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### The Electric Touch Machine Miracle Scam

*Body, Technology, and the (Dis)authentication of the Pentecostal Supernatural*

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# Chapter 3: The Electric Touch Machine Miracle Scam

## Body, Technology, and the (Dis)authentication of the Pentecostal Supernatural

*Marleen de Witte*

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### Introduction

In July 2007 a Ghanaian preacher was arrested at Entebbe airport in Uganda on the accusation of trying to import from the United States an “Electric Touch” machine to lure people into believing that he could pass on the Holy Spirit. The device is purported to give its wearer an electric charge, which he can transfer to people or objects through the medium of touch. The website of the manufacturer of the Electric Touch machine and other magic tricks—the American company Yigal Mesika—promotes its products as “incredibly innovative, clever and a must for those who want to create miracles anywhere at anytime” and “the realest magic ever seen.”<sup>1</sup> The Electric Touch promotional flyer promises: “This amazing new product will create *excitement, mystery, curiosity, and supernatural powers* all in one unforgettable experience!” The website tells us how: “Have a volunteer touch any part of your body, and watch them receive a pleasant electric static shock that will amaze them! They will believe you have supernatural powers!” Not wanting to “expose the secret to non magicians,” Yigal Mesika did not allow me to reproduce an actual picture of the Electric Touch unit in this book, but was “more than happy to show the advertisement” (see fig 2).<sup>2</sup>

<<<Insert Fig. 2 near here>>>

The preacher, Kojo Nana Obiri-Yeboah of the charismatic We Are One Ministry, denied the accusations of trying to fake supernatural powers and fool his followers; he claimed the machine was a toy for his daughter. But the device was seized by the police, and Uganda’s ethics and integrity minister, James Nsaba Buturo, started an investigation into Obiri-Yeboah’s ministry practices. Global news media quickly scooped the issue, and the story of the “Electric Touch

machine miracle scam” started circulating before the machine itself could ever be put to use by the preacher in question.<sup>3</sup>

The brief news story about pastor Obiri-Yeboah and his Electric Touch machine immediately breaks down the distinctions between realms that have long been thought separate in Western hegemonic thinking: that of scientific/technological rationality and that of religious belief or “superstition.” It points to the magic of technology as well as to the technicity of experiences glossed as supernatural or religious. In his introduction to the volume *Religion and Media*, Hent de Vries has called our attention to the structural resemblance between the miracle and the special effect.<sup>4</sup> Recognizing two elements of the miraculous (and of the transcendental more generally)—its (re)presentation as an extraordinary event and its artificiality and technicity—as two sides of the same coin, de Vries concludes that “the magical and the technological thus come to occupy the same space, obey the same regime and the same logic.”<sup>5</sup> This structural and ontological overlap between the miracle and the special effect is not just a philosophical argument. As illustrated by the case of the Electric Touch machine miracle scam and other examples, the necessary element of technicity present in any phenomenon or experience framed as miraculous or supernatural causes great insecurity among believers and a concern with distinguishing true miracles from fraudulent illusions. So while, as de Vries states, “*analytically*, there is no observable difference between true and false miracles,” in a religious field marked by fierce competition among religious specialists seeking to convince widely overlapping audiences of their claims to authority and authenticity, this very distinction is the stake in struggles over who can claim access to “real,” that is, divine, not human, power.<sup>6</sup>

The story also points to the convincing power of touch in this politics of authentication. Touch and tactile sensations are a key modality of spiritual experience and religious subjectivity in African charismatic Pentecostalism, and “feeling it in the body” is often taken as an indicator of the true presence of the Holy Spirit. This emphasis on the embodiment of the transcendental is not to be understood as alternative or opposed to the “body pedagogics” of modern technological culture, as some authors would still have us believe.<sup>7</sup> On the contrary, charismatic Pentecostal pastors all over the world are well-known for their expansive use of modern technologies, not as instruments of technical rationality, but as means to bring individuals into physically felt contact with the transcendental. From audiocassettes to video compact discs and from broadcasting to podcasting, the Holy Spirit appears to flow through every technological innovation to touch expectant believers. At the same time, the slick media formats, editing techniques, and special-effects-media-savvy pastors use to attract people raise suspicions about the authenticity of their claims. The massive growth in churches set up by charismatic preachers in recent years has been accompanied by fears that some could be fraudsters. Especially their fabulous riches and the large

sums of money they ask from their followers evoke widespread social criticism, and the media carry frequent reports on “fake pastors” using dubious techniques to deceive people into believing that they have supernatural powers. The scandal about the Electric Touch machine was that even people’s sense of touch, generally the most trusted of the senses, can be deceived by technological manipulation.

The story of pastor Obiri-Yeboah’s Electric Touch machine, then, raises a problem of mediation and authentication,<sup>8</sup> as it is implicated in struggles for and over religious authority, the use of technologies, and bodily and sensory practices. Linked to broader concerns over the authenticity of technologically mediated religious experience, it invites us to explore the nexus of the corporeal, the technological, and the spiritual in African charismatic Pentecostalism and to ask how electronic technologies intersect with techniques of the body in bringing believers into the presence of divine power. Examining some key techniques and technologies used in Pentecostal practices of mediation as well as concerns over the use of such techniques and technologies and the broader public representation of this movement in Ghana, this chapter shows how technological-bodily mediations are eternally unstable and subject to contestation by both insiders and outsiders.

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## Religion, Technology, Body

As noted in the introduction to this book, recent years have seen a growing scholarly interest in exploring the intersections between technology and religion, especially in the field of media. The most productive focus of attention in this field is not so much on how religion and media technology, as formerly separate spheres, now come to meet as religious groups adopt new—or newly available or accessible—media technologies. Rather than seeing media as new to religion, it is fruitful to see media as intrinsic to religion, understood as a practice of mediation. As an increasing number of scholars emphasize, religion always needs techniques and technologies of mediation that establish links between what is conceived as the physical and the metaphysical worlds and that enable people to experience the presence of divine power.<sup>9</sup> Modern technologies of audiovisual reproduction and transmission are not external to religion, but facilitate religion’s core business of connecting people and spirits. As such they are not essentially different from older, more established technologies of storage and communication, such as painting, writing, or print, or religious techniques, such as prayer, dance, or divination.

The idea of religion as media technology resonates with charismatic discourses in Ghana (and elsewhere) about communication with the spirit world in terms of technology. Various ritual practices are said to “establish points of

contact,” working as “spiritual electronics” and making the Holy Spirit “flow like electricity.” This is not just metaphoric discourse. As media shape people’s imaginations of the metaphysical, their experience of connecting to this invisible realm may be channeled through media technologies. Testimonies report of Holy Spirit baptism through a TV broadcast, of healing through a live on-air radio prayer, or of divine anointing through a sermon tape. As Friedrich Kittler wrote, “the realm of the dead is as extensive as the storage and transmission capabilities of a given culture.”<sup>10</sup> The available technologies of representation not only make possible (and limit) the religious imagination; they also enable and constrain the expression and experience of divine power. In their capacity of making the divine imaginable and rendering it present, then, modern media technologies such as television and radio are not so different from older techniques of religious mediation. It thus makes no sense to assume that media technologies are some kind of external actor doing something to an already constituted religious formation. Any religious formation is the outcome of particular techniques and technologies of mediation.

The growing attention to technological mediation goes together with a focus on the materiality and sensory appeal of the media technologies employed in religious practice.

Resonating with a much broader interest in the body by scholars of religion across various disciplines and inspired by Marcel Mauss’s work on techniques of the body, recent anthropological work has explored the ways in which religious mediations employ distinct sensorial (visual, aural, tactile) registers, showing how they are embodied by their recipients and how they contribute to the constitution of religious subjectivities.<sup>11</sup>

The question of the sensory impact of media technologies has, of course, been debated for some time within media studies, most famously perhaps by Marshall McLuhan. In his *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, McLuhan described television as a touch machine *par excellence*.<sup>12</sup> “TV,” he wrote, “is not so much a visual as a tactual-auditory medium that involves all of our senses in depth interplay.”<sup>13</sup> For McLuhan, whereas the invention of photography and the radio led to the extension of visual and aural sensory experience, television “is, above all, an extension of the sense of touch.”<sup>14</sup> While McLuhan saw this synaesthetic tactility as particular to TV as opposed to other media, I think that all visual, audio, and audio-visual media have a tactile dimension in that they have the capacity to evoke tactile sensations in listeners/viewers and that, in this respect, the differences between television, cinema, photography, and radio are matters of degree rather than of kind.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, whereas McLuhan saw tactility as intrinsic to the technology of television itself, a more anthropological view would posit that what technologies do to people largely depends on what people do to technologies—that is, on how technologies and the encounters with them are culturally embedded and coded.

While avoiding the simplistic technological determinism of which McLuhan has—perhaps wrongly—often been accused, we must recognize that technologies do have specific features that shape human interaction and experience. But we must also ask how the materiality and sensoriality of particular media technologies tie in with cultural, social, and historical subject formations, and in particular with the ways religious traditions discipline the body and tune the senses through conscious learning and rehearsal of bodily and sensory techniques. Attention to the human body and the senses as a site of religious training also implies a shift from a focus on questions of meaning, symbolism, and belief—long privileged in the study of religion—to a focus on how sensory regimes organize relationships between religious subjects and the divine.<sup>16</sup> In a religious culture that pays particular attention to the bodily experience of spirit power and tunes believers' senses to the presence of the spirit, the capacity of media technologies to touch becomes particularly pronounced. The question, then, is how modern media technologies and religious techniques of the body interpenetrate and inform each other in the materialization of religious presence. As I will show in the case of charismatic Pentecostalism, the sense of touch is particularly well-tuned, and this has important consequences for how we conceive of Pentecostalism's relationship to the sensory regimes of audiovisual technologies.

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## Charismatic Pentecostalism and/as Technology in Ghana

In Ghana as in many other sub-Saharan African countries, the popularity of charismatic Christianity has been fast-growing over the past two decades. With their message of individual success and the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, charismatic preachers attract mass followings, especially among young, aspiring people in the urban areas.<sup>17</sup> Many scholars have related this exponential growth to the ways this new Christianity addresses the conditions of modernity in postcolonial society while being firmly rooted in indigenous religious worldviews.<sup>18</sup> In Ghana the Pentecostal boom took place in the context of—and to a large extent depended on—the country's return to democracy in 1992 and the subsequent liberalization and commercialization of the media. The rise of privately owned commercial FM radio and TV stations enabled prosperous charismatic and Pentecostal leaders to buy airtime and to establish a strong public presence. Televised church services led by celebrity pastors, commercials for healing crusades and prayer summits, radio preaching, phone-in testimonies, gospel music charts, and video clips make up a large portion of urban airtime. These media are first of all considered effective channels of evangelization, of spreading the gospel of Christ to the masses. But they are also used to enhance

images of success, prosperity, and modernity, to boost the charisma of the leader and manage his public personality, and to visualize God's miracles and the church's mass following for an outside audience. With their extensive and compelling media output, charismatic Pentecostal churches have captured broad audiences beyond their membership as traditionally defined, exerting a powerful influence not only on other Christian denominations, but also on non-Christian religions and on public and popular culture in general.<sup>19</sup>

From the very onset of the charismatic revival in Ghana, this movement was closely tied to mass-media technologies. Since the late 1970s newsletters, books, cassettes, and television programs by faith preachers such as Kenneth Hagin, Oral Roberts, Morris Cerullo, and Benson Idahosa have been coming to Ghana and have fed a new Christian enthusiasm.<sup>20</sup> Local prayer groups evolved into churches that started growing exponentially, and that continue to flourish today. Many of those new churches started recording their services on audio- and videotapes right from the beginning. Such tapes circulated through local markets, lending libraries, and hand-to-hand exchanges among friends. This cassette culture provided an effective circuit for spreading the messages and the renown of new charismatic preachers or—in Pentecostal terms—for spreading the Holy Ghost fire. When in 1992 the broadcast media were liberalized, the airwaves gradually became accessible. Many of these churches made use of the possibility to buy airtime and started broadcasting their recordings on radio and, if they could afford it, television. Inspired by the vision that “churches have to use all new technologies available, because the Devil is also using all technologies,”<sup>21</sup> most charismatic churches now have a “media ministry”: a church department entirely devoted to the production, sales, and broadcast of radio and TV programs, audio- and videotapes, and PR material, including radio and TV commercials. “Live” church services and crusades are also mediated by technology. This includes mass events that use public-address systems, closed-circuit television, and videos projected onto huge screens in order to connect the crowds to the preacher on stage or even, through satellite connections, to charismatic crusades on the other side of the globe. People's encounters with and experiences of charismatic Pentecostalism thus always happens partly via technology. Clearly this is a religious movement that cannot be thought of as prior to or outside of technological media. Technology is constitutive of the charismatic movement itself.

But there is another dimension to this close intertwining of Ghanaian charismatic Pentecostalism and technology. Pentecostal thought and teaching often frame the operation of and communication with the spirit world in terms of technology. In his book *Invisibility to Visibility*, pastor Richard Gyamfi Boakye explains the working of faith as “the principle device needed to transport invisible things” comparable with technologies of “remote sensing,” such as satellites. Like a satellite, “faith has the ability to gather the energy of the spiritual realm and send

signals into the physical in the form of solutions.”<sup>22</sup> The same pastor uses the recurrent image of the spiritual working like electricity:

When you put on light you are confident it will brighten even though you do not see the electric current. The bulb lightens because when you touch the switch you close the circuit and the electric current is therefore able to flow through. When faith is released it will complete the circuit of the spiritual and the physical and as a result spiritual resources will be transported into the physical.<sup>23</sup>

In another Pentecostal publication, Pastor Emmanuel Abrahams of the Power of God Mission explains how money offerings work as “spiritual electronics:” “Electronics is a system in which we use electric current through create devices that performs the things we want. Spiritual electronics is the usage of our financial resources to produce results in our life.”<sup>24</sup> Similarly, speaking in tongues is described as “a direct communication line to God in the spirit.” Praise and worship help believers “tune to the power of the Spirit,” and prophecy, “seeing powers,” is likened to radar or X-ray technology.

Not limited to Ghana, or indeed elsewhere in Africa, such discourse is found across global Pentecostalism.<sup>25</sup> In the Ghanaian setting, however, it resonates with a much wider discursive religious field, in which the presence and working of a range of invisible powers—witchcraft, spirits, the devil, the Holy Spirit—are explained by turning to electronic technologies. Witchcraft and magic (“juju”) are commonly termed “African electronics.” Traditional healers compare the realm of spirits to radio or television airwaves and divination to computer technology.<sup>26</sup> One “spiritual scientist” described his work as follows: “It is spiritual science, because it is a matter of putting the right things together in the right way for the power to enter and the thing to work. It is like a mobile phone, if it is not arranged well, it will not work. Or a TV and the remote, there is a power working between them, which you don’t see.”<sup>27</sup>

Pentecostals not only imagine the working of the spiritual realm as electronic technology, they also talk about their experiences of the power of the Holy Spirit, or the “anointing,” in terms of electricity. In the context of an ethnographic study of the International Central Gospel Church (ICGC) in Accra,<sup>28</sup> one of Ghana’s largest and most media-active charismatic churches, I talked with one of the church pastors, Pastor Dan, about the anointing. Explaining the concept to me, he said: “the anointing of God is like electricity.” Had I not felt how, during the anointing service, the church auditorium was “electric with the presence and power of the Holy Spirit?” Christians who say that they have been baptized in the Holy Spirit often say “it was like a jolt of electricity.” Pastor Dan told me that when, after such a baptism, he would put his hand next to the person, he could “feel the power, like heat or electricity, radiating off their bodies.”<sup>29</sup> This image of electricity is part of globalized charismatic discourse. In *Good Morning, Holy Spirit*, a book that I bought in the Lighthouse Chapel’s Vision Bookstore in Accra,



the American evangelist Benny Hinn describes an experience he had at the age of eleven: “Suddenly my little body was caught up in an incredible sensation that can only be described as ‘electric.’ It felt as if someone had plugged me into a wired socket.”<sup>30</sup>

The image of the Holy Spirit as electric power is not just a metaphor that is good to think about and understand spiritual matters. Part of a broader religious imaginary of connectivity, circuitry, and immediacy, it informs ritual practices and helps tune the believer’s senses to the working of this invisible power. In other words, such images do not remain on the level of representations, but become literally embodied, thus producing bodily sensations. Sometimes such sensations are expressed in general terms of tactility, as “being touched by the spirit” or “feeling the power of the Holy Ghost”; sometimes they are referred to more specifically as a sensation of heat, coldness, heaviness, or goose bumps.<sup>31</sup> Pastor Dan continued: “The anointing is tangible. It can be felt. Just as electricity is tangible, so is the anointing. And not only is it tangible; it is also transferable. You can communicate it, you can give it away. You can store it up and you can give it away.”

This transference of the invisible power of the anointing is wonderfully visualized in the giant stage backdrop in the International Central Gospel Church, which served as a visual marker of the church’s 2009’s theme “Supernatural.” A creative charismatization of Michelangelo’s *Creation of Adam* on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, figure 3 dramatically shows the touch of the divine hand as it transfers the spark of life to the first man in the shape of a lightning bolt. Note the striking resemblance to the promotional flyer of Yigal Mesika’s Electric Touch machine (see figure 2). The structural likeness described by de Vries of the miracle and the special effect can hardly be better illustrated.

<<<Insert Fig. 3 near here>>>

Being invisible, yet tangible and transferable, Holy Spirit power—like electricity—does not touch you out of the blue, however. You need to “plug into a socket” before you can feel the shock. As Pastor Dan explained, “electricity may be flowing all around us in the walls of a building. This electric power can bring wonderful appliances to life, but only if we plug in to a receptacle and bring the electric power into contact with the lamp or computer we want to use. When the anointing touches you, you become different. Anointing upon your life will set you alive and break the sickness of spiritual inactivity.” Charismatic Pentecostals thus call upon the language of electricity and electronic technology to describe the supernatural realm as immediate and tangible. Such a conceptualization of Holy Spirit power as electric current—as something to which we need to be plugged in before we can receive it and come to life—informs techniques of the body found in Ghanaian charismatic churches.

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# Techniques of the Body and the Touch of the Spirit

In charismatic Christianity the personal experience of the Holy Spirit forms the center of religious attention and desire. In contrast with the Catholic tradition, Charismatic churches promise believers a direct relationship with Jesus Christ and access to the power of the Holy Spirit unmediated by ordained priests. God calls everyone, and every Christian can and is expected to embody his Holy Spirit without any intermediary. Despite this theological emphasis on immediacy, however, Ghanaian charismatic Christianity increasingly emphasizes the role of a supernaturally gifted “man of God” to overcome problems and achieve success.<sup>32</sup> Certain people (mostly, but not only, men) are perceived as being chosen by God and endowed with a special “anointing” that enables them to transfer the power of the Holy Spirit to their followers. The body of this man of God is authorized as an important instrument for the operation of the Holy Spirit on earth. It is part of the spiritual “wiring.” In the context of Charismatic Pentecostal ritual, this is taken so literally that the touch, and especially the pastor’s touch, features centrally as an effective mode of connecting to the realm of supernatural power. Touch the wire and get the shock. In a variety of ritual performances, physical touch closes the spiritual-physical circuit through which the Holy Spirit can flow like electricity and touch an expectant believer.

During the weekly Solution Centre, a healing and miracle service at the ICGC, pastor Dan engages the congregation in intimate physical contact. Laying his hands on people’s heads or on sick body parts and shouting in their ears and into the microphone, he casts out any demons that may be causing their sickness or failure in business or marriage, commanding the power of the Holy Ghost to come upon them, and prophesizing victory in the form of a visa, a villa, a pregnancy, a husband, or a job. Sometimes anointing oil is applied on the body, either by the pastor or the believer herself, so as to create “points of contact” with the Holy Spirit. The drama of the performance is intensified by music or sound effects by the church band and loudly amplified glossolalia (speaking in tongues) by the prophet. Spiritual mediation thus happens most effectively through touch and “haptic sound,” whereby it is not the symbolic quality of sound (the meaning of words spoken or sung), but its physical quality (uttering meaningless sounds, the sheer volume of shouting, the rhythm of music) that makes the Spirit flow. Technology is already constitutive of this total sensory experience of plugging in: sound amplification, surround-sound technology, musical instruments, cameras, closed-circuit television, and PowerPoint projections all contribute to people’s sense of divine presence. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the individual believer manifests itself in the body or in bodily sound: involuntary spinning, shaking,

jumping, falling down, crying, screaming, and speaking in tongues are all interpreted as signs of the touch of the Spirit.

What is important to stress here are the technicity and artificiality of this extraordinary experience of the miraculous touch of God and, in particular, the bodily techniques that mediate this sense of spirit power. Consider the example of glossolalia. When people are praying aloud together and speaking in tongues, at first hearing it seems purely spontaneous and unruly, and this is exactly how it is understood to be in charismatic doctrine: a spontaneous manifestation of the sudden presence of the Holy Spirit within an individual. At such a moment the Spirit is claimed to be speaking through the believer according to the will of God. But in practice it is the pastor who subtly indicates when to start and when to stop praying. Moreover, glossolalia is something you can learn by practicing, and some people are clearly more advanced in it than others. Some people told me that as children they were taught how to speak in tongues by saying "I love Jesus" more and more quickly until the words became unintelligible. Similarly, when people fall down upon the touch of the pastor's hand on their head, this is interpreted to be a spontaneous response to the touch of the Holy Spirit. But such events occur within a format of bodily posture and choreography that inexperienced newcomers acquire with the help of church ushers or by mimicking others. Such bodily and sensory formats for the reception of Holy Spirit are acquired and gradually embodied through participation in religious performance. Through bodily techniques the senses are tuned in to the touch of the Spirit, which is at the same time authenticated as something that occurs spontaneously. The experience is thus attributed to divine, not human, agency.

Despite this emphasis on spontaneity and divine agency, the fact of practicing and acquiring techniques is not necessarily seen as contradictory or fake. Rather, conscious and directed action on the part of the spirit desiring believer is deemed necessary in order to be able to receive the Spirit. One needs to actively plug in and not sit and wait unplugged for the power to come. And yet the technicity of the miraculous touch does pose a tension. It is not obvious when a performance genuinely exhibits "divine touch" and when it fails to become so, remaining an instance of "mere acting." Critics often dismiss charismatic bodily practices as "mere performance" or "just pretending." For their part, many pastors are concerned that the increasing mass-mediatization and popularization of charismatic Christianity merely attract people to an outward style of charismatic worship and Christian appearance without instigating the deep, life-transforming experience of being born again. Such criticisms should be understood as a particular religious concern with authenticity that privileges depth over superficiality, content over form, spirit over the body, spontaneity over ritual, immediacy over mediation, and divine agency over human agency. However, we can escape such dichotomies by arguing that experiences authenticated as deep, inner, spontaneous, and immediate and as generated by the Holy Spirit are

necessarily mediated by bodily forms and performances. As mediating forms, techniques of the body such as glossolalia or laying on of hands are just as prone to disauthentication—that is, to be identified as simulated or fake—as are media technologies such as video or television broadcasting. Conversely, such technologies are also just as likely to be authorized as conducting wires for the power of Holy Spirit as is the physical touch of the anointed man of God.

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## Miraculous Touch Machines

While prospective converts are often urged to “visit this church on a Sunday to really feel the Holy Spirit at work,” it is also possible to have this experience over a great distance through electronic media technologies. The text on the dust jacket of the religious videotape *Miracle Days Are Here* proclaims: “Join Bishop Dag Heward-Mills in the powerful miracle service captured on this video and experience the miraculous touch of God which is able to heal, deliver and restore! As you receive the Word of God about the Anointing and the miraculous, may faith be stirred up within you to receive your own miracle!”<sup>33</sup> The dust jacket thus promises an experience of “miraculous touch” through the audiovisual medium of a videotape by one of Ghana’s biggest celebrity preachers. Indeed testimonies abound in Ghana of people having received the *touch* of the Holy Spirit through a media broadcast or tape recording.

Some preachers solve the problem of media technologies’ transcendence of embodied proximity by calling their listeners, viewers, or readers to create a “point of contact” by laying their hand on the radio set, the TV screen, or the book page. Asamoah-Gyadu writes, for example, that Bishop Agyin Asare of Word Miracle Church International often opens his palms and asks viewers to place their own open palms into his on the TV screen as he prays for them, in the belief that “there is transference of ‘healing anointing’ to the sick through the screen.”<sup>34</sup> In other cases viewers may be asked to place a bottle of oil on their television sets in the belief that the oil will be infused with anointing power as the pastor on the screen prays.<sup>35</sup> Media preachers thus make use of the materiality of the media device much in the same way that the materiality of the body is used to create “contact points” during anointing services. The television set or the radio receiver, Asamoah-Gyadu argues, thus “acquires a talismanic status as a medium for effective anointing.”<sup>36</sup> But even without physically touching such devices, people can receive the touch of the Holy Spirit through their eyes and ears.

In order to understand how such an experience of audiovisually mediated divine touch comes about, two things should be noted. First, in Ghanaian charismatic Pentecostal thought, sounds and images possibly contain spirit powers (good or evil) that may affect the listener or the viewer.<sup>37</sup> Second, particular

practices of listening or watching can enable (or block) the spirit contained in the sound/image to enter the person's body. Concerning the faculty of hearing, charismatics commonly distinguish between listening to the word of God as an educational exercise and as a spiritual event: between "learning" and "catching," in the words of Dag Heward-Mills. He writes about "the art of soaking in tapes" in his book *Catch the Anointing*, which has a revealing cover photo of a hand literally catching an audiotape (see figure 4).<sup>38</sup>

"Soaking" in tapes simply means to listen to the words over and over again until it becomes a part of you and until the anointing passes on to you! When a tape is fully "soaked," both the Word content and the spirit content are imbibed in your spirit. The anointing is not something you learn, it is something you catch. Do not assume that the "soaking" in of the tape is just an educational exercise. It is a spiritual event. [. . .] The Spirit enters a person as he receives the Word of God. That is why many people experience a radical transformation by just listening to a powerful message from the Word of God.<sup>39</sup>

<<<Insert Fig. 4 near here>>>

Heward-Mills thus advises his readers to listen to tapes in such a way that one no longer just hears the meaning of the words, but embodies their spiritual quality, and the anointing "comes into you." One may listen to the message only with one's ears and brains and understand it, but it is only when one also absorbs it into one's material being—like porous matter absorbs liquid—that one can "catch the anointing." Heward-Mills also tells us to "avoid the mistake of leaving out the video dimension. [It] helps you to catch things that you cannot catch on an audio tape: posture, attire, gestures."<sup>40</sup> The technologically stored and reproduced voice and body image of the pastor thus become the vehicle for the Spirit to enter into the person.

Posture, attire, and gestures are exactly the focus of the editors in the media studio of the International Central Gospel Church. Producing television series such as Mensa Otabil's *Living Word* and Korankye Ankrah's *Power in His Presence* involves extensive editing of the spoken content as well as the images in order to maximize the intended effect of the broadcasts on their spectators.<sup>41</sup> For both the aforementioned programs, the editors have developed a format that enhances the pastor's specific ministry gift: in Otabil's case, teaching, and in Ankrah's case, the manifestation of Holy Ghost power. *Living Word* thus visually represents the nonverbal interaction between Otabil and his congregation during the sermon, with images highlighting Otabil's charismatic authority and audience shots depicting individuals responding to his words, agreeing with him, admiring him. *Power in His Presence* not only includes Ankrah's sermons, but dramatic images of worship, deliverance, and people shaking, falling down, and rolling on the floor in reception of the Holy Ghost. In both cases the camera operators and studio

editors make creative and skillful use of camera angles and editing techniques in order to highlight the spiritual power embodied by the pastor and to suggest its transference to their audiences. For instance, they select particularly impressive shots of the pastor, showing his powerful gestures and facial expressions interspersed with expressive and emotional, but always appropriate audience cutaways in which unflattering shots of the pastors as well as any improper audience behavior—such as chewing gum, looking distracted, or walking about—have been removed.

Talking with the editors about their work, it became clear to me how the visual representation of a flow between pastor and audience onscreen also serves as a technique to transfer the spirit power contained in the message to viewers at home. The editors explained that people at home have a tendency to identify with the people they see on TV, and the body language they see depicted shapes their viewing experience.<sup>42</sup> If they see people agreeing with a statement, they also want to agree. If they see people captured by a message, the message will capture them. In line with media theory that emphasizes that this process of audience identification takes place not strictly on a symbolic level, but on an embodied one,<sup>43</sup> the editors deliberately show the bodily regimes necessary to receive the word of God and with it the Holy Spirit. Bodies that do not appear to be listening appropriately—and thus are not receiving the Spirit, but only hearing mere words—are edited out of the scene. The *Living Word* format thus strongly suggests a bodily way of listening to Otabil's message that is needed for "catching" the spiritual power embedded in it. The editors hope that by mimetically identifying with the televised bodies of the church audience, the TV viewers will similarly subject themselves to Otabil and partake in the anointing he embodies and radiates.<sup>44</sup> Sometimes the editors "cheat" in order to produce a desired effect, such as by cutting an audience shot from the footage of one service and pasting it into another. They also alternate effectively between wide-angle shots and strategically placed close-ups in order to evoke a sense of close association with the anointed man of God.

Charismatic Pentecostalism is first of all concerned with the coming into presence of spirit power. Media images and sounds must "touch" their viewers, and the experience of being touched while watching or listening is attributed to the power of the Holy Spirit. Just as the bodies and voices of "anointed Men of God" mediate the presence of the Holy Spirit in church services, their technologically mass-reproduced body images and sounds are intended to transfer Holy Spirit touch over distance. Blurring the boundary between onscreen and offscreen and between representation and presence, editing techniques make the television screen a conductor for the Holy Spirit to touch the viewer. In the hands of Ghanaian Pentecostal pastors—or rather their media staff—video cameras, television, radio, cassettes, compact discs, and other media technologies turn into "electric touch machines" of a kind, closing the circuit that enables the power of

the Holy Spirit to flow and to manifest itself in believers' bodies as physical sensation. It is in this sense that the technological and the spiritual merge and "God is in the machine." Pentecostals have made it their core business to get God's spirit into the body via the machine. They embrace media technologies as effective channels through which to connect physically to the realm of spiritual power. At the same time, the awareness of the enchanting power of technology and the acknowledgment of the mediating role of bodily techniques and media technologies cause anxiety about inauthenticity and the specter of "fake pastors." The Electric Touch machine's promise to "create supernatural powers" by technological means is so unsettling for Pentecostals because it points to the possibility that miracles are merely human artifacts.

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## "Fake Pastors" on the Airwaves

The case of the Ghanaian charismatic pastor and the Electric Touch machine described at the beginning of this chapter should be understood in a broader religious field in which the "fake pastor" (*osofa moko*, in local parlance) or "false prophet" is a recurrent figure: one who seems to have gained prevalence and moral importance with the new accessibility of communication technologies since the liberalization in the 1990s. As Jesse Shipley has also observed, electronic mediation has accelerated fears about spiritual trickery and generated a public obsession with assessing genuine spiritual power and unmasking fakery.<sup>45</sup> Time and again one hears about the activities of fake pastors trying to capitalize on the widespread craving for miracles and making huge sums of money from unsuspecting individuals, who call on them for spiritual solutions to their problems. Local FM radio stations are seen as particularly susceptible to such fraud. Easily accessible and hugely popular, radio is an effective medium for people to claim to possess miraculous powers and to support such claims with personal testimonies of miraculous healings. One Christian radio station in Accra, Channel R, has been criticized for broadcasting "false prophets." It denied the allegations, claiming that all pastors are thoroughly screened before they are allowed to go on the air.<sup>46</sup> A popular talk show host in Kumasi, Kwabena Asare, aka "Otsunoko," has made it his mission to expose fake pastors live on air on his radio program, which is aired on Nhyira FM on weekdays from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, in Nigeria, the authenticity of media pastors became such a matter of public concern that in May 2004 the Nigerian National Broadcasting Commission imposed a ban on the depiction of "unverified miracles" on its television stations.<sup>48</sup> In Ghana such remarkable steps have not been taken, even though the fervent use of broadcast media by charismatics is being watched with suspicion by the National Media Commission.<sup>49</sup>

The point is that Ghana's religious marketplace is increasingly constituted by mass-media technologies. The liberalization and commercialization of the Ghanaian media have allowed new actors, including religious ones, to enter the public sphere and to capture new audiences, not only on the basis of rational-critical argument, but also through the visceral power of visuals, voice, rhythm, and volume. Modern technologies, spectacular imagery, and dramatic sounds have become novel markers of religious authority and authenticity. The attraction of followers—or, from the perspective of the critics, victims—to the new and often self-proclaimed men of God depends to a large extent on media and marketing strategies and personality creation.<sup>50</sup> People's awareness of media technology's power to manipulate, however, gives rise to insecurities and contestations over the authenticity of claims to spiritual authority. Charismatic pastors always risk being accused of faking supernatural powers and just performing tricks to mislead people with false claims in order to get rich quickly and to lead extravagant lifestyles. No pastor is totally immune from such criticisms, and the legitimacy of particular pastors' claims to anointing is much debated in charismatic Pentecostal circles and beyond. Even established celebrity pastors such as Mensa Otabil constantly need to authenticate the implicit message that they are not mere media creations, but rather embody real and effective anointing from God.

As I have argued, religious authority always needs a certain degree of technicity or artificiality. It is therefore very hard to distinguish between a genuine man of God and a charlatan faking divine inspiration for material gain. Such concerns with discerning fake and real spiritual power are of course characteristic of a type of religion that locates religious authority not in institutionalized hierarchies and formal education, but in divine inspiration and charisma. As such, the false prophet is a global Pentecostal figure. But in Ghana the politics of religious authentication and disauthentication between competing men of God are also rooted in much older, pre-Christian forms of religious power and competition among religious specialists offering access to spirit powers. Indeed, present-day traditional healers and priests are prone to very similar accusations of fakery. One of the leaders of the Afrikania Mission, a neotraditionalist organization representing "African traditional" religious practitioners in Ghana, told me that one of the problems they faced was that one cannot always be sure who is a genuine priest or healer and who is a quack: "Priests and priestesses can use tricks and pretend to be possessed, because they know the signs of being possessed by a particular divinity. That is a false prophet. The majority of them are quacks."<sup>51</sup>

The opening up of the airwaves to the public strategies of religious leaders has given a boost to the old figure of the fake priest/pastor/healer. As a result of their eager exploitation of the power of media technologies to enchant the masses, charismatic pastors have become particularly susceptible to suspicions of fakery, and the fake pastor has come to be associated with charismatic Christianity more than with any other religion. With large photographs and bold headlines, popular



tabloids carry all kinds of gossip and allegations about pastors' sexual escapades, criminal activities, and other immoral behavior, thereby spectacularly exposing the hidden evil in these "false prophets." A popular theme is pastors' consultations with traditional shrines and "juju men" and their indulgence in "juju" rituals in order to attract crowds to their churches and get rich quickly. Given the Pentecostal condemnation of "traditional" religion, such revelations of pastors' secret power sources constitute serious charges of hypocrisy. Clearly, while pastors have successfully adopted media technologies, they do not fully control their representation in all media. As media technologies enhance spiritual authority as well as fears of spiritual frauds, pastors' media strategies require a sensitive balancing act on the tightrope between genuineness and fakery and between morality and immorality.

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## Conclusion

The ethnography presented in this chapter has shown that technologies do not have universalizing effects everywhere, but rather have particular effects and affects in local contexts of adoption. Ghanaian Pentecostals ascribe to modern media technologies the power to connect people not only to each other, but also to spirits. Television sets, radio receivers, and audiocassettes are thus put to use not only as media of representation and communication, but also as "talismanic" objects for tapping into the sources of supernatural power. Incorporated into religious bodily and sensory regimes, they are felt to have the capacity to transfer supernatural power into viewers' and listeners' bodies and thereby to affect their being.

The ascription of magical qualities to media technologies is certainly not unique to the African or, more broadly, the "non-Western" context. The transmission of miraculous healing power through the television screen is in fact a familiar phenomenon in global televangelism. For example, the American charismatic faith healer Ernest Angley is known for his televised faith-healing services that end with a shot of his open palm, projecting the image of an enormous hand into American living rooms, and inviting viewers to bring any afflicted body part into contact with the screen. In the hands of Ernest Angley, David Chidester writes, "television truly became a tactile medium, a medium for establishing a kind of physical contact that manipulated unseen powers of healing."<sup>52</sup> In the Ghanaian context, Charismatic Pentecostal engagements with audiovisual technologies show a remarkable continuity with traditional religious practices, where images and sounds do not so much represent or symbolize the divine as embody and convey spirit power.<sup>53</sup> Objects, images, and sounds—including technologically reproduced ones—can be used to bring spirits into presence. As traditional believers take an effigy or a drumming rhythm to make a

deity present in the ritual context of a shrine or a possession ceremony, they may also ascribe to a photograph or video shot of that effigy or a sound recording of that drumming the ability to make the deity present in the context in which the image is viewed or the sound is heard. Charismatic Pentecostal media practices, then, are much closer to African religious traditions than their ostentatiously cosmopolitan outlook would at first sight suggest.

But also in the West, the association of media technology with supernatural powers is much more widespread than Pentecostalism and “modernist” views of technology would presume. In *Haunted Media* Jeffrey Sconce gives a historical account of the persistent association of new communication media (from telegraph, radio, and telephone to television and computers) with spiritual powers and related phenomena in American popular culture.<sup>54</sup> Examining stories of ghosts in televisions, spirit voices heard through radio, and communication with the dead through telegraphy, Sconce shows how such discourses are connected to the dominant understanding of media in terms of liveness, network, and flow.<sup>55</sup> Throughout history the idea that media have a “living presence”—that they can transcend space and time and put us into direct contact with realms outside our normal sensory perception—has included the live presence of spirit worlds.<sup>56</sup>

The magic of electronic communication technology enchants people worldwide. There is a certain uncanniness about the working of technology that springs from a combination of a sense of awe and wonder inspired by impressive technological advance and performance and a lack of control and predictability—an experience of technology displacing our agency. In certain contexts this “technological sublime” is marginalized by dominant collective representations that favor rationalist scientific approaches to technology and deconstruct its magic.<sup>57</sup> In other contexts, however, the awesome power of technology may tie in with particular religious imaginaries and sensory regimes, thus enhancing its prominence and exploiting its religious potential. When the mystery of new communication technologies meets the mystery of religion, the intersection of religious and media ideologies of liveness, presence, and immediacy may generate experiences of being in touch with a spirit power or powers. The charismatic Pentecostal ideology of immediacy and the living presence of God appears to fit particularly well with television’s suggestion of liveness, thus producing in Pentecostal audiences a feeling of being touched by the Holy Spirit.<sup>58</sup> This again has acquired a particular resonance in the Ghanaian context of traditional beliefs about the presence and direct influence of spirits and the practice of communicating with these spirits and embodying their power.

At the same time, this chapter’s focus on Pentecostal uses of media technology in Ghana has revealed a more general and basic tension inherent in charismatic Pentecostalism: the problem of mediated immediacy and the authentication of religious experience and expression. As a religion that places strong emphasis on personal experiences of spiritual power, it depends on media

for contact with the invisible realm of the Holy Spirit. Drawing on bodily techniques and media technologies in order to produce in people experiences of divine touch, Pentecostals at the same time need to mystify the mediating work of these techniques and technologies so as to authenticate a religious experience as immediate and real. That is, technology has to be naturalized, to appear unnoticed in a way, in order for the divine to be identified as the true source of power. The Electric Touch machine could indeed be perfectly suitable to this end, since it remains invisible during the moment of transfer of electricity-annex-Holy Spirit power. When exposed, however—as in the case of the Electric Touch machine—the power of technology risks disauthenticating the sensations evoked as being not spirit-induced, but rather human-produced, and thus “fake.”

Despite their structural resemblance, then, modern media technologies cannot be assumed to be unproblematic extensions of older techniques of religious mediation. On the contrary, technologies and the mediating work they do are always possible sources of caution and conflict. Media technologies may be taken to counteract an ideal of authentic, immediate religious experience. But the repetition of bodily techniques may pose the same challenge, as we have seen. It thus makes no sense to associate the body with authentic religious experience and technology with fakery and fiction. The immediacy of the supernatural as an extrasensory presence always depends on techniques and technologies, including bodily ones, to find material form and to be sensed. Immediacy is thus a fiction. And yet some technologies are felt to provide immediate access to the divine, whereas others are experienced as standing in between. Clearly the powers of particular technologies are not intrinsic. Rather they are attributed via a process of religious authentication that invests them with authority—or denies them authority—in the context of relationships between religious subjects and the divine. Recurrent debates and occasional scandals about religious uses and abuses of technologies indicate that this process is never final.

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## Notes

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1. Yigal Mesika, “Real Magic,” accessed 22 June 2009, <http://www.yigalmesika.com/>.
  2. Yigal Mesika, personal email correspondence, 4 December 2009.

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3. See, for example, "Uganda pastor denies miracle scam," BBC News, 7 July 2007, accessed 22 June 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6294666.stm>.
  4. Hent de Vries, "In Media Res: Global Religion, Public Spheres, and the Task of Contemporary Comparative Religious Studies," in *Religion and Media*, ed. de Vries and Samuel Weber (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 3–42; see also Dennis Tedlock, "The Shaman as Magician," *Journal of Shamanic Practice* 1 (2008): 16–20.
  5. De Vries, "In Media Res," 29.
  6. *Ibid.*, 27–28, emphasis in original.
  7. Chris Shilling and Philip A. Mellor, "Cultures of Embodied Experience: Technology, Religion, and Body Pedagogics," *The Sociological Review* 55, no. 3 (2007): 531–49.
  8. Several authors have identified the dialectics between mediation and immediacy as central to the intersection of media technologies and religious traditions; see, for example, Patrick Eisenlohr, "Technologies of the Spirit: Devotional Islam, Sound Reproduction and the Dialectics of Mediation and Immediacy in Mauritius," *Anthropological Theory* 9, no. 3 (2009): 273–96; Matthew Engelke, *A Problem of Presence: Beyond Scripture in an African Church* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); Birgit Meyer, "Introduction: From Imagined Communities to Aesthetic Formations; Religious Mediations, Sensational Forms and Styles of Binding," in *Aesthetic Formations: Media, Religion and the Senses in the Making of Communities*, ed. Meyer (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 1–28, and several contributions to that volume; Mattijs van de Port, "Visualizing the Sacred and the Secret: Televisual Realities and the Religious Imagination in Bahian Candomblé," *American Ethnologist* 33, no. 3 (2006): 444–61.
  9. De Vries, "In Media Res"; Eisenlohr, "Technologies"; Meyer, "Introduction: From Imagined Communities"; Jeremy Stolow, "Religion and/as Media," *Theory, Culture and Society* 22, no. 4 (2005): 119–45.
  10. Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 13.
  11. Marcel Mauss, "Techniques of the Body," *Economy and Society* 2, no. 1, trans. B. Brewster (1973 [1934]: 70–88; Maria José A. de Abreu, "Breathing into the Heart of the Matter: Why Padre Marcello Needs No Wings," *Postscripts* 1, nos. 2–3 (2005): 325–49; de Abreu, "Goose Bumps All Over: Breath, Media, and Tremor," *Social Text* 3, no. 96 (2008): 59–78; Charles Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).
  12. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966). On the tactile qualities of modern technologies of mass reproduction, see also Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, trans. H. Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1968), 238.
  13. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 336.
  14. *Ibid.*, 333.
  15. In the field of cinema studies, Laura Marks and Vivian Sobchack have focused on the bodily sensuality of film experience and the relation between audiovisuality and tactility; see Laura Marks, *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002); Vivian Sobchack, *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); see also Jojada Verrips, "'Haptic Screens' and Our 'Corporeal Eye,'" *Etnofoor* 15, nos. 1–2 (2002): 21–46.

16. Meyer, "Introduction: From Imagined Communities."

17. With 24.1 percent of the total population and 45.8 percent of all Christians in Accra regarding themselves as charismatic Pentecostal, charismatic Pentecostalism has become the main religious orientation; *Population and Housing Census 2000* (Accra: Ghana Statistical Service, 2000).

18. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Marleen de Witte, "Spirit Media: Charismatics, Traditionalists, and Mediation Practices in Ghana" (Ph.D. diss., University of Amsterdam, 2008); Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalising African Economy* (London: Hurst, 2004); Meyer, "Christianity in Africa: From African Independent to Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33 (2004): 447-74.

19. De Witte, "The Spectacular and the Spirits: Charismatics and Neo-Traditionalists on Ghanaian Television," *Material Religion* 1, no. 3 (2005): 314-35; Asamoah-Gyadu, "Of Faith and Visual Alertness: The Message of 'Mediatized' Religion in an African Pentecostal Context," *Material Religion* 1, no. 3 (2005): 336-57; Meyer, "<HS> 'Praise the Lord.' Popular Cinema and Pentecostalist Style in Ghana's New Public Sphere," *American Ethnologist* 31, no. 1 (2004): 92-110.

20. See Emmanuel Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity* (Accra: Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, 2001).

<sup>21</sup> Interview, Clifford, media staff International Central Gospel Church, 2 April 2002.

22. Richard Gyamfi Boakye, *Invisibility to Visibility: How You Can Release Things from the Spiritual Realm* (Kumasi: Willas Press, 2001), 1:4.

23. *Ibid.*, 4-5.

24. Pastor Emmanuel Abrahams Abrahams, *Spiritual Electronics: The Principles of Giving to Release the Blessings of God* (New Achimota: Power of God Mission, 2000), preface.

25. For a description of discursive images of antennas or satellite dishes deployed by Catholic Charismatics in Brazil, see de Abreu, "Breathing," 345.

26. For a description of how computer technology increased the plausibility of witchcraft among young Sowetans in South Africa, see also Adam Ashforth, *Witchcraft, Violence, and Democracy in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). On Afa divination as computer technology, see Chigbo Josep Ekwealo, "African Divinatory System (Afa) and Computer Technology: The Meta-physics of the New Past and an Old Future," paper presented to the Karl Popper Centenary Congress (University of Vienna, 3-7 July 2002).

27. Interview, Kofi Hande, 29 April 2002.

28. See de Witte, "Altar Media's Living Word: Televised Charismatic Christianity in Ghana," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33, no. 2 (2003): 172-202; de Witte, "Spirit Media: Charismatics, Traditionalists, and Mediation Practices in Ghana" (Ph.D. diss., University of Amsterdam, 2008).

29. Interview, Pastor Dan, May 8, 2002.

30. Benny Hinn, *Good Morning, Holy Spirit* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1990), 22.

31. De Abreu, "Goose Bumps."

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32. Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*.
33. "Miracle Days Are Here" (Accra: Lighthouse Chapel International, n.d.), videotape.
34. Asamoah-Gyadu, "Anointing through the Screen: Neo-Pentecostalism and Televised Christianity in Ghana," *Studies in World Christianity* 11, no. 1 (2005): 20.
35. *Ibid.*, 23.
36. *Ibid.*, 23.
37. De Witte, "Accra's Sounds and Sacred Spaces," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 32, no. 2 (2008): 690–709; Meyer, "<HS> 'There is a Spirit in that Image': Mass-Produced Jesus Pictures and Protestant-Pentecostal Animation in Ghana," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 52, no. 1 (2010): 100–30.
38. Dag Heward-Mills, "Catch the Anointing" (Accra: Dag's Tapes and Publications, 2000), front cover.
39. *Ibid.*, 12.
40. *Ibid.*, 34.
41. See de Witte, "Altar Media's Living Word."
42. Interview, Kofi Hande, *Living Word* editor, 4 June 2002.
43. See, for instance, Vivian Sobchack's description of "mimetic sympathy" as a bodily process of posture, tension, and intention, in *Carnal Thoughts*, 76.
44. Of course there is a difference between the effect intended by the editors and the actual audience experience. Although letters of testimony sent to the church in response to the media ministry indicate that some people indeed experience the Holy Spirit through a media broadcast, this is certainly not always the case, and much depends on factors beyond the editors' control, such as a person's background, context of reception, intention, and desire.
45. Jesse Weaver Shipley, "Comedians, Pastors, and the Miraculous Agency of Charisma in Ghana," *Cultural Anthropology* 24, no. 3 (2009): 523–52.
46. Mr. Adu, director of Channel R, in an interview with *Radio and TV Review* 28 (2001): 50.
47. Enoch Darfah Frimpong, "Welcome to Kumasi, the Garden City of Africa," last accessed 25 January 2010, <http://enochdarfahfrimpong.blogspot.com/2008/06/otsunoko-speaks-i-will-expose-fake.html>.
48. "Crackdown on Nigeria TV Miracles," *BBC News*, April 30, 2004, last accessed 25 January 2010, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3672805.stm>.
49. Interview, Yaw Boadu-Ayebofo, executive secretary of the National Media Commission, 13 November 2002.
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51. Interview Osofo Boakye, Afrikania Mission priest, 25 October 2002.
52. David Chidester, "The American Touch: Tactile Imagery in American Religion and Politics," in *The Book of Touch*, ed. Constance Classen (Oxford: Berg, 2005), 59.

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53. De Witte, “<HS> ‘Insight,’ Secrecy, Beasts, and Beauty: Struggles over the Making of a Ghanaian Documentary on ‘African Traditional Religion,’<HS>” *Postscripts* 1, no. 2–3, (2005): 277–300.

54. Jeffrey Sconce, *Haunted Media: Electronic Presence from Telegraphy to Television* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2000).

55. See Jeremy Stolow, “Salvation by Electricity,” in *Religion: Beyond a Concept*, ed. de Vries (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 668–86; see also Stolow in this volume.

56. See John Durham Peters, *Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

57. Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (London, Oxford, and New York: Oxford University Press, 1964); David E. Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994).

58. See also de Abreu, “Breathing.”