

Make a Joyful Noise

Psalms 100 starts off, “Make a Joyful Noise unto the Lord” and there is evidence that many are following that advice. The congregation about a block away could easily have their music service described as “Song for Organ, Tone Deaf Singer with microphone, and Trumpet.”

The first hotel I ever stayed in in Accra cost a whole \$8 a night and was four doors down from a mosque. Nothing like the sweet notes of the Imam at 4:30 in the morning to bring one from a restful slumber to an upright position.

Evangelists and wannabe preachers equip their vehicles with loud speakers or set up amplifiers and “preach” (scream) at the general public. Some are advertising a revival of some type and encouraging people to attend. Ideally, they expect people to attend at least twice a day for the length of the event and, of course, to make an offering at every visit.

If you do not look closely you will miss the fact that established religious orders are already here. Among the established brick and mortar churches you’ll find Methodist, Catholic, Presbyterian, even the Mormons. As for the plethora of others, they – like cheap utilitarian products – try to bolster their appeal by using ever more declarative names. You won’t find massive billboards advertising the Presbyterian service. However, the Glorified Redeemed Soldiers of Christ Evangelical Ministries Center will gladly greet you five times a week.



It does not take long to realize that revivals are big business in Accra.



Everywhere you look the evangelist is the star. And the sermon is often the hook.



If you are interested in being on a billboard or starting your own ministry, it is relatively simple. You go to one of the Divinity Schools advertised on billboards throughout the city. In six months you can be a Minister. In nine months you can be an ordained Bishop. And if you dedicate a year to the school you can become a Prophet. Yes, the world of religion is waiting for you.

People adorn their businesses with religious sayings. Some even use biblical reference in their business names.



My favorite so far is a small shop near my house, "With God All Things Are Possible Oil Change."

Ghanaians are in general superstitious and there are many who believe in voodoo and dark forces. There are also conservative groups similar to those in the U.S. who wish to impose their doctrines on everyone by creating laws based on their beliefs. But Ghana is a secular society and so far changes have been resisted by people being reminding others that not everyone believes the same way or in the same things. Even though certain groups have large numbers, democracy is more than two wolves and a sheep deciding on what is for dinner.

There are two things that may want to give certain people pause. While the Psalm recommends making a joyful noise and some churches follow that quite loudly, Romans 16:18 also cautions "Such people are not serving Christ our Lord; they are serving their own personal interests. By smooth talk and glowing words they deceive innocent people."

And for all the bluff and bluster about this country being devout, it recently became news that the number two country in the world for searching out videos on PornHub was. . . you guessed it. . . Ghana.

Keep Smilin'