



A Theological Reflection on Witchcraft from a Ghanaian Christian Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Even though witchcraft may not be scientifically proven, it is a widely believed phenomenon in Ghana and other parts of the world. The issue of witchcraft has attracted scholarly attention because it affects the society in diverse ways. This paper contributes to the discussion by offering a theological reflection on the subject from a Ghanaian Christian perspective. The paper used a mixed research methodology involving an empirical approach and a literature review. Primary data were collected through participant observations and personal interviews involving five people selected from different Christian denominations and different geographical locations in Ghana. The secondary data for the research were gathered from books, articles, dissertations and Bible commentaries. The paper argued for the reality of the existence of the phenomenon of witchcraft and encouraged the Ghanaian church to take the issue seriously in its theological, and pastoral ministry. The church is encouraged to help believers practicalize their authority over witchcraft based on Christ's victory over Satan and his host.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper offers a theological and ethical reflection on witchcraft in the context of Ghanaian Christianity. The introductory part deals with the Ghanaian religious context to enable the reader to appreciate relevant aspects of Ghanaian primal religious beliefs that inform Ghanaians' belief about witchcraft. Ghanaians believe in the existence of God (the Supreme Being) who is the highest and most powerful of all beings. He is the Creator of the entire universe, the provider of rain and sunshine and the one who gives and takes life. The Ga reference to God as *Ataa Naa Nyɔnmɔ* (Father-mother God) underlines God's fatherhood/parenthood, implying he is loving, caring and merciful. The Bono people refer to him as *Baatanpa* (Good mother) to stress God's compassion, protection, provision and mercy, among others. The all-powerful God collaborates with other beings because he democratically grants authority to both eternal and mortal beings. The Akan proverb "No one points God to a child" underlines that God's existence is self-evident. The belief that God is a spirit and is everywhere at once is expressed by the saying "If you want to say something to God, say it to the wind." God's love and concern for humanity (especially the oppressed, marginalized and outcast) are illustrated by the saying "It is God who drives flies from the tailless animal."

Ghanaians also believe in the existence of lesser divinities.¹ These entities are gods or divinities made by God to serve him, and to control and help human beings. The lower divinities derive their being from the Supreme Being; their authority and powers are ineffective without him. These entities are next to God in power and above the ancestors. People consider serving them as means of serving and honoring the Supreme Being. These deities serve as mediators between human beings and God and hence, are instruments, rather than ends in themselves.² There are family gods, community gods and national gods, each god having a specific jurisdiction of operation.

Ghanaians also hold that there are many spirits in the world who live in various locations, such as stones, tombs, haunted houses, and trees, among others. These spirits may be rewarded or punished in the future depending on their activities. In terms of power, they come after God and lesser divinities. The world of non-human spirits and the world of the spirits of the dead are the two main divisions of the spirit world. Lower spirit powers include amulets, talismans, or beads that people wear around their waist, neck, or wrists, as well as dwarfs, powerful spirit entities which have their feet pointing backward.

The belief in the existence of ancestral spirits is also part of the Ghanaian religious worldview. The term “ancestor” refers to the spirit of deceased members who lived a long life (at least seventy years), married and produced offspring, lived an exemplary life and died a natural death. The Ewes hold that the domain of the ancestors (*Tsiefe*) has two compartments, one for those who lived exemplary lives and the other for evil persons such as witches, sorcerers, magicians and murderers.³ Ancestors mostly function at night and so they are said to be nocturnal. People leave food in the kitchen overnight with the belief that their ancestors will come and consume it during the night. Ancestral spirits are actively involved in the affairs of their living relatives. Occasionally, they intervene in the affairs of the living, either for good or bad, depending on how the living relate to them.

In addition, Ghanaians believe in the existence of medicine, magic, sorcery and witchcraft. Traditionally, religion is expected to address the religious, economic and health needs of its adherents. When someone falls sick, the person consults a traditional medicine man for cure. Traditional healing is mostly achieved through the use of herbs obtained from the forest. It is believed that dwarfs help traditional medicine men to get the right herb for curing diseases. The medicine man may also apply magic, sorcery or witchcraft techniques in addressing issues brought to him.

The foregoing gives the religious context into which Christianity was introduced to the Gold Coast (now Ghana) by European and American missionaries. The early missionaries took an uncompromising approach to almost every aspect of Ghanaian culture and tradition. Unsatisfied with missionary Christianity, some Ghanaians began the quest for a Christianity that will take the Ghanaian worldview seriously. The result was the emergence of African Initiated Churches. These churches attracted a large following because of their acceptance of certain elements of Ghanaian traditional worldview. Later (especially after the missionaries left the country), the mission churches also incorporated some elements of Ghanaian culture into their liturgical, theological and pastoral traditions. The contextualization/inculturation of Christianity in Ghana has contributed to the survival and growth of the Christian faith.

Nonetheless, in spite of their belief in Christ, many Christians in Ghana fear that they can be attacked by evil spirits such as witches and wizards. The issue of witchcraft has attracted scholarly attention because of its influence on Ghanaians, Christians and non-Christians alike. The purpose of this paper is to offer a theological reflection on witchcraft from a Ghanaian Christian perspective. In the next section, the paper considers the phenomenon of witchcraft from a biblical perspective.

¹ Andrew Akwasi Oppong, *Comparative Study of the Concept of The Divine in African Tradition Religions in Ghana and Lesotho* (MA Thesis: University of South Africa, 2002), 50.

² Ushe Mike Ushe, “God, Divinities and Ancestors in African Traditional Religious Thought,” *An African Journal of Arts and Humanities* vol. 3 no 4 (2017):168-169.

³ Victor K. Ametwee and James B. Christensen, “Homtodzoe’: Expiation by Cremation among Some Tongu-Ewe in Ghana,” *Journal of the International African Institute* vol. 47 no. 4 (1977): 360-371, 360.

Witchcraft in the Biblical Context

The reality of witchcraft is evident in the belief system of ancient Israel.⁴ In addition to witchcraft's reality, some ancient Israelites used other similar methods to seek information from the spiritual world in a similar way done in ancient and contemporary Ghana. Thus, the Bible acknowledges witchcraft activities which also cover activities involving magic and sorcery. In the Old Testament, the KJV renders the Hebrew word “*mekashshepah*” as “witch”. However, it is rendered as “sorcerer” or “sorceress” in the ASV and “magic” as in the GNT (Exod. 22:18; Deut. 18:10). Most Old Testament scholars consider “sorcerer” or “sorceress” as a better rendition.⁵ A sorcerer refers to “one who practices magic by using occult formulas, incantations, and mystic mutterings”⁶ or one who tells the future or controls others by demonic power.⁷ The term “sorcerer” appeals to Merrill F. Unger because it avoids the superstitious connotation of a “witch.”⁸ Unger argues further that “*mekashshepah*” may refer merely to “one of a class, or even a collection of units, rather than the strictly feminine connotation of ‘sorceress.’”⁹ Noel D. Osborn and Howard A. Hatton consider “*mekashshepah*” as “one who performs supernatural deeds or discovers hidden knowledge by calling on the power of evil spirits.”¹⁰ The author believes that the modern sense of the term witchcraft encompasses the activities of witches, sorcerers and magicians. That is the reason why “*mekashshepah*” may be rendered correctly as “witch”, “sorcery,” or “magic.”

Pagan nations used “witchcraft” or “divination” to extract information from the spiritual realm or from a pagan god. Egyptian magicians were skilled at producing marvels akin to those Moses worked (Exod. 7:11, 22; 8:7). The word “divination” was used to describe the activities of Balaam the soothsayer who was contracted to curse Israel (Num. 22:7; 23:23; Josh. 13:22). The same word was also used to describe the woman at En Dor who summoned the spirit of Samuel to speak to Saul (1 Sam. 28). Israel's God, being a cantankerous and petulant and a scorner of witchcraft, warned his people (Israel) against using supernatural powers and even condemns it. Because most witchcraft activities result in the killing of someone, this phenomenon contradicts the fifth commandment of God that prohibits murder (Exod. 20:13). A death penalty is pronounced on those involved in sorcery (Exod. 22:18; cf. Lev. 19:26; 20:6, 27). In Leviticus 19:31, Israel is warned, “Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God” (NIV). Here, the reason for prohibiting spiritism and others is that they make one unclean to approach God.

God again warned Israel not to imitate the surrounding nations in the witchcraft and sorcery practices (Deut. 18:9-12). People are anxious to know about their future and have supernatural assistance in moving toward a successful future. In addition, people look for solutions to such life problems as infertility, sickness, and failure, among others. Israel lived in the midst of nations that had developed various techniques for obtaining knowledge about the future and for seeking spiritual direction toward it. These techniques involved child sacrifice, witchcraft, sorcery, and spiritism (18:9-10). God cautioned Israel not to imitate the Canaanites' pagan customs. Moses highlighted God's hatred for these practices and asserted that it is because of these evil practices that God was using the Israelites to drive the people away (18:12). Even though Moses did not explicitly state the reason why God hates these practices so much, one may reason that it is because these practices are not only cruel

⁴ Obiwuru Chidera Rex, “Witchcraft in Africa: A Bipartite Phenomenon,” *International Journal of Humanities & Social Science: Insights & Transformations* Vol. 4, Issue 1 (2019): 5-16, 7.

⁵ Merrill F. Unger, *Biblical Demonology: A Study of Spiritual Forces at Work Today*, 1963, Fifth Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1994), 153-55; George Parrinder, *Witchcraft: A Critical Study of the Belief in Witchcraft from the Records of Witch Hunting in Europe Yesterday and Africa Today* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1958), 16; John I. Durham, *Exodus: Word Biblical Commentary* edited by David A. Hubbard, W. Glenn Barker, and D. W. John Watts (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1987), 327; J. D. Hannah, “Exodus” In *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament* edited by J. F. Walwood and Roy B. Zuck (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 1983), 143.

⁶ Unger, *Biblical Demonology*, 153.

⁷ Hannah, “Exodus,” 143.

⁸ Unger, *Biblical Demonology*, 153.

⁹ Unger, *Biblical Demonology*, 153.

¹⁰ Noel D. Osborn and Howard A. Hatton, *A Handbook on Exodus* (New York: UBS Handbook Series, 1999), n.p. (ParaText version)

acts against fellow humans but also undermines God's prerogative over life and death. Also, it is because such acts open up a person to manipulation by demonic forces.

Considering all the above verses, one wonders why Saul consulted a medium (1 Sam. 28:1-25). But heartbreakingly, the spirit of the dead whom the witch invoked, prophesied Saul's death. The fulfilment of this prophecy is seen in 1 Chronicle 10:13-14 which reveals that the cause of Saul's death was witchcraft. In Ezekiel 13:17-23 it appears that the "prophetesses" that Ezekiel was to denounce were more like mediums, fortune tellers, witches, or sorceresses. These people were able to kill some individuals and keep others alive for money by using "magic spells."¹¹ It would appear that Ezekiel is addressing the religious practices and ideologies of the surrounding nations that had infiltrated the Israelites. In addition, Nineveh was destroyed because of its witchcraft (Nah. 3:4-7).

In the New Testament, the Greek word "*pharmakeia*" is translated as "witchcraft," or "sorcery." Even though the word "witch" does not appear in the gospels, it is certain that the gospel is against anything in relation to witchcraft. The work of all forces that oppose God (namely, Satan and demons) are not entertained by Jesus. The ministry of Jesus included setting people free from demonic possession and oppression (Matt. 17:14-20; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 4:19-20; 9:37-43). Jesus treated the demoniacs as though they were indeed under the control of demonic spirits. He actually did not want anybody to be possessed by an evil spirit because he knew what the evil spirit will eventually do to the possessed. He sometimes forced such spirits out; at other times, he allowed them to leave the person.

In Acts 8:9-24, the Apostle Paul chastised Simon (the Sorcerer) and told him to turn from his wicked ways. The magician Elymas received a reprimand for being "the offspring of the devil" and "the enemy of all justice" (Acts 13:6-12). Ephesus was a place where witchcraft was very common and when people involved in witchcraft received the gospel, they brought their magic books to be burnt (Acts 19:18-19). In addition, sorcery is classified as one of the acts of the flesh in the New Testament and is closely related to idolatry (Gal. 5:20). According to Revelation 21:8 and 22:15, sorcerers are among those particularly forbidden from entering the holy city, the New Jerusalem. Clearly, the Judeo-Christian Scriptures is anti-witchcraft.

Having considered biblical teachings about witchcraft, the paper now proceeds to examine the witchcraft phenomenon from a Ghanaian socio-cultural and religious perspective.

Witchcraft in Ghanaian Socio-Cultural Context

What is witchcraft?

In Ghana, the concept of witchcraft is rooted in the belief in a supernatural power which humans can become possessed of, and which can act through the possessed. Ghanaians generally believe that witchcraft powers are obtained from *juju* (black magic).¹² Witchcraft powers may be possessed by a male or a female, a child or an adult. Females with witchcraft powers are referred to as witches while males with these powers are called wizards.¹³ Benjamin Yaw Acheampong opines that witches and wizards "are part of the falling angels considered as demons. They are considered to be the cause of all misfortunes, premature death, sickness and diseases and wickedness in life. They also fight against the Kingdom of God."¹⁴ Acheampong defines witches and wizards as "supernatural powers that possess human beings to cause problems for human life."¹⁵

People with witchcraft powers have cults. They have regular meetings which normally take place in the night when the witch's or wizard's soul leaves the body to perform nocturnal activities, appearing as a ball-like flying creature that has lights that blink as it flies.¹⁶ Witches and wizards are

¹¹ John W. Weavers, *The Century Bible Series: Ezekiel* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1969), 110.

¹² Kwasi Atta Agyapong, *Witchcraft in Ghana: Belief, Practices and Consequences* (Accra: Noyam publications, 2021), 19.

¹³ Arinze Agbanusi, "Witchcraft in West African Belief System – Medical And Social Dimensions," *Journal of African Studies*. vol.5 no.2. (2016): 116-122, 117.

¹⁴ Benjamin Yaw Acheampong, Interview by author on 9th January, 2023.

¹⁵ Acheampong, Interview by author.

¹⁶ Ametewee and Christensen, "Homtodzoe": Expiation by Cremation among Some Tongu-Ewe in Ghana," 361.

believed to cause death to their victims through what can be termed “spiritual cannibalism.”¹⁷ Every member of the witchcraft cult is required to sacrifice an animal or a human body in order to renew their membership and climb the ranks. Failure to offer such sacrifices may lead to severe consequences.

Bewitching takes the form of oppression (which can cause the oppressed to experience negative physical or emotional symptoms such as feeling ill or sad and troubled), obsession (which involves taking the mind of a person captive through the activities of mind-binding spirits, mind-bleeding spirits and mind-confusion spirits) and subjection (whereby the spirit of witchcraft controls a person’s life). Witches and wizards may be identified by confession, divination or trial by ordeal (Ewe: *akadodo*).¹⁸ Witchcraft involves secrecy and concealment.

The question of whether witchcraft activities are always evil or not needs consideration at this point. Richard Manu defines considers as “an act of Satan trying to use humans as his agents to destroy other humans using evil powers.”¹⁹ Manu’s view is in line with the worldview of the Nupe tribe of Northern Nigeria who consider witchcraft as the use of supernatural powers “exclusively for evil and antisocial purposes.”²⁰ Some of the negative effects of witchcraft include sicknesses like malaria fever, cancer, hypertension, kidney failure, ulcer, hepatitis, heart attack and stroke. Witches and wizards are also believed to suck people’s blood and eventually kill them.²¹ They may also cause abortion and miscarriage in order to satisfy their thirst for blood. It is also believed that they can extend their life by offering someone as a sacrifice. People believe that witches and wizards can hinder one’s socioeconomic progress.²² Belief in witchcraft activities makes people live in fear and become both psychologically and economically depressed, especially when they live in an environment where belief in witchcraft is high.²³

In spite of the above negative consequences of witchcraft, the phenomenon may also connote something positive. Unlike the Nupe concept of witchcraft, the Akan of Ghana consider *bayie* (witchcraft) as something that can be used for both good and bad purposes. For example, the term “*bayie*” is applicable to the possession and exercise of extraordinary skills. One may tell the friend “*Woye bayifo*” (“You are a witch”) after the friend has displayed extraordinary prowess in an activity. That the term “*bayie*” is attributable to a genius who performs an extraordinary deed in any field or profession was evident in the life and profession of the Ghanaian striker Opoku Afriyie (1955-2020). The footballer was nicknamed “Bayie” (a wizard) because of his extraordinary striking ability. He was Ghana’s key player in the squad that won the 1978 African Cup of Nations. The wizardly goal poacher and tormentor-in-chief scored a brace for Ghana to defeat Uganda (2–0) in the final match. Similarly, the Igbo people would say “*O talu amoosu bọọlụ*” or “*ọ bụ amoosu bọọlụ*” (meaning “he or she is a wizard or witch in football playing”) to describe someone with extraordinary football skills.²⁴ In the technological age, someone who has extraordinary knowledge of Information Technology (IT) is said to be an IT wizard or computer wizard. Semantically, such statements suggest that witchcraft could have an element of “positivity.”

The Akan sometimes attributes the success of advanced societies to the phenomenon of *bayie*. This belief underscores A. B. Crentsil’s classification of witchcraft as good and bad.²⁵ In his song entitled “Devil”, Crentsil asserts that human beings were created by God and brought into the world to live. God, however, gave them *ayen* (or *bayie*, that is, witchcraft) to protect themselves because of the works of Satan. The musician admonishes his audience, “*Sɛ wowɔ ayen a, fa ye ade papa, w’ayen*

¹⁷ Ametewee and Christensen, “Homtodzoe’: Expiation by Cremation among Some Tongu-Ewe in Ghana,” 361.

¹⁸ Ametewee and Christensen, “Homtodzoe’: Expiation by Cremation among Some Tongu-Ewe in Ghana,” 361.

¹⁹ Richard Manu, Interview with author 10th January, 2023.

²⁰ Hans W. Debrunner, *Witchcraft in Ghana: A Study on the Belief in Destructive Witches and Its Effects on the Akan Tribes* (Accra: Presbyterian Book Depot Ltd, 1961), 1.

²¹ Ametewee and Christensen, “Homtodzoe’: Expiation by Cremation among Some Tongu-Ewe in Ghana,” 360.

²² Agbanusi, “Witchcraft in West African Belief System,” 118.

²³ Kisilu Kombo, “Witchcraft: A Living Vice in Africa,” *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* vol 22 no.1 (2003): 73-86, 78.

²⁴ Agbanusi, “Witchcraft in West African Belief System,” 119.

²⁵ The author watched the song “Devil” composed A. B. Crentsil from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmJWhcHYRH0> [Accessed on 7th January, 2023].

yi, fa boa wo mma, mmamfa nsee nkurofoɔ mma oo...Kwasi Broni de ne deɛ aye ewiem hyen...ne train” (literally, “If you have witchcraft use it for something good, use your witchcraft to help your children, do not use it to destroy other people’s children, ... the white man has used his to invent aeroplanes and trains”).²⁶ Crentsil’s song highlights that *ayen* or *bayie* (witchcraft) can be used for both good and evil purposes. He then admonishes those who possess the power of witchcraft to use it for the common good of the society.

Witchcraft is categorized as black, red or white. It is believed that the black and red types are used for evil while the white type is used for good intentions. Witchcraft operations by black people are believed to come mainly from the black and red types while those involving white people are mostly based on the white type. Writing from the Nigerian context, Agbanusi states that one may “hear people remark, regrettably though, that while the ‘white man’ exhibits his own witchcraft in inventions and in the production of superior technological equipment, ... the ‘black man’ exhibits his in mischievous acts.”²⁷

Another good use of witchcraft is healing. In Ghana, it is believed that witchcraft can be used to heal fractured bones. The witch doctor achieves this by getting a fowl and breaking the bone of the fowl in correspondence with the part of the body where the patient has the fracture.²⁸ Without touching the patient, the breaking of the fowl’s bone inflicts pain on the patient. Similarly, the healing of the fractured bone of the fowl translates into the healing of the patient. It is also believed that someone can use witchcraft to help his/her offspring to become successful in life.²⁹ The Ewes refer to the kind of witchcraft used for the economic gain of the witch or her children as *akpasu*.³⁰ In addition, belief in witchcraft forces the ordinary person to follow societal norms.³¹ Normally, crimes and immorality rates are lower in places where belief in witchcraft is high because no one wants to attract the attention of witchcraft. Therefore, belief in witchcraft may serve as a social control mechanism.

Given the foregoing discourse, witchcraft may be considered as a gift that is not inherently evil; its value depends on the one who uses it. It must be noted that witchcraft activities in Ghana are generally considered evil, even though it is believed that witchcraft can be used for good intentions.

Acquisition of Witchcraft

Witchcraft may be acquired in a variety of ways. It may be acquired through heredity.³² Witchcraft that is acquired through this means is said to have been received from God; it is considered the most powerful witchcraft.³³ Additionally, witchcraft can be inherited from a deceased witch within the family. It is believed that the witch or wizard can hand over the power to a close relative when the death of the witch or wizard becomes imminent.³⁴ In this case, the witchcraft will only manifest after the transferor’s death. Inherited witchcraft cannot be transferred to a member of another clan. Such witchcraft is like family “property” that must always remain in the family.

Also, people can be initiated into witchcraft before they are born.³⁵ Congenital witches and wizards (Ewe: *adzetowo*³⁶) are usually children of witches or wizards whose allegiance to a witchcraft

²⁶ Crentsil, “Devil.”

²⁷ Agbanusi, “Witchcraft in West African Belief System,” 119.

²⁸ Gloria Adu-Agyeiwaa, Interview by author in Kumasi on 9th January, 2023.

²⁹ Isaac Nyanful, Interview by author. While the economic gain is positive, the process involved negate the value of the gain. Mostly, the witch sacrifices a human being, usually a close relative in exchange for wealth. Acheampong added that witches and wizards can manipulate spiritual realms for their favor. See Ametewee and Christensen, “‘Homtodzoe’: Expiation by Cremation among Some Tongu-Ewe in Ghana,” 361.

³⁰ Ametewee and Christensen, “‘Homtodzoe’: Expiation by Cremation among Some Tongu-Ewe in Ghana,” 361.

³¹ Kombo, “Witchcraft: A Living Vice in Africa,” 78.

³² Opoku Onyinah, *Akan Witchcraft and the Concept of Exorcism in the Church of Pentecost* (PhD Thesis: University of Birmingham, 2002), 74.

³³ Onyinah, *Akan Witchcraft and the Concept of Exorcism in the Church of Pentecost*, 74.

³⁴ Mary Ampomah, Telephonic Interview by author on 10th January 2023.

³⁵ Agbanusi, “Witchcraft in West African Belief System,” 117.

³⁶ Ametewee and Christensen, “‘Homtodzoe’: Expiation by Cremation among Some Tongu-Ewe in Ghana,” 361.

cult makes them dedicate their children to the cult.³⁷ This compares well with the Christian practice of dedicating a child to God even before it is born. Just as Christians want their children to have a covenant with God, so witches and wizards also want their children to have a covenant with Satan.

Witchcraft can also be received through gifts. It is believed that people can infest items, such as necklaces, beads and pieces of clothes with their power and offer them as gifts to others without the knowledge of the recipient.³⁸ This is the reason why people are advised to be careful when receiving gifts from others. Similarly, a witch can also infest food such as mash-plantain mixed with red oil with the power of witchcraft and transfer it to those who eat the food. In addition, people can also buy the power of witchcraft from others.

Effects of Witchcraft Accusation on the Accused

In Ghana, people accused of being witches or wizards are often taken to witch camps, prayer centres, or traditional shrines for confirmation and/or exorcism. A witch camp is a community where people who are thought to be witches or wizards are harbored for security, and exorcism purposes. Ghana has six witch camps all of which are located in the north, particularly at Bonyasi, Gambaga, Kpatinga, Kukuo, Gushegu, and Gnani.³⁹ There are witch doctors at the witch camps to take care of the accused and to treat sicknesses caused by witchcraft. Whether at the shrine, prayer camp or witch camp, people accused of being witches and wizards encounter a lot of challenges. A few of such challenges are outlined briefly below.

First, witchcraft accusation has social effects on the accused. Usually, a person accused as a witch or wizard suffers stigmatization and marginalization. People refuse to associate with people accused of being witches or wizards because of the belief that associating with them can easily influence their lives negatively. Consequently, the accused and their family may face social exclusion and trauma which in turn affects their social development. Ghanaians desire communal life; a person's life is intertwined with that of others. Therefore, the social exclusion associated with witchcraft accusations poses a big challenge to the accused. Furthermore, the accusation also stigmatizes the accused person's children as they consider them as also possessing evil powers.

Secondly, witchcraft accusation also leads to economic crisis/retrogression, whether the accused lives in the community or finds refuge in the witch camp. No one would like to patronize a business run by a witch or a wizard. Similarly, no one would like to buy an item sold by a witch or a wizard because of the belief that objects and food items can be infested by witchcraft powers. People who leave their houses and seek refuge in various locations outside of their original homes lose their employment. Their properties are sometimes burnt or destroyed by angry members of their community. Should the person come back after being exorcised, he/she has to begin life all over again. In the witch camp, there is nothing the people do to improve their lives. They depend on donations from philanthropists and help received from their families and friends. Their dependents, who are now left in their homes without anyone to cater for them, find it difficult to survive and may involve themselves in criminal activities (such as robbery) to survive.

The accusation of children as witches and wizards is also not uncommon. Witchcraft accusation against children in African communities is not a recent development. In *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe narrates how Ezinma, Okonkwo's daughter was accused of being an *ogbanje* (a witch) who caused a lot of misery in her mother's life.⁴⁰ The seriousness of the matter is underscored by Okonkwo's invitation of a witch doctor to handle the case. In Ghana, witchcraft accusations against children may result in the accused becoming a school dropout, homeless, a street child or a criminal.⁴¹ This contributes to the woes of their community and the nation at large. This is consistent with

³⁷ Agbanusi, "Witchcraft in West African Belief System," 117.

³⁸ Onyinah, *Akan Witchcraft and the Concept of Exorcism in the Church of Pentecost*, 75.

³⁹ Agyapong, *Witchcraft in Ghana*, 19. The Gnani witch camp is the only camp that houses both witches and wizards. The rest are for witches only.

⁴⁰ Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (London: Heinemann, 1958).

⁴¹ Rex, "Witchcraft in Africa," 9.

UNICEF's report that thousands of children have become street children because of witchcraft accusations against them.⁴²

Thirdly, witchcraft accusation has psychological effects on the accused person. Most people living in witch camps suffer from depression which may be mild, moderate or severe. The effect of depression on women is more than on men. The level of depression is usually informed by factors like age, economic status (being poor or rich), marital status (married, unmarried, divorced or widowed), and whether or not the person has children. Marginalization increases the levels of despair and affects psychological wellbeing. Health personnel sometimes provide counselling and other health facilities to improve their wellbeing of the people in the witch camps. However, these services are not adequate considering the number of people suffering from psychological issues in the camps.

Fourthly, exorcism practices in the witch camp, shrines and prayer camps (churches) are sometimes associated with abuses and exploitation. In an attempt to identify and/or exorcise them, some witches and wizards are made to drink concoctions that have negative implications on their health. It is believed that if a witch or wizard takes the concoction but fails to confess, he/she will die.⁴³ In the church setting, confession may take place during healing and deliverance sessions. Some pastors, witch doctors and operators of witch camps sometimes abuse people believed to have witchcraft powers. When the accused person denies being a witch, he/she may be whipped or starved. Sometimes, accused persons are made to kneel or stand in the scorching sun for a long time. The accused may also be chained to restrict physical movement; in the process, many are injured without having proper care for their wounds. In some cases, the treatment given to people suspected of being witches or wizards leads to death. The death of such persons (whether they are actually witches and wizards or not) is inhumane and unlawful. In the camps and churches, there is also financial exploitation associated with exorcism practices. Some religious leaders charge huge sums of money before even attempting to address the situation. This contributes to the plight of the accused and depresses them more.

Finally, the people in the camp lack such necessities of existence as food, water, shelter, and clothing, as well as a sense of acceptance, and family love.⁴⁴ Family members refuse to cater for them because they feel the accused persons do not want them to progress in life. Consequently, some people in the camps are sometimes found wearing tattered clothes, eating an unbalanced and insufficient diet, or bathing without soap. Due to the bad conditions and the abuses that people go through in the witch camps, the government of Ghana (in 2014) attempted to shut down some of these camps to stop the stigma and mistreatment of the accused and reunite them with their families and communities.

Theological Reflections on the Phenomenon of Witchcraft

The Reality of Witchcraft

The reality of witchcraft in both the biblical and Ghanaian worldviews has been established earlier. The church must accept witchcraft as a reality and then look for ways of dealing with it. Anyone who has carefully observed Christianity in Ghana would agree that church leaders have failed to give adequate explanations for the prevalence of evil as well as the ultimate cause of death, sickness and other misfortunes.⁴⁵ As indicated earlier, God, in the Ghanaian traditional perspective is merciful and loves his children. Therefore, he cannot be the cause of misfortune, sickness, untimely death, or accident in the lives of his children. The reason why the church has not given an adequate explanation for the root(s) of evil in the society can be traced to missionary activities in the country. Missionary Christianity did not take the African worldview seriously (as noted earlier). They considered sicknesses and death as natural occurrences and gave no room for spiritual causes. Consequently, the early missionaries put up hospitals to meet the health needs of the people. They dismissed any claim that sicknesses can be caused by evil spirits as mere superstition. By negating Ghanaian culture and tradition, the missionaries failed to address the spiritual needs of Ghanaians.

⁴² Rex, "Witchcraft in Africa," 9.

⁴³ Ametewee and Christensen, "'Homtodzoe': Expiation by Cremation among Some Tongu-Ewe in Ghana," 361.

⁴⁴ Agyapong, *Witchcraft in Ghana*, 20.

⁴⁵ Samuel Waje Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics* (Nairobi: WordAlive Publishers, 2008), 383.

Obviously, the theological, liturgical and pastoral traditions employed by the missionaries had no place for the belief in the existence of witchcraft. After they left the country, the churches they established were handed over to the indigenes. However, the hermeneutical, theological, and pastoral framework that the mission churches inherited from the missionaries continued to overshadow the reality of witchcraft activities. Churches like the Roman Catholic Church, the Methodist Church Ghana, and the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, for example, were initially reluctant to adjust their ministries to accommodate the Ghanaian worldview. At first, the Methodist Church Ghana did not allow its members to speak in tongues, pray corporately during worship service, clap, drum or dance during a worship service. Healing and deliverance practices were not a key part of their pastoral care. Later, African Initiated Churches emerged that addressed the spiritual needs of their members. As members of the mission churches began to join these churches, the mission churches were encouraged to adjust their hermeneutical, pastoral and liturgical traditions to give room for the Ghanaian worldview, especially as related to the impact of the spiritual realm on the physical world.

The fact is that the conversion from African primal religion to Christianity has not changed the belief that the spiritual world dictates whatever happens in the physical world. For the Ghanaian believer, things do not just happen. Their happening in the physical world is a manifestation of what has already taken place in the spiritual realm. Consequently, Ghanaian believers still attribute forces hindering their progress to witchcraft and other demonic forces. J. K. Asamoah-Gyadu serves us well when he says, “Anybody who knows African Christians intimately will know that no amount of denial on the part of the church will expel belief in supernatural powers from the minds of the Christian...”⁴⁶ As a result, the Ghanaian (African) Christian “becomes a hypocrite who in official church circles pretends to give the impression that he does not believe in these things, while in his own private life, he resorts to practices which are the results of such beliefs.”⁴⁷ Because of this entrenched worldview, Ghanaian Christians continue to entertain the fear that these invisible forces can affect them negatively even in their state of being disciples of Christ.⁴⁸ It is clear that the Ghanaian Christian cannot dismiss the existence and operations of witches and wizards.

Because of the failure of the church to accept the reality of witchcraft and provide adequate teachings about it, many Christians seek explanations for the problem of evil from non-Christians and then accept worldly standards and demonic explanations regarding the source of evil.⁴⁹ Consequently, though Ghana is a predominantly Christian nation, many believers are quick to consider the sickness or death of their child as the effect of witchcraft on their family. Many Christians will see a house/wall gecko (*Hemidactylus frenatus*) and conclude that it is a witch or wizard from their family that is monitoring their activities. People “foolishly” accept this explanation because it satisfies their quest for answers to their questions about evil.⁵⁰ Consequent to the lack of adequate biblical, pastoral and theological guidance on the subject of witchcraft, a lot of Christians have more stories about the power of witchcraft (whether true or false) than the power of Christ and so become more demon-conscious than Christ-conscious.

Acknowledging the existence of witchcraft does not contradict the teaching of the Bible. The biblical data examined earlier attest to the reality of witchcraft and other related practices like mediums, spirits, and omens. Having acknowledged the existence of witchcraft, the next task is to provide biblical and theological teachings about it, starting with the victory won by Christ—over evil forces—through his death and resurrection. The next section takes care of this.

Christ’s Victory over Satan and his hosts

⁴⁶ J. K. Asamoah-Gyadu, “Pentecostalism and the Missiological Significance of Religious Experience: The case of Ghana’s Church of Pentecost,” *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology*. vol. XII, no.1 and 2, (2002), 29-34

⁴⁷ Asamoah-Gyadu, “Pentecostalism and the Missiological Significance of Religious Experience,” 29-34.

⁴⁸ John D. Kwamena Ekem, *Priesthood in Context: A Case Study of Priesthood in Some Christian and Primal Communities of Ghana and Its Relevance for Mother- Tongue Biblical Interpretation* (Accra: Sonlife Press, 2009), 39.

⁴⁹ Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, 383.

⁵⁰ Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, 383.

On the cross, Christ won a battle against Satan and his hosts. The Old Testament pictures Christ as a warrior-King who was to crush the head of the serpent (symbolizing Satan, Gen. 3:15 cf. Rev. 12:9).⁵¹ Genesis 3:15 reads, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring^[a] and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (NIV). This prophecy was given after Satan assumed dominion over humanity through the fall of Adam (Gen. 3). The head-crushing prophecy (the *protoeuangelion*, “first gospel” or “mother promise”) signifies that the establishment of the messianic kingdom will be preceded by a warfare between the Messiah and Satan in which the Messiah will win a final victory over Satan and free humanity from his captivity.⁵² The fact that the Messiah was to be the seed of the woman underlines the virgin birth which was fulfilled in the conception and birth of Jesus, the Christ, by Mary (Matt. 1:18-25). Jesus’s birth, life, ministry, sufferings, death and resurrection fulfilled his head-crushing ministry by which he defeated all evil forces.

According to Robert Agyarko “viewing Jesus as victorious over the spiritual realm and particularly over evil forces, answers the need for a powerful protector against these forces and powers.”⁵³ Therefore, Christian leaders in Ghana must explain the cross not only as a sacrificial action of Christ that takes up the penalty of their sins but also as an event that symbolizes might and power that sets them free from the fear of evil powers. Christ’s victory over Satan and his forces is captured well in Colossians 2:15 where Paul says, “He [Christ] disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him” (RSV). Here, Paul draws on the Greco-Roman war tradition to picture how principalities and powers, having been defeated, are dragged along in Christ’s procession. In the Greco-Roman world “when a city surrendered to a victorious general, the conquerors would stage a victory parade at which they would display their conquered enemies and all the goods they had plundered.”⁵⁴ Afua Kuma underlines Christ’s power over evil forces when she says, “Should the devil himself become a lion and chase us as his prey, we shall have no fear; Lamb of God! Satan says he is a wolf—Jesus stretches forth his hand, and, look: Satan is a mouse.”⁵⁵ Here, Kuma makes the point that Satan and his hosts have no power over believers because of Christ’s victory over Satan. In the midst of being chased by Satan who comes like a lion, Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5), appears and fights on behalf of his people, making Satan and his demonic forces powerless. Thus, Christ is not an ordinary Lion but one whose claws are strong enough to tear out Satan’s entrails, render him powerless and lifeless and leave his (Satan’s) carcass for flies to feed on.⁵⁶ This victory won by Christ through the cross must be preached to all Christians. Christians are to appropriate the victory won for them by acknowledging and practicalizing their authority in Christ.

The Believer’s Authority

The tendency of Christians to deal adequately with the issue of witchcraft depends on their ability to know and practicalize their authority in Christ. More often than not, Christians fail in spiritual battles because they fail to realize the authority that Christ has given them on earth. Sometimes, those who realize this authority do not know how to receive or implement the power that is required to enforce their authority. In fact, one’s authority does not benefit him/her if he does not use it. Every powerful person has authority vested in him/her. Imagine a police officer who raises a hand to stop cars from moving through an intersection and raises the said hand to allow other cars to move. The police is like any other person; however, the authority vested in him/her by the state, makes him/her a powerful

⁵¹ James M. Hamilton, “The Glory of God in Salvation through Judgment: The Centre of Biblical Theology?,” *Tyndale Bulletin* vol 56 no.1 (2006): 57-84, 64.

⁵² Phillip Ross Bethancourt, *Christ the Warrior King: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Analysis of the Divine Warrior Theme in Christology* (PhD Thesis: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011), 70

⁵³ Robert O. Agyarko, *God’s Unique Priest (Nyamesofopreko)* (Doctor of Philosophy Thesis: University of the Western Cape, 2009), 41.

⁵⁴ Solomon Adria, “Colossians” In *African Bible Commentary* edited by Tokunboh Adeyemo (Nairobi: WolrdAlive, 2006), 1479.

⁵⁵ Afua Kuma, *Jesus of the Deep Forest: Prayers and Praises* translated by Jon Kirby (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 2011), 19.

⁵⁶ Kuma, *Jesus of the Deep Forest*, 49.

person. Without power backing the authority of the police, he/she cannot stop the car from going through the intersection. The same applies to Christians. Jesus gave his disciples authority over the earth; he gave them the power over all the works of Satan and his hosts (Luke 10:19). It is the responsibility of the church to help believers not only to understand their authority on earth but also to apply this authority in practical ways, especially in fighting against forces of darkness. This requires certain principles (which are outlined below).

First, believers must understand the nature of their battle. Since witchcraft activities take place in the spiritual realm, the fight against witchcraft is a spiritual one. As Paul says, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Eph. 6:10 NIV). It is, therefore, wrong to use such physical objects as canes, syringe (*bentoo*), stones and cutlasses in dealing with witchcraft. Perceiving the battle in physical terms, some religious leaders have urged their members to deal with suspected witches and wizards through physical means. One may find a Christian leader flogging an accused witch or wizard bound to a tree. Some pastors also urge their followers to attend church with cutlasses to butcher evil spirits. The author once witnessed a prayer session in which pieces of wood (representing “enemies”) were physically tied with the belief that their enemies will be tied by such an act.⁵⁷ This sympathetic-magic approach to Christianity may motivate a young man to murder his mother suspected to use witchcraft powers to cause retrogression in his life.

The Bible has adequate provisions for dealing with witchcraft. The believer must know that witchcraft has no power over God’s people who continue to trust in him. Once the believer abides in Christ and Christ in him/her, witchcraft has no power over him/her. Therefore, Christians must appropriate the victory that God has won for them over witches. This can be done in a number of ways.⁵⁸ First, believers can fight against witches and wizards using the word of God as a weapon. As Manu asserts “Christians can overcome witchcraft when using the weapons made available in the word of God. We do this by commanding the powers of witchcraft to break over our lives and any areas we may perceive its operations. It is a stubborn spirit and hence it requires a violent attack and absolute faith on the part of the believer.”⁵⁹ There are passages in the Bible that can be used to rebuke witches and wizards and make them powerless and used to resist evil spirits (Psa. 61:3; James 4:7).

Secondly, believers’ holy life is a great weapon in fighting against evil forces. According to Isaac Nyanful, “the efficacy of warfare prayers to fight demonic activities largely depends on the holiness of the believer.”⁶⁰ It is believed that holiness creates an aura around the believer to prevent attacks by evil forces. Nyanful cites the following case to substantiate the role of holiness in spiritual warfare: “I remember one day in a deliverance session involving myself and some colleagues, the one who was leading the prayer was rebuked by the spirit that had manifested in a lady we were praying for. The spirit said ‘You too you are participating in the exercise of exorcism?’”⁶¹ What the spirit said could be interpreted as “Who are you to exorcise me?” The spirit was, in effect, saying that the leader of the prayer session was not qualified to cast it out because of his unholy life. This is reminiscent of the story of the sons of Sceva (Acts 19:11-20) and stresses the importance of holiness in spiritual warfare. Holiness draws one closer to God and hence builds spiritual strength and stability (Psa. 15:1-6). Sin perforates one’s spiritual armor and makes him/her susceptible to the attacks of the enemy. Similarly, nominalism hinders one’s victory over evil forces. One has to be fully committed to God to fully benefit from the power of God against evil powers.

Thirdly, objects such as water, anointing oil, handkerchiefs and face towels, among others, may also be used to overcome witches and wizards. It must be noted, however, that these objects cannot be used in isolation; they must be accompanied by prayer.⁶² The Holy Spirit uses these objects to make contact with the person involved and then manifests his power to bring about exorcism. Christian

⁵⁷ The researcher observed this kind of practice at Berekum in January, 2015.

⁵⁸ Nyanful, Interview by author.

⁵⁹ Manu, Interview by author.

⁶⁰ Nyanful, Interview by author.

⁶¹ Nyanful, Interview by author.

⁶² Nyanful, Interview by author.

leaders must teach their followers to avoid putting their trust in these objects rather than in God who uses these objects as means of demonstrating his power over evil forces.

Both Manu and Nyanful consider praises, and adoration as effective weapons against witchcraft (Psa. 149:6). According to Nyanful, when the spirit rebuked his colleague (in the earlier story), the Spirit of God told him to simply adore God and see the miracle that would happen.⁶³ He started singing and as he sang, the evil spirit manifested and told the people to tell him (Nyanful) to stop singing. He continued to sing and adore God, and others joined him. With time, the songs of adoration invoked God's power to deal with the evil spirit. Nyanful explains this experience on the basis of the idea that God dwells in the praises of his people (Psa. 22:3).

Another weapon for dealing with witchcraft issues is the blood of Jesus.⁶⁴ Manu finds the basis of this weapon in Revelation 12:11: "They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb...." (NIV). The efficacy of the blood of Jesus in dealing with evil spirits is highlighted in the many contemporary Christian practices in Ghana. Nicholas Duncan-Williams describes Jesus's blood as "efficacious", "redeeming", "sanctifying", "cleansing", "justifying", "prevailing", "overcoming", and "triumphant."⁶⁵ Christians use the blood of Jesus in both passive and active ways. One may say, "I cover my children with the blood of Jesus", "I sanctify this food with the blood of Jesus", "I cover business with the blood of Jesus." David Oyedepo contends that a person who declares "I cover myself with the blood of Jesus" becomes "no trespass" territory to Satan because "[t]he blood is a devastating weapon against Satan; he hasn't got an answer to it and never will."⁶⁶ In line with this thought, some believers sprinkle their cars, houses, furniture, clothes, shops, and other possessions with the blood of Jesus to ward off witches and wizards. The active use of the blood of Jesus includes such declarations as "May Jesus's blood rebuke you," or "May the blood of Jesus cancel it." These declarations usually come in the context of a believer's dealing with evil forces.

The belief that the blood of Jesus is efficacious for spiritual warfare explains the increasing use of *Sobolo* (hibiscus tea) among some Christians in Ghana in recent times. *Sobolo* is a drink made from dried sepals of the hibiscus flower. The *Sobolo* drink, which is red in color, is said to change into Jesus' blood when obtained from the religious leader. This echoes the belief that the Eucharistic wine and bread are the blood and body of Christ respectively. There is an argument as to who introduced the religious/spiritual significance of the hibiscus tea in the Ghanaian religious landscape. In the midst of the argument, it is clear that the use of *Sobolo* for healing and deliverance purposes in Ghanaian Christian circles is gaining unprecedented popularity. In the view of the author, the miraculous use of *Sobolo* in the Ghanaian Christian context should be checked/regulated so that it does not lead to a possible manipulative approach to healing and deliverance.

Given the foregoing discourse, to believe in Christ and at the same time fear the power of witchcraft is incompatible. That is, the belief in Christ and the fear that one can be harmed by witchcraft activities are parallel. However, without adequate teachings on the believer's authority, many Christians will continue to entertain fear of witchcraft and focus less on the power of God. Some of such Christians may eventually seek protection from ungodly sources. In addition to the above, Christians must live responsibly and show neighborly love to all, including witches and wizards. The next section explains this.

Demonstrating Neighborly Love and Living Responsibly

The goodness and love of God should inform the believer's attitude toward witches and wizards (Psa. 84:11; 104:10-30; Jas. 1:17). God graciously created human beings in his own image (Gen. 1:26-27), endowing them with spiritual nature, sociability, creativity, and morality, among others. The fall of humanity affected God's image in human beings but did not erase it totally. Therefore, each person, no matter the person's state, still carries the divine image. Since everyone, even the witch or wizard,

⁶³ Nyanful, Interview by author.

⁶⁴ Manu, Interview by author.

⁶⁵ Nicholas Duncan-Williams, *Deploying the Blood* (Accra: Dominion Publications, 2012), blurb.

⁶⁶ David Oyedepo, *Signs and Wonders Today: A Catalogue of the Amazing Acts of God Among Men* (Ota: Dominion Publishing House, 2006), 119.

is made in the image of God, one must be careful how he/she treats those accused to be witches and wizards. Inhumane treatment given to people accused to be witches and wizards is unacceptable by Christian standards and must stop. The love of God shown to humanity through the death of Christ must produce in the believer the love for the neighbor. Therefore, believers are expected to show love and compassion to those who are possessed by evil spirits. The reality of witchcraft should not mar social relations. Christians should not allow the reality of witchcraft to cause terror, division, envy, and confusion among them. Instead of wishing for the death of their “enemies”, believers must pray for their deliverance so that they can also experience the saving power of Christ and enter the kingdom of light.

Furthermore, believers must note that God is with them in all their challenges. Suffering was introduced into the world because of Adam’s sin. The consequences of Adam’s sin include death, pain, domination of a wife by her husband, a curse on the ground and hard labor (Gen. 3:16-19). Aside from Adam’s sin, evil and suffering also come from wrong moral choices.⁶⁷ This means that one way to deal with evil is to live responsibly. God has endowed humankind with the morality to freely make responsible choices. Choices correspond to consequences. For example, a person may choose to rob others and, in the end, have one hand amputated in the process of stealing. Similarly, a person who chooses to live a promiscuous life may be infected with HIV/AIDS. Again, the inevitable result of being lazy is poverty. Every believer must be fully aware of the possible consequences of the choices they make and then make informed decisions.

As believers strive to live responsibly, the negative effect that witchcraft beliefs have on economic progress must be checked. From the Christian perspective, it is unethical to refuse to work because of the belief that witchcraft activities will take one’s income away. Such people should not blame any witch or evil spirit. Christian leaders must develop and promote a theology of work that prioritizes diligence under the guidance of God. In fact, human beings are free to act, making their own decisions. But if one decides to jump from a storey building, ride a motorbike at an unreasonable speed, or refuse to take good care of his/her health and die as a result, one should not attribute the misfortune to evil forces. Thus, people must take responsible decisions in life and be ready to accept the consequence of their choices as their own doing rather than attributing it to some external forces such as witchcraft.

Responsible living also requires law enforcement agencies in the country to enforce laws on human rights abuse. As the paper noted earlier, accusations of witchcraft have negative repercussions that violate numerous human rights. Attacks against the accused constitute a violation of their fundamental rights which includes the freedoms of life, liberty, and property ownership and, in some situations, the ban against torture. Traditional authorities and the church should desist from such abuses and help the government implement measures to curtail witchcraft-related abuses. The church must use her prophetic voice to speak against all forms of unlawful treatment given to accused witches and wizards. The church should also solidarize with such people and give them the needed physical and spiritual support.

CONCLUSION

The paper has found that though the Bible attests to the existence of witches and wizards, Christianity considers witchcraft as totally evil, categorically condemns it and prohibits believers from practicing this vice. It also found that witchcraft accusations and their subsequent consequences on the accused and their relatives may include human rights violations, disruption to social life, disruption of interpersonal relationships, and retarded economic development. Again, it was found that belief in witchcraft affects the spiritual growth of some Christians. To deal with the situation, it has been proposed that the church, while accepting the reality of witchcraft, develops and promotes teachings that will highlight how Christians can apply their authority in Christ to overcome their fears of the effect of witchcraft on their lives. Such teachings are also expected to help Christians show love and

⁶⁷ Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, 388.

compassion to people accused to be involved in witchcraft and then live responsibly under God's guidance to improve their lives. Also, the church is encouraged to solidarize with those accused as witches and wizards, speak on their behalf against being treated unlawfully and give them the needed spiritual and physical support.

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