*Full Length Research Paper*

# Assessing a culture of religious devotion in Cameroon: Comparing word frequencies in the corpus of Cameroon English with reference to the London/Oslo-Bergen (LOB) corpus

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This contribution assesses the degree of religious (Christian) devotion within the Cameroonian evangelical community, based on word frequencies from the Religious component (96,380 running words) of the Corpus of Cameroon English (CCE), and similar data from Category D (Religion) of the LOB (London/Oslo-Bergen) corpus. Overall, the study analyses 21 religious related words and notions such as faith, worship, prayer, fasting and the Christian life in Cameroon. Analysis consistently refers to similar occurrences in the LOB corpus, considered as a "representative" database of religious discourse in a typical Western society. Results reveal that an ascetic religious culture is on the rise among Christian evangelical movements in Cameroon, and that this trend provides evidence for the depth of spiritual quest within that subculture.

**Key words:** Culture, religious devotion, corpus linguistics, Cameroon English.

## INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, quantitative frequencies from computer corpora have essentially been used for lexical (Cotes, 2004; Biber et al., 2003; Altenberg, 2002), grammatical (Biber et al., 1999; Biber, 2006) and stylistic studies (Algeo, 1988) etc. However, such frequency measures are also becoming a basis on which to study cultural themes and practices of specific groups of people in different settings (Shastri, 1988 and Thompson, 2001). Although, culture is a vast and all-encompassing term, studies that have attempted to use corpus frequencies to understand cultural practices have often focused on the frequency of occurrence of an aspect of language (e.g. grammar and/or vocabulary use). Shastri (1988), for example, claims that the lower proportion of expressions of future time (with modals) in the Kolhapur Corpus of Indian English, as compared to the London/Oslo-Bergen (LOB) and Brown corpora, can be attributed to cultural differences: 'maybe the Indian mind is not given to thinking much in terms of the future' (p.18). Leech and Fallon (1992) have drawn parallel (cultural) conclusions between aspects of American and British life such as sport, travel and transport, administration, business,

military, religion etc. on the basis of a comparison of the frequencies of words related to these domains in the LOB and Brown corpora. With respect to religion, they conclude among other things that 'there is a greater preponderance of religious terms in the Brown corpus as a whole, including words of key importance in the Christian religion: Christ, Christian, churches, eternal, faith, God, Jesus, and religion itself' (p. 42). Furthermore, Schmied (2003) uses evidence from the British National Corpus (BNC) to establish basic differences between women and men at the level of their conversational styles in the domains of clothing, colours, food, personal relationships, swearwords, hesitation and hedges, minimal responses to questions etc. In all these studies the category culture is generally assumed.

This present survey is a "thicker" description of religious beliefs and practices, focusing on the use of religious related terms as they occur in the religious text category of the Corpus of Cameroonian English (CCE) and the LOB corpus. Specifically, the study illustrates how usage of God, Lord, Christ, prayer, fasting etc. appears to projects an austere view of religion in

Cameroon that would not to be the case in a typical western culture, taking the British society as representative. The premise of the study is that any belief system is a socio-cultural construct (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) which uses language to propagate itself. Thus, frequently used language (e.g. words and expressions) by people or society etc. encodes concepts that necessarily reflect their thinking and world view.

## Theoretical premise: Language as a cultural resource

The study of culture on the basis of observable language data is one of the subfields of linguistic anthropology. Linguistic anthropology is the study of language as a cultural resource and speaking as cultural practice (Duranti, 2004, 1997; Ottenheimer, 2006). According to Hudson (1980), linguistic anthropology is not only interested in language use, but it also has as its main focus, the study of language as a set of symbolic resources that enter the constitution of social fabric and the individual representation of actual or possible worlds. This view allows linguistic anthropologists to address in new ways some of the issues such as the constitution of authority, the cultural constitution of a person (self), the process of socialization, cultural contact and social change etc. From the perspective of linguistic anthropology, then, language is seen as a set of practice which plays an important role in mediating the ideational and material aspects of human existence, hence, in bringing about particular ways of being-in-the-world. Duranti (1997: 5) observes that as a domain of inquiry, 'linguistic anthropology starts from the theoretical assumption that words matter and from the empirical finding that linguistic signs as representations of the world and connections to the world are never neutral; they are constantly used for the construction of cultural affinities and cultural differentiations'.

Clearly, this assumption can be traced back partly to Sapir's (1929: 209) claim that 'the network of cultural patterns of a civilization (and/or people, groups etc.) is indexed in the language which expresses the civilization'. In general, any particular society is associated with a language(s), but no language is uniform for all speakers of a society. In one society different groups may use language in different ways to distinguish themselves or to project a certain view of the world and thus become a "speech community" with a subculture. According to Salzmann (2006), any complex of learned patterns of behaviour and thought that distinguishes various segments of a society (minorities, caste, and the like) is referred to as a subculture. Most religious communities in Cameroon and probably elsewhere may be said to be an example of such a subculture within the larger cultural set up.

Cameroon has many churches, including worship groups which have constituted themselves into credible religious organisations in the course of the last 20 years. They are usually distinguished by their strict interpretation of religious laws and beliefs. The following extract is taken from one of the gospel brochures on the subject of love of God and the need to go on spiritual retreats, where time can be devoted for prayers and "meeting" with God.

'When a person loves someone, he enjoys talking to the one he loves always, regardless of the occasion [...]. So decide that you will love the Lord with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might. In order to accomplish that goal, you must give yourself all the time that it will take to know Him intimately [...]. This need of time to hear Him and wait upon Him so as to know Him, love Him, obey Him and serve Him, makes spiritual retreats a must' (RE.txt/CCE) .

Discourse of this type is typical of religious (Christian) literature in Cameroon. The objective is to ensure:

'Total separation of all that one is and all that one has from all sin and self and handing over to the Lord Jesus Christ, in one decisive, final and irrevocable act of all that the person is and all that the person has' (RE.txt/CCE).

This view of religion is an attempt by the churches to offer their followers a spirituality that they believe has been lost. Thus, a different conceptualization of the world is created, where the Christian is supposed to live a life of service and dedication to God. In this interpretation of Christianity, familiar religious words take up new meanings and significance in the lives of those who believe and practice it and a subculture gradually takes root. It seems to be the case that religious influence of this nature is pervasive in Cameroon, at least on the basis of corpus evidence.

### DATA AND METHODS

Data for this survey is derived from a 96,380-word sub corpus of the Religious component of the CCE, composed of texts written between 1990 and 1994 (Nkemleke, 2008). The standard key-words-in-context (KWIC) concordance program was used to retrieve concordance information. Altogether, there are 19 different texts in this category and they address different religious themes ranging from doctrine to matters of personal status see (Appendix). LOB figures are taken from Category D (Religion) of the LOB corpus. All of these is summarised in Table 1.

In order to argue that a particular religious related word is frequent or less frequent in the CCE, and by implication that the related religious belief and/or practice (associated with the word) is probably very common or less common in Cameroon, similar religious words from the LOB Corpus were used, for comparison. When comparison is made between findings in the two corpora, however, certain aspects of similarity and/or dissimilarity between them need to be taken into consideration. First the nature of the subject matter addressed in the LOB Corpus and the CCE are not entirely identical. Second, the number of words in the religious category of the CCE is twice the number in the LOB Corpus. Furthermore, both corpora are not of the same generation: the CCE

**Table 1.** Composition of the databases.

| Corpora | No. of text | No. of words |
|---------|-------------|--------------|
| CCE | 19 | 96,380 |
| LOB | 17 (Category D) | 41,548 |

is composed of texts written between 1990 to 1994; while the LOB Corpus is made up of texts published between 1960 -1964 (Johansson et al., 1978). However, it is largely assumed that both corpora can be considered as a reflection of the nature of religious discourse in the two communities. No sophisticated statistical method such as Hofland and Johansson (1982 cf.); Leech and Fallon (1992); Schmied (2003), which uses coefficient to test degree of significance is used in the analysis. Rather, features are classified and discussed on the basis of simple percentages count.

## FINDINGS

The data yielded concordances with the following 21 religious related words (Table 2). The words presented in Table 2 above may be regrouped on the basis of the notions they stand for in Christianity as a religion, and which are largely practiced by most Cameroonian church-goers in ways that would sound unorthodox to a typical western mind (Table 3). The data is classified under two broad domains: beliefs and practices. The former concerns the core Christian belief that God is supreme and that He sent His Son, Jesus Christ as a saviour to redeem mankind. The later is concerned with the way members of these churches live and practice their religion. On this basis, therefore, a binary category (for subsequent discussion) such as this in (Table 3) is further postulated.

## DISCUSSION

### Assessment of religious beliefs on the basis of frequency evidence

The one major thing to take note of here is the fact that religious related words are very frequent in the CCE, occurring 3,587 times - 7 times more than in the LOB Corpus. At a more specific level, the word God and Lord[1] occurs 1,949 times, representing 54.33% of the religious words in the database. This figure contrasts sharply with the frequency of 173 for the LOB corpus, which represents only 31.42% of the religious word in the LOB religious category. The ratio between the CCE and LOB corpus with respect to the occurrence of God and Lord is therefore 11:1. Furthermore, in the Cameroonian religious discourse, salvation through Christ (the saviour), the power of the Holy Spirit and the cross, the dread of

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[1] Although *Lord* is also frequently used in the CCE to refer to Jesus Christ, the same notion of the Supreme Being is always implied.

Satan (the devil) and the possibility of hell are core beliefs which are too often over-emphasised in Cameroon. Overall, these terms/words (Christ, saviour, Holy Spirit, cross, salvation, heaven, eternal, Satan, devil, hell) occur 807 times, representing 22.5% of the religious words in the corpus. The corresponding figure in the LOB corpus is 77, and this represents just 15% of the religious words in the British material. The ratio between the two databases is 10:1, respectively.

This trend probably signals a more obsessive view of God in Cameroon, when seen from the perspective of Western societies. Since this overall picture is likely to mask interesting details on the nature of religious beliefs within Cameroon, it is important to examine individual words (God and Lord) in greater detail, as presented in the following concordance citations:

(1) ed out one or more of the following actions which God hates because they are sinful: stealing, laziness, (RE.txt/CCE).
(2) holy "They must not hear such dirt. Do not dirty God's ears. If someone invited us to go to the wrong place... (RE.txt/CCE).
(3) on his own is insufficient before God. In fact, God sees all our good deeds as dirty rags before Him (RE.txt/CCE).
(4) e most of it. There are many things for which God will allow the believer to set the limits. He has (RE.txt/CCE).
(5) and all sinful practices, all labour is in vain. God cannot send people who still love sin and practice (RE.txt/CCE).
(6) uld not advertise your needs. If you cannot trust God to supply the needs of money and things how will (RE.txt/CCE).
(7) Heart and mind and all attention is directed to the Lord - on hearing His voice and doing his bidding (RE.txt/CCE).
(8) as he ought ? I encourage you to wait on the Lord. Do not be moved by: minutes, hours, days, weeks (RE.txt/CCE).
(9) s total abandonment to the one goal of loving the Lord will involve risks, but who has ever accomplished...(RE.txt/CCE) .

In these examples God (Lord) is portrayed as a being who is not really far removed from ordinary day-to-day human experience, but as one who watches closely at every act we perform and would constantly "censure" our deeds. This apparent casual portrayal of a supreme deity is not to devalue Him. On the contrary, it appears to be  a

**Table 2.** Frequency of religious related words in the CCE and LOB corpus.

| Religious related words | CCE | | LOB | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Frequency | (%) | Frequency | (%) |
| Assembly[3] | 15 | 0.42 | - | - |
| Baptism | 15 | 0.42 | 16 | 3.16 |
| Believer | 80 | 2.23 | 2 | 0.40 |
| Christ/ Jesus Christ | 325 | 9.06 | 40 | 7.91 |
| Christian | 57 | 1.16 | 23 | 4.55 |
| Church | 125 | 3.48 | 146 | 28.85 |
| Cross | 55 | 1.53 | 8 | 1.58 |
| Devil | 27 | 0.75 | 3 | 0.59 |
| Eternal | 32 | 0.89 | 3 | 0.59 |
| Faith | 65 | 1.81 | 12 | 2.37 |
| fast /fasting | 50 | 1.39 | 8 | 1.58 |
| Fellowship | 17 | 0.47 | 7 | 1.38 |
| (Hell) fire | 44 | 1.23 | 1 | 0.20 |
| God | 1,017 | 28.35 | 120 | 23.71 |
| Holy Spirit | 217 | 6.48 | 6 | 1.19 |
| Kingdom (of God, Heaven) | 75 | 2.09 | 8 | 1.58 |
| Lord | 932 | 25.98 | 53 | 10.46 |
| Prayer/praying | 380 | 10.59 | 39 | 7.71 |
| Salvation | 25 | 0.70 | 6 | 1.19 |
| Satan | 16 | 0.47 | 1 | 0.20 |
| Saviour | 18 | 0.50 | 4 | 0.80 |
| Total | 3,587 | 100,00 | 506 | 100,00 |

[3]Although not directly similar to other religious word, *Assembly* is commonly used by members of the Churches in Cameroon to refer to a gathering place of their followers. In this context, it is synonymous to church.

frantic attempt to instil a sense of awe on the believer, and in that process makes s/he more devoted. For example, He hates... (1), do not dirty [His] ears...(2), He sees...(3), He will allow..., He cannot allow...(4), He cannot send (5), trust Him to supply....(6), hearing His voice and doing his bidding (7). In [8] the believer is "encourage... to wait..." on Him and "... not be moved" by the passage of time[2]. In [9] "...totals abandonment..." to the Lord is implied and the believer is warned to be prepared for any difficulties that this commitment may entail. Other types of verbs associated with God and Lord in the CCE includes; obey(ing), serve, tell, reconcile, listen, speak, talk, look, work, yield (to), say, thank, satisfy etc. In more than 98% of the instances, it is the believer who is called upon to fulfil an obligation towards God. Speculatively, the intention here is to make the Christian more dedicated and virtuous. There are indeed very few of such instances in the British material. Compare examples (10) to (14), taken from the LOB corpus:

(10) it, to show we have self-control D04 135 and that God dwells within us. ^Self-control gives us: Freedom LOB_D.TXT.
(11) er. D04 178 |^And we answer, that the Lord our God gave us *"four freedoms**" D04 179 without which LOB_D.TXT.
(12) D07 24 human teachers to state that this is how God will act). ^As proof of D07 25 this Abaye quotes LOB_D.TXT.
(13) istries of grace**" means in this context is that God blesses His D10 135 faithful people through each LOB_D.TXT.
(14) *"if Israel does not fulfil the wish of the Lord, failing to serve the D04 64 Lord God with all t LOB_D.TXT.

Here, the individual is not necessarily at the centre in the sense that s/he is not being asked to personally engage with God as it is the case with the Cameroonian examples above. On the contrary, He (God) is presented as a spiritual and benevolent being who dwells within us, gave us...sth, will act.., blesses... etc. In (14), to serve refers to Israel and not an appeal to the individual as it is often the case with the examples from the CCE. The LOB sample has as few as 12 examples of the kind in (10) to

[2] This is a reference to the time that the believer is supposed to spend on personal prayer to God. These long periods of praying are also referred to as *retreats* in religious discourse in Cameroon.

**Table 3.** Word related to belief and practice in the CCE and LOB corpus.

| Words related to category of belief | Words related to category of practice |
|---|---|
| God, Lord, Jesus (Christ), Holy spirit, heaven (kingdom), salvation, eternal, cross, saviour, devil, Satan, hell. | Christian, believers, faith, fast/fasting, prayer, baptism, fellowship, church, assembly. |
| Total frequencies: CCE = 2,783 / LOB = 253 | Total frequencies: CCE = 804 / LOB = 253 |

(14) above and in all those cases, no obligation is laid on the individual to act vis-à-vis God.

Furthermore, in the CCE God and Lord frequently co-occur with love and loving in expressions of exhortation such as: "love the Lord with all..."; "loving the Lord is..." This represents 21.54% that is (201 occurrences) of the total frequency of Lord in the data. Again, the aim seems to be an effort to reinforce the individual believer's devotion to worship. The LOB sample has only the following 2 cases:

(15) my commandments, which I command you this day, to love the Lord D04 52 your God, and to serve Him with LOB_D.TXT
(16) od, but there is something deficient. D04 54 ^ To love the Lord your God with all your might is lacking LOB_D.TXT

In general, the nature of religious belief that is apparent in the Cameroonian examples is that of acquiescence. If 'a society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members' (Goodenough 1964: 36), then it seems evident that a cross-section of Cameroonians Christians are becoming more spiritually dedicated.

Having shown that religious related words are very frequent in the CCE, we now focus attention on the use of a few of those words, which in a way point to a categorical believe in a bi-polar view of the world. This view is that there is Jesus Christ on the one side and Satan or the Devil on the other side, and the true believer has to be watchful of the temptation of the Devil. Table 4 presents some of the statements and phrases that frequently occur in the context Jesus Christ, Satan and Devil in the CCE.

The view that Satan or the devil is an objective reality, struggling with God over humans, though a Christian belief, is loosing currency in many Western societies. In the LOB sample, Jesus Christ occurs 40 times, devil 3 times and Satan 1 time. The statements ascribed to them do not portray a pervasive view (compare to the CCE cases in Table 4) that Jesus Christ is all that people should wait and hope. In addition, reference to Satan or devil is passive and does not really suggest any threat. The following examples from the LOB corpus contrast to some extent with the aforementioned CCE cases:

LOB-Jesus Christ:

-whereby Christ calls men out of the world...
-linking men to Christ through its sacraments...
-union with Christ in his death and resurrection...
-the spiritual unity among all men who are in Christ must find visible expression in acts...
-which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our...
-hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ...

LOB-Satan:

-Satan sowed his ... tares, and those tares outnumber...

LOB-Devil:

-The reference to the world, the flesh, and the devil...
-the devil, at least, is soon to be restored to his...
-the devil sees to it that we are kept humble...

**Assessment of religious practices on the basis of frequency evidence**

Statistically, the religious words which have been classified as related to religious practice (cf. Table 3) occur 804 times in the CCE. The LOB figure is 253. However, while the Cameroonian figure represents only 22% of the total frequencies of religious terms under investigation, the British figure represents 50% of the religious words in the British material. This high percentage figure is due to the predominance of church (which occurs 146 times) in the LOB corpus. In fact, it is the single most frequent item in the LOB sample, accounting for 28.85% of all the occurrences of religious word here. This evidence appears to corroborate Leech and Fallon's (1992: 42) observation that 'where the LOB corpus favours religious terms (in comparison with Brown corpus), these tend to be terms such as bishop, parish, vicar, and the notoriously secularized Christmas, which signify outward and institutional aspects of religion'. The suggestion here that church signifies an outward and instititutional aspect of religion (in the West) seems to be the case in Cameroon, because most emergent evangelical Christian groups in the country associate church to traditional Catholicism, which they see as failing to live up to the true teachings of the gospel. Notice that Assembly (which occurs 15 times in the CCE) Notice that Assembly (which occurs 15 times in the CCE) is also frequently used to refer to a place of worship,

**Table 4.** Some common statements and phrases associated with Jesus Christ, Satan and devil in the CCE.

| Word | Frequently used statements and phrases |
| --- | --- |
| Jesus Christ | -He bore the judgment that you ought to...<br>-He died on the cross for my sins...<br>-He came and died on the cross on our behalf...<br>-If you truly believed in Him you would be saved...<br>-Are you prepared to be led to new direction [by Christ]?<br>-How to go with Christ...?<br>-knowing Christ...<br>-did Christ die for us? Yes...<br>-no condemnation for those in Christ...<br>-Christ died for you.<br>-you died with Christ...<br>-before we came to Christ we were death...<br>-I was crucified with Christ...<br>-you are raised with Christ...<br>-we reckon all this in Christ<br>-if we were not in Christ we would have no hope...<br>-you are enthroned with Christ...<br>-have you reckoned yourself [with Christ]...?<br>-I must please Christ.<br>-I must do His [Christ] will...<br>-the all inclusive death of Christ has set you free...<br>-the law of the spirit in Christ has set you free...<br>-will let Christ have His way in us...<br>-He is the source of your life...<br>-God is at work in us (by Christ Jesus) through the holy spirit.<br>-how can we glorify Christ...?<br>-If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation.<br>-make a commitment to Christ...<br>-whom have you lead to the Lord Christ...?<br>-you are eternally secured in Christ...<br>-the disciple (believer) must grow and be like Christ...<br>-in order that I may gain Christ...<br>-a commitment to learn to be like Christ... |
| Satan | -sin come through the work of Satan...<br>-Satan is the originator of the old creation.<br>-all human beings are born into the kingdom of Satan...<br>-we fight that Satan may not take the upper hand...<br>-Satan and his agents are overwhelmed...<br>-break all the stronghold of Satan...<br>-some were baptized into Satan...<br>-all secrets act of Satan must be destroyed...<br>-protect them from the work of Satan... |
| Devil | -the devil always causes people to doubt...<br>-what contradict [sic] my fact is the devil...<br>-give no opportunity to the devil...<br>-they are born into the devil's kingdom...<br>-he who commits sin is of the devil...<br>-these thoughts come from the devil... |

**Table 4.** Contd.

| |
|---|
| -the devil has a goal... |
| -do not hand him to the devil... |

replacing *church*. The following are some of the examples from the CCE:

(17) ing up. There were at least 1000 believers in the assembly and at least 800 of them were present that night (RE.txt/CCE).
(18) er information. He should obey the leaders of the assembly where he worships in everything except when they (RE.txt/CCE).
(19) partation of life. Even when one encounters an assembly with believers, most remain spiritual babies all (RE.txt/CCE).
(20) or answers. If there is no teaching in the local assembly, he should give the disciple a good book that tree (RE.txt/CCE).
(21) paid to do everything. A man can be a part of an assembly of believers for twenty years without ever leading (RE.txt/CCE).
(22) here again and again to meet their needs. Get the assembly in which you are involved to study ways of providing (RE.txt/CCE).

It is also important to note here that there seems to be a desire to return to the old practice in the New Testament, where the early Christians actually worshipped in assemblies. It is a sort of "return-to-the-root" movement. Increasingly, even within most main stream churches (e.g. Catholic) in Cameroon, there are the so-called "charismatic movements" whose goal among other things is to organise separate prayer meetings out side of the church's regular schedules.

   This commitment to the substance of religion (cf. Leech and Fallon, 1992) can further be assessed on the basis of comparison of the frequencies of the word believer (which occurs 80 times) and Christian (which occurs 57 times) in the CCE. The preference for the former seems to connote a greater sense of attachment to spirituality than the later. Again, we see a strong desire to return to the practice of the early Christians in the Bible. Furthermore, a lot of emphasis is placed on prayer. The words prayer and praying occur 380 times in the database, representing 10.59% of the total frequencies of religious words in the CCE. The LOB figure is 39. Baptism, faith, fasting, and fellowship are also important elements of religious practices and the frequency of each of these words in the Cameroonian material is higher than their counterparts in the LOB corpus. Considered together, they occur 147 times in the CCE and 43 times in the LOB corpus. To give a general idea of the type of value orientations that the use of these religious related words (e.g. Baptism, faith, fasting, fellowship, believer)

are intended to project, corpus citations of some of them are presented in [23] to [28], for illustration:

(23) a three day fasting retreat. He was a very young believer but he went on a three day absolute fast, no food (RE.txt/CCE).
(24) The question arises: "How many real believers are there in this country? To what extent has th(RE.txt/CCE).
(25) e to find the time. There is another thing to it. Believers give a tithe or their income to the Lord and in a (RE.txt/CCE).
(26) rd. Without this kind of preparation, there is no praying with conviction; there is no burden; there is no (RE.txt/CCE).
(27) or some organization. Ask the Lord if there is a prayer topic that you have left out which you ought to h (RE.txt/CCE).
(28) ne wants to pray for. For example, if one want to pray for some unbelievers to be save [sic], he may need a di (RE.txt/CCE).

In examples [23] to [25] three fundamental things associated with religious practice in Cameroon are mentioned. These are "fasting", the concept of a "true believer" and "payment of tithe". Reference to "absolute" fasting in (23) is indicative of the strict observance of a religious law common among evangelical Christian Movements in Cameroon. It is not unusual to find people fasting for even longer periods than this (three days), with no food. And of course, in line with the obligation to fast, the (true) "real believer" (24) as they are referred to in Cameroon also has a duty to "give a tithe or their income to the Lord" (25). In former times, tithe was a 'tax of one tenth of one's yearly profit or income paid for the support of the priest of the local church' (LDCE: 1115). Payment of tithe to the Lord and not to the church as it is stated above obviously gives a different spiritual connotation to the whole exercise. The evidence also suggests that prayer is a habit that is pursued rigidly among Cameroonian evangelical Christians. In [26] it is suggested that *prayer* has to be prepared for. In [27] the believer could even ask God for what to pray for and in [28], it is possible that "believers" could even pray for the salvation of so-called "unbelievers". These tendencies are relatively recent in Cameroon and do suggest to some extent a growing quest for spiritual attainment.

## Conclusion

On the merits of quantitative frequency evidence observed in the use of religious words in the CCE (in

contrast to LOB figures), a clear image of the nature of religious (Christian) beliefs and practices has been established. The methodology employed has made it possible for a "provisional" frequency profile of some of the most frequently-used words in religious discourse in Cameroon to be established, namely God, Lord, prayer/praying and Jesus Christ etc. By and large, it seems fair to admit that a spiritually-minded culture is taking shape here. This culture is characterized among other things by an (over) emphasis on individual relationship to God, and Jesus Christ as a personal saviour. At best, it can be characterized as ascetic- an increasing desire spiritual enrichment. Given our limited database, seen in the light of the number of religions and even evangelical movements in Cameroon, it is difficult to make definite statements on the true nature of religious beliefs and practices in the country, or how widespread those practices maybe among different social groups in the society. No doubt, future empirical investigations using a larger corpus may refute some of the findings here.

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## APPENDIX

## Text categories of the Religious component of the CCE

re001 You can receive the forgiveness of sin now (Yaoundé- 1990/male)

re002 How to know Christ (Yaoundé- 1990/male)

re003 Catholic Christians in the Church's Mission in Cameroon (Yaounde-1990/male)

re004 Marriage in the Bible (Yaounde-1990/male)

re005 You and the Lord: Lovers! (Yaounde-1990/male)

re006 The Holy Spirit, the human spirit and the human soul and the Lord (Yaounde-1990/male)

re007 The Apostle Paul and spiritual retreat (Yaounde-1990/male)

re008 Preparing to go on a retreat: Spiritual implications (Yaounde-1990/male)

re009 Fifteen minutes retreat (Yaounde-1990/male)

re0010 Very Important! (Yaounde-1990/male)

re0011 Deliverance from sin (Yaounde-1990/male)

re0012 Practical help for overcomers : How to succeed in Christian life (Yaounde-1993/male)

re0013 The Way of Life (Yaounde-1990/male)

re0014 The Making of Disciples (Yaoundé-1990/male)

re0015 The Holy Spirit Speaks Today (Yaoundé-1994/male)

re0016 The prayer of Faith and Fire (Yaoundé-1993/male)

re0017 Transforming the young disciple into a mature one (Yaounde-1993/male)

re0018 Spiritual goals (Yaounde-1990/male)

re0019 Disciple-Making is a Must (Yaoundé-1993/male)