker must be able to stir up the emotions of the audience toward persuasion or acceptance

of the speaker's conclusions. These three rhetorical appeals are sometimes referred to as the rhetorical triangle. This is usually figured by an equilateral triangle to suggest that a balance of the three appeals is important for effective persuasion (Lutzke & Henggeler, 2009; Zachry, 2009).

The study argues that preachers use the Bible and Jesus Christ as capital D-discourse to perform small d-discourses to create identities for their audiences. Bamberg, De Fina and Schiffrin (2011), Zhao and Jones (2017), and Gee (1999) teach that small *d-discourse* refers to micro-practices of talk (like preaching) through which identities are talked into being, and capital *D-Discourse* is an entire system of understanding (like the Bible and Christianity) that determines how structures and practices are understood. Small d-discourses are then shaped and regulated by the more powerful capital D-Discourses that are available to an individual in society.

There is the view that identity is something that people do rather than what they have (Bamberg et al, 2011; Burke & Stets, 2009; Zhao & Jones, 2017). This view studies identity as constructed in discourse through discursive activities. The study, therefore, explores how Archbishop Nicholas Duncan-Williams of Action Chapel International uses a sermon discourse to create identity for his church audiences and persuades them to act. This study is important because of his large influence on his church audiences and the Ghanaian society. There is a need to deconstruct his rhetoric and expose the persuasive and manipulative elements as there is a thin line between the two; and both are done through discourse (Van Dijk, 2006). Three research questions guide the analysis, and these are:

• What elements of constitutive rhetoric can be found in the sermon of the preacher?

• What rhetorical strategies are employed in the sermon to constitute identities?

• What actions are the audience persuaded to take?

Answering these questions will provide insight into the preacher's language use to influence his church audience towards his desired interest.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The discussion in this section focuses on two main items. One is Duncan-Williams and prosperity gospel; the other is sermonic discourse.

Duncan-Williams and prosperity gospel

Archbishop Nicholas Duncan-Williams of Action Chapel is the first known pastor to have founded a charismatic church in Ghana following Apostle Anim's Pentecostal movement (Sarbah, 2020). His official church website describes him as the father of Charismatism in Ghana. He presides over the church which has grown from its humble beginning in 1979 into a global phenomenon with branches in many countries. The church is headquartered in Accra where it started and housed in *The Prayer Cathedral* off the Spintex Road near the Kotoka International Airport and the Tetteh Quashie Interchange.

Duncan-Williams has been represented in the literature as the symbol of the prosperity gospel, the most defining feature of charismatic Pentecostalism, in Ghana (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005). According to Asamoah-Gyadu (2018, p.9), the prosperity gospel is summed up in the statement, 'God is a good God and that he wills to heal and prosper people'. Asamoah-Gyadu (2018, p.10) as well as other scholars decries this form of preaching because it involves a situation described as 'transactional giving' whereby a person is encouraged to give offerings in exchange for God's multiplied blessings. Benya (2018) warns that the commercialization of religion which the prosperity gospel sometimes tends to perpetuate has negative effects on society.

Asamoah-Gyadu (2018) observes that the contrast with preachers of the mainline churches was sharp because they used to preach and portray that a Christian must eschew material wealth to maintain the faith. Yet, he described the prosperity gospel component of the charismatic phenomenon as an unfortunate dross that should not be mixed with the triumph of African Christianity (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2006). This attitude seems to reflect the general attitude of the mainline churches toward charismatic churches. The quote below reveals the conflict between the two groups of churches:

> The older, established Western mission denominations often presented wealth as one of the biggest obstacles to entrance into the Kingdom of God. In the new form of Christianity that Roberts represented, matters of sin, judgment, hell, and heaven now lie subdued. The emphasis on existential matters meant the holiness theology of "retreat from the world" was reduced in positive faith preaching as wealth was increasingly understood as the "heritage of the true believer." What is projected is material blessings and empowerment for this life, and the preacher is usually the ultimate representation of the message (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2018, pp.7 & 8).

Inferring from the above quote, mainline churches seem to view wealth as unholy, worldly, much as sin and would hinder the believer from entering the kingdom of God. On the other hand, the charismatic churches are represented as accepting wealth not only as holy but also preaching it as believers' heritage. In other words, mainline churches would like Christian preaching to focus only on spirituality while charismatics would like to address socio-economic problems in their preaching. Thus, charismatics in their preaching project *material blessings and empowerment for this life* while mainline churches emphasize *matters of sin, judgment, hell, and heaven.*

Perhaps, a blend of both theologies might do better for a people than the conflict between the two. Most sick people would accept healing from God, if God truly

healed, as much as they would treatment in a hospital. It would seem a matter of consensus that Ghanaians need material blessings and empowerment for life. Probably, differences in opinions might centre more on whether these came from God or not; or whether theology should address the need or not than the need itself. We have seen in the literature, for example Omenyo (2002) and Ojo (2010) that Ghana and Nigeria respectively embraced charismatic Pentecostalism at a time of political and economic hopelessness. Perhaps, Duncan-Williams of Ghana and Idahosa of Nigeria together with their followers saw the possibility of applying theology to the problems of their nations.

What is debatable is whether these and other charismatic pastors have parochial motives in addressing socio-economic problems of their nations in their theology. Motives are often difficult to judge, as the popular saying goes, not even the devil can tell what is in a person's mind. Nevertheless, issues like seed faith and Duncan-Williams attributed statement that 'a person's blessing in life is directly related to how much he/she contributed to God in tithes and offerings' (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2006, p.375) are bound to generate more diversity than consensus in theological opinions.

Sermonic discourse

The sermon as a subtype of religious discourse was described as a monologue, especially, in orthodox Christian circles (Ventimiglia, 2020), but with the advent of Pentecostalism it is viewed as conversational by contemporary studies (Oluoch, 2020). Since the sermon involves the speaker alone addressing the audience from start to end, it is rightly described as a monologue. However, Pentecostal preachers are found to use creative communication strategies to achieve relatively high audience participation (Taiwo, 2005). The conversational features prevalent in Christian Pentecostal sermons make them different in outlook from orthodox sermons. The present study focuses on Pentecostal sermons.

Studies on sermons have looked generally at Christian and Islamic sermons with little attention to other world religions (Acheoah, & Abdulraheem, 2015). Acheoah and Abduraheem observe that there is not much difference between Islamic and Christian sermons in their language styles except in nomenclature. Some studies (e.g., Reinhardt, 2017; Ventimiglia, 2020) view the sermon not from linguistic point but as intellectual property and consider its copyright status. Ventimiglia (2020) observes that religious media such as Christian music, films, hymnal books, and sacred texts become subject to intellectual property law but the sermon often escapes clearcut application to the law. It is observed that sermon stealing is an encouraged practice among Pentecostal preachers in contrast to orthodox preachers, as it is the mode of training apprentice preachers in some Bible schools (Reinhardt, 2017).

The present study focuses on the sermonic discourse of a Ghanaian Charismatic preacher. There are many linguistic studies on sermons of Pentecostal/Charismatic preachers in Africa including Ghana (see Akinwotu, 2021; Avevor, Mwinwelle & Asante-Anyimadu, 2023; Oluoch, 2020; Taiwo, 2007). These focus on different aspects of language use in Pentecostal sermons, however, they do not explore constitutive rhetoric in the discourse of the selected Ghanaian Charismatic preacher as the present study does. The findings of the present study will, therefore, complement those of the previous studies to help us understand Pentecostal sermonic discourse better.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

This section discusses constitutive rhetoric as the theoretical framework of the study. It is conceptualized as a type of rhetoric; therefore, the discussion traces different perspectives of rhetorical theory from sophistic rhetoric to constitutive rhetoric. There is a long history of perspectives about rhetoric dating back to ancient Greek and Roman sophists and philosophers. The sophists were paid teachers who travelled from place-to-place training their clients, who were mainly litigants, in the art of persuasive speaking to win legal cases against their opponents (Bitzer, 1968). According to Buck (1900, p.84), sophistic rhetoric 'was simply a process of persuading the hearer to a conclusion which the speaker, for any reason, desired him to accept.' There was no absolute good, truth, or justice; the art of rhetoric was the art of war in which the speaker became the stronger and won, while the hearer became the weaker and lost.

Plato and other philosophers such as Aristotle and Cicero were opposed to the sophistic view. Plato criticized the sophistic rhetoric for being merely eloquent words without substance. In contrast to the sophists, he believed in absolute good, truth, virtue, and justice; and taught that persuasion should not be achieved merely by eloquent speaking but by ethics, virtue, and logic as well. Moreover, rhetoric should not be about the speaker alone winning but should result in mutual persuasion of both speaker and hearer to the truth and common good (Foss, 2009). Foss argues that the writings of Plato against the sophists must be largely responsible for the popular connotation of rhetoric as mere eloquence without substance or proof.

Aristotle postulated that rhetoric was the art of discovering all the available means of persuasion; the art of discourse, of systematically and artfully thinking through the five canons of rhetoric: invention, organization, style, delivery, and memory (Foss, 2009). Bitzer (1968) and Zachry (2009) note that Aristotle also classified rhetoric into three types. The first type, deliberative rhetoric, is concerned about what should be done and is oriented towards future courses of action.

It seeks to determine what is expedient. The second type, Forensic rhetoric, examines what has happened to establish justice or injustice of actions. This can apply to legal systems as well as finding scientific proofs. The third form of rhetoric is epideictic or demonstrative which is usually directed at promoting community values by praising or denouncing ideas, events, or persons. This happens especially during ceremonies to remind the audience of the community's identity as a people.

As Aristotle classifies rhetoric into types, Charland (1987), McGee (1975), and White (1985) also identify a type known as constitutive rhetoric. Generally, constitutive rhetoric is the use of discourse to create an organized identity for an audience (Ludwig, 2014; Thorpe, 2011). According to James Boyd White in his *Heracles Bow* published in 1985, constitutive rhetoric is the capacity of language or symbols to create a collective identity for an audience, especially by means of condensation symbols, literature, and narratives. He explained that it denotes the act of constituting character, community, and culture in language. The term describes rhetoric that calls a common collective identity into existence (White, 1985). Constitutive rhetoric presumes that the audience already has an identity with which the rhetor must identify to create or reshape it.

The proponents have approached constitutive rhetoric differently depending on their points of emphasis. Burke (1950) has highlighted identification rather than persuasion as the major means by which language functions to call identity into being. McGee and Charland emphasised the importance of narratives and how rhetoric should lead subjects to take action to express the constituted identity. Charland explained that constitutive rhetoric affects audience in three ways. First, it creates a collective interest that replaces individual differences among the audience. Second, it connects the audience to those who lived in the past with the same identity; and third, it leads the audience to believe that they are free to act according as they please while they are regulated by the beliefs of the collective identity that has been constituted for them (Charland, 1987).

Apart from White, the others have approached constitutive rhetoric as an abstract, theoretical concept. They focus much attention on the audience without giving agency to the rhetor. In their approach, the audience creates its own community identity as the rhetor engages with the audience. (Ludwig, 2014; Thorpe, 2011). White, on the other hand, does not see the audience as essentially producing itself. Rather, the rhetor seeks to create identity for the audience by using a specific text. The rhetor, therefore, rhetorically constructs identity by making specific choices in what to say in order to achieve the purpose (Thorpe, 2011).

The present study views constitutive rhetoric as a means of constituting community identity by the agency of a preacher. It explores how a preacher negotiates personal identity and invites his audience to adopt certain identities through discourse. The study blends the various scholarly approaches to constitutive rhetoric to do something like Reid (2004) in the Ghanaian charismatic context. I will subject a sermon discourse produced by a charismatic preacher to scholarly criticism giving agency to the preacher as rhetorically creating his church.

METHODOLOGY

The study employs qualitative research design. According to Leavy (2017, p.124), 'qualitative approaches to research value depth of meaning and people's subjective experiences and their meaning-making processes.' The study leans towards the Interpretive or Constructivist Paradigm because, 'This paradigm examines how people engage in processes of constructing and reconstructing meanings through daily interactions' (Leavy, 2017, p.129). The data consists of a sermon preached by Archbishop Nicholas Duncan-Williams, one of the first and most famous Charismatic preachers in Ghana (Sarbah, 2020). The selection followed a purposive sampling technique. I stumbled upon the sermon video on YouTube during data collection for my PhD thesis. I found it worthy of analysis because of its rhetorical exigence. The preacher wanted his church audiences to will their properties to his church as service to God before they die. This demand hardly has a Biblical model or a practical precedence on the Ghanaian church landscape. So, I became interested in analysing how the preacher succeeds or fails in persuading his audience to accept this.

Patton (2015) notes that the goal of qualitative analysis is to transform data into findings. However, how each inquirer achieves this goal is unique because there is no formula for that transformation process. Even though one may receive guidance and direction, individuals must do their very best 'to fairly represent the data and communicate what the data reveal given the purpose of the study' (Patton, 2015, p.762). The present study makes use of qualitative content analysis shaped by Constitutive Rhetoric Theory to investigate how the said preacher constructs the 'Charismatic church' identity in a sermon.

The sermon analysed in the study was titled on YouTube, 'Care for Others' (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=exyY3KWpm4I). However, the video content gives a different title as 'Winning Soul.' Yet still, after viewing and listening to the sermon the subject seems to be 'Writing a Will.' This subject struck me as interesting and novel in church discourse. I have viewed and listened to the 53-minute sermon video several times and transcribed it almost verbatim into a 6,886-word document covering 15 pages of single-spaced lines. During the coding process, numerous themes were identified and categorized as story, explanation (Expl),

guilt, admonition (Admon.), personal example (Pers. Eg), threat, interjection (Interj.), appeal, scripture (Scrip), reward, prayer, and praise/censure (PrCens). To ensure validity of the exercise, I had a colleague PhD candidate in the Department of English at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana also go through the same process with the data. After discussing and resolving our little differences, we reduced the data to its working state for the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Rhetorical construction of identity for audience

The sermon may be described as a deliberative rhetoric because it seeks to induce a future course of action in the audience. The preacher identifies an exigence, a problem, something that must be done, a state of affairs that must change in the church. He therefore invents or creates a sermon to address the exigence and bring about a change. The perceived problem is that members of the church do not include the church in their will before they die. He is passionate about the problem and is sad about the inaction of the audience:

> 1. And **I feel very sad** about some of the things I'm about to say because **I am fully convinced** that a lot of believers use God for their personal gain and they use him for the things they care about the most but not the **things about Christ Jesus** (Expl. 01).

In *Excerpt 1*, the preacher reveals that the inaction of believers about the problem may be attributed to their lack of concern for the *things about Christ Jesus*. In the following excerpt, he states what he wants the audience to do:

> 2. If you're **writing a will**, please remember others, please remember **the cause of Christ**, and remember the gospels, and **the church** (Appeal 01).

The entities the preacher suggests to be remembered in a will are *others*, *the cause of Christ*, *the gospels*, *and the church*. It is not clear in the data who *others* refers to but could include any person not among one's immediate family. This could, therefore, include members of the church including the pastor. The other entities – cause of Christ, the gospels, the church all seem to revolve around the church. The preacher's appeal could be generally understood, then, as members of the church writing their will to include the church.

Not only does the preacher want the church included in members' will, but the percentage of property willed to the church must be greater than what is left for members' immediate families. The preacher makes this clear in the following assertions:

> 3. Because if by the time you die, **when your will is read**, **you gave more**, leave more to those you care about the most and loved the most, more **than** Christ and more than the gospels and **the church**, you were **corrupt**. You were a user of the grace of God. You exploited God when you were alive (Guilt 01)

> 4. What was the **percentage**? And if it was, if they **gave more to their children** and their immediate family **than** they gave to the cause of the **gospel and Christ**, I know they were **selfish**, they were **greedy**, they never cared about the things that God cares about, they never loved the things God loves, and **Jesus is waiting for them** (Guilt 02).

The preacher's tone seems demanding and forceful depicted in the use of such strong terminologies as **corrupt**, **selfish**, and **greedy** to describe individuals who would not comply with his demands. The preacher's attitude and approach underscore the urgency of the rhetorical exigence, at least, from his perspective.

The exigence is relatively novel both in scriptural models and sermon rhetoric. Because of this, the preacher requires unusual persuasive strategies to convince the audiences to agree, let alone do it. The preacher has, understandably, demonstrated such unusual boldness in using sophistic persuasive appeals that one finds the rhetoric truly compelling. He organized the rhetoric in four stages which are appeal to logos, appeal to ethos, appeal to pathos, and a call to action.

Appeal to logos

At the first stage, he uses story, explanation, and scripture as premises for reasoned arguments which serve, in Aristotelian rhetoric, as appeal to logos. The preacher is trying to construct a certain identity in his sermon. He uses stories in the sermon to illustrate the points that he makes. The stories are of two main types: those that serve as bad examples and those that serve as good examples of the identity he seeks to construct for the audience. This seems to confirm White's (1985) assertion that an identity must be created in contrast to another identity.

The preacher opens the sermon with a story of 150 Salvation Army youths who drowned because they gave their life jackets to other passengers who did not have when a ship sunk in 1914. The preacher used this story as a premise to argue that his audiences must make similar sacrifices by willing their wealth to the church for the salvation of other people instead of leaving it for their own family members. His point is caring for others instead of caring for oneself.

In contrast to the good example of the Salvation Army youths, the preacher tells another story of a doctor who had hoarded material possessions in life only to die without the chance to enjoy them. The preacher used this story to illustrate a point that it is vain to amass wealth with the sole motive of enriching oneself and taking care of one's own. It is more pleasing to care about others and think about the church in one's enterprises. He then threatens the audience that if they followed the bad example of the dead doctor in the story, they would suffer similar fate. The excerpt below followed the story immediately:

> 5. A day is coming, all the things you **value** and you boast of and you spend money on than others will **mean nothing** and another will come to enjoy it. Another will come and enjoy that your

*beautiful wife and handsome husband. You go ahead, keep living
for yourself, keep thinking that you have arrived.* (Threat 01)

This threat has the potential of inducing fear in the
audiences and causing them to consider accepting the
proposition of the preacher to avoid harm. Throughout the
sermon, such threats often follow stories, explanations, or
scriptural quotations.

Appeal to ethos

At the second stage, to reinforce the exigence and make
the proposal worthy of acceptance, the preacher uses
admonition, personal example, direct appeal, and praise or
censure. These contribute to the appeal to ethos. Several
times in the sermon, the preacher cites his personal
example to illustrate what he wants the audience to do.
For instance, he narrates how Bishop Dag impressed upon
him to write a will as a father. After the writing of the
will, he observed how all his property was willed to his
immediate family with nothing left for others:

> *6. It was great, but there was **one thing missing in the will**. And
> that was about others. Christ, the gospel, and others was* [sic]
> *not in my will. It was all about my kids, and my mother was then
> alive and it was about my mom. And I realized that I had not
> made any provision for Christ's cause. For my master's cause
> and his business, and the gospel's, and **the church**, and others.
> It was all about my immediate family* (PersEg 01).

After this personal example, the preacher explains the
significance of one's will as follows:

> *7. And **your will**, which is your last testament reveals what is
> truly **in your heart** and what you **lived for** when you were here
> on earth* (Expl. 05).

The preacher's will had not reflected what is truly in
his heart and what he lives for on this earth. It is to be
assumed that he made the changes in the will to include
the church, his master's business, which by inference is
the preacher's preoccupation in life. This testimony of the
preacher presents a credible example to be followed by the
audiences. According to Aristotelian Rhetorical Theory,
the rhetor's credibility as expressed in the message has
a powerful force of persuasion. Having exemplified the
action objectified by the rhetoric, the preacher's testimony
wields the effect of persuading the audience to do same.

The preacher's explanation of the will as revealing
what is truly in one's heart, and what one lives for also
challenges the audiences to examine their priorities. If
they have not thought of including the church in their will,
then they probably have not been living for Christ the
Master and his business. This should be an indictment to
be repented of. If all the persons one has in their will are
one's immediate family, then one should feel guilty and
seek to do as the preacher has done.

Appeal to pathos

At the third stage of the rhetoric, the preacher induces
guilt, issues threat, and promises rewards to manipulate
the emotions of the audiences. This constitutes an appeal

to pathos. For example, the preacher induces guilt in the
audience when he requests the reading of Mark 10: 28
-- 'Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left
all, and have followed thee' (KJV). After the reading, the
preacher comments as follows:

> *8. Underline the word **all**. You are not worthy of him if you don't
> **leave all*** (Expl. 03).

This explanation makes the preacher's demand of a
greater percentage of the will for the church look like a
merciful request indeed. Ideally, one must *leave all* to
be worthy of Jesus. If the scriptures demand all, and the
preacher only asks for a greater percentage he must be
very kind. This explanation is followed by inducing guilt
in the audiences:

> *9. I hear people say **am a Christian**. What have you left? What
> have you sacrificed? This **Christian walk is a life of sacrifice**.
> And there are people in the church, they haven't sacrificed
> anything. All they sacrifice is to criticise and fight others, question
> everything, and make themselves judges of others* (Guilt 03).

According to White (1985), constitutive rhetoric
presumes that belief in identity always precedes logical
persuasion. Thus, constitutive rhetoric must address the
previous identity and must live or coincide with or change
it. The preacher in the excerpt above calls an already
existing identity into being by saying, *I hear people say
am a Christian*. Most of the audiences already understand
and relate to the Christian identity. It is the common
collective identity of the audience and the preacher. The
preacher is telling the audience, if you believe you are a
Christian, then you must accept and do what I am asking
you to because *this Christian walk is a life of sacrifice*.
In other words, if you will not do what I am asking you
to, then you are not really a Christian. You are guilty
of hypocrisy because you are in the church but *haven't
sacrificed anything. What have you left?* This evil must be
repented of by writing your will and leaving your wealth
for the church.

A call to action

At the final, fourth stage of the rhetorical process,
the preacher uses interjections and prayers to compel
the audiences to act in response to the rhetoric. The
interjections include the preacher asking the audience
to repeat a saying after him or to say something to one
another. This practice was used in the sermon delivery
much like a refrain. This was observed to have occurred
throughout the four stages of the preacher's rhetorical
process. For example, after telling the Salvation Army
youth story that opened the sermon the preacher demanded
from the audience to say the following to one another:

> *10. Please **turn to somebody and say** care about others* (Interj.
> 01).

The Salvation Army youth story that preceded this
activity was about sacrificing one's life to save others. The

preacher wanted his audiences to do something similar to what the Salvation Army youths had done in the story that he told. The only difference was that instead of drowning in the ocean so *others* could be rescued, the audience were to will their wealth to the church at their death so *others* could be saved through the evangelistic activities of the church. The similarity was that in both cases sacrifices are made for others. In the case of the youths, their physical lives were sacrificed; while in the case of the audience, the security or welfare of their immediate families and loved ones would be sacrificed. The bottom line is *others* instead of *self*.

The rhetorical goal of the preacher is obviously that the audiences must live the *others* identity. According to White (1985), constitutive rhetoric demands that action be taken to reinforce the constituted identity and the beliefs of that identity. In line with this principle, when the preacher demanded of the audience to *Please turn to somebody and say care about others*, he appeared to be inviting the participation of the audience in the new identity. When the audience responded by obeying the preacher, they demonstrated their persuasion, or at least willingness, to take on the constituted identity.

Talking about prayer, the preacher explains,

11. As long as it's about self, it's about you God said forget it, don't even pray those prayers, I'm not obligated to answer such prayers; selfish prayers, I don't answer them but ask for others and I will do it. Others (Expl.11)!

In this teaching about prayer, the preacher emphasizes **others** as that which gets God's attention. Anything about the **self** is not regarded by God because it is a selfish prayer. He then instructs the audience:

12. Turn to somebody and say care for others (Interj. 04).

This is another invitation of the audience by the preacher to participate in the **others** identity. On another occasion, the preacher admonishes the audiences that they 'have a responsibility to touch others' (Admon. 04). And calls on the audiences:

13. Somebody say others (Interj. 05).

This refrain about **others** runs through the sermon delivery. The preacher seemed to have used it as a strategy to call the **others** identity into being in his rhetoric.

Apart from interjections, prayer was also used by the preacher at the final stage of the rhetorical process to compel the audience to act. Prayer, like interjections, was also used to invite the audience's participation in the constituted identity. The following excerpt is an example:

*14. May that **not happen** to you [shouts of amen] (Prayer 01).*

The preacher made this prayer for the audience to avert the threat of losing their blessings for disobedience and selfishness. What was to have happened to the audience was that they would get to heaven and realize how they

had forfeited many blessings on earth because they failed to make sacrifices for God. The prayer could be seen, then, as the preacher's timely intervention to avert the plight of the audience. Before the prayer, the preacher created a threat as follows:

*15. There's a **hundredfold**; some of you you [sic] will get to **heaven** and you will be **shocked** and blown away; they will show you blessings that was [sic] meant for you here on earth and will mean nothing to you in eternity, but you **missed** it when you were here on **earth**. You were **selfish**, you were just concerned about you and **yourself**, your immediate **family**. That was all you were concerned about; you weren't concerned about **Christ** and **his business** (Threat 06).*

As can be seen in Excerpt 15, the audience's offense was that *'you were just concerned about you and yourself, your immediate family. That was all you were concerned about; you weren't concerned about Christ and his business.'* It should be recalled that Christ and his business refer to the church; and to be selfish means that one does not include the church in their will. In this case, to be concerned about Christ and his business implies to include the church in one's will.

For the threat not to happen, the preacher prays for the audience, *May that not happen to you*! And the audience responded with a loud AMEN! If the audience's *amen* could be interpreted as their acceptance of the blessing of the preacher's prayer, then it could also mean an expression of their repentance and willingness to do 'the right thing' from then on. This shows that, perhaps, the audience were being persuaded by the preacher's rhetoric to adopt the new identity being created for them.

In the following excerpt, the preacher prayed for those audience who would agree to make a promise to sacrifice something:

*16. We all make **promises** when we are growing up, and **we must**. I pray for the grace to **fulfil your promise** (Prayer 02).*

To benefit from the blessings of this prayer, the audience **must** make **promises**. It seems that the preacher directed these words to young people among the congregation who had the potential to become successful politicians, professionals, and clergy. The preacher observes,

*17. There are a lot of **young ones** hearing me; some of you are **potential presidents**, **ministers of state**, **ambassadors**, great **architects**, **doctors**, **lawyers**, **engineers**, **scientists**, **bishops**, **archbishops** better than Duncan Williams, **prophets** better than the prophets of today, **teachers**, **pastors** of mega churches, **evangelists**, **great ones** sitting under the sound of my voice (Expl 13).*

The preacher insinuates in the next excerpt that the above-mentioned professions and careers are dreams which could come to pass or fail.

*18. And God will give you the grace to become what he has chosen you to become; **but you will** always have to **sacrifice something** and you will always have to **let something go** (Prayer 03).*

This excerpt implies that God may have chosen the audience to become any of the professionals mentioned. However, it is only God's grace that could enable them to become; and God will only give that grace if they sacrifice or let something go. Prayer (02) above invites the audiences to make promises and receive grace through the preacher's prayer to sacrifice something and qualify to become what God has chosen them to be.

Through the strategy of prayer, the preacher arrogates to himself the power to make the audiences to become 'something' or 'somebody' in the future. The following excerpt makes this observation clearer:

*19. I hear **people come to me**, **pray for me** I want to stand for election, I'm going to be a minister, I'm going to be that, I'm going to be that. And **I look at them, and I ask them what have you accomplished with your life for others?** Nothing; you want to stand for politics, to do what? To help who? You haven't accomplished anything for anybody* (Pers.Eg 04).

The above testimony shows that people recognise the power of the preacher's prayers to make them to become politicians and other things. Because of that they seek such prayers from him. The preacher himself seems to be conscious of his own powers when he implies that he interviews those people to determine whether they qualify for such prayers. According to him, '**I ask them what have you accomplished with your life for others?**' This implies that he has conditionalities for offering such prayers, and one of those conditionalities is that the seeker must accomplish something for others. It would seem that once people meet the requirements, the preacher has the power to pray their desired identities into being.

The identity the preacher constructed for himself in the above testimony increases his credibility in the eyes of the audience. He has the power to make people achieve their dreams through his prayers, then they can take advantage of the opportunity before them. They can go ahead and make promises to sacrifice things to the church, he will pray for them and they will receive 'grace' to fulfil the promises and become what they dream to be.

Finally, the preacher used the strategy of prayer to identify those among the audience who would like to identify with the constituted identity. This strategy may also compel those who had not made up their minds during the preaching to do so. At the end of the sermon, the preacher makes the following call:

*20. I want to **pray two prayers**: right now, I want to pray for **those who say Papa, I repent** for being selfish. And I haven't given God the best of all that he has given me. **I haven't yet done my will**, and others **say I've done my will but I never considered what you're saying** that I really have to do something and leave something for Christ and the gospels. It's all about my kids and immediate family. I want to do right; I want to work for the Lord* (Prayer 04).

Two categories of people from the audience were expected to answer this call: those who had not yet done their will and those who did their will without making provision for the church. These people were to repent of being *selfish*, not giving *God the best of all that he has given* them. They were required to walk out to the front of the podium and receive prayer to go and do the right thing.

*21. I want to **pray for you**. All those individuals **if it relates to you**, please **come forward** and let me pray for you **right now** (Prayer 05).*

Many people from among the audience walked forward and received the prayers. This response can be interpreted to mean that these people have been persuaded by the preacher to adopt the newly constituted identity. Members of this church, Action Chapel International, would be expected from then on to write their will and to allocate a greater percentage of their wealth to the church than their families.

CONCLUSION

The analysis set out to look for elements of constitutive rhetoric in a sermon of Archbishop Duncan-Williams of Action Chapel International in Ghana. Three research questions guided the analysis, and these are (1) what elements of constitutive rhetoric can be found in the sermon of the selected preacher? (2) what rhetorical strategies are employed in the sermon to constitute identities? (3) what actions are the audience persuaded to take?

Addressing the first research question, it was found that the preacher crafted the sermon as a deliberative rhetoric (Zachry, 2009) to create the '*others*' identity as against the '*self*' identity. He used narratives, explanations, and scriptures to call the Christian identity into being before reshaping it into '*others*' identity. He then persuaded the audience to adopt the '*others*' identity as an ideal Christian character. Finally, the preacher calls on the audience to act by making a promise to will their wealth to the church before they die. The preacher's rhetorical process follows White's (1985) description of constitutive rhetoric which creates an identity for an audience and persuades them to act on it. Regarding the second research question, it was found that the preacher used the rhetorical appeals of logos, ethos, and pathos to persuade the audience to live the constituted identity. He was found to have leaned more heavily on pathos as he employed threats and guilt to manipulate the emotions of the audience towards persuasion. The third research question is addressed by the finding that the goal of the preacher was to make his church audience will the greatest percentage of their property to his church. The preacher achieved the audience's persuasion largely by threatening eternal damnation to those who disobeyed.

Based on the above findings, it is concluded that sometimes some preachers use emotional manipulation instead of logical and credible persuasion to make their

audiences do what the preachers want. As Van Dijk (2006) observes, there is a difference between persuasion and manipulation, and both are done through discourse. Though both lead to convincing an audience, persuasion is positive while manipulation is negative. As the study exposed manipulative elements in a sermon, it is recommended that society, especially patrons of preachers, critically examine preachers' demands to be sure that they are not being manipulated when they obey the preachers.

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