

How Africa's False Prophets Are Spreading Deception

In a church in Kampala, Uganda, a mysterious “prophet” known as Brother Innocent asks a woman to come to the front of the room. Then, in front of others, he puts on surgical gloves and reaches under the woman’s skirt to fondle her private parts. In most cases he eventually pulls out a piece of cloth, a coin or an animal skin—and then proclaims that he has “delivered” the woman from witchcraft.

In other cases, he reaches under the neckline of a woman’s shirt and fondles her breasts—and then pulls out an object. In videos he posts on TikTok, it’s obvious he’s using old-fashioned sleight-of-hand techniques. He should be arrested for sexual abuse; instead, gullible women are lining up to be touched by this so-called prophet of God.

Despite his name, this man is certainly not “innocent.” I wish I could say he’s alone in his vile attempt to deceive, abuse and exploit people financially. But the sad reality is that a small army of spiritual imposters have taken Africa by storm during the past decade:

- Shepherd Bushiri, a celebrated false prophet from Malawi, made an outlandish claim a few years ago that he could walk on air. A cheap video he posted on YouTube isn’t convincing (someone was suspending him above the floor), but he still has thousands of followers who believe they’ll get rich if they listen to his teachings. He has been charged with money laundering and other crimes and is awaiting trial.

- Lesego Daniel of South Africa makes his followers eat grass and drink gasoline to prove their loyalty. Another false prophet in Ghana, Daniel Obinim, became infamous in 2014 for kicking a pregnant woman in her stomach to heal her. A Kenyan

prophet, Rev. Njohi, asked his congregants to lie on the floor so he could walk on their backs. (He said God told him he was too holy to walk on the ground.)

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– A charlatan named Paul Sanyangore of Zimbabwe claims he has a direct phone line to God, and that God actually calls his number. Crowds flock to his meetings hoping that God will call Sanyangore's phone while they are in the service.

– A false prophet from Nigeria named Andrew Ejimadu claims to be able to vomit money from his stomach to help poor people. Based in Zambia, he tells audiences that he carries dozens of currencies in his body. He was recently arrested in South Africa for fraud and trickery.

– Probably one of the most dangerous false prophets in all of Africa was the late T.B. Joshua, founder of the Synagogue Church of All Nations in Lagos, Nigeria. He got his start as an occult healer, but he developed an international following after he began using the name of Jesus in his strange sermons. He died in 2021, but it seems he transferred his dark powers to various African preachers in Uganda, Ghana and other countries.

Sadly, T.B. Joshua's influence isn't limited to Africa. In spite of a recent BBC documentary that reported that he sexually abused some of his female followers, and that he drew his spiritual power from fetish idols, some American ministers now claim that they learned how to perform miracles from Joshua. (If you are following preachers who defend T.B. Joshua in light of everything that has been exposed about him, you are opening a dangerous door to serious spiritual contamination.)

This proliferation of false prophets is nothing new. Even in

the first century, New Testament Christians had clashes with spiritual imposters. In Acts 8, we read about how the apostle Peter confronted a Samaritan sorcerer named Simon, who was known by the locals as “the great power of God” (Acts 8:10b). Peter rebuked this man sharply, not only because of his occult background but because he wanted to buy the power of God.

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False prophets always have the same characteristics:

- They are full of pride, and they always draw attention to themselves instead of glorifying Jesus Christ.
- They are often sexually immoral while pretending to be holy.
- They are full of greed, and they usually exploit people financially by selling spiritual blessings or manipulating people to give money. Like Simon the sorcerer, they assume that they can buy and sell God’s miracle power.
- They mix the truth of God with error, creating a deadly concoction that sounds biblical to immature Christians. False prophets are masters of manipulation. Only people who are truly filled with the Holy Spirit can discern the evil mixture.

How will we combat this current epidemic of dark occultism? We must imitate Peter, who had both the maturity to discern Simon’s wickedness and the courage to confront it. Those of us in the charismatic and Pentecostal community must also warn our congregations that even if a minister performs miracles, we shouldn’t be impressed unless he or she also demonstrates the fruit of the Holy Spirit and preaches the unadulterated gospel.

We must stop being so desperate to see miracles that we settle for demonic counterfeits. We must pursue God. If we soak our

minds in the Scriptures, pray for the Spirit's discernment and stay focused on Jesus, we won't be victims of Satan's spiritual predators.

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