

**THE IMPACT OF WITCHCRAFT ON THE FRIENDS CHURCH IN LUGARI-  
WESTERN KENYA**

By

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## DECLARATION

I hereby acknowledge that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any academic institution for degree purposes.

Elly Kigunyi Lugwili

23/01/2014

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is a dedication to my late grandmother; Ruth Kasudi who went to be with the Lord in 2012. She brought me up in the Christian faith.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research was written to investigate the impact of witchcraft in the Friends Church. The research aimed to make a theological contribution in fashioning an understanding on the phenomenon of witchcraft in the Church today. The study conducted was to help raise the need for developing discipleship materials for the newly born again believers in the Friends Church and to fortify laid down strategies for evangelism in meeting the needs of the church members. This was done by; identifying the challenges of ministering to those who practice witchcraft, understanding the current approaches of Luhya pastors in the Friends church towards witchcraft, and to propose a biblical model of discipleship for new converts in the church. The research argues that witchcraft is a real phenomenon facing the church and must be dealt with through discussion within the framework of the African theodicy. People who resort to witchcraft have genuine concerns. Therefore, these concerns should be addressed by the church in light of the Word of God.

The target population of interest was 210 Church members. Simple random sampling techniques were used to select sample size representing 60% of the target population. Questionnaires were sent to 132 members where the actual response rate was determined. The actual responses rate was obtained from the respondents in three population categories namely the top level (pastors), adult members and the youths. Data was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively and presented in form of tables. Interviews for the elderly were also conducted to get a balance view of the data obtained. Secondary data involved the review of both the published and unpublished materials.

The findings reveal that witchcraft is still a prevalent problem in the church that needs to be addressed theologically. It also reveals that there are inadequate discipleship materials that are used to disciple new converts within the Friends church.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter examined the problem of witchcraft. The chapter set the question in context and explored various popular beliefs that surround the practice of witchcraft. It also examined how our belief in God or in gods affects our reasoning capacity (worldview) that shapes us in how we look at the world.

#### **1.1 Background**

For the last eleven years, I worked as a pastor in a local church in Eldoret Kenya, with the Friends Church. In my pastoral ministry I had dealt with various glitches during my counseling sessions. The most notorious of all these was the problem of witchcraft. Most of the members that I counseled nitpicked of having been bewitched, or reported and confessed to have consulted a witch doctor at some point in their lives. There are also several instances that I personally witnessed pastors and church leaders being putrefied by portions said to be from magicians, diviners or sorcerers.

During my time of serving as a missionary in South Sudan with Emmanuel Christian College, I witnessed a case where a student came to me crying saying that she was experiencing evil forces that appeared to be human-like in nature that spoke to her during the night. The student sobbed before me in the office wondering why she was suffering from such forces. She had marks on her body that she believed that are as a result of witchcraft. The student confessed that the spirits had been appearing to her and she thought that it could be her father who died long ago and was not given proper burial rites. As a result she mobilized her clan members to organize a proper burial ceremony for her father which was immediately done. But the spirits kept haunting her warning her that she could lose her life. The marks on her body were-in her conclusion-a sign that she had been bewitched by someone who is believed to be a witch in her village. Her coming to my office was in the hope that perhaps I might provide her with some lasting solutions to the problem.

I felt for the student and prayed for her. But her situation left me pondering like many scholars; why do the righteous suffer? Why do bad things happen to good people? What wrong did this young girl do to deserve such warning from bad spirits? Is her belief in God affected by such bad events? Does her faith in God offer a solution to such problems?

There may not be satisfactory answers to these questions but they point to the fact that we live in an evil world. However, what we believe in affects our understanding of evil (Kunhiyop 2008:376). For instance our understanding of the god we believe in will affect our understanding of evil. This is called worldview. A worldview is a set of assumptions held consciously or unconsciously in faith about the basic makeup of the world and how the world works (Miller 1998:38). If we believe that God- who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ- is holy, loving and just, then the definition of evil will be affected by this belief. Miller observes that worldviews do not stay in the dusty pages of the obscure tomes of a

professor's library. They are diffused across oceans, through societies, and over the centuries, shaping individuals, cultures, nations, and the flow of history (1998:41). How things happen in a society can be judged according to the societal worldview. Throughout history, humanity over the globe is trying to find answers to the question of "What/who is responsible for our suffering?"

Kunhiyop notes that in real life, theoretically, many people believe in God, but practically they are dualist. (2008:376). The belief is that God is the creator of the universe and he is holy, loving and just yet when bad things happen, there must be some unnatural causes for the same. According to his argument, then such beliefs point to the fact that ultimate reality is understood to be the fight between good and evil (2008:376). People have no understanding where evil comes from. A traditional African man believes in witchcraft as the only way to explain reality of evil and misfortune. Beliefs in witchcraft then are the explanation of the inculpable events including death (2008:376).

Barren women, people whose children die at birth, women with irregular menstrual flow, accident victims, traders who suffer losses, office workers who fail to get promotions, apolitical candidate who fails to get elected, a student who fails examinations, a person who notices scratches on his body or her body, a hunter or fisherman who fails to bring home meat, a farmer with bad crop yields, a football team that consistently loses matches-all suspect witches as the cause of misfortune. Even those who are most successful in their business or profession constantly fear being bewitched by envious relatives or friends (Kunhiyop 2008:376).

The preceding statement precipitates two things. First, all bad outcomes are associated with witchcraft; that there was someone behind a fateful event. The person behind this happening may or may not be necessarily known, but is believed to exist. Secondly, there is a looming fear on top of many people's head that no matter how successful they are in the society, they cannot escape these mystical powers that sends fear and chill down their throats that they can be

bewitched. Kunhiyop notes that such beliefs are not irrational but rather a philosophical attempt to deal with the question of evil (2008:376).

With these two things in mind then all of human beings in Africa live in fear of the witchcraft. Such fear then retards development and affects the social economic status of the people. For the case of western Kenya, there are people who are afraid of developing for the fear that they might die through witchcraft and leave their properties behind. Many shops built along the road have been deserted in some areas for fear that someone somewhere will do something bad about it.

Laurent Magesa rightly says,

In African mentality, everything wrong or bad in society and in the world, and most particularly, various afflictions, originates in witchcraft. There is no kind of illness or hardship at all that may not ultimately be attributed to witchcraft. When natural or religious explanations fail to satisfy the social explanation-witchcraft-is invariably invoked (Magesa 2008:167).

The statement according to Magesa might look simple yet it calls for serious philosophical and religious reflections. The key word from this statement is “everything.” Everything virtually means everything. There is nothing or misfortune that happens that can be attributed to any other thing except witchcraft. Magesa quotes Evans Pritchard who made an observation among the Zande people who believe that the failure to; have good crops, get an animal to hunt, get termites from the ground, have good relationship with the subjects, have magical rite to achieve its purpose, *get married*, (emphasis mine) and all other misfortune is as a result of witchcraft (2008:167). And so what motivates people to get involved in witchcraft?

There are several reasons given to the above mentioned. The first one is the desire to be protected from bad things/people. Many church members, who confessed to have participated in witchcraft, cited insecurity as the main problem.

They felt that if they bewitched someone or are protected from bad people or things, their lives would be safe. Insecurity then serves as a scapegoat for the practice of witchcraft. No matter how much the governments in Africa spend money on security matters to protect their people, many families still feel unsafe. They are unsafe from their neighbors whom they meet on a daily basis than from a stranger. This statement then leaves us with the question of “What is the definition of security?” Amidst well trained police officers and army battalions an African man stills feels insecure.

The second reason was the desire for power within the local church. There are those who desire to be in certain positions in the church. Now when someone else has been elected to the same coveted position, he/she becomes a threat. This warrants one to seek other interventions to stop the other person's progress or any suspected move.

In my interview with one of the Pastors Stanley Lusimba (2012) of Friends Church, I discovered that when a minister of the gospel is progressing in ministry, he becomes a threat to other leaders who feel that his success may overshadow their presence in the local church. Through my private and public search I have also tried to find out if a research in the area of witchcraft had been conducted in the Friends Church, but I found no records or materials for in this particular area. As a result, I felt prompted therefore, to make a venture into this area and discover some of the reasons that cause members of Luanda Friends church to engage in secret practices of witchcraft.

I believed that my findings in this area will provide insights and knowledge to some of the practices that were taking place in some of the local churches that may not be known by the church leaders or pastors.

Witchcraft is sin. In the book of Leviticus 20:6, God spoke to Moses and told him to tell the Israelites that “He will set his face against a person who turns

to mediums and spiritists”. Anyone engaging in this practice should know that this practice is highly condemned in the scriptures authored by God. Deuteronomy 18:9-12, categorically warns the Israelites that when they enter the land that the Lord was giving them, they should not engage in practices of human sacrifice, divination, sorcery, interpreting omens, witchcraft casting spells, or medium and spiritists who consult the dead.

Not only is witchcraft condemned but it dethrones God and replaces him with Satan. This is the very reason other nations were driven out of the land where the Israelites were to possess (Deut. 18:12). If then this is the case, witchcraft can be equated to satanic worship. Anyone who worships the “Satan” and knows that God abhors such kind of practice is lost and needs to be evangelized and disciplined to Christ. In so doing, we will be fulfilling what Jesus came to do “... to release the captives and make them free.” Witch doctors, magicians, sorcerers, and diviners are under such captivity. The only person who has power to deliver them is Christ.

## **1.2 Literature review**

The Friends Church (always referred to as the Quakers) was introduced to Kenya in early 1900s. Late in the year 1902 a young American Quaker stood above the Falls of Goli Goli River at Kaimosi in Western Kenya. Through his Swahili interpreter he carefully explained to a group of wondering Africans that he planned to make the swift-flowing water of the river provide power to saw logs into boards (Painter 1951:19). Their limited experience led them to believe that his words were idling boasting. The young man also declared that he would also make water grind into meal. Then they saw he was engaging in foolish talk for certainly the water would run the mill in the process of grinding.

About a year later many of these men stood before a crude dispensary at Kaimosi. They saw a young Quaker at a place of their number on a crude work bench under convenient tree. By means of a magnet the doctor located a metal spear head deeply embedded in the man’s flesh. He put the man to sleep with

mysterious drug and with a surgeon's skill cleansing he served up the wound and applied addressing within a few days the man was well on the way to recovery (1951:11).

Two years later a mill dam had been constructed. The water providing power to driving a saw through logs and power was harnessed to grind grain into meal with no effort on their part of the women. Arthur Chilson, the mechanic and Elisha Blackburn the surgeon had what seemed to be miracles before their eyes (1951:11). Even more important the missionaries had proven that their words were not idle boasting. The response was almost spontaneous "now we believe."

Willis Hotchkiss had gone to Kenya in 1895 in a company of Peter Scott the founder of African Inland mission. Organization of Friends Industrial Mission was completed in 1901. FAIM represented a new and very practical approach to Christians witnessing in lands where the gospel was not known. Willis Hotchkiss won the interest of Arthur Chilson a student in Cleveland Bible Training school. He possessed very practical mechanical ability. The other very willing recruit was Edgar T. hole a young business man from Salem (1951:14).

The people to whom the missionaries were being send to would need medical care, suitable homes, food for their families, education for the young and the old, above all they would need to develop their own Christian culture by expanding their entire horizon of their living (1951:20).

The missionaries stopped in England and Ireland, where the friends provided additional funds and supplies including metal Devonshire house which was shipped to Kenya at a later date. British friends had already established a mission on the Island of Pemba off the coast of Kenya in 1896.

The centre became a means of communication for the missionaries who resided in the interior. They were aided by newly constructed railway line. They were aided by railway officials and C.W. Holey, District Commissioner (1951:20). He was a scholar as well as a government official. He took a genuine interest in the local tribes and had collected valuable information regarding the dialects. He aided the missionaries with the list of Lulagori words for the basis of their language study. The purpose was for the evangelization to the heathen.

The Society of Friends in Kenya belongs to the large part of the Quaker family which has programmed meetings for worship and appoints pastors for its congregation (Rasmussen 1995:1). On the surface at least, this is a radical departure from the principles of the early Quakers of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (1995:1). Hireling priests and fixed rituals were features of the church which were abhorrent to early Quakers, because they presented the free expression of religious experience by all members of the meeting and they represented some of the aspects of the established church life in England at the time against which the Quaker fathers and mothers rebelled (1995:2).

When those same factors that were important in provoking the pretest out enraged begin to appear again within the society of Friends itself, we need to analyze the historical development which led the Quaker meeting to adopt such seemingly un Quakerly practices yet without losing their essentially Quaker character. (1995:1)

Quakerism rose amidst great political and religious turmoil in England in the Mid-seventh century (1995:1). The founder of Quakerism is George Fox (1995:3). He was born in 1624 in a small town in Leicestershire. In 1643 he traveled around seeking spiritual truth. In 1647 he wrote a journal known as seekers children of light. He saw all beings in the eyes of God and treated everybody as a social equal. George Fox refused a 'hat honor' doffing one's - heart in the presence social superiors -and instead of addressing higher ranking persons with customary "you" "they" instead on using the pronouns "thee" and "thou". He believed in plain speech, dress, and acting. Persecution a rose in England and George was arrested in Derby in 1650 and was accused of blasphemy. The name Quakers came to be used as a nickname when the judge was asked to tremble in the name of the Lord. The name Friends came into use in 1652. The 17 Century Quakers were persecuted and subjected to torture for spreading the gospel in England (1995:6).

Meic Pearse remarks that the Quakers were radicals socially, politically and theologically. For this they suffered even during the relatively tolerant years of the Interregnum. It was, in no small part, the fear of the 'fanatics' such as



themselves that brought about the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. And it was they who were to bear the brunt of persecution in the very different world that followed (1998: 274).

The Quaker missionaries fought the concept of witches and sorcerers. The Luhya people believed that the universe was filled with evil powers of various kinds. Physical health, material well-being and success in various undertakings were seen as a normal state of affairs. The Luyhas believed in a number of different categories of such evil minded people who might be thought to be driving the force behind all sorts of misfortune, bad health, or death. Consequently, the fight against the various evil powers was a very important aspect of life. If angry ancestors caused misfortune, then sacrifices were made. If it was a witch, a specialist was consulted to detect, and destroy the evil magic, and reverse it directing it to harm the originator by performing counter-magic (Were 1971: 20).

Witchcraft, magic and sorcery are very intricate occupation that someone should dare engage in (Kigunyi 2007). Whether separated by geographical distance or political boundaries, every man or woman shares in the belief and fear. The belief is that they are real and the fear is that they are harmful and disastrous. Mutungi Kiminyo points out that witches are said to change people into things, animals, wolves, owls, or monkeys (2004:54).

The dominance of witchcraft is not a privilege of only certain persons. Every human being has this potential power, so that in fact, every human being is potentially a witch (Magesa 2008:167). In the great preponderance of people this power is suppressed, dormant or cool. In some people, however, regardless of whether they are consciously aware of it or not, it is active or hot. Consequently, if confronted with the suggestion or mild accusation that one may be a witch, they may confess to possess the powers of witchcraft. This may also give an admission that one is actually a potential witch for that matter.

In active witch, this power functions physically. A witch executes no rite, utters no spell, and possesses no medicines. (Magesa 2008: 167). An act of witchcraft is clairvoyant act and in this case there is no palpable apparatus connected with it but his power operates at will from the mind of a witch. The same way vital energy is concentrated in certain organs of the body such as blood or hair- the power of witchcraft can also be concentrated as witchcraft substance (2008:167). For the Luhya people such power is said to lie within parts of his body of the witch, this includes the eyes, the hands and intestines. Wherever these powers lie, it is said that those who possess such powers are said not to be aware of it. Nevertheless it offers them power to act and to succeed in their actions whenever they want and wherever they are.

The power that lies within the intestines ought to be interpreted by a person who is said to have 'certain knowledge' of the secrete things. This person when slaughtering an animal has to observe the behavior of the intestines of an animal and predict the events that will happen. I personally witnessed this when I was a young child. At one time in our extended family, there was a party to commemorate the death of our great grandfather; a man was called in to slaughter chickens that were to be part of the meal for the invited guests. The slaughtering was to take place early in the morning. As the chickens were dissected one by one, the man began to observe the intestines of each chicken and explain to us what each observation meant. I saw it strange and have never known up to this moment what it was about.

There are other communities that may not easily identify where the power of a witch lies. However, even in such communities that do not identify specific organs as concentrating the witchcraft substance, witchcraft is still a invasive power in an active witch, a power that is uncontrollable and cannot be resisted by the individual. A witch is beguilingly driven by to instigate misfortune. Such power is so robust that it often palpably impinges on the physical appearance of the individual. Witches may be unusually old, strong, beautiful or ugly

(Magesa2008:167). Often they are described as having red eyes. Extreme physical deformities may also be a sign of witchcraft, as are excessive social success or failures. Consequently, a very rich or a very poor person or a very popular or unpopular individual, may all be characterized as a witches. (2008:167).

Another feature that may characterize a witch is his/her home (Magesa2008:169). The home of such a person is somewhat dreaded by many. In most cases, the home is said to be full of various paraphernalia that occupies the compound. Such include horns, animal skins, animal skulls, and old pieces of clothes, hair, old instruments like cups, cooking bowls, bottles, sharp objects and animal tails. Most of these instruments are used for communication between the witch and the spirit world. It is believed that each instrument plays a vital role during communication. There are other instruments that are specifically used for determining a decision on casting of spells. Of these are shells and beads that are collected at the sea.

Parinder, an old writer, made an observation among the Ga people of Ghana and found out that the power of witchcraft to cause harm does not have any palpable apparatus connected with it, no rites, ceremonies, incantations, or invocations that the witch has to perform. It is simply projected at will from the mind of the witch. Consequently, witches are people said to be mentally afflicted with the obsession that they have power to harm others by thinking them harm (1958:135). The potentiality of the power of the witch lies within some organs of the body just like hair, or blood. In most cases the powers lie within the kidney or liver (Magesa 2008:169). Among the Luhya people these organs- in the case of an animal- lies within the intestines. No wonder when an animal is sacrificed the intestines are observed to predict events including the coming of the rain, dry season, bumper harvest, or natural phenomena. The interpretation of these events will give a clear direction of what needs to be done. In case of an impending catastrophe, then strict measures have to be taken. The possession

of these powers within the witch exhibit strong or extreme personality including red eyes. Such powers enable him to kill someone in dreams, poison, and inflict more harm on individuals from far.

The possession of such powers is a driving factor to why some people choose to join the company of witches. This brings a lot of pride in them that they can interpret the future and can to a certain extent control situations and events. To possess such powers requires emasculation and total devotion to listening for instructions from the spirit world.

Activities for witchcraft are characterized by secrecy and loathsome behavior (2008:169). Some of these activities include killing and drinking human blood, committing incest, sexual intercourse with the animals and spirits, rejecting kinship and preferring solitary (2008:169). Although witches are human, they have the powers to mutate into various forms. They can change themselves into animals such as hyenas, owls and other nocturnal creatures. They ride on these creatures to their assemblies (2008:169). There are -true told stories- in one of the villages in South Sudan among the Mundu people. The community is believed to be having the toughest witches in the village. The witches are believed to change people into animals or can change themselves into cheetahs and leopards (Latiyo 2012). Students of Emmanuel Christian College, South Sudan, located in the village, confessed that at one time a certain wild animal was spotted near the school compound. When the security guards and the game rangers heard about it they went to handle the situation. They employed their guns and decided to shoot the animal. But every time they shot a bullet, the ammunitions slid on the skin of the animal. The animal which was believed to be a leopard increased in size such that the rangers and the security officers had to flee the scene. The conclusion was that, it was the power of a witch working in the animal. Up to this point the villagers have held the story in awe of the powers of the witches in the community.

Another example is from Vihiga District in Kenya where a certain man is believed to be a witch. The man is said to have kept certain animals perceived to

be leopards and cheetahs. The animals are usually released in the evening when the main is said to be 'on duty'. It is believed that the compound of rich man is filled with these animals at night. The man plays with him in the darkness and runs around people's homes. The said animals act as a protection to the man during his mission at night. It is said that if the animals happens to come into contact with man, then they may tear him into pieces. The animals are not easily killed as they are said to have unnatural powers to resist any form of killing.

In the eventually that any of these animals died a natural death, particular unique signs were formed in the skies. The climate also changed to be foggy and without much sunshine. At this sign the whole community interpreted that the animal of the witch is dead. The sign in the skies also appeared differently if the same animals give birth to the young ones. And you would hear the people in the village saying, "The animal of the witch has given birth."

Among the Luhya community, like in many other communities, a diviner was 'held in premier regard'. He possessed powers which were conceived as serving the intermediaries between men and the spirits (Magesa 2008: 204). The accent here was on communication; the actions and words of mediums were translatable which differentiated them from mere spirit possession or madness.

The powers the witch hold are not natural powers but powers from unseen and unexplained sources (Gehman 2001:43). Such are the powers of witchcraft, magic and sorcery. The origin of such powers is from a sinful dark world of Satanism. Witchcraft is nothing else but the powers of Satan himself.

Witchcraft was rendered as the foe of life. This is because its description revealed the vital place in the moral structure of the African Religion. Witchcraft robs the society of harmony, order, good relationships' or company, corporation and sharing, propriety and equitableness, honesty and transparency all of which constitute signs of how human and created order should be (Magesa 2008:170).

Witches do not control the inclinations that good members of the society must keep in check. Unquenchable desires and hatred account separately or together for the death that witches cause. Such people are pessimistic, unsociable, people who eat alone so that they need not to share their food, but who can be precarious if others do not share food with them; egotistical people who pass by others without greeting them; people who are readily offended. By their action and intentions, they make people ill. Nothing is too contemptible for a witch, nothing frightening. The solidarity of the society and the unity between the living and the dead, underlying elements in the order and survival of the universe, mean nothing to people with active proclivity to witchcraft practices.

As a consequence, witchcraft is insupportable for any society that values ethical principles and life itself (Magesa 2008:171). For instead of working to strengthen the force of life, as all moral persons are called to do by religious tradition, witchcraft perturbs this order and causes chaos. Good order requires that people act openly in daylight; that they exhibit more or less equal physical and mental powers; that they avoid any thing associated with death, which except in mature old age the ultimate negation of life they observe all sexual and other taboos of the community; that they bear normal children, that they try to do whatever has been determined by the society as being the good that builds up life and life force of the community. Such is the normal and moral way for human beings to conduct their lives. But witchcraft gainsays all of this and in this sense is an abomination and there is no reason adequate to validate or to excuse such action of exceptional impiety.

Ironically, in the ethical order, witchcraft also serves as a sanction (2008:171). Insofar every human being experiences emotions of envy hatred, anger, pride, lust, and so on, everyone is a latent witch. Witchcraft is, in essence, a personal failure to keep these destructive emotions in rein. This is indeed the dreadfulness of witchcraft. At any moment it may trounce an individual, become full of zip or hot and act to obliterate life and the power of life. Human being must always be on the lookout against the potential of witchcraft that is in each one of

them. They must go out of their way to show love, care and concern, and sharing good company. As sanction, witchcraft invariably warns individuals, through the community against despicableness, inhospitableness, quarrelsomeness, rudeness, suddenness, disloyalty, false or reckless speech and disrespect towards elders (Magesa 2008:171). Witchcraft strikes a chord to everyone that such deeds risks two dreaded things: that one might be accused of witchcraft of that he will be harmed by witchcraft. Children grow up with the apprehension that the stigma of quiriness is dangerous; too great a departure from the norms of everyday conduct will magnetize the suspicion of others and lead to seclusion and in the long run obliteration.

Witchcraft and magic is everywhere and is less notable. Houses and shops, villages and fields, seek protection from evils by hanging lucky or offensive charms in prominent places (Parrinder 1987:132). Among the Luhya people, such charms include bones of a pig, the oil from the same animal, and some roots of particular trees. The bones of a pig normally referred to us *kigumba*, is usually placed at strategic places. For example it can be placed at the top part of the door frames of the main entrance to the house. It is believed that if a person has bad intentions, or is a witch and happens to enter the house; his powers will be dispelled and will be rendered powerless by the bone placed at the top of the door frame.

On the other hand, if a person notices that he may be under the influence of the evil spirits, he/she might decide to cook pork meet in the house. It is believed that the meet has the power to chase all the evil spirits and keep them at bay. In the event that one is not near the house to cook the meat, he might resort to eating it raw, just to deal with the immediate problem. Therefore, among the Luhyas, the pig and its products is highly valued in fighting the demons and evil spirits.

There are several cases from the village where people have been warned from buying certain millet from the market place. Such millet has been powdered with ash is mostly prohibited as it is said to be having the "spirits". Such spirits are said to have power to talk upon being bought from the market, and can

torment the person who bought them instructing him how to take care of them. People, who are familiar with this, will always advise that certain substances should be used to put the evil spirits at bay.

While the bones and the meat of the pig are used mostly in the homestead, other paraphernalia are applied to the fields and the boundaries of the farms. Mixed concoctions and roots of particular trees are planted on the boundaries of the farm. To a normal person things like bunches of leaves or feathers of porcupine quills, or rat skins may be useless but to a diviner, magician or sorcerer, this may be very important (Parrinder 1987:133-134). All this is done to protect one from the “harm” that may occur as a result of someone’s intervention into “your business”.

In trying to compare magic and religion, Parinder puts it this way “Magic demands, religion implores” (1987:134). Magic tries to control impersonal forces, by command and imitative action and if the correct procedure is followed the results should be certain like switching on electricity. But personal religion depends upon a spirit which has a greater and possibly contrary will to that of the suppliant and the true word of religion is ‘thy will be done’ (1987:134).

The evil spirit manifests itself in different ways amongst different cultural settings, whilst in Africa witchcraft is prevalent, in other cultures the problem manifests itself differently, for instance idolatry, gothic culture, Satanism, underground evil societies, angel worship etc, it is different manifestations of the same evil spirit and the hordes of angels that follow it. When someone is converted the evil spirit takes on a stronger force and battles with that person, trying to take him into captivity, the old ways persists such as when the Israelites longed for the garlic and onions of Egypt, in the desert, and time and time again the Israelites defaulted to their idolatry of Egyptians and Canaanite idol worship, it is a long and turbulent spiritual journey for someone to be ultimately freed from the evil chains, therefore we must wage consistent and deliberate warfare against the evil spirit. We must keep vigil and pray for those who falter including ourselves, that we don't fall prey to the tricks of the evil spirit.



Some scholars are convinced that just like healing, the issue of witchcraft is not that complicated (Grebe, Fon, Brant & Still 2006). Dealing with it is the tricky bit, it seems. Some tentatively propose that the reason we see witchcraft prevail throughout "Christian" groups is attributed to three things. The first one is poor teaching, secondly poor discipleship and thirdly ignorance and lack of skills and experience in the issue of deliverance. They claim that if someone has dabbled in witchcraft whatever his culture, he needs to be set free by those who know what they are doing, people of God with integrity, experience and knowledge about strongholds. Any stronghold will remain on the edges of possibility for someone who has succumbed to it at some point-even after deliverance- it is an area requiring guarded avoidance to avoid future entanglement. As Jesus said, we must avoid leaving the house empty after the big clean up, or reoccupation (with extras) may happen in a flash. They allege claims to have seen intelligent Bible believing Christians become completely disenchanted about dealing with this issue because of fear, after attacks from satanic forces precisely because the issue was not thoroughly tackled. Jesus has given us the directions, the handbook, some people the skills and knowledge and He Himself has already set us free, so this issue does not have to be a stranglehold over Africa-or anywhere else.

Such preceding views may appear that they may be privy to information that a lot of people may not be. However, we would want to understand what they mean by deliverance. Are such scholars suggesting that there exists some means where a person can totally be liberated from sinful bondages? If so, can such a method be appropriate to all forms of sin? Can we apply such a method such that one is delivered from all sin in this life time? Or is this method only applicable to some forms of sin such as witchcraft. What about, lying, deceit, idle speech, gossiping, forgetfulness in attending to prayer, overlooking our neighbors needs and generally falling short of God's requirements. Can someone deliver all congregation members from the spirit of not giving generously? The doctrine of sins states that all men are under the influence of sin due to the fall

and only one man can break this influence, but we understand that, even after being saved man continues to sin, only being truly liberated upon glorification after resurrection.

Perhaps we need to understand what in their opinion are evil spirits and/or demons? Are these not the agents of Satan to hold people in bondage to sin? Whether the bondage is occult or otherwise? The author of this research would like to believe that anyone person who is under sin is under the influence of Satan and therefore his agents. A person who tells deception, is under the influence of the demon of lying, or a drunkard, or adulterer or sorcerer or witch or murder or any one form of sin? This is where the question emanates from that is, is there a method that could truly deliver one once and for all from the power of Satan in all entirety whilst he still on earth. The Word of God teaches that Satan rules this world because God has granted him a bit of time before his time is over. We need to remember that when the demons said to Jesus Christ, "Are you to torment us before our time is over...?" (Matthew 8:29).

The purpose of the preceding question is twofold: In the first place we don't want to set up our selves for disappointment by proclaiming that we could instantly deliver someone from the evil bondage, and therefore judge someone harshly who's struggling against any form of bondage. If as a pastor someone comes to church or the priest and says "I want to give myself over to Jesus, but I'm a sorcerer, witch, drunkard, prostitute, vampire, belong to an evil underground society, drug addict, violent abusive spouse, liar, adulteress, fornicator, cheat, practice Gothic culture, pierce my body, etc, and I have looked at my ways and realized that I'm a sinner and would like to come to Christ." Is there a definite method, one could use to deliver that person from that bondage or there exists only a method that delivers people from witchcraft only? And how efficient is this method? Does it guarantee against relapse? Because in a different perspective, if such a person has given himself to Christ and he continues to pray, and now and then he confirms that there has been a relapse, We must pray for him asking for deliverance and asking for the forgiveness of his sins, so long as he repents,

This question is poised in the context that there have people relapsing to addiction and other forms of bondage, and there are some sins they are struggling with, that they would like a method that could deliver them completely, once and for all.

The second purpose of this enquiry is to find out that are there some forms of sin that as Christians think we cannot live and pray for the people who are slaves to such sin? In reality are there sins that we think are acceptable to the blood of Jesus Christ and others that we think the blood of Jesus Christ is not for them? Are we trying to preach that the blood of Jesus Christ is not good enough for witches etc that they need a specific method of deliverance that is privy to a select few? Are we not to pray to Jesus for the cleansing of our sins through his blood and repent our sins? Or do we have a specific method that delivers us from sins that are too bad for the blood of Jesus Christ?

Reading into this subject, it comes to us that one aspect of this problem of witchcraft, as with many others, is the failure to recognize the all sufficiency and supremacy of Jesus. This was the problem for the Colossians and why a false doctrine was able to take root. This may be why some in the African church turn to witchcraft as they think it can achieve certain things for them (that they think Christ can't, or know that He wouldn't). It is not just restricted to African churches because Western churches can face similar issues, some more subtle, such as New Age and secular philosophies, as well as the full spectrum of occultism.

Satan uses innumerable ways to beguile God's people; occultism, addiction, witchcraft, poor self esteem (i.e. we are not worthy to be God's children, guilt (we have done so much that God cannot want to do anything with us) pessimism, false doctrines, and a general sense that God is angry with his creation and many others that we can cite, so long as we are in a broken relationship with God, we will be under the influence of sin or Satan ((Martin 2003). However, veritable deliverance comes when we accept Jesus Christ as our savior and accept that through his birth, life, death and resurrection we have

been forgiven of our sins. Such sins include the white ones, and the red and the black and the gravest of them all.

Samuel Kunhiyop argues that believers who are trying to be relevant to their culture should first and foremost acknowledge that witchcraft exists (2008:379). That is Satan uses people with spiritual powers to harm, inflict pain and injury on others. Denial of such unseen powers will only create room for skepticisms and pessimism. The result of this will be fear and elevation of evil over the powers of the sovereign God who is above all evils and lives in an approachable light where evil and darkness does not exist.

It is unfortunate that even when missionaries came to Africa, they did not give this subject much attention. It was one of the pitfalls that pioneering missionaries criticized (Turaki, 1982:27), and looked down upon the African culture without critical interrogation of some of the practices. Parrinder (1987:134) says that the missionaries thundered against the African idols and few of them tried to study religions and its causes. In many parts of Africa there developed the belief that Christianity was nothing but a 'white man's religion'. For some people, Western culture and civilization was equated with missionarism and the Christian faith at large (Kigame 1998:5). The situation became shoddier when the missionaries tried to interpret Christianity for the Black populations along Western lines leading to certain 'dos and don'ts as a matter of faith and practice.

In most parts of Africa people resented the mentality that the European missionaries and other perceive Africans as 'wretched stock of heathen, in utter darkness odd loathsome pagan idolatry.' Such practices as dancing and drumming were, in some cases, excluded wholesale from the Christian faith, leading to cultural tensions (1998:5). While Western folk-music was propagated as 'sacred and heavenly' the vigorous rhythms, dances and repetitious songs of African musical instruments were not allowed in the mushrooming churches and were replaced, in some cases, by pipe organs and pianos. This alarmed the

African population spiritual leaders (1998:5).

With such radical changes and introduction of the Western religions, the understanding of the lifestyle of the black man by the missionaries widened. No wonder even when the missionaries thought they had preached the gospel to the African man they would still struggle with his practices. In this respect one scholar in the field of Theology has rightly concluded that missionaries did not bring Christ to Africa but Christ brought them (Ter Haar 2007:17).

However, there still exists a gap in the approaches to handling the members who dwindle in their faith and finds themselves in witchcraft. (Shasha 2007:30) laments that even the Pentecostal pastors who are trying to fight witchcraft are themselves a form of witchcraft. This can well be explained by prayer life, worship, and exorcism. Such preachers claim to have certain powers that can fight the spirit world and bring about freedom to the victims of demon possessed or those seeking for direction in life.

### **1.3 The Problem**

Friends Church in Kenya claims to believe in the evangelical truth of the scripture. They also believe that man's salvation from sin is by grace. Their constitution affirms the belief in one God, the Father and the creator of the universe. They also believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God born of a Virgin Mary. They believe that the Holy Spirit is expressly from God and that He is God and a member of the trinity.

However, contrary to these beliefs, there are members within the Church that are secretly practicing and engaging in witchcraft practices raising the question of the genuineness of their faith or whether the church is sensitive to the needs of its members. If this is addressed, the research would like to find out how members in this church are brought up in the faith and what causes them to

be easily swayed by consulting witchcraft practices.

#### **1.4 Main Research Question**

Main Research question: In what way does the practice of witchcraft impact the church in Lugari, and what is the response of the Friends Church?

#### **1.5 Subordinate Questions**

1. Who are the main characters that get involved in the practice of witchcraft in Friends Church?
2. What is the general perception of witchcraft in the Friends Church?  
Does the Friends Church Condone witchcraft?
3. What role does the church play in helping to disciple members who engage in witchcraft practices in the Friends Church?

#### **1.6 Objectives**

This research aimed to:

- a) To identify the challenges of ministering to those who practice witchcraft in the Friends Church.
- b) To understand current approaches of Luhya pastors in the Friends Church towards witchcraft.
- c) To propose a Biblical model of discipleship for new converts in the Friends church.

#### **1.7 Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the motive behind the practice of witchcraft and develop discipleship materials that could be used for teaching and discipling new believers in the Friends church.

## **1.8 Delimitations of the study**

The study was delimited in the examination of practice of witchcraft among members in the Friends Church in Western Kenya, Lugari District. The study confined itself to interviewing and questioning both members and non members of the church where purposive sampling procedures were used to avoid generalizability of the findings. The major challenge in this research was finances. The researcher conducted his study on private sponsorship.

## **1.9 Definitions of key terms**

### **(1) Abaluhya/Avaluhya**

This is the pronunciation of the Luhya tribe. It means the people of the north, or the people of up.

### **(2) Busula**

This is a type of witchcraft that is cast upon another person, and the evil effect is transmitted through contact with the other person either. The eye contact is of the witch to the victim. It is mostly practiced by women.

### **(3) Chamgizi**

This refers to the front part of the house. It is the part that faces the gate of entrance into a Luhya home.

### **(4) Chandangu**

This is the back door of the main house in a homestead.

### **(5) Endelizu**

This is a wandering plant that grows on natural fences. The leaves if squeezed are very slippery. Mostly used for medicinal purpose.

### **(6) Kukunya**

This is the act of failure to grow tall. The English word is dwarfism

**(7) Kumara**

*Kumara* means to sweep over or to pass over something or someone's shade. The shade of a witch passes over someone or something and affects its growth.

**(8) Marande**

This is a plant that grows in a form of wandering form. Most commonly found among bushes and can also grow as a weed in farms.

**(9) Mayenga**

This is an act of killing someone from a distance by use of objects.

**(10) Magic-** Intended for evil (refer to sorcery).

**(11) Marad-** The past tense of passing over the shadow of something or someone by a witch

**(12) Oloheni**

The English word for Oloheni is lightening. This is an act of a witch sending the power of lightening to strike at something or someone as a seek for revenge.

**(13) Sorcery-** This is explained rather defined. Sorcery generally takes on the form of spells, poisoning or other physical injury done secretly by someone to someone else or his crops and animals, mostly associated with women than men (Mbiti 1975). Although this does not negate that man can be a sorcerer too.

**(14) Umukumu**

The most type of dreaded form of witchcraft among the Luhya people. Umukumu is a person who carries the act while *bukumu/vukumu* is the act itself. The acts may include turning human beings into animals, or birds.



### **(15) Umulogi**

This is the official name of a witch

### **(16) Umsali**

This is a person who offers prayers. He is a seer and can see into the past and the future.

Witchcraft- This is a manifestation of mystical forces, which may be inborn, in a person, inherited, or acquired in various ways, (Mbiti 1975).

## **1.10 Presuppositions of the researcher**

Witchcraft exists and it is posing a bigger challenge to the faith of the members of the church.

The church is facing a big challenge in handling the members who secretly practice witchcraft.

There are developed materials that are being used to disciple people who become born again from such practices.

## **1.11 Significance (or value) of the study**

Having worked as a pastor in a local church for eleven years, there are scores of things that have lodged my attention, but not with much encumbrance as to why members of local churches dwindle in their faith and consult the practice of witchcraft. Many sermons scarcely touch on the practice and if they do, it is condemnation without proper exegesis. This study was to help raise the need for developing discipleship materials for the newly born again believers in the Friends Church.

Secondly, the research was to fortify strategies laid down for evangelism in meeting the needs of the members of the Church. This was accomplished by evaluating their strategies for evangelism (if there were any) and making a

recommendation for the same.

Finally, the data gathered from this study was to serve as a guide to other researchers in the quest for additional knowledge. It was also to help those who chose to be missionaries in this church.

## **1.12 Design and Methodology**

### **1.12.1 The research design**

The proposed research falls within the field of practical theology. Solving the main problem required four major steps. First, the study described the challenges related to the practice of witchcraft posed to the Friends church in Western Kenya. Then, it examined how the church currently handles the challenges. The next step for the research was to present biblical principles the pastors in Friends Kenya should bear in mind when ministering to members who trust in witchcraft. Finally, the research concluded with some practical guidelines for pastors to implement in the Friends Church.

The study contained both literary and empirical components. There was limited literature available on step 1 and 2, so in addition the researcher gathered more data through empirical means. Step 3 required a literary approach, analyzing selected texts that had relevance to the ministry in addressing those who practice witchcraft.

### **1.12.2 The research methodology**

The study surveyed the available literature materials on the subject of witchcraft and its practice in the Friends Church of Western Kenya. The materials provided information on the scholarly work done in the area of research. In addition, the study collected views on how pastors are currently handling the members who dwindle in their faith and consult witchcraft practices. Interviews

were conducted among the pastors, and questionnaires distributed among the members of the churches.

The data collected was analyzed to determine factors contributing to members being attached to the practice of witchcraft. The findings were treated to a biblical exegesis of the text from the scripture in response to the practice. Finally, using the findings the research developed an effective ministry approach of discipleship to newly born again believers.

Data collected from this interviews and questionnaire was compared to the already existing materials on the practice of witchcraft among the church members which were in literature form.

Appropriate tables and charts were included in the final report along with narrative interview data obtained from pastors and church members. In order to respond to the question posed at the outset of this study, the research included participants who engaged in the practice, and collected their views on the subject matter.

### **1.13 Summary**

The focus of this chapter has been on the question of witchcraft. The chapter sets forth the question of witchcraft and how it is an enigma in the African society. It explores the question why people suffer under the hands of the diviners, witches, sorcerers and magicians. In other words, why do people suffer? The answer given to this question is that all misfortunes are attributed to witchcraft.

We have looked at the background setting of the coming of the Quaker church in Western Kenya. In this background we have seen how missionaries struggled in dealing with the traditional cultural beliefs of the people. Even though the people came to believe in the Word of God, they still struggled with their beliefs in African Traditional Religion.

The chapter has also explored some reasons why people in the Friends church get involved in witchcraft. We have seen some of the reasons to these

are insecurity and desire for power. But such do not ends do not justify the means. The fact remains that witchcraft is sin because it dethrones God. The powers that the witch possesses are spiritual, thus their use for harming endangering people's lives is equitable to the work of Satan himself. The chapter also defines the problem statement, the objectives, and delimitations, significance of the research, design, and research methodology.

## Chapter 2

### **Current approaches of Luhya pastors in the Friends Church towards witchcraft.**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter provides a historical background of the Luhya people, their migration, culture and the coming of the Friends church to Western Kenya. It sets forth the approaches of Luhya pastors in the Friends Church towards witchcraft. Several reasons are given to why people get involved in witchcraft and an explanation to how the church contributes to such a practice. Written literature used in this chapter was basically collected from Friends Theological College library in Kaimosi. The school serves as the only Quaker theological institute in the republic of Kenya. The school was built by missionaries at their first coming to Western Kenya over one hundred years ago. It also settles on the same land with Friends Mission Hospital, Kaimosi Teachers College, Kaimosi Technical College, Kaimosi Girls High school, Kaimosi Boys secondary, Primary and school for the physically challenged; all established by Friends Mission.

#### **2.1 A brief history of the traditions of the Luhya people**

The Luhya people belong to the Bantu community (Ember & Ember, 2003:247). They are commonly referred to as '*Abaluhya* or *avaluhya*.' The translation of the word means the people from up, people of the north or people

from above (2003:247). This is derived from the word *Luhya* which is rightly pronounced as *haluhya*. The *Aba or Ava* before the word *luhya* stands for article 'The' in English.

The Tiriki people among whom the Friends Church settled are part of the larger composition of the Luhya tribe claim that their ancestors came from the Western area of Uganda and first settled near Kavirondo Gulf on Lake Victoria (Painter 1951:10). At one time they were closely associated with the Wanga (Mumias) people. Folklore indicates that once the two groups lived together then at a later period they moved eastwards into the hill country where they now live (1951:10).

The Maragoli have a tradition that their ancestors under the leadership of Mulogoli (Mulagoki) came from northward by boat from Lake Tanganyika along the shore of Lake Victoria and settled in the vicinity of Maseno, northwest Kisumu (1951:10). Apparently this migration took place 300-400 years ago. Later the migration of the Luo tribes southward pushed the Maragoli back into the hills where they now reside.

The Kakalelwa clans migrated to their present location in north Nyanza only a few generations ago. Hundred years ago they were living among the Wanga under chief Lutomia (1951:10). Tradition connects to Isukha and Idakho tribes with the Wanga people. The Kabras came from Western Uganda not many generations ago they are related to Tachoni whom they frequently intermarry. However, some of the Kabras clans came from Nandi origin (1951:10).

The Bukusu people trace their origin to northwestern Uganda. They first moved eastwards, they settled in Mbale Uganda and then at a later date moved south to their present location. At the time of migration, the area around Kitoshi (Lugulu) was virtually uninhibited except for a few so-called Elgon Masai.

Tradition of the Tachoni tribes indicates that they came from the Western part of Uganda. They were first located twenty miles west of their present holdings but were driven eastwards by the Teso and Wanga tribes. At present they are neighbors to the Bukusu and maintain marriage relations with them (1951:10). According to Wanga traditions the tribes' ancestors came from West Africa and settled in the Lake Albert region of Uganda. From there they moved South ward to the present location of the Kavirondo gulf of the Lake Victoria (1951:10). All these tribes are related by languages and customs to the west of Sudan cultural groups.

Presently, many of these clans have intermarried, and settled in different places of the Rift valley and Nyanza province. Such places include Kitale, Kisii, Eldoret and Lugari which is the present location of the study for this thesis. Lugari is a large settlement scheme where most of the clans settled in search of land for farming and grazing. The major cash crops in this area are maize and wheat which to a large percentage are consumable products.

Abaluhya social patterns and political organization centres in their cultural practices. Ember describes "a tribe as a loose federation of clans speaking a common language and following similar social practices" (2003:247). Many tribes consists only a few thousand people. However in recent years the number of individuals in few tribes had greatly increased so that they are numbered by the tens of thousands.

The migration and the settling of clans in different parts of the western region, is in itself alone a major challenge to pastors who are ministering to those who practice witchcraft. The Luhya people, even though they belong to the same tribe do not speak the same dialect. There are clans whose dialect is easily understood while others may need interpretation. Take for example the word 'love'. When a Mulogoli person says '*ndakuyanza*', people from Butere will say '*nakhuchama*'. This is the same word that refers to a person falling in love with

the other or loving another person. Another word is, 'What are you saying? This is said differently among many clans. A person from the Maragoli clan will say '*uvola kindiki?*' The Kabras people will say '*ulasungangoriena?*' The Idakho and the Isukha people will ask '*uvola shina?*' The Wanga people will say *Uvolanga shi?* With these differences, the pastors have tried to employ various approaches to the practice of witchcraft.

The first approach is dramatization (Lugusa 2012). The pastors are organizing for public meetings where they involve the young people in playing various skits of drama on witchcraft. The dram is intended to demonstrate how witchcraft is done, its effects on the victims and point the viewers to the ultimate solution to the problem of witchcraft.

The second approach that is being employed by Friends pastors is prayer for deliverance (Lugusa 2012). For the last five years, pastors have been trying to organize for crusades and seminars in Lugari District to pray for those who are bound by the spirit of witchcraft. The meetings are intended for exorcism and healing. Such meetings come in the name of 'youth seminars' and 'evangelistic campaigns.' Many people prefer sending their relatives for such gatherings so that perhaps a miracle will work out and that they will be delivered.

This approach however has attracted various issues. First, the Friends church does not have any written statements on matters to do with exorcism or how to deal with witchcraft. So pastors who engage in this exercise have to copy the procedures from the surrounding charismatic churches. This does not auger well with the Friends church's doctrine. On the other hand when the elders disagree with some of the practices of exorcism, the pastors and the members involved easily slip out of the church to join those churches that are in favor of the practice. Second, exorcism has a problem in itself in that some people may be coerced and manipulated which may lead to hypnosis. This approach does not specify the age limit of the people that are send for exorcism. This in the end might have side effects that are devastating.

During my pastoral involvement in speaking at some youth seminars, I



encountered a group of young people practicing exorcism on a fellow youth. The said youth went through beatings that almost left him fatally wounded. He was not only beaten but was also subjected to mandatory fasting so that the evil spirit that had been cast on him by his parents might be tortured by hunger and leave him. Without intervention, the young man would have died in the name of exorcism.

Most of the young people that are involved in dealing with the problem of witchcraft in the Friends church, through drama and exorcism have never been to theological colleges. Thus, most of them have little understanding of demonology and African Traditional religion and this might lead them to going to the extreme.

The third approach is that some pastors are planting 'Born again fellowship' in every village meeting. A village meeting is a small gathering of members in the Friends Church (Lugusa 2012). Some pastors are using these meetings to help people who are involved in witchcraft. It is also in these meetings that planning on how to deal with witchcraft is developed. Not all church members agree with this approach but to some extent it is helping people to reconnect with God.

The preceding approaches could be working in some cases while in other cases they may not work, hence the need to evaluate how effective these approaches are to the Friends church. First, the drama method is a good approach in dramatizing about witchcraft, how it is done and its effects and it points people at the ultimate solution of their problem, which is Jesus Christ. However, the approach has got its own challenges. The first challenge is organizing for the drama itself. The pastors must have people who are willing to participate in the drama. The other challenge is the resources needed to travel to various places to dramatize. The pastors will need enough money to go to various places in order to host such dramas. And lastly the participants might fear being attacked by the same spirit they acted against and therefore make no deliberate attempt to dramatize witchcraft.

The prayer for deliverance approach has attracted some church members. However, this approach is facing some opposition from the church leadership. As

mentioned earlier, the Quaker constitution does not have any statements on exorcism and therefore the pastors who carry out this approach usually borrow from their neighboring charismatic churches. In such a case the borrowing creates a problem such that those who participate in such activities are expelled from the church (Lugusa 2012).

The motive of those who conduct such prayers is always good; to help people in the church to find deliverance from the powers of Satan. But the church leadership perception is that such an activity might in the end discredit the constitution of the church leading them to the extreme.

The born-again fellowship approach is viewed as being friendly. It takes into account the importance of teaching and helping the church members be rooted in the Word. The intention of this approach is to dwell on the Word

## **2.2 Most common acts of witchcraft among the Luhya people**

There are two common names that stand for people who practice witchcraft; *avaroji* (which stand for witches) and *abahini* (which stands for wizards). It is believed that these two represent a bigger group of people within the Luhya community who practices various forms of witchcraft. The witches and wizards are night-runners who prowled in the nude, running at night and casting spells.

The wizard is said to be a man of hot blood and has the ability to sense something or someone from far during the night (Kasudi 2012). This gives him the advantage of running in the dark and not being seen. Another advantage of a witch not being caught in the night is through the wife's effort. Before he goes out, the wife of the wizard is instructed to place her legs on one of the three cooking stones. The placement of the legs on these stones acts as a protection for the husband. The condition is that the wife should not fall asleep at all. If by chance the wife sleeps and her legs sleep off from the stones, then the wizard is bound to be caught and subjected to torture. The science of placing legs on the cooking stones when the wizard goes for runs at night is a mysterious one. It is

hard to interpret this type of science; however it is linked to the spiritual powers of a witch. The powers are said to be within the blood. The blood gets hot and wizard begins to run at night.

When I was a child, I was much disturbed by the stories of witches and wizards and their operation in totality. Sometimes and in most cases I feared being left alone in the house especially at night. The days I was alone the wizard would come and knock our house as if he wanted to enter. But when I got out opening the door he would be gone. Sometimes he would throw sand on top of the roof and hang on the rails of the house. At certain moments he would blow bad air on the door only to make us laugh or get more scared. But every time we went to peep through the window or slowly opened the door, he would be gone. It was hard for us to understand them. The following are categories of practices of witchcraft found among the Luhya people, each described in detail. The names of the forms of each category were collected from an interview with Ruth Kasudi, Hellen Kanaiza and David Lusweti at Kesogon in Kitale, and Luanda Village meeting in Lugari respectively.

### **2.2.1 Busula**

This type of witchcraft is that which affects the tongue (Kanaiza 2012). If this type is cast on person, then the tongue turns white (sometimes referred to as fungal infection in medical circles). The person may die in a few days if the effect of this craft is not quickly recognized. It also affects breast feeding mothers thus they are advised not to meet such people known to be notorious in the practice. Among children, it commonly affects the tummy. Their tummy swells and the women in the village are advised to use pork-oil to smear around the swollen tummy. As a result small black stones come out after a strenuous exercise. Upon swelling of their belly, babies, if not quickly attended to may die in a few days. This kind of acts may also affect animals like cows, goats and sheep.

Ubusula, as commonly referred to is acquired by placing objects on one's hand. This practice is commonly found among the Luhya women and is shared with women from Kisii land in Nyanza province (Kanaiza 2012). The act is

transferred from mother to-daughter, who desires to continue this kind of practice after the mother is gone. Even if the girl may not be aware, the mother may still transfer it anyway since she has to entrust this practice to one of her girls or daughter-in-law. Sometimes if the mother does not use her daughter to continue the practice, she may use her daughter-in-law. When the daughter-in-law goes to her mother to borrow salt or tea leaves, the mother-in-law will ask the recipient to bring her hand and then she will pour the substance on the palm. It is believed that if this substance-salt or tea leaves- are poured on the hand in such a manner, that the giver will have transferred some power to carry on the activity (Kanaiza 2012). The recipient upon receiving these powers is able to affect young children, breastfeeding mothers and men. The next time you meet the daughter-in-law, you are likely to be affected if “your blood did not agree with hers.”

The carrier of *ubusula* is said to be more active early in the morning and late in the evening. Her blood is said to be active at these times. Magesa refers to this as “hot” *powers*. (Italics mine) (Magesa 2008:169). The inherent powers in drive her from her home and she has to forcefully take a walk and meet someone whom she can affect at that particular time. When passing around, children are hidden and only grownups with courage will walk towards her and greet her. The greeting is meant to dispel the powers of the witch so that it will not affect the opponent. Should the witch meet someone she can affect she does so at will and when the “powers” becomes cold she returns back home.

### **2.2.2 Mayenga**

This is an act of killing someone from a distance by use of objects (Kasudi 2012). It is done in two ways. The first one is through a mirror. The person is called from far through a mirror and if the person responds to the call then he is moved near and his body is cut into two through the mirror by using sign “X” (Kasudi 2012).

The other form is calling someone through a water pot made from clay

(Kasudi 2012). The calling, usually done from a designated distance preferably notable distance from the village of the victim, is intended for harm. It is assumed that the person being called will respond to the calling at one point. Should this happen that he/she does responds, then the person dies from wherever he/she is. This type of magic is commonly used for revenge or for evil intent. This type of a witch is consulted for bad things. He causes death from a distant and the victim dies within a short time.

### **Case study (to illustrate how it works)**

My grandfather was seventy five years old. He had just come from the field where he had been tending the flock. On one evening he was resting in his chair after eating several cobs of maize. All over a sudden he had three long hick-ups. On the third hick-up, he died mysteriously. People in the homestead were running up and down and wailing wondering what had killed him. Surprisingly, one of his brothers who were his neighbor never appeared at the scene from the day he passed on, till and after the burial. The conclusion was that the family members and the community arrived at was that my grandfather's brother was the cause of his death. He had been "called from a distance through *mayenga*." That very evening, someone notorious for *mayenga* had been spotted in the home of the bother to the deceased. We were warned as children neither to enter the home of that man nor pass close to it.

The brother to my grandfather could not attend the funeral since it was believed that his absence meant his involvement in the death. Should it have happened that he attended the funeral, it was postulated that the dead would rise up and sit.

### **2.2.3 Kumara**

*Kumara* means to sweep over (Kanaiza 2012). It is believed that a witch will pass over something or someone's shade. For example if pumpkin was about to be ready and all over a sudden, the fruit behaves funnily and it does not mature, then it is believed that a witch must have crossed over. If a young one of

a cow, goat, or sheep does not increase in height and size but remains as a dwarf, then it has been '*marad*.' A child who is born and does not grow in size or increase in height has been passed over by the witch whose intention was to take away the shadow of the child. The witch does not literally carry one's shadow but the fact that he passed over the other person's shadow, it meant that his shadow carried the other shadow in mysterious ways. The shadow is believed to be kept somewhere by the witch and is intended for evil at some point in life. So the next time a person will see his maize not doing well, animals being in a bad shape after birth, children becoming short, then he will have no doubt that the witch must have seen them at some point. Among the Maragoli people, the state of becoming small is known as *kukunya* (Kasudi 2012). The English word for this is "dwarf."

#### 2.2.4 Oloheni

The English name for this word is lightening. Witches in Western Kenya are believed to poses powers to send *oloheni* to strike someone or at something. Among the Luhya people, if someone is struck by such misfortune, then it means he has been bewitched (Lusweti 2012) by or someone has gone to see a witch for that matter. The *Oloheni* as commonly referred to can be sent by the witch to strike houses, people and plants. *Oloheni* has the power to kill, to cause cracks in houses, to dry and even uproot trees. In the case of a tree being made dry, it cannot be used for any other purpose including cooking since it may attract the lightening force and cause more damage (Kasudi 2012). Such a tree can only be left to rot. In case of animals, they are buried deep in the ground without dissection. No one is allowed to eat its beef for it may cause injury to the person.

People who die as a result of *oloheni* their graves are covered with a wandering plant commonly known as *marande*. The plant is wild and wanders like the passion fruit. It is commonly found in thickets and bushes. The purpose of covering the grave with this plant is avoiding more damage on the deceased by the thunder (Kasudi 2012). If the grave is not covered well by *marande*, it is

believed that the *oloheni* might come and strike again this time opening the grave, which seen as a security threat to the dead.

### **2.2.5 Umukumu**

This is a person who can do more harm to other people if requested to do so. He can make a person eat grass, turn a someone into an animal, cause madness in people, make them not to ease themselves when they visit the toilet and cause a man's genitals to stick in a woman in case of adultery (Lusweti 2012) . And many other things that are dreaded among the members of the community. He is mostly used by some people to locate thieves and those committing adultery. His acts are mostly said to be irreversible. He is most dreaded among the Luhya community.

### **2.3 Social security factors**

A recent study in Kenya indicates that witchcraft has gained popularity in many tribes as a result of fear and superstition (PRC 15 April 2010). Many people are venturing into witchcraft business to find protection and prosperity (Turaki 1006:103). The influence of such is through the media especially the television. Local Television channels within the country have embraced Nigerian movies which depicts how people seek for supernatural powers in order to communicate with the spirit world to gain answers to their life's problems. The movies are sold locally and are shown in local halls where those interested pay a little fee in order to watch them. The research finding indicates that many people opt for witchcraft in order to revenge, gain wealth, power, and keep marriages (PRC).

In an interview with some Quaker men(Luyakha 2012, United Society of Friends Women (USFW) (Amadi 2012), and Young Quakers Association (YQA) (Otano 2012) of the Luanda Friends Church, various groups of people responded differently to why they engage in this practice. One group of young women who are 3-6 years in their marriage said that the practice is necessary to protect their

marriages. “We want to protect our husbands from engaging in illegal sex outside constraints of our marriage,” said Iminza (Iminza 2012). Marriage is seen as a stage of success and needs to be protected by the African man or woman. Turaki points out that indeed one is vindicated to exterminate those contemplating one’s downfall (2006:103). In this case a woman can be seen to be right for putting to death- through witchcraft- anyone who might intrude into the marriage relationship. Witchcraft then becomes a powerful tool of protection.

The unmarried young people cited the involvement in witchcraft as a result of lack of education (Embenzi 2012). They noted that they have nothing to do with the spiritual world of the witches as it is baseless and full of superstition. They were concerned though that the church being aware of these dangerous and mischievous acts of Satanism did not educate her people on this vice. Some regretted that they have lost parents and relatives through such practice that has taken toll on the society of the Luhya people. Most surprisingly they were able to point out a few people whom they were aware of who have a connection with the spirit world yet come to church for prayer and worship and are participants in the church leadership.

During my pastoral practice with the Friends church, I realized that education in the church is polarized around giving, church projects, and miracles. Such kind of teachings have also entertained various and weird teachings in the Friends that are not part of the constitution of the church.

Consequently, it has led to some members breaking away from the church claiming that they have received a new revelation from God to be separate and begin their own church. They have not fallen out empty hands but with a handful of people who are like minded and have affinity for mysteries that cannot be explained by human understanding. Such a leader claims to have a message from God and that He is using him/her to tell it out. On the other hand the Friends church is looked at as rebellious group of people who are lost and do not understand God’s will. This has given rise to cultism. With such, the leader turns the followers into a small cult group that can be loyal to him alone. It is expected that when members report to the cult-church for worship, they should bring a new



message spoken to them by the 'spirit.' Interestingly, the members do not have the order of the service and may take many hours singing so as to hear from the 'spirit.' During the worship service, some get into a trance that leaves them hypnotized. This is the extent to which witchcraft has intruded the church in the name of neo-Pentecostalism.

Women in the late menopause stage were concerned more with the family security. One woman (a widow) had been robbed of her properties was concerned that now she was a single mother and her husband was dead, she would find those who stole her property through a diviner. Asked how much she paid for the exercise, she said that she had to part with Ksh.10, 000 equivalent of \$ 115. The work of the diviner was to locate the thieves and subject them to torture wherever they were. The torture is intended to make the thieves regret their action and be obliged to return the stolen commodities.

According to this group, protecting the family involves planting some portions of substance given by the magician or witchdoctor around the compound. Some portions are planted in front of the house directly in the main entrance of the house '*chamgizi*'. This includes the pieces of bones from pork meat, skins of dead animals and herbs recommended by the village diviner. The intention of these actions is to keep people with bad eyes at bay or render them powerless when they approach the home.

Consequently, pieces of bones from pork meat are inserted in men's trousers on the waistline and are meant to protect the man. Quite a number of men interviewed from Luanda village cited this as part of their security against sorcerers who are fabled to be mostly women.

Young children are smeared with oil substances from pork meat at their foreheads. An alternative of this will be to use leaves of a plant commonly known as '*endelizu*'. The leaves of this plant are rather slippery when squeezed and are applied at the forehead, on the chest and at the back of the neck. It is strongly believed that anyone who has applied this on his body will not be harmed by the powers of witchcraft or sorcery.

All these practices were done to protect someone. A large number of the people interviewed cited insecurity as number one thing that makes them consult other powers. If all the people had social security provided for then no one would seek help from the outside world.

The men who were interviewed had their major reason to consult witches; land. Land is an emotive topic both in the Bible (I Kings 21:6) and in our African society (KNA 2005: 2359). Land problem is one thing that has hit most people in our African society. Among the Luhya people, moving a boundary on someone's land might lead to death. In most cases, men go to magicians to give them protection for their lands. No one should move the boundary and if he does so, then the magician or the diviner has to deal with it. 'Some people' are brought at night to bury some substances on the boundaries of the farm so that whoever tempers with the neighbor's land is dealt with by the powers designated to deal with him.

During my own research within the Friends Church in Lugari indicates that witchcraft, sorcery and divination are some of the major problems that members, pastors and missionaries have to face.

The following are the results of research undertaken among 200 members of Lugari Yearly Meeting of Friends between 1<sup>st</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2012:

Has heard of witchcraft	200
Has been bewitched at home	150
Recently been bewitched	40
Witnessed witch killing	5
Witchcraft possesses great danger	100
Poverty, marital problems and commemoration of the dead are bigger problems	160
Need theological solution to deal with it	120
No need for church to be involved in witchcraft	198

The following are the results of research undertaken among 10 pastors of Lugari Yearly Meeting of Friends, Majengo Quarterly Meeting on June 16<sup>th</sup> 2012:

Had been bewitched in the past	3
Had recently been bewitched	0
Has witnessed witch killing	1
Witchcraft is a big problem known to the society	8
Poverty, marital problems and commemoration of the dead are bigger problems	5
Witchcraft is a problem to the Friends Church itself	7
Need theological training to be better equipped to handle the issue of witchcraft.	8
No need for church to be involved in witchcraft	1

The U.S based centre of research postulated that a quarter of Kenyans believe in witchcraft even though they are acutely religious (PRC: 2010). Kenya then was ranked 11<sup>th</sup> in Africa and 16<sup>th</sup> in the world on religious most religious people (PRC). In spite of religious credentials, strong belief in existence of God, heaven and hell, the survey established that sub-Saharan Africa Kenya included, leads in the worship of alternative gods-witchcraft evil spirits and sacrifices and ancestors, traditional religious healers and reincarnation (PRC: 2010).

It is worth noting that as much as the missionaries fought the concept of witchcraft and magic among the Luhya people, the idea did not completely disappear. Just as they struggled to believe that water could produce power to grind mills and saw trees into logs, so was the idea of witchcraft. The idea immersed slowly among the people especially when faced with myriad challenges. It is not surprising to find a deeply committed Christian who attends

church on Sunday and prays to God engaging in secrete practices of witchcraft in times of real need or existential crisis. In such a case they turn to *umganga* for healing and to *umsali* for exorcism and deliverance from spiritual oppression. Several factors contribute to such a drawback.

First and foremost, the missionaries who introduced the gospel to the Luhya people in the Friends church did not fully deal with the problem of witchcraft. The subject was dismissed as mere superstitions and full of fear. When the Luhya man expressed his fear of being bewitched, the idea sounded strange to missionaries and according to the missionaries this could not happen. Take for example a woman whose child has been 'seen' by a woman with an evil eye. His tongue has turned white and his stomach swollen. How would such a woman believe in the power of prayer from a pastor, when there is someone who can easily counter this magic by applying 'some medicine' and the child gets well?

If for example the missionary or the pastor prayed and the child got healed, then the Luhya man would have placed his total confidence in the prayer of the pastor and consider it to be very important. But alas! This was not the case. The one who performed the counter magic was seen as the messiah in the community for saving the life of the child from demise.

The second factor is the hermeneutical problem. Many theologians have not fully confronted the issue with the church members. Some of them are entangled in the snare and have become victims of circumstance. That is to say that if the problem affected the same theologian, he would go the traditional way and do as the church member has done. Such an engagement is secretly done, so as not to appear that the pastor lacks faith in God. It is done secretly so that the members do not disbelief God. Such kind of approach to problems within the church created a worldview for the members of the church as well as the pastor. The hermeneutical problem is attributed to the fact that many pastors in the Friends church have not dared to engage in tough hermeneutical debates. And as such many are contended with the pocket-size knowledge they posses about the scripture and Quaker tradition of worship and conduct of service.

Speaking on the challenges facing the African church, Stephen Coertze in his dissertation says that spiritual ambivalence of African Christianity can be attributed to two possible factors. The first one he says, is the inability to comprehend the requirements for discipleship (2005:18). There is inadequacy of the gospel product which failed to address the African situation holistically- a situation that led African converts to Christianity in view of the insufficiency of the missionary gospel, to revert to their traditional practices which to a large extent, were not ecclesiastically acceptable. In analysis then the spiritual ambivalence can be attributed to people who first introduced the gospel (Khathide 2003:16). Theologians can be partly blamed for hindrance in understanding the spiritual world. The New Testament scholars even though they do acknowledge the spirit world in the New Testament, struggle to acknowledge the ministry of Jesus as exorcist and the role of the demonic in the modern world (2003:16).

The western missionaries prided themselves on the issue of enlightenment and so it played a part in the lack of the understanding of the spirit world. Mark Shaw points out that “the missionaries viewed African traditional religion with horror operating with an exaggerated Augustinian view of the kingdom they saw their work in Africa as part of the age-old struggle of the kingdom of Satan with the kingdom of God.” (Shaw: 130) This is due to their rooted perspectives which in essence denied the existence of the spirit world. Missionaries who came to Africa demonstrated ignorance in understanding dealing with the spirits and spirits possession. The result was evident; the missionaries failed to see the consequence of primal world views which allow for the interrelationship between the natural world and that of spirits and gods. The enlightenment separations of the natural and supernatural realities have been ridiculed as merely fairy tales and have been labeled barbaric and primitive in nature. The perception given to this was that God and the Bible were insufficient.

Not only were the missionaries unable to comprehend the requirements for discipleship but also were inadequate to prepare for social spiritual conditions in host countries. The result was the limitations of the world view and lack of preparation. Traditional theology has been incapable to point out that the invisible

reality forms the cosmic backdrop of the mission and ministry of Jesus in the New Testament. When the missionaries settled in Kaimosi, they had a good idea to educate people on what they could do; setting up milling industries, hospitals and schools. But one thing they failed to do was to get into the world of the African-Luhya people.

The fact that Christianity in two-third world is often viewed as powerless to deal with the spirit world Christians often go to diviners and spirit doctors to have their needs met. The dilemma facing the African church is lack of fidelity to biblical revelation, a lack of articulation and application of the very super naturalistic oriented New Testament views of life. It is sad to note that ...African biblical scholars have found themselves being drawn into theological reflection before they have found time to process what they are doing with the Bible (Loba-Mkole & Wendland, 2005:4). According to Loba-Mkole and Wendland African biblical scholars have not been able to seclude themselves in their universities and seminaries; ordinary African Christians have dragged them, willingly or not into a real world and demanded that they serve them with their academic skills and resources (2005:4). The two have noted that since the Bible was developed in the Northern part of Africa, the Western, Eastern and Southern Africa have only had the Bible for the last for 400 years (2005:4).

We need to note that African scholars are being mentored by western theological specialist. However, there are things that are not accounted for; this includes divinities, spirits- good and bad, ancestors' witchcraft, sorcery, diviners and healers (2005:4).

## **2.4 Reasons for practice of witchcraft**

### **2.4.1 Social Political-religious factors**

Leadership in the Friends church in Kenya to be particular is very central to the running of the church (Rasmussen 1995:6). The structure of leadership in the Friends church is well defined and is not somewhat complicated. The Yearly meeting is the highest hierarchy, followed by Quarterly meeting, monthly meeting and village meeting (Lumb: 2012). All these are offices of leadership in the

Friends Church. However, these offices can become a source of conflict in the Friends church. Many church leaders sometimes do not understand what leadership is all about. Subtly but rightly to say, many a leaders in the Friends Church have forgotten that we are living in a complex world full of uncertainties of precipitous changes. The changes may be in governments, business, profit and non-profit organizations, and churches where people are hankering for authentic and profound leadership as an antidote for their sense of insecurity in the mutating world. When church leadership causes conflicts and men resort to dubious means to get to the top then it loses meaning and turns into self interest.

In the recent past, people who have desired to be leaders have struggled through their efforts to become leaders in the Friends church. Some have had to campaign through their friends and finally make it to the top. Others have even made efforts to consult the diviners and magicians for help. This is where politics plays a negative role in the church matters. Yusuf Turaki calls this 'acquisition of power.' (2006:89). Turaki points out six means of acquiring power; through senses, through one's ancestors and associates, through various paraphernalia, through sacrifices, through rituals and ceremonies, and through belonging to a secrete cult (2006:89). The main interest of this research is to see how these powers are obtained through belonging to a secrete cult. Turaki says that in Africa traditional religion the sagacity of the sacred and mysterious is profoundly felt. The deeper things of life are thought to be best known and understood in secrete (2006:95).

The pursuit of power in the local church; in this case the Friends church, through secretive means has given way to proliferation of secrete cults and societies into which devotees are initiated.

In such instances, the Bible is politicized. The scriptures are not obeyed but rather twisted. And so people forget the real message of the gospel and veer off to witchcraft and magic, a practice abhorrent to the scripture. In fact becoming a Christian is seen as a way of the first step to greater mysteries (2006:96). Leaders, who indeed make to power through such means, demean the message

of the Bible and instead esteem the 'advisers' who would prefer them to consult other external powers. Leadership in any part of the world and in institutions should provide people with the sense of security as they move from the comfort of familiar to uncertainty of the future. Notably church leadership should anchor in God who is the source of wisdom for those in power. Their power in the leadership of the church means servant hood. If then church leaders attain their power through such secretive means then church leadership has not only lost direction but will be ridiculed as the refuse of the world.

The Quaker church does not condone witchcraft; neither does it encourage its members to participate in any form worship of the spirits. According to the Quaker Faith and Practice, members of the church are to seek solutions of difficult matters from the leading of the Holy Spirit (Faith & Practice 2008:16). It is quite surprising that even though this ideal, the practice is the opposite.

The inner self here refers to the inner light. The inner light is the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Friends church, since its inception is known for its search of the inner man who illumines the mind and the heart. In matters of making decisions, the Quaker is called upon to release himself upon God for guidance. The Quakers worldwide are known for being non violent, refuse to participate in war, taking oaths and refusal to indulge in alcohol (2008:16).

The Quaker church government would be an empty shell without the living expression of their faith provided by generations of individuals Friends (2008:16). The customs of writing testimonies to the grace of God as shown in the lives of the Friends (in the Quaker Faith and practice) provide them with a wealth of materials showing ordinary Friends living out their faith from day to day. These testimonies show that whatever circumstances, God can be present with his people and they encourage each to be faithful to their calling.

The Quaker discipline and structures do not exist by themselves. The life



of the Society of Friends consists in the faithfulness of each and all of the members thereof, including adherence to the faith and practice. None of the members can expect the 'society' to be more faithful, more committed more loving than himself is prepared to be. Therefore, the departure from the central truth of the scripture that disowns all kinds of evil is a sign of the weakening of the foundation of the Quaker church.

#### **2.4.2 The jealousy factor**

Many Africans know that "witchcraft" is not restricted to some strange old woman somewhere in the night. It is everywhere. It can be witnessed in all areas of life and in all aspects of social life. No situation can claim to be free of "witchcraft" All people can, for some reason or another, engage in "witchcraft". "Witchcraft" is therefore not a craft or an art. It bears witness to the mystery that people harm others and destroy human relationships and the harmony of society for reasons not always known to us (Wyk 2012:1215-1217).

Wyk argues that Africans explain evil as an anthropological reality. The source of evil never lies with God or the "devil", but can always be traced to humans themselves. He quotes the studies of Van Beek (1994:197-207) who shows that among the Kapsiki of Northern Cameroon this assertion is reaffirmed. His research reaffirms the point that Africans explain evil only in terms of an anthropological frame of reference.

But Wyk probes further to find out answers to the question: Why do people harm other people? Throughout Africa everything points to *jealousy* as the answer to this question. He argues for the reason of jealousy. It is jealousy that drives people to harm others. Jealousy causes people to hate others and to destroy lives. It forms the basis of fear and the obstacle for co-operation. Jealousy is the reason behind the destruction of the community and the

exploitation of society for personal ends (Ray 1976:150-152; Turaki 1999:193-194; Müller & Ritz-Müller 1999:143; SANPAD 2003:13).

By indicating “jealousy” as the most profound cause of “witchcraft”, Africans concentrate on one very important aspect of evil. By attributing it to jealousy, they stress the fact that most of the time witchcraft (as well as other acts of evil) is not the result of legitimate anger, but arises from the urge to harm (Wyk 2012). The book of Genesis in the Bible gives us a clear example. Like Cain we see that people who have more than you, who are more successful than you are and who have better looks than you have. “Witchcraft” therefore is a desire, a craving, and a passion to harm others who have more than you and who achieve more than you do. “Witchcraft” therefore is a metaphor for one aspect of human “sinfulness” that we as Christians would term the “Cain-factor”. Cain saw Abel to be having more than him. He wanted to be like him, but because he could not, he resorted to killing his brother. The question that was killing him was: “Why were his brother prospering and he failing?”

The African concept of “witchcraft” does not only overlap with certain aspects of the Christian notion of “sin”, but also with certain aspects of the notion of “original sin”. Africans, as well as Christians, know that the potential to do evil vests with all. Every human being has the potential to do evil. No wonder the Bible puts it “For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Africans know that anyone could be a witch or could become one. Therefore, they know that every person is a potential witch. Every person has this potential power. It just remains latent in most people. According to African thinking evil is situated in the liver – that is in everyone’s liver (we just refer to the heart as the center of evil). Emotions of envy, hatred, lust and jealousy fill us all. But why do all people succumb to “sin”? Africans – as Christians – say it is because of man’s situatedness in society (Wyk 2012). Africans know very well that “sin” (in the form of witchcraft) is embedded in human society. In certain instances witchcraft is committed wittingly, and in other instances it is committed

unwittingly (because the doer is overcome by a pre-existing evil in society). Therefore, they know that sin and evil must be traced back to more than mere individual choice. Society turns people into witches. Africans teach that witchcraft can be transmitted by mother's milk and can be learnt at home. We as Christians can identify with this argument. We also teach that sin is transmitted from one generation to the next (be that through sexuality or not). We also teach that we are born into sin; the sin that already exists in society (cf Hammond-Tooke 1993:172; Magesa 1998:181-184; Ferdinando 1999:97).

Notwithstanding the fact that all people know that "witchcraft" is a mystery and that anyone could succumb to this kind of evil, people still have the urge to accuse certain people of witchcraft. Accusations of witchcraft mostly occur in closely-knit communities with limited resources. In closed communities that experience financial problems, relatives and neighbors are most often accused of witchcraft. Accusations of witchcraft abound in situations of domestic tension and strained relationships due to bad economic circumstances. In circumstances of hopelessness people readily believe their life power to have been taken away from them (and that is why they are poor or ill). To restore this "power", they have to either harm or kill their adversaries.

Jealousy and envy drive people to accuse others of witchcraft. Africans doubt whether it is possible for ordinary folk to have success on their own. It is believed that ordinary people that are successful must have achieved their success by making use of other people's life-force, or of some kind of charm. Those that are highly successful could even be accused of a muti-murder (Minnaar 1991:53-54). In the past, women who were academic achievers were accused of witchcraft, because women were believed to be inferior to men in all respects. Today, these women are accused of witchcraft, because of the feelings of inferiority of men who are not prepared to work in order to achieve success within the parameters of a "new society". The accusation could also apply inversely. In my own research I have increasingly found that people are accused

of witchcraft because they are believed to hamper educational, financial and social progress (cf Reyneke 1972:154; Bosch 1974:74; Mbiti 1975:167; 1985:199; Parrinder 1981:131-134; Nyirongo 1997:187-188).

According to Niehaus (1997:271-272) not all witchcraft accusations can be traced back to social tensions. Sociological explanations are not the only explanation for witchcraft and counter-witchcraft. Not even the visible actions of jealousy, envy, malice and resentment can cover all the cases of witchcraft and witchcraft accusations. According to him divination, in the form of dreams, plays a major role in witchcraft activities. Such extra-social revelatory knowledge has a huge impact on the lives of Africans. We must accept that non-rational elements (such as dreams and hallucinations) are important tools in witchcraft activities as well as in accusations.

In African Traditional society, people believe that there are many evil-minded people that want to cause harm to them. They believe in the existence of people who can leave their bodies at night in a supernatural way to harm them. This is interpreted as “the pleasure of hurting them.” They also believe there are people that could plan to hurt and harm them. They believe for instance that such people have the power to harm them over distance by manipulating animals and by poisoning their food. They believe that jealous people, who could deliberately inflict harm upon others in an attempt to improve their own life situation, can be found everywhere. This includes at home, churches, schools, river banks, markets and other places.

Protection of oneself from harm is a normal human behavior. People protect themselves against the attacks of evil-minded people. A true African man would pray, Oh God protect me from bad people-witches, sorcerers, diviners and magicians. As Mbiti points out, Africans try to protect themselves against “witchcraft” by using herbal medicines as well as magic medicines that are stronger than the evil that threatens them (1985:197-198).

There are various groups of people who provide “medicine” that could be used to counter “witchcraft”. The first group is the “herbalists” (“pharmacists” or

“primary health workers”) (Campbell 1998:1). They provide people with “medicine” similar to Western medicines. Van Myk notes that among the Basotho and Mamabolo traditions the *Ngaka* can diagnose disease and can prescribe remedies. In the Nguni tradition, this task vests with the *inyanga yokwelapha* and the *isangoma* (van Myk 2013). Just like Basothos, the Maragoli people have *Umwahi*. This is a man who prescribes the required medicine for a particular treatment. He is respected just like trained professional doctor. These herbalists can also provide “medicine” to protect people against sorcery and disaster. Sometimes the medicine is provided as the result of professional knowledge, and sometimes it is issued with the help of ancestors (Fourie 1921:82-84; Hanekom 1972:112; Magubane 1998: 61-62).

The second group could provide people with “medicine” unfamiliar to the scientific fraternity. It could be described as providing people with “good magic”. These “practitioners” (*bongaka* – Tswana, *isangoma*- Basotho) can also be called “medicine men” and “herbalists”. In most instances they are called “diviners”, “mediums”, “rainmakers” and “priests”. They are the friends of society. They have the knowledge to apply mystical powers to the benefit of society. They are therefore often referred to as “good magicians” or “good witchdoctors”. These good magicians, who have the ability to perform “white magic” or theurgy, provide people with concentrated mystical power in the form of charms, amulets, powders and feathers. These objects, filled with good powers, are used for counteracting misfortunes, undoing curses and in destroying witchcraft (Reyneke 1972:146-147; Turaki 1999:193-195). Van Myk calls this “medicines” “muti”. “Muti” as part of the armament of “white magic” could protect, heal or bring good fortune, because it is more powerful than the elements used by the witches (2013).

It is believed that “Muti” could, however, also be used in a way, far removed from theurgy. As assistance to victims, witchdoctors could also provide them with “muti” that could be used in revenge (*letswa*) against evil people. The abhorrent aspect of such “muti” is that it could also comprise parts of the human body, because body parts (especially sexual organs – Fourie 1921:85) make the

strongest “medicine”. Such “muti” does not only cure and protect, but can also harm and could even kill. Africans believe that only magic can be used in defense against the magic of another. They would therefore pay huge sums of money to acquire magic potions or “muti” that would be strong enough to counteract the evil of others (Crafford 1996:16-17; Magubane 1998:113; Müller & Ritz-Müller 1999:143-146). In recent year, the albinos of Tanzania have become the most prized group of individuals for such kind of business. Their flesh and other parts of the body are believed to be of great value to witches and those in search of riches.

Where magic is not only employed for defensive and protective purposes, but also for offensive purposes, it’s again becomes an issue of “black medicine”, “black magic” and sorcery (Turaki 1999:116-117). In Africa the dividing lines between good and bad, victim and aggressor, healer and murderer are clearly very narrow.

Then, there is the third group. People confronted by “witchcraft” also seek help from this group of traditional healers, known as “diviners” in the English language and as “dolosgooiers” (Van Myk 2013) in the Afrikaans language, and Umukumu among Luhya people. These diviners are also called *ngaka* - Tswana or *inyanga yokubhula* – Nguni or *senohe* – Sotho (Magubane 1998:113). This group is consulted for their knowledge of the source of this evil. They specialize in the divination of the *buloyi*. They have the ability to see whether a disease or a misfortune is to be traced back to the evil deeds of a “witch”. They have the gift of literally smelling out the evildoer (Magubane 1998:61-62. 98). They help their clients by identifying the “witch” through the help of the ancestral spirits, by throwing stones or “dolosse” (*ditaola*), shells, seeds and artifacts or by interpreting dreams (Reyneke 1972:146-147; Hanekom 1972:114). Many female diviners get their (reliable) information via dangerous snakes. It is believed that many ancestors live inside these snakes. Due to a special relationship between the diviners and the ancestors, the snakes don’t bite them. When these methods fail to provide the information needed, a last method can be resorted to, namely the swallowing of poison (in the expectation that the guilty would die and the

innocent would live). To the Western mind such “judicial process” amounts to nothing less than injustice. Africans reason differently – to them witches are unknown. Therefore, a trial with witnesses would be inappropriate. A witch has to be smelled out; and for this experts in the trade should be used (Krige 1981:225-226; Myburgh 1991:122-123).

Once the diviners have identified the foe with the help of the ancestors, they can prescribe a remedy or a plan of action which could even include a witch-killing. The latter could take the form of sticks being stuck up the anus, stoning, spear-killing, banishment and being thrown to crocodiles (Reyneke 1972:152-180; Krige 1981:226-227; Parrinder 1981:106-114; Sundermeier 1990:232-239; Thorpe 1993:113-120; Magesa 1998:189). These people who act as the defenders of society against witchcraft, tragically, are the same people who lead witch-hunts (sometimes through secret societies) that could easily end up in a witch-killing. By fighting “bad magic”, they become part of a new cycle of destruction and death. These friends of society are the very people responsible for maintaining a vicious cycle of revenge and counter-revenge (Parrinder 1981:106-130; Olupona 1991:145).

## **2.5 Summary**

This chapter has dealt with the current approaches of Luhya pastors in the Friends Church towards witchcraft. We have seen a brief history of the Luhya traditions and way of conduct within the society. In this chapter there are three approaches employed by the pastors in Friends church towards witchcraft. The first approach is dramatization, whereby young people organize public evangelistic meetings to demonstrate the effect of witchcraft. The drama is intended to show the negative impact of witchcraft on people and the society at large.

The second approach is prayer for deliverance meetings. These are meetings organized by the churches to help people be delivered from the powers

of darkness. To some extent this meeting have had their own strong impact on the newly born again people that have confessed Jesus Christ as Lord and savior of their lives.

The third approach which is closely attached to that is the planting the born-again churches in every town. This method targets to get new members for evangelism and discipleship. This is method is currently being experienced in some few areas because it's new and has its own challenges.

Most common acts of witchcraft used by witches, diviners, sorcerers and magicians are; busula which mostly affects the tongues, and the neck, Mayenga which is a science of killing someone from far, kumara, which affects the growth of a person, animals and plants, and finally Oloheni which is thunder send to destroy someone or something.

We have also seen why people choose to engage in witchcraft. Three reasons from this are clear; social security factors, social political religious factors and jealousy factor.



## **Chapter 3**

### **Biblical principles for ministering to cultural witchcraft practices**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter examines Biblical principles for ministering to cultural witchcraft practices. In this attempt, the chapter answers the question “What principles are applicable in ministering to those practicing witchcraft? Are these principles viable or are they only theoretical in nature. How effective are the principles? This was done with a closer examination of the of the Old Testament scriptures that are applicable to the context in question.

#### **3.1 Witchcraft and the Bible**

The Bible, which is the yard stick for Christians strongly warns us about the pure practice of evil namely sorcery, divination and witchcraft. Some scholars especially those in the twenty-first century have dismissed witchcraft as not being true but just a medieval superstition (WE 1988:373-374). They regard witchcraft as an extremely old system of organized religious worship. Such argument is traced back to pre-Christian times in many parts of Europe. History confirms that between 1400s-1700s the church authorities tried to stamp out witchcraft. But

people in many parts of the world continued to practice witchcraft (1988:374). This act of exterminating witches is considered as a prime example of medieval ignorance and religious bigotry. Such examples of persecution of witches occurred in England, France, Germany, Italy, Scotland and Spain. Most people suspected to be witches were women who bore the brunt of it all. It is estimated that close to three hundred thousand people practicing or suspected to be witches were put to death (WE 1988:373-374).

Historians have now realized that witch-hunting was of primarily a medieval phenomenon. It peaked in the seventeenth Century. During the rationalist age of Descartes, Newton and Vincent de Paul, persecuting suspected witches was not an elite plot against the poor, nor was practicing witchcraft a mode of peasant resistance (Miesel 2001: 21-26). Catholics and Protestants hunted witches with comparable vigor. Church and state alike tried and executed them. It took more reason to end the witch hunt.

Not only were the witches burned, but hanged, strangled, and beheaded as well. Such a witch-hunt practice was developed by Catholic clerics before the reformation (2001:21-26). The Catholic church was misled about the church's role in the witch-hunt by apologists eager to present the church as an innocent of witches' blood so as to refute enlightenment theory that witch burning was almost entirely a Catholic phenomenon.

Such background does not justify the actions of the Catholics against witches, but rather points to the way the society has reacted towards them in the past. So what exactly does the Bible say about witchcraft, sorcery and divination? This section will be devoted to examining Old Testament texts and their messages to the Jewish community and their applicability to the present church.

### 3.2 Witchcraft in the Old Testament

The Old Testament records various accounts on matters concerning witchcraft. Some of these accounts date as far as the narratives in the book of Genesis. Chapter 41:1-8 records the story of Joseph who interpreted the Pharaoh's dreams after all the magicians and enchanters failed to do so (41:8). In Exodus 7:12, God asked Moses to perform some supernatural acts before Pharaoh so that he may release the Israelites to go to the Promised Land. The rod that Moses had in the hand was turned into a snake, water was turned into blood 7:22 and frogs appeared. The magicians duplicated all these to counter the superior power that Moses had. However the magicians could not produce lies as Aaron did. The demonstrations of their magical powers were accompanied by enchantments or incantations. The word enchantment means to wrap tightly or to envelop and thus suggesting secretes, mysterious ways.

God's supremacy over these magicians is in three fold way. First, their snakes were devoured by Aaron's (Exodus 7:22). Secondly Aaron's miracles did not require incantations. The Bible indicates that the magicians countered every act by Aaron through their secrete ways. The more they did this counter, the more the Pharaoh's heart hardened. And while they performed their acts with incantations, that of Aaron did not require such. Third, they were unable to duplicate the plague of gnats (8:18). This act of inability to duplicate Aaron's acts can be compared to that of Daniel 2:2 where the magicians, sorcerers of the Chaldeans were unable to interpret the king's dream of a large tree. The consequences of such failure in the ancient world were no small thing. The magicians' reward for such failure instituted death by the king's orders.

God's attitude and response is stated in Exodus 22:18. "Do not allow sorcerers to live [*among you*] emphasis mine. For those who practice all these offense to the Lord contaminates themselves.

Leviticus 19:26 says, "*Do not eat any meat with the blood in it. Do not*

*practice divination and sorcery.*” The preceding verse mentions two main things: divination and sorcery. So that the two terms may not appear ambiguous in the usage, the term divination is defined as foretelling of the future by performing symbolic or magic acts eg scrutinizing the liver of a newly slaughtered animal (Unger & White 1980:99). The word divination in Hebrew is referred to as *qasam* which refers to pagan parallel to prophesying (1980:99). Deut. 18:10, 14-15. It is seeking after the will of the gods, in an effort to learn their future action or divine blessings on some proposed future action (Josh. 13:22). There is a probability that diviners conversed with demons to get the information about the future. It is a craft that is skillfully conducted by the individuals attached to some spiritual powers.

The practice of divination might involve offering sacrifices to the deity on alter (Numb 23:1). It might involve the use of a hole in the ground, through which the diviner spoke to the spirits of the dead (I Sam. 28:8), at other times the diviner might shake arrows, consult with the household of idols, or study the livers of the dead animals. The sole purpose of divination was of man’s attempt to know and control the world and the future, apart from the true God. It was the opposite of true prophecy, which essentially is submission to God’s sovereignty (Deut. 18:14). The occurrence of the word in Numbers 22-23 and Proverbs 16:10 seem to be an equivalent to prophecy.

Sorcery, on the other hand refers to deliberate use of techniques by ordinary peoples to invoke evil on another person (Deist 1984:240). This act is mostly associated with women rather than men. A clear example of this is Jezebel in 2Kings 9:22, 34-35, died a violent death after committing atrocities of abominable sacrifices. God swiftly dealt with her actions and this stands as a reminder that God hates such practices. In the same context, King Manasseh (2Kings 21:10-16) engaged himself in witchcraft, wickedness, and sorcery. He messed himself up and he got contaminated. As the scripture says God does not let go sin unpunished, King Manasseh was punished for his evil acts. He acted on Babylon with her practices in Isaiah 47:9 and his promises were fulfilled by

using King Cyrus who attacked her in spite of her sorcerers and incantations.

Witchcraft relies on material strength (Micah 5:2-5). God's attitude towards witchcraft is that it has a defiling effect on His people. He will completely remove every trace of sin. The Old Testament is clear that God hates sin of divination, sorcery, witchcraft and magic. These are acts of defiance towards his authority and sovereign rule.

### **3.3 Why God forbade divination in the Old Testament.**

#### **3.3.1 Lust for knowledge**

Divination is the lust of the secret knowledge. Such knowledge belongs to God alone and has chosen not to reveal to anyone (Deut. 29:29). The desire "to know" the forbidden knowledge has its roots in man's first sin. In the Garden of Eden the serpent said that *"For God knows that when you eat of it [the fruit] your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."* (Gen 3:5), emphasis mine. Being like God was a greater desire in man. For Eve knew that when she attains that status, equality with God will not be a question anymore.

A critical look at these facts reveals two things. Primarily the purpose of divination and other witchcraft practices is to keep people away from a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. The chief purpose of God creating man is to love and enjoy God forever. But divination has the intention of wanting to block man from coming to Christ. This then becomes a stumbling block. God hates anything that stops human beings from relating with him. He hates it with all the might. For nothing on earth that God created, whether seen or unseen should block man from relating with Him.

The teachings of Jesus Christ are contained in the New Testament and constitute the further divine revelation that Moses promised when that new

"Prophet" came. These writings are authoritative and combined with the Old Testament constitute "the revealed things" (Deuteronomy 29:29) that belong to us. This is the limit of authoritative, divine revelation. Prophecy in the New Testament is not adding to authoritative revelation, but exhorting from it and applying it. Just as the Old Testament prophets (except Moses) were not law-givers but law-appliers, so are the "prophesying ones" in the New Testament. The other function of Old Testament prophets was to inerrantly predict the future of Israel and her Messiah. Since the One to whom the prophets pointed has come and spoken in full and final revelation, that role no longer exists. All the prophecies about the future that we are allowed are already contained in the Bible.

Using prophetic techniques to learn secret information or the future is divination. Today it is like it was in Jeremiah's day: *"Then the Lord said to me, 'The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name. I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them; they are prophesying to you a false vision, divinations, futility and the deception of their own minds'"* (Jeremiah 14:14). For example, in his book, *The Final Quest*, the "prophet" Rick Joyner went into a trance, visited heaven, and talked to the apostle Paul. Here is what the departed "Paul" told Joyner: "If what I have written is used as a foundation, it will not be able to hold the weight of that which needs to be built on it ... You must see my teachings through the Lord's teachings, not try to understand Him from my perspective,"(133). We may not necessarily agree with the author that he spoke to Paul, but Necromancy (communicating with the dead) is a technique for gaining secret information that is forbidden. When forbidden techniques are used, deception is gained. The information from Joyner's "Paul" is contradictory to the New Testament where Paul claims that his writings are foundational and authoritative. I do not deny that various practices from guided imagery, to EMDR (a technique used by some practitioners of "Theophostic Ministry" to help people find hidden memories and gain personal revelations from God), to contemplative prayer (which uses techniques to silence the mind in the hope of hearing God's

voice), and many others "work." They do. I deny that they are from God. God has chosen the valid means by which we can hear from Him. Those means are revealed in the Bible. Going outside of God's ordained means is rebellion which constitutes divination. Samuel told Saul: *"For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is an iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord He has also rejected you from being king"* (I Samuel 15:23). Using divination puts one in the realm of deceptive spirits. Paul predicted: *"But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons "* (I Timothy 4: 1).

It is important to know that methods are not neutral. That much has been proved by the fact that the Bible forbids divination, a practice which involves innumerable possible methods. The other claim that peoples always use "God can use anything," is misleading. That God could use something if He chose to does not mean that He will. It also does not mean that if He does use something it is a good thing. For example, God used Balaam to prophesy of Messiah, yet Balaam is condemned through Scriptures as a wicked person who led Israel astray (see Numbers 24:17 for Messianic prophesy; Balaam is condemned - 2 Peter 2:15; Jude I 1; Revelation 2:14). Balaam was a practitioner of divination, hired to curse Israel yet God chose to sovereignly use him to bless Israel instead. God may indeed use things He condemns, but that does not exonerate those who are thus used.

Today divination is rampant in the church. It is just as poisonous to the faith today as divination was to Israel's faith in the Old Testament. It is rebellion in that it involves refusing to stay within the boundaries God has set for our own good. Those who are thus deceived have put themselves into that horrible state because they did not receive the love of the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12). The truth is the gospel of Jesus Christ. We need to purge divination from the church and replace it with Gospel preaching and Bible teaching.

A person can expect to be invaded by demonic spirits if he/she dabbles with psychic phenomena profanities such as fortune telling, sorcery, calling spirits, witchcraft or any kind of occult, he/she can expect to be invaded by demonic spirits. As his/her defenses are dropped by his/her meddling curiosity, occult spirits can and will enter in and establish themselves. These are the spirits which travel to the third and fourth generations through the parents by inheritance, because consorting with them breaks the first commandment by contacting another god. If this is so, a curse from God results (Deuteronomy 18:9-12 and Exodus 20:3-5). However the person continues on, the God-given defenses are forced down again and again. Increasingly the demons have free access and control. Before long they will make a slave-victim of him/her, driving him ever deeper into the mire of sin and slavery.

The Bible teaches that such acts are not acceptable to God and warns that such a relationship places a person under the influence of the Devil. Usually evil and demonic spirits penetrate through individuals who seek fortune telling, a human fascination to know about the future through the power of evil spirits. Consulting fortune tellers and psychics is very popular.

The Word of God says in Isaiah 8:19, "When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people enquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living?"

### **3.3.2 Leads to deception**

The second aim of divination is to lead people into deception of embracing false doctrine so as to distort their understanding of God's revealed truth. The distortion is as a result of twisted information about God. When the serpent told Eve that when she *eats of the fruit, she will not surely die...for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil*" (Gen.3:4-5). This statement has since been described as 'a



*truthful-lie* [italics mine].’ The desire to be like God is what led Eve into desiring to eat the fruit. This was a complete deception from “the father of lies.” This desire existed in the devil himself. Isaiah 14:12-15 details the account of the devil’s fall. He fell because of the deception of his beauty. “*You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God. I will set my throne on high’ I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will make myself like the High.*” William Still in his book “*Biblical teaching on the devil*”, comments that, a creature, however high and fine, trying to ape the uncreated God, is foolish, and that is just what the devil is-foolish, but he hedges himself round with such consummate powers of deception that we are not supposed to notice it ( 2006:7).

Adam and Eve were led in to the deception that they will be like God, and that is what they wanted to be. But they did not know that they were being duped into sin. The power of witchcraft is to deceive people that they will have some super powers and that they can perform bigger things. Such things include seeing into the future of other people and being able to predict some events that might occur in their lives. The deception of the possession of supernatural powers looks great, it is much lucrative, and something that a man would go for. Such a deception is destined to perish with time when one realizes that certain things are beyond control. People who deem to possess such great powers have never for example predicted death. Death remains a mystery even to the most educated and genius. Thus, the desire to know many things is always restricted by the fact that mans mind is finite. Finite mind has never understood the infinite. God is the only infinite being, and no one can be like God.

If for example God did not deal with the deception given to Adam and Eve by sending them away from the Garden of Eden, then they would be like God and God would no longer be God. So that God may remain God and that human beings may not fathom him, they were send away from the Garden of Eden. God hates people who want to equal themselves to him. The Bible speaks of Christ;

even though he was God, did not equal himself with God while on earth (Philippians 2:5-6).

### **3.3.3 Witchcraft is rebellion against God**

Leviticus 20:6 says, *“I will set my face against the person who turns to mediums and spiritists to prostitute himself by following them, and I will cut him off from his people.”*

The act of following other mediums and spiritists and leaving the true God is itself a rebellion. The rebellious act is joining the very thing that opposes the government of God. In modern terms, a rebel is one who has denounced his loyalty to the ruling government and instead wants to fight it from the bush. The bush and other hiding places becomes his home. He no longer listens to the ruling government but goes a head calling for support from sympathizers.

A rebel does not only call for support from sympathizers but also forces some people to follow his rules set by his bush government. He does so by threatening their lives and even wounding or maiming them. When he enters a village he causes mayhem and calls for attention from the media by making his demands known to the existing government. If the government does not respond to the demands of the rebel then he becomes a small king in his hiding place and threatens the lives of those in his jurisdiction. Such a person if he gets to power, rules by dictatorship.

The act of turning to divination and other forms of witchcraft is a rebellious act against God himself. Divination is a direct fight on God. Such kind of a fight is limited and destined for defeat. That is compared to a man fighting a losing battle or fighting the air. God has the power to destroy both the rebel and his paraphernalia that are used to gain power from the underworld.

Isaiah 8:19 *“When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper*

*and mutter, should not a people enquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of the dawn.*” The context of this passage is Assyrians being used by God as instruments to carry out his plans against his children who rebelled against him. The passage points to the fact that the murky world of secrete, spiritual knowledge is characterized by unclear whispering and muttering. Seeking such secrete information is equivalent of failing to consult God who has revealed his truth objectively in His Word. Those who are not satisfied with what God has revealed will always consult other sources. The act of divination is highly forbidden because it does not speak for God but for men and dirty spirits.

Deuteronomy 18 continues to give a list of the things forbidden by God that are associated with witchcraft. *“Let no-one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritists or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord, and because of these detestable practices the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you.”*

From this passage we notice that divination, sorcery, witchcraft, mediums and spiritists are mentioned as forbidden practices. Notably, the sacrifice of children in the fire is also mentioned. This practice was very common among the ancient people who settled in Canaan. It was a detestable practice to the Lord and it was classified among the things that are abhorrent to God. For this very reason God was going to deliver those nations in to the hands of Israelites for destruction. He was tired of their practices and wanted them destroyed. All the practices mentioned here were an alternative to listening to God’s chosen spokesman.

*“The nations you will dispose listen to those who practice sorcery or divination. But as for you, the Lord your God has not permitted you to do so. The*

*Lord your God will rise up among you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.” (Deut. 18:14-15).*

God’s intention was that the people listen to his servants who prophesied and warned people in the times of danger. Moses’ statement was prophetic in nature that God was going to raise another prophet whom the people were to listen to. This was to be God’s action, and not individual self-proclaimed prophet.

In I Samuel 15, God compared the rebellion of Saul to the sin of divination. *“For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.”* I Sam. 15:23). The rebellion of Saul was to seek after other gods. He could not listen to God and following this God rejected him.

There are two passages in the book of Leviticus that strongly speak against mediums and other forms of witchcraft. The first one is Leviticus 19:31 *“Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I’m the Lord your God.”* Mediums and spiritists defile! They make one sullied and cause him not to worship God. God cannot be approached by dirty human beings. The defilement mentioned here has to do with sinfulness. God is sinless and cannot be approached with sin.

The second verse is Leviticus 20:6 *“I will set my face against the person who turns to mediums and spiritists to prostitute himself by following them, and I will cut him off from his people.”* Go warned about looking to the occult for advice. Mediums and spiritists were outlawed because God was not the source of their information. At best, occult practitioners are sham whose predictions cannot be trusted. At worst they are in contact with evil spirits and thus extremely dangerous. We do not need to look to the occult for information about the future. God has given the Bible so that we may obtain all the information we need- and the Bible’s teaching is trustworthy. These two verses lead us to third point.

### **3.3.4 Witchcraft is prostitution**

The Oxford Dictionary defines prostitution as an act of using yourself or your abilities or beliefs in a way in which does not deserve respect especially in order to get money. The term itself 'prostitution' is also used to identify sexual intercourse for non-affection purpose, normally for financial gain (Atkison & Field 1995: 701-702). In pagan religions the cult 'prostitute' was associated with processes of nature in linking the gods and goddesses with human fertility and the propagation of intercourse with the sacred prostitute to achieve fertility of home herd and crops.

The fertility cults were a much more serious spiritual threat to Israel than commercial prostitution. The gods of Baal and Ashera were at the core of the fertility cults and were anathema to the Old Testament writers. The chief function of fertility cult is sexual intercourse as a means of offering one's body to gain cultic ritual blessings.

In the context of this research, witchcraft is seen as prostitution. This is a deliberate act of offering one's body in a degrading manner. Anyone who consults mediums and diviners is offering up his/her body to defilement. The attachment of such practice is to gods and spirits which are evil. John Mbiti describes mediums as people who get in touch with the spirit world. They are often women, and they are attached to medicine men and diviners (1991:158). Getting in touch with the spirit is at will, but it is brought about by ritual drumming, dancing and singing until the person becomes possessed. The person may fall down without being aware of it. Under such possession she may jump, beat herself, bang her head, walk on fire, thorns, and do other things which she would not do when in her normal self. It is during such possession that she communicates with the spirit world.

The biblical prohibition against prostitution are uniform in denouncing the sins of fornication and harlotry (Lev. 21:9, Deut. 22:21). The Israelites were also

prohibited from becoming prostitutes (Lev. 19:6) and neither female nor male prostitution were to be tolerated. The punishment of such sin was death, for it was a transgression against God.

### **3.3.5 Witchcraft is idolatry**

Anything that turns man's heart from worshiping the true God is idolatry. The first three laws of the Ten Commandments are basically speaking on the worship of God.

*"You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, I am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers of the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments"(Exodus 20:4-6).*

If a man consults a witch, a medium or a sorcerer he is simply indicating that his faith is not in God. The withdrawal of faith from the living God to any other object is nothing but idolatry. The heart of idolatry is to make man disbelief God and his powers. The object of our faith is God. However, when we make the object to be something different, then we are automatically being enslaved into idolatry. This is the very sin that made Moses to be angry with the Israelites and to throw down the two tablets of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. The Israelites engaged in idol worship while Moses had gone to communicate with God on the Mountain. *"When the people saw that Moses was long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered round Aaron and said, Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him."* Exodus 32:1).

The people were easily led a stray into idol worship by a simple delay of Moses coming back. Moses had gone to the mountain to communicate with God on their behalf. He had gone to receive instruction about the lives of the Israelites. Because of their impatience, they turned to idol worship. They demanded from Aaron that they needed a god they could see. Witchcraft and divination makes people demand to know things about their present and future. They demand to know their fate and find out if they could do anything to alter the very fate in their lives.

After Aaron had made them the golden calf, “So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterwards they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry. Sin began to build after the other. First they demanded to have a god they could see so that they could worship him. They had dismissed Moses from their minds. Secondly, they woke up early to sacrifice to the gods created for them by human hands. What energy! They offered to the gods what they had prepared and finally got down to drink and indulge in revelry. Revelry as used here refers to sexual intercourse. This is the very heart of idolatry. Once a person’s faith is turned away from God, then the possibility of revelry is high.

As mentioned earlier in chapter two, witches engage in sexual activity. They might do it with the clients or with the spirits. They may also make individuals have sexual affairs with demons. All these are as a result of turning away from God to idols. A person is very vulnerable if he is not in the Lord. He can be invaded by demons that come and establishes satanic kingdom in his heart. God had severally warned the Israelites not to turn to idol worship. Idol worship corrupts man and makes him useless. The story of Saul and the witch of Endor is a clear example of what witchcraft and divination does to a person.

I Samuel 28:7-20 “Saul then said to his attendants, “Find me a woman who is a medium, so that I may go and enquire of her.” “There is one in Endor,”

they said. So Saul disguised himself, putting on other clothes and at night he and two men went to the woman. "Consult a spirit for me," he said, "and bring up for me the one I name."

But the woman said to him, "Surely you know what Saul has done. He has cut off the mediums and spiritists from the land. Why have you set a trap for my life to bring about my death?" Saul swore to her by the Lord, "As surely as the Lord lives, you will not be punished for this." The woman asked, "Whom shall I bring up for you?" "Bring up Samuel," he said. When the woman saw Samuel she cried out at the top of her voice and said to Saul, "Why have you deceived me? You are Saul!" The king said to her, "Don't be afraid. What do you see?" The woman said, "I see a spirit coming up out of the ground." "What does he look like?" he asked. "An old man wearing a robe is coming up," she said. Then Saul knew it was Samuel, and he bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" "I am in great distress," Saul said. "The Philistines are fighting against me, and God has turned away from me. He no longer answers me, either by prophets or by dreams. So I have called you to tell me what to do." Samuel said, "Why do you consult me, now the Lord has turned away from you and become your enemy? The Lord has done what he predicted through me. The Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hands and given to one of your neighbour- to David. Because you did not obey the Lord or carry out his fierce wrath against the Amalekites, the Lord has done this to you today. The Lord will hand over both Israel and you to the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The Lord will also hand over the army of Israel to the Philistines." Immediately Saul fell full length on the ground, filled with fear because of Samuel's words. His strength was gone, for he had eaten nothing all that day and night.

The foregoing passage is a clear indication of a man forsaking his God and consulting mediums to know his fate. Saul had been asked by God to go and



carry out his fierce anger against the Amalekites, but he refused to carry out God's decrees. Instead he went and picked the spoils and took them with him and spearing Agag king of the Amalekites. As a result God was not pleased with what Saul had done. Based on this, God send Samuel to rebuke Saul of his sin and tell him that He had rejected him as a king (I Sam. 15:22-23).

Samuel did as the Lord had instructed and following this, Saul never saw Samuel again till he died. Since then, Saul thought to himself that he would still get to talk to Samuel and find out what the Lord had spoken even though Samuel was long dead. How can a man speak to the dead? Impossible! And so Saul had to employ a tactic by consulting a medium. He found one, a witch of Endor. Previously he had carried out an exercise of exterminating all witches in Israel. But this one seemed to be living, perhaps for the very purpose that the scripture might demonstrate to us how God rejected an evil king in Israel. After striking a deal, Saul asked the woman to bring to him the Spirit of Samuel so that the he could enquire of him about his fate. Indeed Samuel came up but only spoke to Saul God's verdict for his life. Saul had been rejected by God and he was not going to stay any longer. God had planned to end his life together with his sons to demonstrate his justice and appoint for himself a king after his own heart.

We need to note that the story clearly indicates that divination works. Communication of a man with the spirit world is possible. This could be the reason why people of diverse cultures throughout human history have practiced it. What needs to be taken seriously is that these methods are forbidden in God's Word because they do give access to the spirit world. These are deceiving spirits and have been practising their deception for thousands of years.

Another observation in the passage shows that when the spirit of Samuel came up Saul prostrated himself before it. This is an indication of fear and worship. Whether a man was righteous or evil, we are not permitted at all to worship him. Worship of man or spirits is idol worship. God clearly says that he is

a jealous God and will not entertain us worshiping other gods. Saul worshiped the spirit of Samuel for he fell before and listened to it. Whatever the case, God used the same opportunity to speak to him about his rejection.

Witchcraft is listed among the works of flesh in the Bible. The researcher finds it interesting how people treat many of these works of the flesh. When Paul writes, he qualifies some seventeen characteristics as works of the flesh. In many Christian cycles, people tend to practice selective condemnation as they sift and sort through them. While it is obvious that some have a more evident impact and steal our attention, let us remember that each of these works has a sobering conditional statement, *“that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God”* (Gal. 5:21). What is it about witchcraft and idolatry that makes them important enough to list them separately and not include them in the category, *“and such like”*? Perhaps there is not a single answer to that question, but a simple investigation of these condemned practices highlights at least one major snare inherent in these practices that traps more than the superstitious.

Idolatry and witchcraft have plagued God’s people throughout the ages. “Idolatry” is clearly defined in the first two commandments given at Sinai as recorded in Exodus 20:2-5. An “idol” was very simply a created image or object, most often the product of men. The disturbing thing about an idol was the service and worship associated with it (Jer. 19:5). In the Old Testament, it was often the worship of a man-made deity, such as Dagon, the imagination of the Philistines (Judg. 16:23). While the significance can be seen in the Old Testament, it becomes clear in the New Testament that idolatry is associated with more than imaginary deities; it also includes anything that takes the place of God (Matt. 6:24; Col. 3:5). Commenting on this sinful practice and providing a contemporary definition Warren Wiersbe stated, “We are to worship God, love people, and use things, but too often we use people, love self and worship things, leaving God out of the picture completely” (2007:575). Quite often, people even use things to wound others, the very things that have been blessed by the Lord.

Witchcraft is also a practice that serves Satan in his attempt to deceive and take the place of God. God had a very simple admonition that undergirded the path of peace and prosperity for Israel: *“Forget not the Lord thy God”* (Deut. 8:11). While that message should have been clear enough, the God of all grace continued to teach and warn. He explicitly stated that sorcery was a part of the sinful culture of the people of Canaan, and it would be a disparaging practice if it was entertained upon their arrival to the promised land (Deut. 18:9-12). When we consider all that was inherent in this corrupt practice, it is easy to see how one would come to forget God. Our English word “pharmacy” comes from the word Paul used in Galatians 5:20. Describing this work of the flesh, W. E. Vine says, “In sorcery, the use of drugs, whether simple or potent, was generally accompanied by incantations and appeals to occult powers, with the provision of various charms, amulets, etc., professedly designed to keep the applicant or patient from the attention and power of demons, but actually to impress the applicant with the mysterious resources and powers of the sorcerer.”(1997). Simon the sorcerer is a clear biblical case study; his deceitful practice had him, believing he was someone great (Acts 8:9).

Most of us realize *“we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device”* (Acts 17:29), and most likely we are not using drugs and appealing to occult powers. We may not know a stereotypical sorcerer or idolater, but let us not be deceived. As Paul stated, *“the works of the flesh are manifest”* (Gal. 5:19). King Saul believed they were secluded, that idolatry and witchcraft were far from him. Imagine his surprise as he heard these words, *“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king”* (1 Sam. 15:23). While these practices include a variety of actions and have sundry applications, the common thread is clear: *“...when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools”* (Rom. 1:21-22).

When God is forgotten, people, places, things and ideas take His place, and we become trapped by the Harry Potters, the Toby Keith mantra, that say, “I want to talk about number one...I want to talk about me,” and we fall headlong into the crippling practices of using people, loving self, worshipping things and leaving God out of the picture.

Those who willingly and intentionally go out of what God has chosen to reveal put themselves under the judgment of reprobation. That is to say that God has allowed them to be deceived. *“... For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness (2 Thess. 2:12).*

Like Saul, those deceived by the antichrist’s signs are led astray by their own lust. The diviners and spiritists cater to the desires and lust of the sinners. God sends the deception not directly, because God cannot lie, but indirectly by giving Satan permission to unleash deceiving spirits on his victim.

Those who practice divination are departing from the Gospel for the sake of learning what God has chosen not to reveal. They end up in delude by the lie! The definite article indicates the lie that Satan has been using since fall of man.

### **3.4 The New Testament and witchcraft**

It is not only in the Old Testament that we find God condemning witchcraft but also in the New Testament. In Acts 8:10 records that a man by the name Simon was a sorcerer. He had a vast gain through his practicing of witchcraft (μαγεύν). People followed him and were dumbfounded of his great powers/arts. The Greek word used in this passage is μαγείαις. The word refers to magic arts or systems of magic. Many people were led a stray by Simon, Act 8:10; they said he was the great power of God. However, during the preaching of the apostles, Simon came to believe in Jesus. He was amazed that miracles performed by Philip were greater than his. This was God’s superiority over that of sorcery.

The term for magic comes from the noun *magoi* which in Greek μαγοι is translated to mean wise men in Matthew 2:1-16 (Zuck 1971:357). This verb is related to μαγεύω. However men East Persia or Arabia were not sorcerers like Simon. They were experts in philosophy religion, astronomy, and medicine. Barnes suggest that μαγοι came afterwards to signify those who made use of the knowledge of those arts for the purpose of imposing on mankind astrologers, soothsayers, necromancers, and fortune-tellers (1971:357). Such person pretended to predict the future events by position of the stars and cure diseases by incantations.

The apostle Paul confronted some satanic powers during his time. In his first missionary journey a Jewish sorcerer μαγος called Elymas opposed Barnabas and Saul on the Island of Cyprus; he tried to preclude Sergius Paulus the governor from turning to the Lord (Acts 13:6-8). Perhaps Bar-Jesus sensed that if the governor accepted Christ, Bar-Jesus would be ousted as the governor's sorcerer. Saul denounced Bar-Jesus with strong words "You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord?" In this statement the apostle Paul indicates that witchcraft is deceiving, Satanic, the opposite of righteousness and spiritual perversion.

At Ephesus most people confessed to have participated in witchcraft and magical practices. Upon receiving Jesus as their personal saviour, they burnt their books which apparently contained teaching and instructions on the practices of witchcraft Acts 19:19.

God considers these things to be idolatrous; they honor demonic spirits, and thus He calls them abominations or detestable things, things that He hates. Interestingly, He says these practices are a reason why He sent Israel in to

dispossess these people. We do not want to practice customs that ultimately bring on God's wrath and destruction.

In Leviticus 20: 6 God likens spiritism to prostitution, the physical counterpart to spiritual prostitution, idolatry. To God, witchcraft and occultism are similar to sexual immorality, but one is physical and the other is spiritual. Which is worse—physical or spiritual prostitution? Both defile the purity God desires in our flesh and in our spirit (II Corinthians 7:1). This linking of spiritism with sexual sins and idolatry occurs elsewhere (Exodus 22:16-20). Witchcraft is equated with them because it is both prostitution and idolatry.

When a Christian meddles in spiritism of any kind, whether witchcraft, sorcery, divination, consulting a medium or fortune-teller, or even reading a horoscope, he undermines his relationship with God—just as a man who visits a prostitute damages his relationship with his wife. Someone else is coming between the two covenanted parties, causing division. Occultism puts a wedge between God and the Christian; he might as well bow to an idol. It produces the same result: to drive him away from God.

The New Testament takes the same approach as the Old:

“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery,... of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21).”

The apostle Paul speaks of adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and licentiousness—all with at least overtones of sexuality—then he mentions idolatry and immediately thereafter sorcery! It cannot be just a coincidence that they all fall in this order. Those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God because they are not fulfilling their covenant with God.

In the book of Galatians 5:20, witchcraft is listed among the works of the flesh φαρμακεία. The word comes from the root word, φαρμακον which means medicine, poison, magic portions or drug. From this, the primary meaning came to be administering magical portions possibly with incantations. Diviners, enchanters, witches, and sorcerers employed drugs and other potions to put them or their clients "in the spirit" so their "magic" would work. The drugs, then, came to stand for sorcery of all kinds. For the same reason, drug use is part of the celebration among the more serious Halloween devotees today. In Revelation 9:21 witchcraft is listed among the gross sins together with Galatians 5:19-21.

The Bible's teaching on this is consistent. Spiritism occult, is a form of idolatry, a kind of spiritual prostitution. Its end is separation from God and eventual destruction

### **3.5 Summary**

The focus of this chapter has been on the Biblical principles for ministering to witchcraft practices. The main objective of this chapter has been to see what principles are applicable to ministering to witchcraft practices and their effectiveness.

The chapter has delved into the history of witchcraft in the olden times in order to establish the treatment of the subject matter in the past. History indicates that the practice of witchcraft was not well received by the society. It was seen as a vice practice that deceived people and made them seek for alternative answers to their needs. The society led by the church, notably the Catholic Clerics was led to witch-hunting people said to be practicing witchcraft.

The chapter has also established that the Old Testament in its entirety forbade the Jewish community from practicing witchcraft. The chapter points out

five reasons why God forbade the practice of witchcraft. The first one being that witchcraft leads to the lust of knowledge. The knowledge spoken of in this context is that of the secret things; things that belong to God. This is the kind of knowledge that Adam and Eve at one time desired to have, which led them to sin against God. The intention behind the search for this kind of knowledge was that they will be like God.

Secondly, we have seen that witchcraft leads to deception. This kind of deception is the twisted truth that comes directly from the devil. The devil's intention is that man may put his trust in him. His main task is to deceive as many as he can in order to bring disobedience. Simon the Samaritan sorcerer deceived many for a long time by means of his magical powers. II Corinthians 11:14 is clear that Satan masquerades as an angel of light.

Consequently, we have pointed out that witchcraft is rebellion against God. In the Old Testament, witchcraft is compared to the sin of rebellion. Witchcraft is demonic, opposing all that is godly. Manasseh's witchcraft as well as that of Bar-Jesus was in direct opposition to God and His followers. Witchcraft is the work of the flesh and will be cast out in the lake of fire.

Not only so, but that witchcraft is prostitution against God. Prostitution is a public display of unfaithfulness against the creator of the universe. It is a deliberate act of offering one's body to filthiness. Prostitution displays lack of respect for one's body and so is witchcraft. Prostitution is contamination of the body. The Old Testament witches were put to death for such contamination. Jezebel's involvement in this contamination led to her violent death and Judah suffered greatly because of Manasseh's witchcraft.

Finally we have seen that witchcraft is idolatry. The heart of idolatry is to dethrone God. This is a deliberate act of misplacing God. The story of Saul is a clear indication of how a man can be led astray from the truth and deliberately



replaces it with a lie. It is true that communication between the physical and the spiritual worlds is possible and so we are warned that we should not consult other powers in order to find out about our future, because the future belongs to God.

In modern days there are persons who have suffered physical harm, mental depression, emotional upheaval, spiritual defeat as a result of dabbling in black or white magic. Experimentation with any form of witchcraft is highly dangerous. Believers need to know that witchcraft is doomed. Though sorcerers may have tremendous supernatural powers because of their subjugation to and alignment with demonic forces, God's power is supreme. Persons trapped by magical practices can experience deliverance from that bondage through faith in Christ Jesus.

## Chapter 4

### Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

#### 4.0 Introduction

The question to be answered here is why should the Friends church conduct discipleship for the converts from cult and occult practices and especially those from witchcraft background? In which way can the scripture through discipleship be contextualized to help the African man in the Friends church to appreciate God's message?

#### 4.1 Disciple

By definition, the word *disciple* means learner. The word occurs at least 230 times in the Gospels and 28 times in the book of Acts (Wilkins 1992:40). The Greek word for disciple; *mathetes* is a root word for mathematics which means thought accompanied by endeavor (Newton 1999:15). According to Newton, disciples are people who think and learn, but they also move beyond learning and doing-endeavor. It is worth to note that even in Jesus' time, disciples were those who were more than pupils in school; they were apprentice in the work of their master (Newton 1999:15). This involves acceptance of the views and

practice of the teacher. In other words it means learning with the purpose to obey what is learnt. It involves a deliberate choice, a definite denial and determined obedience (Sanders 1994:8).

In the first century the understanding of the word disciple in the cultural senses was more than a learner, he was a follower. This is well demonstrated in the Greco-Roman world where great philosophers like Socrates (Hull 2006:53) and Plato had devoted disciples who were trained under the guidance of an exemplary life. Other examples include Rabbis like Hillel and Shammai who had disciples who learned how to interpret the scriptures and relate them to life (2006:53). There were other disciples according to the tradition of Moses (John 9:24) and that of John the Baptist (Matt 9:14, 11:7, 14:2). From John's ministry, some disciples were incorporated into Jesus' ministry (Matthew 19:14, 11:17).

The Bible acknowledges the existence of many other disciples apart from the disciples of Jesus; it gives more attention to the impact of those who belonged to Christ (Wilkins 1992:105-118). The group is seen as seedbed of the embryonic church. First, before Jesus ascended back to heaven he gave them the power to make disciples starting from Jerusalem. Secondly he promised to be with them till the end of age. He also gave the criteria to qualify those who believe in Him. The new disciples were expected to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, be committed to him through the baptism, and be obedient to his teachings and submission to his Lordship (John 2:11, 6:68-69, Matt 19:23-30, Luke 14:25-33). It was through obedience that they would bear fruit as Jesus had indicated.

The above mentioned characteristics of the Christ disciples were used to qualify believers in Antioch for the first time as Christians. This created a new identity in the Church in the city of Antioch. The identity made them truly belong to the early church. The church grew in number with followers who were referred to as disciples.

This is the state of being a disciple. This involves active manifestation of one's relationship with Christ. For the Christians, discipleship is an act of following and imitating Christ. Imitation has the idea of adherence, thus a good disciple adheres to the teaching of Christ. The main characteristic of a disciple is to follow and abide. Abiding means "continuing without change or being formed into a particular shape (Webster's Dictionary). Paul prayed for the disciples in Galatia that Christ may be formed in them (Gal 4:19). This implied that the disciples were to produce changed lives and provide evidence that transformation that was stirring. The followers of Jesus Christ are formed into an ever clearer image of him through discipleship. So, why do we need good discipleship in the Friends Church?

#### **4. 2. We need discipleship in order to deal with the African theodicy as the solution to the problem of evil**

Theodicy is an attempt to resolve the evidential problem of evil by reconciling the traditional divine characteristics of omnibenevolence, omnipotence, and omniscience, in either their absolute or relative form, with the occurrence of evil or suffering in the world (Elwell 1989:1083). Unlike a defense, which tries to demonstrate that God's existence is logically possible in the light of evil, a theodicy provides a framework which claims to make God's existence probable.

Theodicy addresses real life questions. If according to the Bible, God, who is omnipotent and benevolent, has eternally decreed all that ever come to pass, and if He is sovereign and providentially controls all things in His created universe, how is He not the author of evil? How can evil exist in the world? How do we justify the actions of God in causing evil, suffering and pain?

Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo, pondered the nature of evil. In his City of God, and elsewhere, he maintained that since God has created all things "good" (Genesis 1:31), evil cannot have an independent existence. Evil is the absence of good, as darkness is the absence of light. Evil, then, is the absence of good; it is not the positive presence of something (Augustine 1996:7). This being the

case, said Augustine, evil cannot be the efficient cause of sin; it is a deficient cause in the creature. Evil, being the absence of good, or the presence of a lesser good, is the result of the creature's turning away from the commands of God to a lesser good: the will of the creature. Herein is the essence of evil: It is the creature, not God, who is the creator of sin. But this does not give us a solution either. As Clark wrote, "Deficient causes, if there are such things, do not explain why a good God does not abolish sin and guarantee that men always choose the highest good (Clark 1993:113-114).

The researcher would like to point out that all people on earth are confronted with evil. However, different peoples understand evil differently, they define it differently, they explain it differently and they handle it differently (Van Myk 2013). However, someone somewhere has to be blamed and accused of wrong doing.

This is however not the only way followed when accusations of witchcraft are made. According to the PANSAD Report (2003:11-21) "public discourse" is another important route taken with regard to these accusations differently. African societies, and African Traditional Religion, have developed inimitable framework in terms of which they recognize, define and deal with evil. To a certain extent, this scaffold is typically African (or typical of tribal existence). It is worth noting that most societies think and argue in exactly the same way about such matters.

As we noted earlier in the first and the second chapter, witchcraft or black magic functions as an elucidation for evil (Kunhiyop 2008). It provides an answer to the mystery of why bad things happen (to good people) in this world. Because natural explanations of the bad often fail – or do not provide satisfactory answers, the need to explain the unexplainable still remains. Witchcraft offers Africans a way of explaining the unexplainable. Magic and witchcraft help people to explain their human experiences of pain, suffering and sorrow within the wider

perspective of human relationships; and in this way assist in making life bearable (Mbiti 1975:174; Stadler 1996:110; Magesa 1998:182).

The Westerners in their Christian tradition tend to deal with the problem of evil in terms of a “theodicy.” As Wyk (2013) reports that the study of Hermanni 2002 offers one of the most recent comprehensive studies on this subject. He says that the “theodicy question” as we know it in Christian theology, however, does not concern ATR. The question: “Why do things happen?” is not frequently asked- many people do not question good things. The question, like that of Augustine is: “How can one reconcile the idea of a loving and almighty God with the reality of evil?” is unknown to Africans (Gyekye 1998:468-470). To them the question of importance is: “Who caused something to happen?” This justifies the point that that nothing bad just happens. Among the Kamba people they have a short expression: “*timana*”- (meaning, it is not just for nothing, someone must have been involved). If harm has come to a person, he believes that *someone* has used evil powers against him. More often than not the culprit would be a family member, a relative or a neighbor (Mbiti 1975:164-5; Minnaar 1991:53-55). Of sin such things are thunder, death of an animal, a child and lack of good yield as mentioned in other chapters.

An African man believes that there is clearly no room for a cosmic dualism (such as a devil causing evil problems – Bosch 1974:74-89). To Africans evil is an anthropological reality. Evil can only be attributed to human beings. Man causes evil. The origin of evil and the reason for its continued existence is man and man alone. The question about evil as such is senseless to Africans. Africa is only interested in the practical fight against evil. In order to fight evil, the cause must be known. The cause of evil in Africa is always the other one (and neither God nor the ancestors – Hammond-Tooke 1989:47-48; 1993:178). Witches are the others being responsible for evil. When witches are identified the inexplicable could be explained. However, it is not even easy to identify a witch. He may be suspected but one cannot point to the other and say that so and so is a witch.

Witchcraft is an extremely complex phenomenon, and could therefore be explained in terms of various models of interpretation. It is commonly said in African context that, suffering becomes bearable when one knows who causes it (Sundermeier 1990:133, 231), even though the person may be a believer and a partaker in the Christian faith.

Consequently, in Africa evilness is clearly restricted to evil persons. Evil persons are those known for their use of bad magic, sorcery and witchcraft to harm others (Magesa 2008). Africans therefore see magicians, witches and sorcerers as the evil of society. They are the ones behind all the bad things that happen. Even natural catastrophes, such as droughts and earthquakes, are not viewed as enemies, because someone – some evil-minded person – would be behind such occurrences (2008). Thus, someone is ultimately responsible for most of the catastrophes in life. Someone has manipulated the forces of nature to harm others.

In the same vein, Africans would not deny that ancestors, and even God, could be responsible for some evil occurrences. However, they are not seen as evil-minded beings as such. A quest for a theodicy, in the Christian theological tradition, has no urgency in Africa. What would interest Africans is namely the question “who caused the ancestors or God to act in anger?” Who did not obey traditional norms and taboos, or who did not bring their sacrifices? (Myk 2013).

Notwithstanding, the fact that African Traditional Religion is not interested in the theodicy problem as it is formulated in the Western Christian tradition, it however does not mean that ATR does not have its own kind of theodicy (or to be more precise: an “aetiology of misfortune”(Myk 2013) in terms of which the problem of evil is dealt with. Witchcraft has a “theodetical function” (2013). It provides an answer to the “why question” by saying: “The reason for there being illness and misfortune, is because someone has caused it”. The belief in witchcraft therefore provides an explanation for illness and misfortune. The belief

in mystical powers and the ability of man to manipulate those powers help people in finding explanations when things go wrong. Knowing how a disease is caused does not satisfy them, as they want to know who caused the disease to attack them (Myk 2013). This answer harmonizes with the view of the universe that acknowledges that there are many invisible forces at work, some of which are available to human beings. The answer also harmonizes with the view that that which is bad in life, such as disease (including HIV/AIDS), is caused by poor inter-personal relationships. This type of theodicy feeds on the African philosophical notion of “cause” as being one of the bases of the African view of reality, also referred as the African Worldview. (Myk 2013: 1220 & Sogolo 1998:177-185).

#### **4.2.1. Evaluation of the African theodicy**

Having looked at the African theodicy as a solution to evil forces, we need to make an evaluation. At the outset, we need to understand that in Africa the logic behind the belief in witchcraft is the assumption that there is no such thing as coincidence in life. All events have a cause. The reference to “witchcraft” is the way in which Africans explain the ultimate cause of things (not the immediate cause). Africans believe that evil people (such as sorcerers and diviners) cause bad things to happen to good people. In Africa, a scientific explanation of an occurrence will never satisfy (Myk 2013). People in the villages and in cities, will never be satisfied with the knowledge that a child suffering from malaria was stung by a mosquito. What they want to know is who had sent the mosquito to bite the child (2008). Someone (an evil-minded person such as a sorcerer) has to be responsible for it. Africans believe that harmful happenings never occur by coincidence. Someone causes something through the use of mystical power. Even the slightest experience of misfortune and sorrow is blamed on the misuse of mystical power. Someone will and must therefore be blamed. In this sense, “witchcraft” provides an answer to the “why question”. What it does is it declares someone to be responsible for the misfortune. Moreover – when people know



that a specific person is responsible, then action can be taken to prevent or to remove the evil.

The problem with this type of theodicy (or scapegoat thinking) is that someone has to be identified as the culprit responsible for the evil. In every African village, whenever there is evil, there has to be a witch causing it and this witch will have to be removed from society. It is surprising that much effort will be increased to get the culprit. Because so many bad things happen in life, people are constantly looking for witches to blame. Somewhere out there must be a guilty one that needs to be removed from society. And who is that? The witch! The witch will always be the other one. In Africa the witch is to blame for every occurrence of misfortune. Those who are victims of circumstances never see themselves as wrong, they are always right. Therefore evil is what someone has done to the “right man”. Thus, the witch becomes the sinner and the “right man”- the victim. Somewhere the “right” man will find someone to blame. He always makes sure that he is not the one that will be blamed. When the witch-hunt is on, he must look for someone to blame. The idea is that someone must be sacrificed before the right man is. (Mbiti 1975:167-169; Hammond-Tooke 1993:174-178).

#### **4.2.2. Positive aspects about this type of theodicy**

From the preceding evaluation, there are a few positive things about this view. To be fair, one has to acknowledge that notwithstanding the negative consequences of this theodicy, there are also some positive dimensions to it.

The first one is the fear of others. The fear that others would use magic against an individual in their defense against his evil intentions deters people from offences such as stealing. In addition, in the presence of constant suspicion of witchcraft, people tend to be more cautious and tend to avoid any wrongdoing. Such establishes a stabilizing effect in relationships among people living close together (Müller & Ritz-Müller 1999:138-169, 238, 294).

This could be explained by referring to the faculty of “conscience”. In traditional Africa, “conscience” is not the realization that I have done something wrong, but that someone threatens me. Having worked among the students from various tribes in South Sudan, I have learnt that they do not have consciousness of saying sorry. Therefore, when a wrong is done, they do not apologize. This means they see no evil coming their way in doing wrong (cf Bosch 1974:75-76). The word “sorry” is absent and neither are they planning to make it part of their speech. Saying “sorry” means that you did something intentionally. It is viewed as sarcasms.

Not only does fear of magic deter people from doing wrong, but the talk about it brings education. Talk about witchcraft brings educational function. It keeps the tribe’s norms and values alive (Myk 2008). Through talk about witchcraft children learn about the good values of society, such as harmony, good order, good neighborliness, good company, cooperation, sharing, honesty, transparency and equitableness. Children are taught that witches are unsociable people. They are people that eat alone; they do not share food. They show no solidarity. They are arrogant people; they do not greet others. They are people who reject all normal things of society. By talking about witchcraft, children are constantly reminded of what social life is all about and what not. Education on witchcraft teaches children that nonconformity is dangerous and that one should not depart from accepted norms, because it raises the suspicion of others and can lead to isolation and eventual destruction (Mbiti 1985:200-201; Russell 1987:416; Sundermeier 1990:230; Magesa 1998:184-188).

Finally, the removal of witches from society (by public execution) is an indication that people want to develop. It is generally accepted that no society can function when evil practices control certain areas of public life. In Africa, where the witch is the personification of evil, such evil must also be removed from society. Witch-hunts make life bearable again. The Old Testament puts it “there should be among you sorcerers, diviners and fortune tellers. It is the sign of a society that needed a new start (Sundermeier 1990:232; Hammond-Tooke

1993:174). The fight against witchcraft can be compared to the western fight against groups like Al-Qaeda, Al-shabab in Somalia and Boko Haram in Nigeria which are a constant threat to security and freedom.

Some people think that when people are educated, then there will no such evil as witchcraft. According to such scholars' scientific development, secular education and religious apathy would be able to save humanity from this evil. This is not true and neither does the researcher subscribe to this presumption. There are instance I have met very learned people, but when struck by evil they run to witches, sorcerers and diviners to seek for help. The question is not education, or enlightenment but the real application of that education received.

My step mother consulted a magician at one time when thieves broke into her house and robbed a television, a radio and a few other households. She wanted to find out who from the village did that. The magician is said to be a tough man who causes culprits to eat grass. My step mother is learned and has a good education. But this education does not mean anything to her when she is seeking revenge. This could just be a single example. There are many other examples outside there.

The German philosopher Odo Marquard (1982) and the German theologian Oswald Bayer (1984:9-22; 1991:201-207) have both convincingly argued that the Enlightenment project (as a rejection of the classical theodicy) in itself ends in some kind of a witch-hunt. If man accuses God of an imperfect world, forces him into retirement, takes over the responsibility to create a perfect world – and then fails to produce one – then one must find a scapegoat – someone to blame. Even the modern Western world, the world of the “Enlightenment”, knows how to “deal” with culprits. It knows how to remove the accused from society. Therefore, not much has changed – only the methods by which scapegoats are dealt with have changed.

When one associate him/her self with cult and occult practices, his affiliation affects three groups of individuals: the cult member, his immediate family members and the children reared during the period of cult affiliation. While the role that the mental health professions adopts regarding the cult member and

his family requires a complex balancing of therapeutic concern (through proper discipleship) and individual rights, his role vis-à-vis the minor within the cult context is much more clearly defined (Markowitz & Halperin 2013). The pastors in the Friends church have a responsibility to assist members in making full use of opportunities for growth and life that are available to them.

The relationship of cults to church members and the possibility of abuse of the church members and their entire families especially children present a deep concern and extraordinary complexity.

The relationship of the *new religion* in matters of witchcraft, cult and occultism and the members does not necessarily present itself in such a dramatic of life- threatening terms. Nevertheless, pastoral concerns may frequently arise; particularly some members develop an interest in an exotic spiritual group.

#### **4.3 We need discipleship to protect families from abuse.**

In 2006 I happened to attend a discipleship training camp in Kitui- Kenya. During the camp session one of the young disciples- Alice (second name withheld), was possessed by some demonic powers. Together with her sister they were seized and thrown on the ground. They began to see things that we were not seeing. They could also talk to people that were in the spirit world. They became violent while on the ground such that we began praying to exorcise the demons. After much prayer, they became conscious and began to cry. Later on we interviewed and asked them to explain their horrible experience. They said that their parents had sold them into witchcraft. Alice narrated the ordeal and told how she had suffered for many years under the power of witchcraft. She also told us that sometimes back before she came for the training she had a conversation with a young stubborn child who happened to appear at their home when her parents had gone on Safari. The male child whom she conversed with left her bruised and all over a sudden he disappeared and never came back. Alice was too scared and kept telling the story again and again. It is a fact that parents who

get involved in witchcraft temper with their children's life.

It is not only children who can be given in sacrifices, but also other family members. However, in most cases witches go for the close kinship ties that bind people together. In some cases witches and cultic practitioners feel that young sacrifices are better than 'old aged' ones. Witches take advantage of people's naivety and have a way of manipulating individuals to dance to their tunes. Those who have worked in psychotherapeutic centers in trying to rehabilitate people who had been sold in witchcraft and to other occult movements will agree with the following statement:

Our experience in working with present and former cult members indicates that there is a relationship between child abuse, cult, doctrine and the presence of common psychodynamic features among cult members. The latter are: (a) primary use of splitting defense mechanism, which is encouraged by the cult group; (b) the narcissism of the cult child's parents and when the child misbehaves, their resulting extreme narcissistic injury and protective identification; and (c) the dependency crisis cult members experience and its resultant interference with the functioning as parents (West & Singer 1980: 158).

From the foregoing statement, we note that the role of the cults is to split the defense of the children sold into their hands. The self importance of a child is destroyed and is meant to be devalued at all means. When the child misbehaves the self importance image is destroyed. This leaves the child very vulnerable without any protection.

Witchcraft, divination and sorcery are cultism. The structure of destructive cult predisposes these organizations toward abusive practices in general and potentiates their propensity toward child abuse in particular. Rudin has documented the existence of abusive practices and maltreatment of cult members in her paper, "*Women, Elderly, and children in Religious Cults*" (1984).

In the present discussion, the researcher seeks to identify the psychological factors that transform the cult members' altruistic intentions into severe and harmful discipline of their children. Although splitting, narcissism, and dependency issues do not offer an exhaustive explanation for child abuse within destructive cult groups, they represent, dominant psychological factors, which may be intensified by sociological and organizational variables. This leads to the conclusion that cult and occultism is evil and families needs to be protected.

#### **4.3.1 Environmental Factors Contributing to Abuse and Neglect of Families as a result of cult affiliation.**

The child whose parents are members of a cult is effectively hostage to the cult leader's often idiosyncratic ideas of childbearing (Moore 2013). In 1994 a grandmother, Monicah Kisala (in a village called Munoywa in Mbale, Vihiga District), described how she was forced to threaten legal proceeding in order to see her grandson, who had been consigned to stay in a house while sick without going for medical treatment because the group's leader (Umusaali) had suddenly decided that all the members of his cult should depend on instant healing (Kisala 2013). And if it was not to work, they will have to consult a witch to give directions concerning the sacrifices to be made to see to it that the child comes back to normal. When the grandmother finally saw her grandson, his life appeared to be ebbing out as a result of his parent abandonment to such kind of teachings. A few days later, the child died. As a result of his grandmother's efforts, more appropriate child care arrangements for the other three siblings were instituted. Although the child's parents were superficially reasonable and concerned, they were unable to take effective action to protect their child. Their relationship with the sage is reminiscent of those parents of ancient Carthage who sacrificed their children to appease the great god Beal Moloch (Moore 2013).

While child abuse needs not to be a necessary consequence of familial

affiliation with the cult or occult groups, the very character of the cult organization and lifestyle provided significant predisposing factors. As West and Singer (1980) have noted, the preeminent characteristic of cult totalitarian control over the members' lives by a leader claiming a special relationship with God or some suprahistorical force. Most of the members who come for consultation and seeking direction in life for various issues, always feel that the consultant has a better word of advice to offer. Their beliefs are entrenched in the fact that for every problem there is a particular and a suitable solution. Additionally, within the cult or occult movements (that includes those who practice high level of witchcraft), there is the development thinking, the creation of exploitative working conditions that often leave members with little time for family-centered activities, and the development of communities characterized by exclusivity and isolation. With such a context, there is little to restrain the cult leader from instituting his most whimsical ideas on childbearing (Moore 2013).

Within the totalitarian context of the cult, there is a primacy of ideology over biology. The ideology is meant to make the clients feel insecure if they detach themselves from the consultants-the mediums, sorcerers, and the witchdoctors. The following excerpt explicitly depicts the context in which children may be seen as a disposable superfluity:

If you are not thinking of the Supreme or of me, if you are thinking of somebody else, some other human being, then unless it is absolutely a mundane thought about telling that person something totally unimportant, that is your destruction. If you think of someone even with softness or tenderness, be careful; danger is approaching you... (Sri Chimoy, 2012- Quoted in Cults and the children).

From the foregoing excerpt one can imagine what the childbearing experience must be like within a group where any human concerns is seen as so completely secondary. This also sounds like a threat. There is nothing worse like

if someone's defense mechanism is torn apart. This is contrary to the text in Matthew 11:28 which invite people to bring their burdens to Jesus, in exchange of the lighter ones. Jesus, in this text promises to be gentle and humble and willing to relieve the burdens of those who are under the yoke of Satan. Such kind of invitation is rare. Yet the occult leader makes it impossible for one to think of Christ as being good. In the whole context then the Jesus of the Bible will be doubted for what he says if the member of the occult has pledged allegiance to the cult leader.

For Africa to be free, the bondage of witchcraft, cult and occultism has to be broken. (Hinfelaar 2007:229). The key for this to happen, I suggest – is faith in God, i.e. Yahweh – the creator and the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is primarily because God is God. It may be important to state at this stage that these thoughts on how to overcome witchcraft, and the assumptions regarding the nature and preeminence of witchcraft is underlying them, may not be shared by African people themselves. My advocacy of belief in God as solution to witchcraft belief is both positive and negative. Positive, because I believe in God and I believe that He has left us his Word, that he came to die for mankind, and that the greatest thing a person can do is to become a follower of Jesus Christ. Related to this – I have seen God transform people's lives and found Christian teachings to have brought positive transformations to people in diverse contexts and circumstances. On the other hand I subscribe to the promotion of Christianity because I have seen that alternative strategies of intervention by the West "do not work". In some cases their immediate impact is negative, and in other cases the dynamics they engender create unhealthy dependency or outright corruption (Odongo 2007).

#### **4.4. Challenges of ministering to those who practice witchcraft**

Witchcraft victimizes black Africans, including Christians and has a negative influence on their lives. According to Maimela (1985:68) witchcraft is classified among Sawyer's four types of sins that call for salvation. Maimela (1985:68) explains the victimization as follows: ... the traditional African is a victim of anxieties that are born out of evil spirits and malicious persons,



especially witches and sorcerers. Accordingly, most Africans express an intense revulsion against all forms of diabolical evil embodied in witchcraft, because not only does it prostitute the laws of nature by a deliberate manipulation of the vital forces for destructive purposes, but also poisons all human relationships, thereby threatening the corporate nature of society.

Witchcraft raises intense fear and revulsion because it destroys human life, human community and shatters dreams and visions of individuals and societies. People need salvation from this evil. Maimela (1985:68) emphasizes both the malevolent nature of witchcraft and humanity's dire need for salvation when he says: "Evil spirits and witchcraft are therefore the greatest injustice imaginable towards a community – a sin against which traditional Africans spend their greatest energies, trying to procure relief or salvation from ...." According to the African world view, salvation does not in particular refer to the eschatological life of glory but to a life of happiness, good health and prosperity, here and now. Ramashapa (1996:358) declares: "For them salvation is to total peace, good health and prosperity. Salvation for them is good life."

In view of the aforesaid, witchcraft has a very negative impact on members of various black communities, including Christians. This phenomenon is regarded, especially by the Northern Basotho people as an existing permanent life-threatening reality and practice (Ramashapa 1996:358). It is a life-threatening evil, not only to those who fear for their lives because of bewitchment, but also those who are said to practice it. Haule (1969:146) cites Father Albert's statement on the negative impact the belief in witchcraft has on people: "It depresses the soul with its eternal fear, and destroys all too often the body; it leads to suspicion and hatred, nay, to mutilation and murder ...." The horrendous acts of witch hunts and witch murders in many rural parts of South Africa, especially in the Limpopo Province are known to many people (Kgatlana 2000:6). Aylward Shorter (1985) describes the situation especially as it relates to individuals suspected of witchcraft practices, quite aptly: "To accuse people of witchcraft practices is to destroy their social personality, if not to condemn them

to a more merciful (sic) death.” Such suspicions are indeed condemnatory and inflict irreversible damage, both physically and socially on the one who is suspected of witchcraft activities. Suspicions of witchcraft can stigmatizes the entire family and its progeny for generations.

Beliefs in witchcraft have serious negative economic implications as well. Those who are afraid of being bewitched are forced to spend a fortune to acquire the strongest protective muti (medicine). One form of protecting individuals and families is to strengthen one’s homestead which entails employing a traditional doctor to put medicine around the homestead. For this medicine to retain its effectiveness, it has to be renewed each year. People are charged many head of cattle in exchange for these services. Ejizu (2002) makes the following statement with regard to the measures people take to protect themselves against the actions of witches and wizards: “People protect themselves against their nefarious activities through different kinds of ritual practices including offering ritual sacrifice, making and wearing of charms and amulets.”

So dangerous for human life and survival are witches that people who find themselves in the grip of bewitchment have to seek help, not only from humans but also from divine and spiritual powers. Should they forget to renew the protective measures, they open their homestead to onslaughts of witches. In traditional Africa an unprotected homestead is referred to as the playing ground for witches and its occupants are in danger of becoming easy targets of witches.

The impact witchcraft has on the way in which the church fulfils the devastating. The growth of the church is greatly impeded. Members leave in their thousands those churches that do not take seriously and address the threat posed by witchcraft. Ramashapa’s (1996:358) assessment of the situation is rather accurate: “The movement of church members from churches that do not clearly practice faith healing to those which practice it is a sign of fear of *boloi* and other destructive powers.” Of course, the exodus of members from many mainline churches to the African Initiated Churches and charismatic movements

is not only well known, but is also cause for grave concern for mainline churches wherever they operate.

It is obvious that the Christian church has to do something about this state of affairs. The question is; “how can the church counteract witchcraft in order to facilitate appropriation of the Christian faith and the promise of abundant life?” Unfortunately some people do not seem to realize the need for the church to find appropriate ways of reclaiming the situation. Many ministers are assumed to maintain the position that the church should continue to preach the pure gospel of Jesus Christ. The importance and need for the church to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in as pure a way as possible, cannot be refuted and is indeed the church’s central task and responsibility. The question, however, does not only concern the “what?” of preaching but also the “how” of proclaiming the gospel. Does the way in which we serve African Christians in the context of their existential problems, which among others include witchcraft, really suit their conceptual framework? The way in which the gospel is proclaimed should be both transformative and liberative and the church in Africa should find ways of providing a transformative and liberative service to its members.

#### **4.5 Current approaches of Luhya pastors in the Friends Church towards witchcraft**

This is a difficult question to answer. It can indeed only be answered from the perspective of a particular worldview. We have two frames of reference from which we can attempt to answer the abovementioned question, namely the western worldview and the African worldview. From the western worldview, which is largely influenced by enlightenment thinking, the answer to the abovementioned question will be an emphatic “no”. Gerkin (1997:44) describes the enlightenment as “an age marked by the rise of secularism: the belief that human history as well as contemporary life can be understood without speaking of God or assuming divine activity in human affairs.” In terms of this worldview the reality of witchcraft and other supernatural forces will probably be rejected in the same way the existence of demons is rejected as a form of escapism (Van

Aarde 1987). Stating the objective of his article, Van Aarde (1987) says that he wants to indicate firstly, that believing in the devil is a form of escapism. Secondly, he “wants to show that to believe *in* the devil is in direct contrast with believing *against* the devil”, the latter being the attitude the New Testament demands.

At the end of his article, Van Aarde (1987:34) demonstrates the nothingness of evil by using a metaphor of small holes in a Swiss cheese, borrowed from Russel: “Evil exists in the cosmos like holes in a Swiss cheese: the holes are there, but they are there only as non-cheese and have no existence apart from the cheese. As one cannot eat the cheese and discard the holes into a box, one cannot remove good and put evil into another category.” This position is undoubtedly insightful and of great value in a western, modern and secular setting.

It is, however, not relevant in an African context at the core of which is the belief in the existence of ravaging spiritual forces which deprive human beings of peace. The question whether witchcraft really does exist does not belong in an African context. In the minds of many African people there is no doubt as to the reality of witchcraft. Mwalwa (1999:6), dealing with almost a similar question than the one above, states: “I am convinced that witchcraft is NOT imaginary, nor unreal. It is still a strong force in Africa ...” It does not simply exist as nothingness as Van Aarde suggests in the metaphor about the small holes in a Swiss cheese.

For many African peoples it is an existential reality. The entire life of African people is said to be an involvement with witchcraft – the prevention but also the practice thereof. According to Stebbing (1985:189), Monica Wilson and Aylward Shorter note in consort, the importance of the witch as an embodiment of evil in the traditional African context. The belief in witchcraft is quite central to the traditional African community. It is among important elements that exercise influence in the traditional religions of the southern and eastern African countries. According to Stebbing (1985:190), Monica Wilson notes four such elements, which are: a cult of shades, belief in God, belief in the power of medicines and fear of witchcraft. After a discussion of witchcraft, Ramashapa (1996:358) makes

the following statement, using the term “sorcery” for “witchcraft”: “Sorcery is regarded by the Northern Basotho as an existing reality.” To these people, the fear of *boloi* or witchcraft is thus very real. In the light of the above insights the service of the Friends church Kerk in Suidelike Afrika to black African Christians is not relevant because it is founded on a theology influenced by western thought and philosophy. This theology is shaped and governed by the western worldview, which does not relate to, but negates the African worldview.

#### **4.6 Biblical model of discipleship for new converts in the Friends church**

From what is evident from both the Old and the New Testaments, particularly from Jesus Christ’s concern and care for people, especially those in distress, the following theological principles can be listed (Van Biljon 1984:2; Dreyer 1981:23; De Klerk 1978:17; Kramer 1978:22): The revelation of God in the Holy Scripture is the primary principle that governs the pastoral care as proclamation. The following can be said about pastoral care as proclamation: Pastoral care is revelation theology and not an existential theology. Humankind can never serve as source, basis and norm of pastoral care. God’s acts of redemption are found in the Word which is the essential mode of revelation. Pastoral care becomes true proclamation, only when it actualizes God’s acts of redemption within humankind’s wrestling with the truth. Only then, can the encounter between God and humankind, in which God truly addresses humanity, take place.

As noted earlier any association of a person with cult and occult practices has negative effect on the members concerned together with together with their families. The concern here is that, the impact is always negative with damaging effects. Witchcraft, sorcery and divination are damaging practices that needs to be wrought. Discipleship is crucial in such cases for individuals who have received Jesus Christ as Lord and savior in their lives.

As a conversational proclamation, pastoral care is a para-liturgical form of service within the ecclesial service structure and has the edification of the body of Christ as goal. Pastoral care therefore ensures that: those who hear the Word of God live in obedience to the Word and their witness about Christ will lead them back to the service of worship. This witchcraft includes elements of admonition, rebuke, comforting, training and encouragement. The Spirit employs the biblical witchcraft as a means through which the Spirit comforts and instructs the counselee and raises his or her faith. Special pastoral care is focused or specialized service to an individual who is in tribulation and if necessary, also to the family that has to endure the pain inherent in that situation. It is proclamation to a person in his or her contextual needs but it does not mean that the special pastoral care seeks in an empirical-critical way, a technique for religious influence of the person in his or her concrete situation but rather a joint search for the truth of God's Word. That is the only way in which the redemptive revelation of God's Word can be actualized in humankind's wrestling with the truth.

It remains the responsibility of the pastor to unconditionally adhere and remain loyal to the Scripture. The pastor should proclaim the Scripture in its full richness as the authority of the Word of God. The Word of God derives this authority from the Holy Spirit. The pastor is in other words the carrier of the witchcraft message from whence his authority comes. The witchcraft therefore becomes the gracious speech to the counselee in his or her greatest crisis that is the crisis of sin.

Because of the fact that special pastoral care is a person-focused conversational proclamation, it is necessary that the basic elements of a successful conversation or communication be taken into account. In spite of the fact that special pastoral care adheres to the theological principles, it displays some flexibility with regard to the pastoral conversation, which fits into a different method from that of the pastoral care in general.

Although there is a systematic differentiation between various modes of proclamation, they all run in consort towards one proclamation goal, are

interdependent and bear overlapping characteristics. Where special pastoral care uses the theological-critical method, the norm that it should function as a fully-fledged theological discipline that is completely loyal to the Word of God applies. In this case other theological disciplines interpret the pastoral labor while pastoral care determines the how of the person-focused conversational proclamation as well as fulfilling a stimulating and a serving function within the entirety of the theological study.

Furthermore, pastoral care utilizes knowledge from, and results of non-theological disciplines that are believed to be subservient to theology, without falling into subjective, anthropological processes or without becoming a superficial companion of these non-theological disciplines. The axiom that applies in the special pastoral care is that everything ultimately revolves around the revelation of God in Jesus Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit, as attested in the Scripture and understood in the lives of people through the Word and Spirit of God.

From the aforementioned theological principles, Van Biljon (1984:33) concludes that a theologically balanced pastoral care is discipleship, that is communication of the Word that inspires every situation, guiding the counselee to faith in Christ, which in turn leads to a new meaning of life and transformation, to the glory of God and edification of the body of Christ through the work of the Spirit.

The Friends Church family's ministry focuses mainly on pastoral care to the sick. It means that the church is content with providing a supplementary service to the work of the medical doctor with prayer and soul care (Jonker 1986:143). This is really not adequate to effectively counter mysterious forces that are inherent in witchcraft beliefs and are so overwhelming to black African Christians. This deficiency can also be observed in the curriculum of the theological training of the Nederduitsch Friends churchKerk van Afrika responsible for the training of ministers of the Friends churchKerk in Suidelike Afrika, the latter which should be equipped to serve black African Christian communities. All the sub-disciplines of Practical Theology, that is, care,

homiletics, catechetic, liturgics, ministry to the poor and the sick deal with issues in a manner that, though theologically formative and insightful, does not help ministerial trainees to grasp and effectively practice ministry in the African context. Topics dealt with and literature prescribed, focus on the teaching of theology from the perspective of the western worldview. One reason for this state of affairs is that until very recently the lecturing staff of the Friends church has been entirely white. The contribution of some recently included black ministers, unfortunately also the products of the western theological discourse, in recognition of the need for an African perspective, is minimal. This does not, however, suggest that there are no genuine attempts by some lecturers of the Friends church to include some aspects of the African perspective. While these attempts are laudable, the dominant context is still that which is linked to the western worldview. The following is a list of issues that are dealt with in the training of ministers of the Friends church.

The issues are listed within relevant sub-disciplines of Practical Theology, starting with Pastoral Care and Counselling: In the introduction to Pastoral Care, Gerkin's work is used *An introduction to Pastoral Care*. The author is a North American Practical theologian who wishes to see a healthy interaction between the Christian religious contribution and that of the contemporary culture of people.

Fundamental aspects of Pastoral Care: This section provides different terms and metaphors used to explicate the nature, meaning and function of Pastoral Care as communicative action in the service of the gospel. The other is the aim and functions of Pastoral Care. The aim of Pastoral Care is described as healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling. In addition, different levels or forms of Pastoral Care are noted, namely; mutual care, pastoral care, pastoral counselling and pastoral therapy. Furthermore, the context in which Pastoral Care takes place is here to be considered when dealing with such issues. Another section is the communicative process in Pastoral Care. The section addresses basic principles of the caring dialogue, explains conditions of a therapeutic relationship and describes the six basic attitudes in pastoral dialogue.



Crisis Counseling. Terms related to crisis counselling are clarified, characteristics of crisis are described. Pastoral Care to the sick, with DJ Louw's work as frame of reference, is offered. In all of the above, concern for African issues is but minimal as most of the work is in accordance with the western world view.

Then finally the goal of preaching. In this, the content of preaching, the preconditions of preaching, and the process of sermon preparation should be considered as crucial when contemplating of quality discipleship.

#### **4.6.1. Discipleship in the Friends Church**

The Friends church does not have a 'model of discipleship' for the new converts from cultic and occult practices but have something similar which is closely related to discipling. This is called associate and full membership classes. The two classes are intended for the growth of an individual upon joining the Society of Friends.

The associate class which also acts as a probation period for a new comer takes one year. Here the new believers and converts to Quakerism are intentionally put on probation and observed by the church leadership to see how they fair in their walk with the Lord. The new converts are also restricted to participating in some important events of the church perceived to be for the 'full members' of the church. Such include participation in church leadership, teaching others on church doctrines, and being active in other church responsibilities. The catechist provides guidance to the new converts by meeting them during the week and going through the designated portions of scriptures for the probationary class. The converts are expected to study, memorize and understand what they are taught through the scriptures.

When learners are through with the above "class", they are initiated into the church through a recognition ceremony. Those who successfully go through the

class are recognized as members of the “first class” and are awarded with certificates for the said class. It is at this level that they are ‘confirmed’ as members and will move on to the next class commonly referred to as “the second class”. Here the learners in the catechism class are taken through a series of teaching to strengthen their doctrinal believes. This section examines some of the core believes taught at this level to the converts.

1. Of God: God is Spirit (Jn. 2:24). God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three in One, yet not three God’s but One (5:7).
2. Of Christ: Christ is God (John 1:1). Christ Jesus was born from the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18). Jesus Christ, God made flesh (John 1:14). Jesus Christ died for our sins but rose again the third day according to Scripture (I Corinthians 15:3-4) Christ is the only Mediator between man and God (I Tim 2:5).
3. Of the Holy Scriptures: The Holy Scriptures are inspired by God, therefore true and profitable (2Timothy 3:15, 16, 17). But only Christ Jesus is the Word of God (Rev.19:13-15) as the Scriptures clearly testify. Christians must study the Holy Scriptures (John 5:39). One must be led by the Holy Spirit in order to understand the Scriptures if not then there is the danger to fall into heresy (2 Peter 3:16) The Scriptures were written under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:20, 21).
4. Of the Light of Christ within: Christ has enlightened every man on earth (John 1:9). This means that all people can if they repent their sins turn to the Light Jesus Christ and be saved (John 12:25). Those who deny the Light (Jesus Christ) do it because they love sin (John 3:20) and are already judged for denying Christ. True Christians must walk in the Light (I John 1:7). The Light can teach all Christians, which is the Jesus Christ teaching through anointing of the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:27).
5. Of Salvation: We are saved through Faith, the grace of God, (Eph.2:8, 9, and 10).
6. Of Freedom from Sin: Christians are free from sin (Romans 6:2, 7, 11, 12, 13, 16, 23). And they should aim for perfection in Christ “(Matthew 5:48).

7. Of the Church: Christ is the Head of the Church (Col. 1:13 and 2:19). The Church is the body of Christ, the people of God.
8. Of Worship: True worship is done in the Spirit and in Truth (Jn. 4:23-24).
9. Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper: There is only one Baptism (Eph. 4:5). This is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit not the Baptism in water (Acts 1:4, 5). The Lord's Supper is also Spiritual (not with elements of bread and wine) (John 6:32-58 and Rev. 3:20).
10. Of quaking and trembling: We must tremble at the word of God (Isa.66:5, Jer.33:9).
11. Of oaths: We should not swear at all (Matt. 5:33-37).
12. Concerning End Times: Christ will return in the body to judge the world. On that day the dead will be resurrected and accordingly some will go to Eternal Salvation and some to Eternal Damnation with Satan (Acts 24:15)

#### **4.6.2. Evaluation of the method**

The foregoing method of discipling the new converts in the Friends church is hereby evaluated in the context of the faith and practice of the Quakers. First it is important to notice that the church has a form of method of helping the new converts find a place within the local church. The method is good and only suits the members of the Quaker Church. Consequently, it looks more doctrinal and one that cuts across the board.

Whereas the program can be used for training the new converts, it deals more with what the learner needs to do. It does not have a strong relationship between the learner and the teacher. If a discipleship program is to be effective, it must have a learner-teacher relationship. After all the objective of good discipleship is to transform an individual and mould them into Christ-like character.

The probationary period contained in the program is good and its workable for all new converts. The aim of the probationary period is to monitor the growth of the new converts. The scriptures clearly indicate that the new converts should

not be given bigger responsibilities within the church. This is because they are new to the faith and might easily be drawn back into sin. (I Timothy 3:6) *“He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.”*

Finally, if the new converts are not given good guidance and care, they are likely to fall back into the cultic worship. The Friends church needs to re-introduce the silent worship with much deeper meaning in the second stage of teaching her members. This is for the reason that some, before they came to Christ used to get into trances and used to worship spirits. Without much care this might be confused with the silent worship which is likely to mislead others.

#### **4.7 Factors that contribute to poor discipleship in the Friends church**

There are several factors that contribute to poor discipleship in the Friends church. Most of these factors are well known to members while others are thought to contribute knowingly or unknowingly to the problem of poor discipleship.

##### ***4.7.1. Poor discipleship Structure***

Structure is what one needs in order to operate. In this case it is a module that can be used for operating classes for discipleship. The Friends church struggles with the module of operating discipleship. It may be consistent with the old module of operation which to some extent may be rigid. For successful discipling, there needs to be a dynamic module that can be operated. Lack of good structure makes new converts from witchcraft practices to dwindle in their faith. There is likelihood that the spirit of witchcraft is very active in people who have not been grounded in the Word of God.

#### ***4.7.2 Poor leadership***

Leadership is crucial in every organization. In the case of a church it is of paramount importance that good leadership should be practiced. For a church to have strong discipleship programs there must be visionary leaders who will think on behalf of the church. The thinking should be in terms of objectives such as; what do we want to achieve at the end of this discipleship program? What should be the behaviours of the people that we disciple? What characters should they portray in the future? How will they be useful in the church? Visionary leadership should enhance the performance of the discipleship program by providing a recipe for daily living. Recent converts from occult practices need to be rebuked several times by a stout leader so that they do not easily slip back into witchcraft.

#### ***4.7.3 Lack of evangelism***

Churches in the rural areas are struggling when it comes to evangelism. At times they may try leading people to Christ, but end up slowing the process which they began with a bang. Sometimes the leaders of the churches do not challenge people to go for evangelism instead they embrace the homogenous principal of growth. One can only disciple people that he has evangelized to. And discipleship must be a continuous process that never ends. This can only be achieved by good evangelism. Evangelism targets people who live in darkness and sin. Individuals who practice witchcraft, divination, sorcery and magicians are lost. They need to be evangelized to so that they may see the light.

#### ***4.7.4. Lack of discipleship materials***

When the church lacks materials for discipleship, then we do not expect much to take place. Good materials for discipleship provide good content for what the disciples need and how to live as a new person in Christ. Walter Martin (203: 495-496) emphasizes on the need for quality materials for discipleship in

teaching the new converts from occult practices. Such materials should well printed and documented for church use. They must also be doctrinally apt. Most cults know the importance of such materials and how to use them for the influence of their followers. If the church has materials, it is easy to lead members in the right direction. Other materials could include pamphlets and flairs to be used during the evangelism campaigns. People who practice divination and witchcraft have been indoctrinated by evil spirits. They need to learn from quality materials on the danger of being an opponent of God.

The above factors may not be exhaustive, but have been mentioned for they top the list of things that contributes to poor discipleship in the Friends church. The next part of this chapter is to focus its attention on the integrated model of discipleship and how it can be useful in discipling church members who have had a previous experience with witchcraft, divination, sorcery and other cult and occult practices.

#### **4.8. Further consideration of the lessons to be taught by the Friends Church in the discipleship classes**

The following is a model of discipleship lessons that could be adopted by the Friends Church to help teach her members that are recent converts from witchcraft, cult and occultism. The lesson an adaptation from Wyk and a combination of research as presented in the Bible.

##### ***4.8.1. Protection from harm comes from the triune God.***

Here the teacher should clearly teach the converts that God as creator is not a *Deus otiosus*. He is also the sustainer of life. God is not a deist. He has not created the world and abandoned it. Real protection comes from the Lord. Several verses support this idea:

**2Thessalonians 3:3** But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.

**1John 5:19** We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

**1Peter 2:9** But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the Excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

**Revelations 12:9** And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

**2Samuel 22:3-4** my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge, my savior; you save me from violence. 4 I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.

- The cross of Christ is a symbol of power over evil forces.
- The Holy Spirit is “God-with-us”.

This does not mean that God protects us from everything. Jesus said that *“in this world you will have trouble but take heart I have overcome”* (John 16:33)

#### **4.8.2. Human dignity of every individual.**

- (i) Every person is a creature of God and has a right to live.
  - God forbids people from killing their human beings
  - God has power over life and death
  - Anyone who kills will be judged.

- Anyone who gets angry with his brother has committed murder Matthew 5:22

(ii) Bewitchment of people is dehumanization.

- Witchcraft is forbidden by God (Leviticus 19:31)
- We should not consult mediums and sorcerers (Deut 18:9-14)

#### ***4.8.3. Accepting and fighting sin.***

(i) Acceptance of own sinfulness. Do not blame others.

We must be willing to confess our sins according to I John 2:9

God is ready to forgive us all our unrighteousness.

- Jealousy must not lead to murder (Cain and Abel) (Gen 4)
- We should be like Cain who killed his brother Abel (I John 3:12)

(ii) Focus on the love commandment.

- God commands us to love one another (John 15:12)
- He who does not love is a murderer (I John 3:15)

#### ***4.8.4. Belief that evil is self-destructive and is destroyed by God.***

Evil cannot continue to exist. It destroys itself (God allows that). God sees to it that evil is destroyed.

- ...God will repay them for their sins (Psalm 94:23)
- Then everything will come to an end and God will destroy evil (I Corinthians 15:24-28)

### **4.9 Summary**

We have been looking at the importance of discipleship for the new converts from cult and occult practices in the Friends church. This chapter has been a response to how the Bible can be contextualized to make meaning to an



African man in the Friends Church in the face of evil like witchcraft. In response to this, the chapter has given two answers to why we need to have good discipleship in the church today. The first one is, we need to respond to the question of theodicy: "Why do bad things happen to people?" In response to this question is why people engage in witchcraft. We have noted that in Africa things do not just happen, but they are caused and someone has to be responsible for the misfortunes.

We have also evaluated the African theodicy and have seen that based on these beliefs, it is commonly taken that in Africa, that there are no things like coincidences. Things are caused. Based on this the researcher has observed that for every occurrences of misfortune including natural disaster, someone has to be blamed. This is dangerous as it will result in witch-hunting for people who may just be suspected for having done wrong, when in reality had nothing to with the problem.

On the other hand we have seen that out of this theodicy, we can derive some education. That the mention of witches teaches our children that evil is bad. And that they need to grow up knowing that those who engage in vices in the society are bad people and will never be entertained.

The second reason for the need of discipleship is protection of families. We have seen that people who engage in witchcraft, cult and occultism are risking the destruction of their families. This includes children, who may be sacrificed in witchcraft or abandoned in order to obey someone's advices and dance to their tune. There are other environmental factors that contribute to such abuse that needs to be dealt with by those offering therapeutic counseling to the affected.

In so doing we have also seen that there are various challenges faced by Friends Church pastors in trying to minister to those stepped in witchcraft practices. It is important to note that witchcraft causes victimization and can negatively influence the society. Witchcraft is sin that needs to be dealt. Therefore amidst these challenges pastors ought to educate and call people to repentance.

There are several approaches employed by pastors in the Friends church in dealing with this vice. The researcher has pointed out that the best way to deal with the issue is to teach the truth about witchcraft and point people back to God.

In the Biblical model for discipleship the researcher has also proposed that the pastors need to adopt a friendly approach in counseling teaching their members the truth about God. The type of discipleship offered in the Friends church, needs to be revamped with integrated approach in order to reach all affected. Factors that contributed to poor discipleship in the Friends church can be dealt with by developing a good structure for the church program to help each member grow. It hoped the suggestions given in the research finding and analysis will help the Friends Church grow.

#### **4.9. Conclusion**

Black African Christians are often subjected to incredible suffering because of the activity of evil forces. It was also pointed Witchcraft as suffering does not correlate with the dominant aspiration of black Africans, namely the aspiration to good health and abundant life. A Christian church that ministers to black Africans therefore cannot serve in the same way it would serve Europeans who view the illness/health situation purely and exclusively in physical and medical terms. I have indicated that there is a lacuna in the ministry of the Friends church with its predominantly black African membership. The necessity for a Christian ministry that takes the African worldview seriously has been proposed as the subject of further research.

One aspect of African life often concealed from Western view is its solid belief in witchcraft. The profound effect this has on interpersonal relationships has adverse effects on diverse aspects of socio-economic development. Bitterness and especially jealousy are at the root of witchcraft, which is little understood by Westerners, who often deny its existence. This denial means that inter-church relations can be based on misguided assumptions. As meaning is context-based, such ignorance of “the other” can throw theological and ecclesial

teaching off course, leaving much of Africa dependent on the West primarily because of the subsidization of its education by the latter. This research suggests that a better alternative could be the use of regional African languages, especially in theological education on the continent. In this way Biblical scholarship could be applied in the light of African experience including witchcraft and magic. The Biblical message of God and his son, Jesus Christ, working through the church, can be powerful tool to combat witchcraft and superstition not only in the Friends Church but in Africa.

#### **4.10 Recommendation**

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following are suggestions on the way forward:

**i. A call back for pastors**

We acknowledge that witchcraft is a real problem not only in the Friends Church but also to the church in Africa. This research recommends that pastors should be called back to their work. There is clear evidence that most pastors have abdicated their duties and are not paying attention to their work. Most of these pastors after their undergraduate studies turn to other fields in order to secure jobs in government or non-governmental organizations. The church should call its pastors to “preach the Word” in order to fulfill her mission of existence.

**ii. Faithfulness to the Word**

Pastors should not only preach the Word, but should be faithful to the “Word.” Reading the Word of God, preaching and living it are crucial for pastors in the Friends Church. These can be done through Bible studies and home fellowships (an activity that tends to be losing meaning in the Friends Church with time). African pastors should criticize the killing of witches in order to fulfill cleansing rituals that has nothing to do with the Bible.

**iii. Provide Quality literature for believers**

There is need to provide truths through books that clarifies the issues affecting the African church. There are so many books on the market, shipped across the Atlantic that sometimes have nothing to do with the African issues. Some of them contain heresies that have a common diet for those who choose to

feed on them. Quality literature based on the African context will help answer the problem discussed in this research. Members exposed to education should be encouraged to read relevant materials.

#### **iv. Support for theological training**

The church should invest in training the ministers of the gospel. Preachers of the true Word should be trained to retain the sanctity of the Church. There are many mushrooming “colleges” in the name of Bible schools. But most of them do not emphasize on the exegesis of the Word. The church should be on the look-out for quality theological schools. The support given to these trainings should go beyond monetary but also evaluation and the content of the materials offered.

Ministers who attend theological schools should be well trained to understand Biblical Pastoral counseling. Pastoral counseling is vital. The problems of witchcraft should be addressed pastorally and believers should not live as if there are no evil spirits, diviners, and witchcraft. However, they should anchor their faith in God who punishes all evil.

Biblical Worldview should be made part of the curriculum for Bible school students. Understanding the set of beliefs that people have and how they perceive reality is important in providing the right information. The Bible student should not spiritualize matters concerning reality, but should endeavor to deal with such issues in a proper Biblical worldview. This will then call for developing an African Christian theology, where complexities are dealt with in a more effective way.

People resort to witchcraft for genuine concerns; those concerns should be addressed in the light of the Word of God. No stone should be left unturned when it comes to matters of faith and practice.

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## APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHURCH MEMBERS

I am a post graduate student (MTh.) at South African Theological Seminary. I am conducting a research on the “Impact of Witchcraft on the Friends Church in Lugari-Western Kenya.” I’m kindly requesting you to assist me in collecting information on the above topic. The questionnaire is purposefully used to gather information on the impact of witchcraft. The information collected will be accorded strict confidence and will solely be used for research work. Your sincerity will be highly appreciated. Thank you.

Please tick only once unless otherwise state

### SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Gender

Male

Female

2. Age

18-21 years

22-25 years

26-30 years

31-34 years

35-39 years

Above 40 years

3. Marital status
- Single
- Married
- Divorced

4. Highest Educational Level
- Secondary
- College
- University
- Other (specify) .....

**SECTION B: Members Believes on witchcraft**

5. Has heard of witchcraft before? Yes  No
6. Have been bewitched at home? Yes  No
7. Has recently been bewitched? Yes  No
8. Has witnessed witch killing? Yes  No
9. Witchcraft possesses great danger to the society? Yes  No
10. Poverty, marital problems and commemoration of the dead are bigger problems in the church? Yes  No
- Explain.....
- .....
11. There is need for theological solution to deal with witchcraft?  
Yes  No
12. No need for the church to be involved in matters of witchcraft?  
Yes  No

**SECTION C: Pastors' Believes on witchcraft**

13. Has been bewitched in the past? Yes  No
14. Has recently been bewitched? Yes  No
15. Has witnessed witch killing? Yes  No
16. Do you believe witchcraft is a big problem known to the society?  
Yes  No
17. Are Poverty, marital problems and commemoration of the dead bigger problems in the society?  
Yes  No
18. Witchcraft is a problem to the Friends church itself?  
Yes  No
19. Need theological training to be better equipped to handle the issue of witchcraft?  
Yes  No
20. No need for the church to be involved in dealing with issues on witchcraft?  
Yes  No

**Thank you very much for your time and cooperation**

## **APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE ELDRERLY**

1. Explain in your own words why people resort to witchcraft?
2. How does the society view both those who practice witchcraft and those who consult witches, sorcerers and diviners?
3. In which ways does witchcraft pose a great danger to the church?

**Thank you for your time and cooperation**

### **APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PASTORS**

1. What are the challenges that pastors and ministers of the gospel face in ministering to those who practice witchcraft?
2. Are there any current approaches employed by the church ministers in reaching out to people who practice witchcraft? Name them
3. Does the church have any discipling materials for new converts from cult and occult.
  - a) Are the materials adequate in providing the right information?
  - b) Are the materials relevant to all ages?

**Thank you for your time cooperation**