Drawing upon interviews with readers in Ghana and Nigeria as well as a large number of locally published marriage guidance pamphlets, this article considers attitudes toward the printed word among Christian readers in West Africa. Gender is an especially significant category in West African 'how-to' books, particularly those produced by Pentecostal and evangelical authors. While the majority of male authors try to reinstate Pauline strictures on wifely submission in their writing, the female authors discussed in this article make use of biblical quotation alongside romantic discourse in order to reconfigure both men's and women's marital roles. In so doing, they construct marital utopias which reveal a great deal about the contradictions and paradoxes of contemporary Christian gender ideologies in West Africa.
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