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Visions and voices versus hallucinations and voices: The effects of grey areas in mental health diagnoses

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Statement of the Problem: The intricately religious adherence of Africans engenders the disregard for mental health symptoms thereby wounding the emotional wellbeing of blind adherents. The African continent is noted for its intense spiritual adherence in all spheres. This reliable adherence has led to some manipulations, deceit, and unquestioned belief systems. The proliferation and flourishing of new Christian churches confirm the trustworthiness of this belief system. However, some of the leaders claim to be in direct contact with God through visions and direct instructions from God's voice. While respecting the belief systems of these faith leaders, this paper is based on the examination of some of the unusual faith leaders, their voices and their visions, vis a vis symptoms of some mental Health Disorders. Spirituality and its practices are not empirical therefore some claims of voices and visions, though a clear symptom of mental health disorders, could pass for religious skills. This paper is based on research carried out on 10 unusual church leaders in Africa and the effects of their ministration on their followers. This paper describes the effects of intricate religious adherence to unusual faith leaders and its link to mental health disorders. A theoretical research was carried out on ten of the unusual faith leaders through interviews, questionnaires, and literature review. A sample of the adherents from five of the churches and were screened using DSM V and assessment tests for depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and codependency. Conclusions on the research unearthed several mental health disorders including depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and codependency on 78% of the sample chosen. The findings are to enlighten policymakers to reshape mental health policies to include a screening of societal and religious leaders as a pre-requisite for practice.

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