

Kwasi Atta Agyapong

WITCHCRAFT IN GHANA

Belief, Practice and Consequences



Foreword by Jonathan E.T.Kuwornu-Adjaottor

 Noyam



Kwasi Atta Agyapong

WITCHCRAFT IN GHANA

Belief, Practice and Consequences



Foreword by Jonathan E.T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor

 Noyam

PUBLISHERS
Accra, Ghana

Witchcraft in Ghana: Belief, Practice and Consequences.

Kwasi Atta Agyapong

Copyright © 2021 Noyam Publishers.

ISBN 978 – 9988 – 3 – 1740 – 9

DOI: 10.38159/npub.eb2021502

Published in Ghana by

Noyam Publishers

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

For further information or permission, contact:

Noyam Publishers

P.O. Box 165 La, Accra-Ghana

Contact Number: +233 593142920

Email: publications@noyam.org

Website: www.noyam.org

This book is dedicated to Reverend Professor Opoku Onyinah and Reverend Eric Kwabena Nkyamekye (former and current Chairmen of the Church of Pentecost respectively), Reverend Alexander Nana Yaw Kumi Larbi, Reverend Dr. Christian Tsekpoe, Reverend Robert Kobina Dentu, Rev. Foster Kwasi Aniakwaa and my beloved wife, Lucy Agyapong for their dedication and support unto me that have culminated into this study.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Rev. David Arthur and Nalari Isaiah who were my research assistants at the Gnani witch camp in the northern region. Deacons Gideon Adomako, Arhin Frederick, Elder Francis Kumi Wiredu together with Brother Emmanuel Omari Darfour were of great help to me when the primary data was gathered at Nkawkaw and I am very grateful to them.

I am indebted to Rev. Solomon & Mrs. Cynthia Mantey and Rev. Rigwell Ato and Mrs. Grace Addison who saw me afar off mentored and recommended me to the full-time ministry of the Church of Pentecost.

A round of applause to my children who supported my interest to pursue the publishing of this book.

Contents

DEDICATION	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	IV
TABLE OF CONTENTS	V
FOREWORD	IX
PREFACE	X

CHAPTER ONE

THE CONCEPT OF WITCHCRAFT BELIEF IN GHANA

Introduction	1
The Concept of Witchcraft belief	1
<i>Witches fly at night</i>	2
<i>Witches drink human blood and eat human flesh</i>	3
The Position adopted by the book	4

CHAPTER TWO

SCHOLARLY VIEWS ON THE CONCEPT OF WITCHCRAFT BELIEF

Introduction	6
Opoku Onyinah	6
Abraham Akrong	10
Rick Joyner	12
Daniel Olukoya	12
Perry Stone	13
J.P. Timmons	13
Johannes Merz	14
Alexander Crampton	15
Owusu Berempong	16
Conclusion	17

CHAPTER THREE

WITCHCRAFT ACQUISITION AND WITCH CAMPS IN GHANA

Introduction	18
Witchcraft Acquisition	18
Witch camps in Ghana	19
<i>Bonyasi witch camp</i>	19

<i>Photo 1: Picture showing Bonyasi witch camp and some accused witches.</i>	19
<i>Gambaga witch camp</i>	19
<i>Photo 2: Picture showing Gambaga witch camp and some accused witches</i>	20
<i>Gnani witch camp</i>	20
<i>Gushegu witch camp</i>	21
<i>Photo 4: Picture showing Gushegu witch camp and some accused witches.</i>	22
<i>Kpatinga witch camp</i>	22
<i>Photo 5: Picture showing Kpatinga witch camp and some accused witches.</i>	22
<i>Kukuo witch camp</i>	22
<i>Photo 6: Picture showing Kukuo witch camp and some accused witches.</i>	22
<i>Nabuli witch camp</i>	23
<i>Photo 7: Picture showing Nabuli witch camp and some accused witches.</i>	23
Perspectives of Ghanaians outside the witch camp	23
Assemblages of Witchcraft Belief and Practice in Ghana	24
Addressing the three groups of witchcraft belief and practice in Ghana	24
<i>Witch-cynic paradigm</i>	24
<i>Witch-detectors</i>	25
<i>Witch-centric conduct</i>	25

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BEDROCKS OF WITCHCRAFT BELIEF IN THE GHANAIAN SOCIETY

Introduction	27
Witchcraft belief and the family set up in Ghana	27
Witchcraft belief on marriage and fertility in Ghana	29
Witchcraft belief and Chieftaincy in Ghana	30
Witchcraft and economic conditions of Ghana	31
Witchcraft belief and unemployment in Ghana	34
Witchcraft belief on poverty, sickness and social vices	35
Witchcraft belief on misfortune	36
Conclusion	36

CHAPTER FIVE

AKAN AND KONKOMBA WITCHCRAFT INVESTIGATIONS

Introduction	37
Akan Witchcraft Test	37
Konkomba Witchcraft Test	38
Appraisal of Witchcraft trials of the Akan and Konkomba	40
Conclusion	41

CHAPTER SIX

WITCHCRAFT BELIEF, PRACTICE AND CONSEQUENCES IN GHANA

Introduction	42
Gender and age discrimination	42
Educational Challenges	44
The increased rate of Poverty	45
Medical challenges	46
Estrangement of relationships	46
The Incidence of Lawlessness	47
The Exploitation of the weak and the vulnerable by the strong and affluent	48
Conclusion	48

CHAPTER SEVEN

BIBLICAL, ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND PSYCHIATRIC PERSPECTIVES OF WITCHCRAFT BELIEF IN GHANA

Introduction	49
Biblical Perspective	49
Witchcraft belief on marriage and fertility	49
Biblical perspective on the belief that witches fly at night	51
Biblical perspective on witches drinking human blood and eating human flesh	52
Biblical perspective on witches causing poverty, sickness and other social vices	54
Biblical perspective on witches causing misfortune	55
Biblical Perspective on Curbing the activities of witches through witch camps	57

Anthropological Perspective	58
Psychiatrists Perspective	60
Conclusion	61

CHAPTER EIGHT

WITCHCRAFT BELIEF AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS IN GHANA

Introduction	62
Ethics in the Christian Perspective	62
An appreciation of ethical implications of belief and practices of witchcraft in Ghana.	65
<i>Marriage and fertility</i>	65
<i>Flying in the night</i>	65
<i>Camping of witches</i>	66
Conclusion	66

CHAPTER NINE

PASTORAL AND THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE TO WITCHCRAFT BELIEF AND ACTIVITIES IN GHANA

Introduction	67
Pastoral responses	68
The Theological response to the belief and activities of witchcraft in Ghana	71
<i>Man, the Imago Dei (Image of God)</i>	72
<i>Enthronization of the Holy Spirit</i>	73
<i>The affirmation of believers authority</i>	74
Conclusion	75

CONCLUDING REMARKS 76

BIBLIOGRAPHY 77

APPENDIX 1 - Interviews 81

APPENDIX II - Ethnologic map of Ghana 84

APPENDIX III - Glossary of Asante and Konkomba Words 85

Foreword

Witchcraft is difficult to define. However, its definition is best conceptualized in what it is believed to cause – harm, social instability such as famine, rapid change, oppression and economic distress. These beliefs about witchcraft, are deeply rooted in Ghanaian culture. The beliefs can be traced back to hundreds of years before the coming of the colonial powers.

In Ghana, some scholars have attributed witchcraft to psychological imbalances resulting from ill health and misfortunes. Others see it from a spiritual perspective. To them witchcraft is a reality which roots stem from the spiritual world, manifesting itself in the physical. The result of the belief in witchcraft is that some Ghanaians have shirked virtually all their responsibilities and roles in society, and are blaming witches for their misfortunes.

Witchcraft in Ghana: Belief, Practices and Consequences examines witchcraft activities in Ghana with the aim of quantifying its impact on the socio-economic, religio-cultural and anthropo-psychological development in Ghana. The Author's research on the subject is in-depth. He has added his voice to what earlier scholars such as, Hans Debrunner, Abraham Akrong, Owusu Berempong, Johnson K. Asamoah-Gyadu, Opoku Onyinah, Joseph Quayesi-Amakye and Christian Tsekpoe have written about witchcraft.

The book is a must-read for all who are seeking additional information on witchcraft in Ghana. I recommend it as a basic textbook on the subject in Ghanaian tertiary institutions. The general reader will also benefit immensely from the book.

Jonathan Edward Tetteh Kuwornu-Adjaottor
Associate Professor - Department of Religious Studies,
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana.

Preface

There are varied views concerning the belief in witchcraft in Ghana. In pre-Christian religions in Ghana, reality consists of an organism and physical entities imbued with varying degrees and qualities of supernatural power and hardly do things happen at will, naturally, accidentally, or by negligence. The material realm and the realm of the supernatural are not detached from each other but are fettered up and undivided: nothing is purely natural, since spirits control everything and vicissitudes occur as a result of one spirit acting upon another thing, thus a chain reaction. Deaths are hardly natural as well as sicknesses and business failures. There is always a link between physical evil and supernatural wicked forces that are the witches. The belief of Ghanaians with regards to witchcraft affects the way they live and act which has a direct bearing on Ghanaian society. Witchcraft belief also embraces a system of values that regulate human conduct.¹ Witchcraft takes part in all misfortunes and scarcely may any hypothetical evil transpire, deprived of a witch who is branded to have activated the malicious act.

The people of Ghana often seek higher powers or spiritual persons who will protect them from the witches who are regarded as life-threatening forces. The early missionaries who came to Ghana, in their zeal to “evangelize and civilize the indigenous people” spelled out that, belief in the spirit-forces such as the gods, fetishism, dwarfs, amulets and witchcraft are devilish and demon induced, thus enforcing their belief in the spiritual forces but failed to provide for the all-inclusive needs of the people to combat these life-threatening forces as they have believed over the years. As a result, this has been a struggle for Ghanaians and down through the centuries to date, the belief of the activities of witchcraft has hugely affected the Ghanaian society. Debrunner’s research in Ghana in 1959 postulated that witches cause social instability such as famine, rapid change, oppression and economic distress.² Field’s case studies and analysis of so-called witches in Ghana

¹ Edward Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among The Azande*. (Clarendon: Oxford, 1937),18.

² 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. (1959).

also revealed that witchcraft is attributed to psychological imbalances resulting from ill health and misfortunes.³ In Ghana, an effective Christian ministry with significant relevance and impact seems intolerable unless one takes into account the misfortunes and evil promulgated by witchcraft and how to deal with them. Access to power and dominion to deal with witchcraft is critical not only for realistic pastoral care but also for understanding African responses to the Gospel throughout Christian mission history.⁴ The concept of Witchcraft issues has spread over the years in Ghana and this has greatly impacted Ghanaian society. The speculations that all misfortune, social instability, the canker in society, mishaps, sicknesses, and all negatives in life are caused by witches are quite widespread. Belief, Practice and consequences stemmed from the fact that some Ghanaians have shirked all their responsibilities and roles in society but rather blame witches when bad things happen to them. This inadvertently situates Ghanaians at a pedestal where they are helpless about the plights they are faced with because a power beyond their reach is in control.

The book seeks to find ways to understand the Ghanaian belief in the activities of witchcraft and to quantify its impact on the socio-economic, religio-cultural and psychological development of Ghanaians. This book is based on research conducted by the Author to find out the effect of witchcraft belief on Ghanaian Society. The nine-chapter book discusses the concept of witchcraft belief in Ghana, the acquisition of witchcraft and the living conditions of these accused witches in some selected witch camps in Ghana. The book also looks at the activities of witches and wizards from the Ghanaian perspective as well as the effects of their activities on the economy and social lives of the people. It finally discusses the biblical, anthropological and psychiatric perspectives of the belief and activities of witchcraft in Ghana.

³ Margaret Joyce Field, *Search for security: An Ethno-psychiatric study of rural Ghana*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1960).

⁴ Johnson K. Asamoah-Gyadu, Witchcraft accusations and Christianity in Africa, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 39 no. 1, (2015): 23–27.

CHAPTER 1

The Concept of Witchcraft Belief in Ghana

Introduction

Africa's cosmology is characterized by a preoccupation with good and evil spirits.⁵ Ghana is located in the western part of Africa. Modern Ghana comprises of about seventy-five ethno linguistic groupings of which most are the Akan, Mossi, Ewe and Ga.⁶ Ghana the then Gold Coast became a British colony in 1874.⁷

Witchcraft issues have been widely discussed over the years in Ghana and this has greatly impacted the Ghanaian society. Different peoples from different backgrounds and cultures share contrary views about witchcraft activities based on their personal experiences, cultures and religion. This chapter discusses the concept of witchcraft belief and activities in Ghana and explains the position adopted by this book.

The Concept of Witchcraft Belief

In pre-Christian religions in Ghana, realities were made up of beings and objects imbued with fluctuating grades and potentials of supernatural power. The speculations that all misfortune, social instability, the canker in society, mishaps, sicknesses and all negatives in life are caused by witches are quite widespread. The challenge is that some Ghanaians have relegated all their responsibilities and roles but rather blame witches when bad things happen to them. This inadvertently situates Ghanaians at a pedestal where they are helpless about the plights they are faced with because a power beyond their reach is in control of their affairs. The

⁵ Opoku Onyiah, "Akan Witchcraft and the Concept of Exorcism in The Church of Pentecost." (PhD, The University of Birmingham, 2002).

⁶ See Appendix II, p.84. *Ethnologic Map of Ghana*.

⁷ Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalising African Economy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004),1.

belief in the activities of witchcraft seems to cause much confusion and divisions amongst family members, churches and the society at large and pragmatic efforts and principles should be set in motion to avert its negative repercussions on the Ghanaian society.

The corporeal realm and the realm of the spirit are not separate from each other, but are bound up in one whole: nothing is purely natural, since spirits imbue everything and vicissitudes transpire as a result of one spirit acting upon another.⁸ Onyinah's assertion on witchcraft issues postulates that witchcraft and the ways of dealing with them have continually posed problems for African ethnic groups.⁹ There is a strong belief that nothing happens accidentally or naturally in Ghana: there is always a link between physical evil and supernatural wicked forces who are the witches.¹⁰ The belief of Ghanaians with regards to witchcraft affects the way they live and act which has a direct bearing on Ghanaian society. Some common witchcraft beliefs in Ghana are described below:

Witches fly at night

Ghanaians believe that witches fly at night. "Onyinah affirms the sentiment of some Ghanaians and writes that: "At the night, it is believed that their *akra* (souls) leave their physical bodies in sleep and fly into meetings."¹¹ Debrunner writes that the meeting places of witches are believed to be on big trees.¹² Ghanaians often recount stories where some witches fly to other continents of the world to go and cause havoc to victims. Is it possible for witches to fly long distances to places like Europe, American, or Asia since it's often assumed they fly in the night only? There was a consensus from the respondents of the interview that, witches fly at night. However, Timmons asks, "how does a witch change into an owl and fly through the night?"¹³ He then explains that it is the general belief that spirit beings operate at a much higher speed and frequency than human beings in the physical world.¹⁴

⁸ Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*, 83.

⁹ Onyinah, "Akan Witchcraft and the Concept of Exorcism in The Church of Pentecost."

¹⁰ Joseph Quayesi-Amakye, "Coping with evil in Ghanaian Pentecostalism." *Exchange*, 43, (2014): 254-272.

¹¹ Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism: Witchcraft and Demonology in Ghana*, 56.

¹² Debrunner, *Witchcraft in Ghana*, 56-57.

¹³ Timmons, *Mysterious secrets of the Dark kingdom*, 30.

¹⁴ Timmons, *Mysterious secrets of the Dark kingdom*, 28.

He also recounts various experiences in Africa when witches flew from wherever they were sent from and entered his room at 2 am.¹⁵

Witches drink human blood and eat human flesh

From the interviews conducted by the author, it came to light that, witches have great feast days during Christmas periods and they changed their victims into animals before consuming them. Some of the respondents argued that there were instances when those who had been turned to animals e.g. goats and sheep by witches, were set free when their church leaders prayed for them. Some people also claimed that, in churches, there are often revelations that explain how some human beings are turned into animals by witches awaiting slaughter. If the above view is correct, could that mean that witches eat the real flesh of the human being involved physically or spiritually?

The early missionaries who came to Ghana, in their zeal to supposedly evangelize and civilize the indigenous people spelled out that, belief in the spirit-forces such as the gods, fetishism, dwarfs, amulets and witchcraft are devilish and demon induced, that notwithstanding, no antidote was provided to avert the works of the demons. Consequently, the Ghanaians introduced several ways to combat witchcraft activities, some of which have been briefly explained in the following paragraphs.

In Ghana, witch camps are established to house suspected witches, who flee there for safety to avoid being lynched by neighbors or family members. Their life lacks the most basic needs: food, water, shelter, and clothing, but most of all, human recognition, companionship, and love.¹⁶ The culprits housed in the witch camps have been accused as witches and therefore confined to keep them from society. The Ghanaian media has debated on the issue of whether the government should expedite the action of closing down all witch camps in Ghana. Surprisingly, inmates at the camps attested to the fact that they are not ready to desert the camps to their own homes because of the ordeals their own family members or society meted out onto them after they were accused of witchcraft. It seems the witch

¹⁵ Timmons, *Mysterious secrets of the Dark kingdom*, 341.

¹⁶ Robert J. Priest et al., Witchcraft and Mission Studies, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 39 no.1 (2015).

camps have become the shelter for suspected witches who often face the wrath of their communities who may wish to take their lives. The belief in the activities of witchcraft in Ghana often results in brutalities, lynching, murdering among others. On 13th October 2016, the Ghanaian Times published a story on a man who murdered his own grandmother because he suspected her of bewitching him. Debrunner's research in Ghana in 1959 postulated that witchcraft belief was the outcome of social instability such as famine, rapid change, oppression and economic distress.¹⁷ Field's case studies and analysis of so-called witches in Ghana also revealed that witchcraft is attributed to psychological imbalances resulting from ill health and misfortunes.¹⁸

Most often than not in typical Ghanaian societies, an effective Christian ministry with significant relevance and impact seems intolerable unless one takes into account the misfortunes and evil promulgated by witchcraft and how to deal with them. Access to power and dominion to deal with witchcraft or other spirit forces is very crucial in Ghana and it is not only for authentic pastoral care but also to discern African responses to the Gospel throughout Christian mission history.¹⁹ The above assertion describes the belief subscribed to by Ghanaians with regards to the activities of witches and how the gospel can thrive in the Ghanaian context. Any religion that fails to deal with the forces or witches feared by Ghanaians thrives little and its impact on the lives of the people is very minimal. The belief in witchcraft activities and their effect on society is complex because it seems not to affect only those who hold on to the belief, but it affects the entire society and that is the justification of the book.

The Position adopted by the book

With this background, the author seeks to find ways to understand the Ghanaian perspective of the activities of witchcraft and to weigh its impact on the socio-economic, religio-cultural, and psychological development of the Ghanaian society. Also, there are discussions on some pastoral and theological reflections that can address the effects of witchcraft belief in Ghanaian society. Through various research studies carried out by the author and reviews of various materials

¹⁷ Debrunner, *Witchcraft in Ghana*.

¹⁸ Field, *Search for Security*.

¹⁹ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Witchcraft accusations and Christianity in Africa*, 23–27.

on the subject, a paradigm will be recommended that will re-shape the belief of Ghanaians on the activities of witches. This paradigm seeks to challenge the trend where most Ghanaians regard issues affecting their lives and society as witchcraft induced. This is to prevent its negative rippling effect on Ghana as far as her socio-economic, religious-culture, psychological and human resource developments are concerned. The major question addressed in this book is whether the belief in the activities of witchcraft can hamper or affect progress or development in Ghanaian society? Other issues addressed are how the bible, anthropology, and psychoanalysts view/assess the belief of the activities of witchcraft.

The different interpretations Ghanaians give to the belief in the activities of witchcraft are colossal and they shoot from their various religious-cultural dimensions, experiences, psychosomatic orientations which have a direct bearing on the Ghanaian society. A society that feeds on an inadequate belief system makes inappropriate choices and actions; therefore there is a need to assess the Ghanaians belief in the activities of witches. There is also a belief that witches are capable of causing good or evil to befall mankind and this book explores those sentiments as well.

Moreover, the book also provides recommendations helpful to Churches, policymakers and non-governmental organizations in Ghana to stand as a voice and speak into the issues that affect Ghanaians as a result of witchcraft belief. The book finally recommends pastoral and theological responses to curb the negative impact of witchcraft belief in the Ghanaian society.

CHAPTER 2

Scholarly Views on the Concept of Witchcraft Belief

Introduction

A lot of studies have been conducted on witchcraft beliefs and activities in Ghana. In this section, the author reviews pieces of literature that relate to the phenomenon and unveils the existing gaps that compel the need for this book.

Opoku Onyinah

Onyinah brings to light that the Ghanaian terrain is preoccupied with the assumption of good and evil spirits.²⁰ He explains that generally evil is attributed to witchcraft since it is believed that all evil powers can be in confederation with witches to carry out malevolent acts. Onyinah stresses that in the African cosmology, to achieve the expected good life, one has to consult a spiritually powerful person, who can prescribe the right type of solution to hindrances and challenges in life. The principal evil causers: the witches, when found out either through prophets of God, Islamic clerics (*Mallams*), or traditional priests, are exorcised by supposed powerful persons to stop them from causing more harm to people. Exorcism plays a major role in religious activities and is all geared towards the fear of witchcraft and how to deal with them.

Onyinah added that when the missionaries came to Ghana in the 1800s, they taught the Ghanaians that, belief in spirit forces including witchcraft is superstition, and the power behind them is the devil and his demons. This teaching unconsciously

²⁰ Opoku Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism: Witchcraft and Demonology in Ghana*. (Blandford Forum: Deo Publishing, 2012).

strengthened the belief of the local people in the phenomenon. Additionally, they did not provide them with the antidote to these life-threatening forces (witches). This has been the search for Ghanaians, as to how to really engage these witches and to prevent them from practicing their diabolic activities meted out on their fellow human beings, who are weaklings because they are not spiritually powerful. He also mentions that, since the early part of the twentieth century, a number of exorcist activities emerged to bail people out of the reach of witches: anti-witchcraft shrines, African initiated churches and Pentecostal churches. The colonial regimes tried to suppress the belief in the activities of witches as they said it hampers the progress of a nation but it re-emerged in other strands or forms with time.

Based on these assertions, this book seeks to engage the populace of Ghana and to find out how the belief in the activities of witchcraft is affecting the Ghanaian society. Onyinah's book was an effort to investigate and interpret why the belief still persists amongst Ghanaians (from the Akan context) and to suggest a theological framework for exorcists which will not continue to instill fear and cause confusion amongst the people as has always been the case. Onyinah was right in his argument that the belief in witchcraft was affirmed by the missionaries who themselves wanted to defuse the phenomenon, however, what the missionaries said seems to be a step toward the empowerment and liberation of Ghanaians from these life-threatening forces (witches) though their assertion was not holistic nor complete in their urge to curb the trend.

Onyinah further suggested that the attention given to the demoniac (witches) is unnecessary and therefore Ghanaian Pentecostals have to contextualize the Christian message by taking the African spirit world seriously. He suggested that prognostication (*abisa*) which is very prominent in the Akan context, with regards to how they deal or combat the life-threatening forces should be integrated into the Christian worship, which is a very good recommendation, but he did not provide the required structure or framework for the *abisa* which he called the prophethood of all believers and prophetic counseling and how it must be carried out.²¹ The Akan Christian view of *abisa* suggests that it is an unholy act found only in traditional shrines of the gods, and *abisa* is among the central activity of the work

²¹ Onyinah, "Akan Witchcraft and the Concept of Exorcism in The Church of Pentecost," 273.

of traditional priests (*akomfo*).²² The *akomfo* will provide the mysteries with regards to a person's plights and further prescribe its solution. If *abisa* that is known from the Akan context is integrated into the Christian rituals as the prophethood of all believers, what becomes the fate of ministers or believers who cannot be possessed to foretell a person's plights? And can that amount to manipulation? Is it possible that ministers or believers who cannot provide the divinatory consultation (*abisa*) will hire or recruit another to be in charge of that area as contextualization is being recommended? Moreover, in the Akan context, the traditional priests (*akomfo*) does not hire or recruit other traditional priests (*akomfo*) to perform divinatory consultation for their clients as they are capable of receiving from their respective deities, should issues of this sort crop up in the course of contextualization, will that not be a mere winding of the wheel which in reality cannot provide the needed solution? The *akomfo* whose chief occupation is *abisa* in the Akan context are possessed involuntarily of which most of them initially struggle to come out from.

The Akans call the involuntary possession of people by deities' as *akom afa no*, transliterated as 'the spirits of the gods have taken hold of him/her.' The Author is of the view that it is not the same as Christian ministry or assurance of salvation where the person out of his /her own volition decides to serve God. Can two divergent issues of this sort provide the same antidote? The author further suggests that as "*abisa*" is for the *akomfo* so is sharing of the gospel or *asempaka* for Christians. A Christian attempt to sideline their main occupation and to compete for the chief occupation of the *akomfo* will be a disaster because they cannot be like the *akomfo* and such an attempt will rather unveil the church's deficiencies and the result will in turn project the *akomfo* and their efficacy to provide *abisa* which Ghanaians need due to the belief in witches.

Christians believe that the ability to foretell or predict is a gift from the Holy Spirit (1Corinthians 12:8-10) and it implies that not all believers or ministers might receive this gift as the Spirit gives as He wills (1 Corinthians 12:11). The effect is that the prophethood of all believers and prophetic counseling cannot be operated by all believers in Christianity and therefore contextualization may not be the way forward as recommended by Onyinah.

²² Onyinah, "Akan Witchcraft and the Concept of Exorcism in The Church of Pentecost," 85.

He further suggests that the Ghanaian Pentecostal approach to dealing with these life-threatening forces, including witchcraft and demons is in tension with the bible and cannot help the African Christians to be delivered from their fear of evil spirits. He, therefore, sees the current deliverance ministries that deal with issues of witchcraft as an incomplete attempt to deal with the African spirit. The author agrees to Onyinah's position to an extent and then disagrees, because the attempt by various deliverance ministries to deal with witchcraft in Ghana is often incomplete as asserted, but that notwithstanding they seem to combat the issues that frighten Ghanaians and that seems to be the reason why the missionaries could not do away with the anti-witchcraft shrines and other powerful persons and deities who claim to exorcise witches. There were times some of the *akomfo* were flogged by the missionaries but that could not deter them from operating just as in the instance where King Saul banned the practice of necromancy in Israel but the practice still prevailed.²³

The author's position is that some Christians have swept away the issue of witchcraft under the carpet as if it is unnecessary; forgetting that, one of the reasons why people flee to the church is to find shelter and protection from these witches. The testimonies and dreams about events that lead most people to Christ tell it all. Christians should be bold and courageous enough to address these issues in the church and to provide the members with the requisite ammunition to arm themselves to a level that, they will courageously deal with their own challenges (witches). Christians cannot afford the consequence if Ghanaians should sound an alarm that the church is now unable to deal with these life-threatening forces (witches).

Christian leaders must present the Gospel message in a manner that the average Ghanaian may understand that the power of Jesus Christ transcends and diffuses or neutralizes the powers of witchcraft which often causes fear. Ghanaians admire the visible experiences that accompany their religious life and are often comfortable when they receive physical objects as evidence. Thus, leaders who provide anointing oil and other spiritual directions (*akwankyerε*) are believed to abort the activities of witches and are hailed in the Ghanaian context as very powerful persons who can exorcise witches. The church's silence on the phenomenon has

²³ Onyinah, "Akan Witchcraft and the Concept of Exorcism in The Church of Pentecost," 101.

triggered the emergence of some supposed powerful men of God who deceive Ghanaians and take huge sums of money from them, yet their clients seem satisfied because they think their enemies have been taken care of. The challenge and the way forward seem to stem from the

Ghanaian psychosomatic orientation and there is a need to use the word of God to refute that paradigm and encode new principles in line with God's word rather than rebranding or refurbishing traditional principles. Onyinah further suggests that the sovereignty of God should be the focus of Ghanaians: God owns the land and everything within it, He also controls whatever transpires on the land, but that notwithstanding, it should be brought to light that, there is a Ghanaian belief that asserts that, the Supreme Being has transferred some of His powers to the smaller gods and other spirits to manage the affairs of humans.

Hence, they can reward or punish and this belief has become the source of fear among most Ghanaians and as a result, they seek protection from supposed powerful men. It should also be clarified that their fears do not hinge only on witches but also on other deities like the smaller gods (*abosom*) and ancestors (*nananom*) who can afflict them with various punishments when they are not pleased with the way humans live. This assertion explains the belief Ghanaians place in charismatic or powerful leaders, other than looking to the Supreme Being for help to deliver them from these life-threatening forces (witches and other spirits). This is the reason why church leaders must present themselves as anointed men of God prepared by God to pray for the members to avert the diabolic activities of these witches whom they fear. It is very clear that Onyinah did a sterling work but did not research into the activities of witchcraft and its effects on the Ghanaian society and this is the gap this work intends to fill.

Abraham Akrong

Akrong in his article writes on the belief in witchcraft and its associated practices, which in recent times has gained so much prominence, especially in Neo-Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Ghana. He stresses that this mentality is sustained by the dualistic worldview in which one attributes all misfortunes to the work of evil forces and witches and hence Christianity is perceived as the religion with the power to deal with the threats of witches. He further defines the neo-witchcraft

mentality as an interpretive scheme for dealing with misfortune and disasters. Akrong goes further to postulate that witchcraft mentality in contemporary Ghanaian society is described as the theory of evil because it allows its adherents to concretize evil by making it specific and identifiable with an external agent (witch). He traces this neo-witchcraft mentality as shooting up from the traditional African metaphysical construction of the world.²⁴ Akrong traces the neo-witchcraft mentality to the following structures rooted in the African worldview: African ontology and metaphysics of being and the Principle of identity. He asserts that the African mind sees reality as intertwined with spiritual categories, which is to say that, matter is active because it is imbued with an internal power or spiritual energy, additionally, he substantiates the mentality from the principle of identity which spells out that “I am because we are and since we are therefore I am.”²⁵ He explains the principle of identity by the Ga saying: “once you are born, both your enemy and your benefactor are born with you”.

This socio-centric definition of identity makes it clear that another individual or spiritual entity is responsible for what happens to the other. He concludes that the neo-witchcraft mentality in popular Christianity is a repackaging of the traditional witchcraft mentality in Christian categories. He said, the most serious challenge this mentality poses to society is the “enthronement of the magical worldview with its dualistic subtleties that lures us to passivity, dependence, surrender of the power to make choices and accept responsibilities.”²⁶ The Author agrees with Akrong’s view that rationality and scientific thinking is the basic requirement for proper functioning in a global village.²⁷ Additionally, he adds that, the Ghanaian society where this research was conducted lacks more than rationality and scientific thinking and some of which Gifford captures in his book. Akrong’s research mainly unveiled the source or origin of the neo-witchcraft mentality in popular Christianity but like Onyinah did not delve deep into its effects on the Ghanaian society.

²⁴ Abraham Akrong, Neo-Witchcraft Mentality In Popular Christianity, *Research Review New Series*, 16(1), (2000): 1–12.

²⁵ John S. Mbiti, *African Philosophy and Religion*, (New York: Doubleday, 1970).

²⁶ Akrong, Neo-Witchcraft Mentality In Popular Christianity, 11.

²⁷ Akrong, Neo-Witchcraft Mentality In Popular Christianity, 11.

Rick Joyner

Joyner in his book brings to light the stronghold of witchcraft which he claims can influence Christians if they don't discern the nature and operations of witches. He said many Christians are suffering from the attack of those who practice witchcraft. He further defines "witchcraft as a counterfeit spiritual authority that uses a spirit other than the Holy Spirit to dominate, manipulate or control others."²⁸ He reiterates that in Galatians 5:20, the Apostle Paul named witchcraft, or sorcery as one of the deeds of the flesh, which means its origin is from the carnal nature of man, but it usually degenerates into demonic power.²⁹ Joyner postulates that the antidote to overcoming witches is not being ignorant of their schemes/ operations and resisting them firmly through faith (1 Peter 5:8-9).

The author, however, disagrees with the notion that witchcraft can influence Christians if they don't discern their nature and operational strategies. A Christian does not primarily need to discern the nature and operations of witches to be able to resist their influences. If there is an area of interest to a Christian, then it is to know Jesus Christ better (Philippians 3:10) and not witchcraft and its nature. The Bible states clearly that, He who is in us (Christ) is greater than those (witches) in the world (1 John 4:4).

Daniel Olukoya

Olukoya defines witchcraft as "the enemy that hates progress and the enemy that supervises personal and national problems."³⁰ He stresses the fact that witchcraft destroys nations and dismantles profitable foundations. This enemy drinks human blood and eats the flesh of victims. He goes on to argue that many nations are having problems because they are reviving witchcraft powers that were once buried by the missionaries. Witchcraft has infiltrated churches, schools, drama, entertainment, governments, laws, businesses, etc. Olukoya's view on the belief of the activities of witchcraft postulates that witches are capable of wrecking nations such as Ghana of which this research is seeking to unravel.

²⁸ Rick Joyner, *Overcoming Witchcraft, Combating Spiritual Strongholds Series*. (U.S.A.: Charisma House, 2008), 2.

²⁹ Joyner, *Overcoming Witchcraft*, 2.

³⁰ Daniel K. Olukoya, *Praying To Dismantle Witchcraft*. (Lagos: The Battle Cry Ministry Publishers, 2002), 9.

The author acknowledges his contribution to this issue but cannot fathom why all cases of retardation to progress are considered as a result of witchcraft activities. Can retardation to progress also not be traced to laziness, inefficiency, bad governance, illiteracy, corruption, etc. on the part of its victims or nations? Moreover, Olukoya outlines fifty facts about witchcraft and fifty symptoms of witchcraft attacks which are very striking. According to Olukoya some symptoms of witchcraft attacks are “delayed or denied promotions, untimely deaths, always fighting to get anything done, poverty, strange accidents, suicidal tendencies, joblessness, academic and career frustrations, disfavor” etc. It seems Olukoya is of the view that all negativity and backwardness in the life of any person, institution, or nation is the work or activity of witchcraft.³¹ The author asserts that, Olukoya’s view has the tendency of raising irresponsible people who will be negligent as they have the witches to blame when things go wrong. Any nation that thrives on speculations of this sort is heading towards underdevelopment and will have regret in years ahead. The author does not dispute the existence of evil spirits because, there are countless pieces of evidence in the scriptures, but cannot simply understand why all negatives in life that can be explained away rationally and scientifically are attributed to a witch who cannot be described.

Perry Stone

Stone also exposes the warfare of Satan and his cohorts on human beings. He continues to stress that a believer of Jesus Christ who does not renew the spirit of the mind and does not cast down carnal imaginations may find him or herself under mental oppression by the devil and his cohorts which include witchcraft. That is to suggest that when one renews his/her spirit in the light of the word of God and refrains from all carnality as a Christian, witches cannot harass him/her.³²

J.P. Timmons

Timmons also brings to the table his view on whether a Christian can be harassed or possessed with spirits of evil intent or witchcraft? That is to ascertain whether Christians or true disciples of Jesus Christ could be possessed or tormented by these life-threatening forces? Timmons is of the view that “anyone who tells you that a Christian cannot be possessed by demons is not experienced enough to handle

³¹ Olukoya, *Praying To Dismantle Witchcraft*, 17.

³² Perry Stone, *Exposing Satan’s Playbook*, (USA, Charisma House, 2012).

your case, they do not have much experience in the deliverance ministry.”³³ There seems to be a sort of disparity between Stone and Timmons’s teachings on evil spirit’s dealings with Christians. Perry denies the possibility of a Christian being possessed with a demon while Timmons affirms that a Christian can be possessed an evil spirit. Moreover, Stone believes if a Christian does not renew his Spirit’s mind with the word of God it is then that the believer could be oppressed mentally, and even that state differs from the state of possession.

Johannes Merz

Johannes Merz’s work on Witchcraft Beliefs & Moral Dualism in Northern Atakora of Benin postulates that, Christianity and the anti-witchcraft shrines are to be fundamentally appreciated as responses to witchcraft as perceived by the people. The belief seems the normal opinion and lifestyle of the people and is mirrored in the popular idiom ‘I seek life’, which people often give as an answer to the question of why they attended the new church of *Ministère International de Jésus* (MIJ).³⁴ ‘I seek life’ probably developed within the MIJ congregation in Touga to express the pursuit of protection from witches and to get health, wealth and peace. Not only did the two new religious movements offer new ways to deal with their witchcraft beliefs, they also affected their perspective and how they relate with each other. He asserts that, while the priests and attendants at the anti-witchcraft shrines more often blame witches to be liable for difficulties, diseases, famine and destruction in life, there is an essential deviation introduced by Christianity with the notion of the Devil and with it brings to the fore the moral dualism. With this assertion according to Johannes, witches become associated with the Devil who creates challenges and problems for people and as such a need to resort to a higher power for protection and thus the introduction of churches and anti-witchcraft shrines. The proliferation of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches according to Johannes is a response to witchcraft hunts and some literature ultimately evaluates them as a replica of Ghana’s anti-witchcraft shrines in a new form at Atakora in Benin.

The researcher also highlights the fear of the people that, among the Maxi of central Benin, as well as other ethnic groups, to talk about witches and witchcraft,

³³ J.P. Timmons, *Mysterious secrets of the Dark kingdom: The battle for planet earth*. (U.S.A.: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1984), 351.

³⁴ Johannes Merz, “I Seek Life: Witchcraft Beliefs & Moral Dualism in the Northern Atakora of Benin” (Leiden University, the Netherlands, 1998).

especially during the night, is a distasteful and obnoxious practice. Words such as ‘witch’ are often to be conveyed by a euphemism. Johannes presents that, witchcraft is real for those societies who believe in them and this often goes hand in hand with the view that witchcraft’ does not really exist. He also asserts that the position, however, is difficult to maintain or deny because of the vagueness and ambiguity the belief in witchcraft presents which is multifaceted and problematic to conclude on whether it’s a reality or fantasy. Therefore, the question of its reality should not be easily discarded nor affirmed. The discourse on witchcraft beliefs should be taken seriously in order to better understand such politics. Johannes’s discussions on the phenomenon bring out the fear of the people which triggers them to either visit churches or anti-witchcraft shrines as an antidote to their perceived enemies. The author, however, brings to the fore for discussion; could there be a possibility where churches whose main intent and purpose is to preach salvation to lost souls rather lose the essence of their existence and now live to check witches who are hunting people? It should however be noticed, that when the essence of existence is lost, existence becomes a nuisance. Additionally, when people live in fear of witches, they become enslaved by beliefs which those who have believed have not substantially and reasonably explained the reality of their existence.

Alexander Crampton

Alexandra Crampton, in his article proposes that in Ghana, older women may be ostracized, molested, and even murdered as witches. Crampton asserts that, witchcraft beliefs are a part of everyday life in Ghana and a part of aging in Ghana as well. To this effect, older persons who are female are often tagged as witches of which the society frowns upon and often leads to their being abused. His assertion brings out a pitiable situation, where instead of celebrating older persons, it turns out to be the other way round. If there is an old woman in the family or house and the young ones undertakings are not prospering, they will regard her as a witch. But if the young ones in the family are fruitful, they won’t esteem the old woman as a witch. When the younger ones turn out productive in their undertakings, the old women are often regarded as having good witchcraft (*bayi pa*), while the opposite are known as bad witchcraft (*bayi bone*).³⁵ Crampton’s work on Ghana’s belief poses a threat to the peaceful co-existence and sustenance of the Ghanaian society.

³⁵ Alexandra Crampton, “No Peace in the House : Witchcraft Accusations as an “ Old Woman’s Problem ” in Ghana,” *Anthropology & Aging Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (2013): 199–212.

A society that determines the fate of older women on what happens to the younger generation becomes a very serious dereliction and indictment that casts a slur on the integrity of the entire populace. Why would a persons' predicament be tagged to witchcraft custody of another in an equitable and unprejudiced society? Any society that accepts such oblivious blunder as part of their dogmata is negotiating on chancy grounds, as the young shall definitely grow and its rippling effect shall continually degenerate the quandary of the society.

Owusu Berempong

Berempong's study on witchcraft in Ghana reveals that, the belief in witchcraft is ubiquitous not only among the countryside people in Ghana but also in the big towns among the elite; it scratches transversely all communities' classes. He admits that traditional beliefs including witchcraft are part of the religious experience of the people in the African societies.³⁶ Berempong quotes from Margaret Fields' work on the search for security to speak into the viewpoints of Ghanaians assertiveness towards witchcraft beliefs as follows:

Witchcraft is more than a cultural thread; it is the warp reinforcing the spiritual fabric of Ghanaian societies. Even today, despite the impact of Westernization, for adherents of Christianity and Islam the belief in witchcraft is not an alien religious experience. Many people join Western religions looking for new "deities" as benefactors and protectors against the traditional witchcraft system.³⁷

Berempong's discussion further reveals that, witches from the matrilineal side are the ones that can harm and hence used the Akan maxim, *sɛ efie abosea etwa wo a ekyɛn sekan*, literally translated into English as 'the gravel from the home, when it cuts you, it is sharper than the cutlass.' Berempong's work from the background of Akan in Ghana discusses the popular belief of witches where family members who are witches are eligible to attack and harm. Berempongs' etymology of the Akan term *bayifoɔ* (witch) posits that, the *ba* means *child* while the *yifoɔ* means taker. Thus, *bayifoɔ* means one who takes children from another's womb and thus prevents them from giving birth. Debrunner affirms Berempong's key thesis in his writing that, cases are known where the womb or the testicles of both sexes have been removed and thrown into the latrine pit. In the case of the women, the

³⁶ Owusu Brempong, "They Have Used a Broom to Sweep My Womb: The Concept of Witchcraft in Ghana," *Research Review (NS)* 12, no. 1&2 (1996): 42–50.

³⁷ Brempong. "They have used a broom,"42.

witches generally turn the womb upside down to prevent the sperm from entering the womb.³⁸ Witches according to Berempong are feared terribly because they can cause the worst calamity to humans, especially bareness. The Akan of Ghana commonly have a kind of dislike and looks with disparagement on any marital union that has failed to produce children. In derision and humiliation, they call males in childless marriages *Kote krawa* (impotent) and female *obonin* (barren). The Akan say, *Awoɔ yɛnto, awoɔ ne wo yam* meaning children are not bought but from your own womb. Berempong identified from the songs of both popular and traditional singers, lamentations in their songs, *sɛ me kɔ awadɛɛ na manwo ba a, wɔde praɛɛ apra me yam*, plainly meaning, if I marry and cannot produce a child, they have used a broom to sweep my womb. A common witchcraft belief in Ghana is what is being peddled by Berempong in his work, that witches prevent their victims from giving birth and one of the methods is using a broom to sweep the victim's womb.

The challenge with this belief according to the author of this book is how people of all social classes look to witchcraft when bareness exists in a marital relationship. It should however be noted that there are incidences of bareness in the bible, which were not attributed to witches. Additionally, biological research works have enough evidence of people with diseases and divergent malfunctions in their reproductive systems which can also prevent them from having children. That notwithstanding, God is known to shut some wombs in the scriptures for some time for His own intent and in one of the narratives, David's wife had her womb closed by God because she rebuked her husband for dancing before the ark of God. God is a Spirit and biblical evidence has it that, He can close the womb from carrying children and could that be extended to all spirits including witches as also having the power to shut wombs from giving birth according to Ghanaian belief?

Conclusion

A few works of literature that relate to the phenomenon being investigated have been reviewed and other pieces of literature will be consulted in the course of the discussions in the book, but the focus and the gap this work intends to fill is to understand from the Ghanaian perspective, the effects of Ghana's witchcraft belief, practice and accompaniment consequences on individuals and the nation.

³⁸ Berempong. "They have used a broom to sweep my womb,"45.

CHAPTER 3

Witchcraft Acquisition and Witch Camps in Ghana

Introduction

The African is believed to be highly religious and dutifully bound to religion. Most aspects of the African life trace its roots to a deeper religious belief embedded in a transcendental being outside one's reach. This can be observed from the passage rites (birth, marriage, and death), songs, dance, folktales, etc. Ghana as an African nation is not exempted as a myriad of its beliefs have their roots from various religious beliefs within the region. Witchcraft belief infiltrates Ghanaian life and is deeply embedded in the people. Kirby as well as most of the respondents in the interviews conducted agreed that witchcraft activities and beliefs certainly exist in Ghana.³⁹ This chapter discusses witchcraft acquisition, witch camps in Ghana and perspectives of outsiders on witch camping.

Witchcraft Acquisition

In Ghana, it is a popular belief that people get witchcraft from *juju* (black magic). Others are initiated into it, others inherit, and others go in for witchcraft. A Pastor the author interviewed added that, witchcraft can be acquired through items received from a practicing witch or wizard. Onyinah's research on witchcraft in Ghana postulates that witchcraft can be acquired through various means: as an inheritance from a dying witch within a family, receiving demonic-infested gifts from witches, eating certain foods like mash plantain with red oil prepared by a

³⁹ Jon P. Kirby, 'Toward a Christian Response to Witchcraft in Northern Ghana' *20 International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 39 (1).(2015):19.

witch, and purchasing the witchcraft.⁴⁰ Suspected witches are most often sent to witch camps, prayer centers, traditional shrines, etc. by their relations to isolate them from society.

Witch camps in Ghana

A witch camp is a settlement where suspected witches can flee for safety to avoid being lynched or tormented. Most witch camps in Ghana are situated in the northern region of Ghana and can be found at Bonyasi, Gambaga, Kpatinga, Kukuo, Naabuli, Gushegu and Gnani. In the sections below the author presents brief descriptions of the various witch camps mentioned above.

Bonyasi witch camp

The Bonyasi Witch camp is found in the Central Gonja District in the Northern Region. The government of Ghana in partnership with Action Aid closed it down on December 15, 2014. The freed witches had problems re-uniting with their families due to the stigmatization from their communities and their families' unwillingness to accommodate them due to the stigma attached to the phenomenon.



Photo 1: Picture showing Bonyasi witch camp and some accused witches. (Credit: Action Aid).

Gambaga witch camp

Gambaga Witch camp is a disjointed community within Gambaga township in the Northern Region of Ghana established in the 18th century to house suspected witches who are banished from their communities. The camp has about 25 round huts and holds about 100 women. No health services are available to meet their health challenges.

⁴⁰ Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism: Witchcraft and Demonology in Ghana*, 55.



Photo 2: picture showing Gambaga witch camp and some accused Witches. (Credit: Action Aid).

Gnani witch camp

Gnani Tindan, as it is locally known, is one of those safe spaces where the *Usoan* (Konkomba rendition for accused witches) and wizards fleeing persecution or execution can find refuge. It is the only witch camp that houses accused wizards. Witch camps in Ghana often house women but the Gnani Tindan witch camp also accommodates men. Their life lacks the most basic needs: food, water, shelter, and clothing, but most of all, human recognition, companionship, and love.⁴¹

It's very common in the Yendi Area where the camp is situated to be accused of *Kisoak* (witchcraft) when evil befalls another person. One of the respondents at the witch camp said “a girl went to fetch water and was bitten by a snake and on her way to the hospital she died and I was the suspected snake who bit her to death.” Another also said “a family member complained of having dreams of me chasing her and I was accused of witchcraft and sent to the camp.” When one is accused, the next option is to test the veracity of the accusation; hence rituals are performed on the accused at the witch camp. It was observed that some of the witch camp dwellers are not pleased with their stay at the witch camp but have no other option. Life at the camp is horrible and very pathetic as the inhabitants lack the basic amenities needed for human survival.

The Chief Priest and *Utindana* (landowner) of the witch camp Shei Alhassan said during the interview, the camp is a relief to those accused of witchcraft as their families and relatives do not want to see them anymore, however, at the camp, they will have peace. This particular camp was discovered about 380 years ago when a hunter found the shrine at its present location and stayed there. The hunter's

⁴¹ Kirby, 'Toward a Christian Response to Witchcraft in Northern Ghana', 19.

sister was later on accused of witchcraft and she was sent to that shrine to test the legitimacy of the claim and thereafter the place became a place where witchcraft accusations are either affirmed or denounced. The Utindans are the successors of this hunter who discovered the shrine. The Chief Priest said that the *liwaal* (god) in charge of the witch camp and all its rituals is *Shamshei*. The *liwaal shamshei* is responsible for the affirmation or denial of witchcraft accusations. *Utindan Shei Alhassan* added that when one is accused and he/she confesses to the claim, the rituals performed will minimize the witchcraft powers and make the witch powerless and harmless. This is how the rituals are performed according to the *Utindan*: water is poured in the *kiyik* (calabash) and an *ukolo* (fowl) is slaughtered and its blood poured into the calabash. Soil from the shrine is then put into the calabash to make the concoction where the accused witch shall drink. However, the accused witch must confess first if he/she is a witch either wise death is inevitable after drinking the concoction. On the other hand, if the accused denies the accusation and is innocent, though he/she may drink the concoction no harm shall befall the individual caused by the *liwaal shamshei*.

Moving on, if one is affirmed a witch or otherwise through the process stated above, it behooves on the accused or the relatives who accused him/her to determine whether he goes back to where they stayed or joins the people at the witch camp, nevertheless, *liwaal shamshei* permits the accused to dwell at the witch camp without hesitation.



Photo 3: Picture showing Gnani witch camp and Some accused witches. (Credit: Author).

Gushegu witch camp

Another witch camp in Ghana is the Gushegu witch camp located in a suburb of Tamale. On November 4, 2015, The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection attempted to shut down the camp but was not successful.



Photo 4: picture showing Gushegu witch camp and some Accused witches. (Credit: Action Aid).

Kpatinga witch camp

Kpatinga Witch camp is located in Yendi in the Northern Region of Ghana and houses about 200 women believed to be witches.



Photo 5: Picture showing Kpatinga witch camp and Some accused witches. (Credit: Action Aid).

Kukuo witch camp

Located in Tamale, this camp is not a large one, but quite a considerable number of women believed to be witches by their family and relatives are camped there.



Photo 6: Picture showing Kukuwo witch camp and Some accused witches. (Credit: Action Aid).

Nabuli witch camp

Nabuli is also located in the Northern Region and also houses a small number of women who are believed to be witches.



Photo 7: Picture showing Nabuli witch camp and Some accused witches. (Credit: Action Aid).

Perspectives of Ghanaians outside the witch camp

50% of respondents interviewed during this study suggested that witches ought to be camped to avert their destructive activities. Most respondents agreed that it was necessary to camp accused witches and wizards to exorcise them. The Chief priest of the Gnaani witch camp added that it is beneficial to camp witches because people don't want to see them anymore, but at the camp, there is peace for them and life continues. The author is however of a different opinion, that there can be no peace without justice. In most cases, the accused are victimized and denied their basic human rights. It is therefore impossible for camped witches to have peace as alluded to by the chief priest of the camp. The respondents to the interview affirmed that the witches in the various camps go through hardship, yet a majority

of the respondents maintained that it was still appropriate for them to be camped to prevent them from causing harm to their communities through their presumed nefarious activities.

Assemblages of Witchcraft Belief and Practices in Ghana

Essentially, Ghanaians do not subscribe to witchcraft activities on the same akin or plane. Different persons have bits of divergences as well as points of congruence's with regards to witchcraft belief and practice in Ghana. The study brings out three main groupings in the witchcraft belief and practice in Ghana. The three groups are as follows:

- Witch-cynic paradigm
- Witch-detectors
- Witch-centric conduct

Addressing the three groups of witchcraft belief and practice in Ghana

There are three groups of people in Ghana with regards to interpretations on belief and practice of witchcraft in Ghana according to the interviews that were conducted.

Witch-cynic paradigm

The first group the author calls witch-cynic paradigm consists of those who are not sure whether witches exist or those pretending that witches don't exist. There is a class of persons in Ghana and Africa who in reality do not subscribe to the conventional witchcraft belief in Ghana. Most of them seem to be among the educated and prefer to refute assertions that have no empirical proofs. The author has reason to suggest that, not all belief may be verified empirically or scientifically, that notwithstanding, they obviously may make points or carry tested and tried truth. There are also some people in this class, who actually neither deny the conventional witchcraft belief nor refute, thus to say that, they are not sure whether witches exist or not. The author suggests that, none is a tabula-rasa, thus having a blank or empty mind. Those who are not sure whether witches exist or not, might be hiding their resolve, as the author is of the view that, every person must be able to form an opinion on such a widespread and common phenomena as witchcraft. As has already been indicated, any Ghanaian who denies the existence of evil spirits like witches does not qualify to be termed a skeptic but a pretender or ignoramus. It is therefore suggested that since biblical, anthropological, and

psychiatric views on witchcraft belief and activities could not rule out completely the existence of witches, none can arguably deny their existence.

Witch-detectors

The second group is what the author terms, “witch-detectors”. These witch-detectors see witchcraft manipulation in almost every situation. Their consciousness of witches is overwhelming and unusual. They interpret all negativities and vicissitudes of life including but not limited to sickness, famine, stunted church growth, economic failure and bad leadership as propelled by witches. This group forms a significant margin of the people of Ghana as was realized during the author’s interview. They seem to be the reason why Ghana is not thriving enough, as pragmatic efforts would not be made to solve challenges but blame witches for circumstances that may be corroborated by what really prevails in the environment. Moreover, Ghanaians who are witch detectors will normally see witchcraft as the cause of all misfortune and all evil and will therefore not apply any rationality in way of solving personal challenges and that mindset needs to be reformed with the word of God. In as much as some challenges are induced by evil spirits or witches, which is congruent with the bible, that does not mean that all evils are caused by witches.

Witch-centric conduct

The last group is “witch-centric conduct” which places witchcraft at the center of all deliberations of life and shows a keen interest in talking and teaching about them. The witch-centric conduct places so many premiums and brings to bear witchcraft issues even when nothing demands it to be mentioned. The author had a discussion with a highly educated graduate student and a well-endowed person of about his intention to pursue a PhD program. The answer he gave was that, he needs to spiritually fortify himself first else a witch may end up killing him, should he start the program. The witch-centric conduct group will do all they can, to hide all they are doing to all suspected witches as they might become their prey, should they witness their progress. The author counsels witch-centric conduct persons to make Jesus the center of their deliberation, instead of focusing on witchcraft and other evil spirits. Christians who are so much concerned or engrossed with spiritual mapping of witchcraft covens, bombing and shooting of witches, tracing territorial spirits, tracing witches that control certain strategic places and individuals should

redirect that interest and energy to knowing more about Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:10, 2 Corinthians 4:10) and strengthen their commitment to daily walking in Christ's will (1 John 5:14).



CHAPTER 4

The Bedrocks of Witchcraft Belief in the Ghanaian Society

Introduction

Nothing happens accidentally and there is a cause for everything under the heavens. The Akan adage “*wisie bi ni ɔsoro a egya nni aseɛ*” transliterated in English as ‘there is no smoke without fire.’ The Ghanaian belief and activities of witchcraft might be premised on some peculiarities, experiences, or worldviews of the people of the land. Witchcraft belief and activities have been attributed to various happenings in Ghanaian society. This chapter discusses these stipulated witchcraft activities concerning the family, chieftaincy, economic, political aspects of Ghanaian society.

Witchcraft belief and the family set up in Ghana

In the Ghanaian context, a man is closely linked to the extended family either through blood or spirit. In the context of the Akan’s, it is believed that a person inherits the blood (*mogya*) maternally while he inherits the spirit (*ntorɔ*) paternally. This view is supported by Onyinah who argues based on the Akan belief that the human being comprises two personas as stated above. The family setup postulates the dependency of one to another from the same family and their relatedness to each other, which to some extent makes people from the same family inseparable and connected.⁴²

Additionally, Ghanaians and Akans in particular shout “*agyae*” (father) when they are hurt or frightened implying an appeal to the spirit (*ntorɔ*) of the father that

⁴² Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism: Witchcraft and Demonology in Ghana*, 26.

protects them to intervene. Some exorcists in the Ghanaian context who intend to deal with the root cause of the challenges of Ghanaians often trace evil and misfortune that befall people from the blood (*mogya*) they belong to.

The family set-up depicts the Ghanaian belief in oneness and dependency upon one another and how particular evil spirits can destroy a particular family because they are related by blood. When one gets married and there is a problem of childlessness, it instills fear in the younger ones amongst the same family to appeal to the right spirit to come to their aid so that that evil spirit of barrenness will not transcend to them because they might be culpable of suffering the same plight.

A respondent interviewed stated that witchcraft can only be acquired through a family link. There is an Akan maxim that *se obi benya woa na efiri fie* which can be interpreted as “If an enemy will get you, then it should be from your family.” When misfortune strikes, *abusua na wɔkɔ abisa*, which means, it behooves the family to search for the cause of evil and avert it if possible. The notion above is reinforced by the belief that witches from one’s own family are a major threat and more likely to destroy than a witch from outside one’s family. The Akan’s in Ghana often say *se aboa bi beka wo a, na efiri wo ntoma mu* which transliterates as, “it is only an animal in your cloth, that can bite you.”⁴³ It implies that witches often harm members of their own families.

This view makes one capable of blaming his/her woes on external factors outside the victim’s reach or control and hence can do little about the challenge. “The family setup sets the stage for one to accuse another as Ghanaians are interconnected by blood relations and one’s ineffectiveness could mean a relative with witchcraft powers might be instigating one’s failures. The Ghanaian terrain is known for the violence meted on people who are suspected of using witchcraft to cause retrogression, sicknesses, death, etc.

⁴³ Akrong, Neo-Witchcraft Mentality In Popular Christianity, 3.

Witchcraft belief on marriage and fertility in Ghana

Marriage is seen in Ghana as a rite of passage and analogous to birth, puberty and death rites. Most Ghanaians expect all individuals to marry at some point and have children.⁴⁴ The Ghanaian may deem any thwart in the life of an individual in this regard to be against the norm and therefore needs to be probed into, to ascertain the reason for the deviation. Marriage in Ghana thus transforms the status of those entering the institution for the first time. Fortes argues that “ Marriage is a necessary criterion in the definition of a total personhood among the Talensi of the Upper East Region of Ghana” and the other regions and dialects in Ghana are not exempted.⁴⁵ There is a general impression that witches commit evil acts of which marital destruction is inclusive. It is believed that there is a destructive nature of witchcraft in family affairs. “It, therefore, means that witchcraft activities focus on destroying anything that brings happiness and satisfaction to a person. Additionally, there is an Akan adage that *Nimo antumi wo a, wɔtete wo ntoma* that is to say that “if someone is not capable of overpowering you, he will tear your clothing.”

The belief in Witchcraft activities on marriages extends to issues of fertility. There is a belief that witches cause infertility in marriage. Most marriages that do not produce the fruit of the womb are often attributed to the activities of witches. In an interview with the author, a respondent narrated how after 16 years of marriage, there was no fruit of the womb and some prophets prophesied that witches were responsible for the barrenness, but after seeking medical attention and through doctors’ advice, the respondent has since given birth to children. One officer of the Church of Pentecost also shared a 15 years’ ordeal of sterility in his marriage which took the intervention of artificial insemination for them to have a child. The paradox here will be how a doctor’s advice or artificial insemination will put to an end the work of witches.

Another respondent asserted that witches often uprooted the womb of their victims and dump it somewhere thereby causing barrenness. The seemingly general convention in Ghana is that witches cause the breakdown of some marriages and

⁴⁴ Oladele Kwaku Aribike, *Marriage, Registration And Divorce in Ghana: Law and Procedure*. (Accra: Aridola Consult, 2018), 2.

⁴⁵ Fortes Meyer, *Religion, Morality And The Person*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University - Press, 1987),271.

barrenness or infertility in certain marriages. Most often Ghanaians with sterility in their marriages resort to Christian prayers, consulting Mallams (Islam clerics), visiting the shrines of traditional priests (ɔkomfoɔ), herbalists and medical care. Timmons writes on the ability of witches to abort pregnancies or replace babies in the womb with black stones.⁴⁶ It is very imperative to understand the above issue from the Ghanaian perspective, but the question is, can all destroyed marriages and infertility be traced to the activities of witches? Could there be other reasons that may account for marriages being destroyed or sterility in marriage?

Witchcraft belief and Chieftaincy in Ghana

In Ghana as in other parts of Africa, chiefs in particular socio-cultural contexts are chosen from particular families and persons outside those family despite their affluence, intellect, or leadership capabilities cannot be made chiefs since they are not part of the lineage to the throne. Chiefs in Ghana are often referred to as the custodians of the land and the link between the ancestors and the living. The chieftaincy institution of Ghana in essence is built on the belief in dead relatives (ancestors) and spirits' control over the living. It is a well-known fact that the chiefs own lands within their jurisdiction in Ghana and can sell them at will. Their supposed linkage with the ancestors and the spirits of the land makes them powerful and feared. Forson argues that no general account of the Akan people in Ghana will be adequate without recognizing the significant role of the sacred chieftaincy.⁴⁷ Its sacredness is embedded in the fact that the chief connects the living and the dead. The Chief is the commander in chief of the *atra nkonya* (sub-chiefs).⁴⁸

The Prime Minister of the second republic of Ghana suggested that “the chief was the axis of the political relations of different elders and their subjects.”⁴⁹ The chief then was the head of the traditional area to which obeisance was duly accorded to, as he has the right to bless, punish or banish one from his jurisdiction when the need arises. Very often the subjects will carry the chief in “*apakan*” (palanquin) to

⁴⁶ Timmons, *Mysterious secrets of the Dark kingdom*, 352.

⁴⁷ M.K. Forson, “Split Level Christianity in Africa: A Study of the persistence of Traditional religious Belief and Practices among the Akans.” (Asbury Theological Seminary, 1993).

⁴⁸ Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism: Witchcraft and Demonology in Ghana*, 23.

⁴⁹ Kofi Abrefa Busia, *The Position of the Chief in modern Asante*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1951),22.

make all know the distinctness and headship of the chief. The Kingship institution affirms the belief in spirits and the spirits' role of protecting the land from enemies through the chief who acts as an intermediary between the living and the ancestors. When the ancestors are not pleased with the way of life of the people of the land and therefore bring judgment, the chief must lead and assign the traditional priest to appease the gods or ancestors concerned. This belief brings to light that chieftaincy in Ghana affirms the belief of the nation in the controlling power of the spirits over the living and is the same can be said of the belief in witchcraft. Witchcraft is a spirit like the gods and the ancestors who can wreak havoc on people. The power of chiefs in Ghana emanates from the belief that they can appease the ancestors or gods to rescind evil intentions and so Ghanaians revere any charismatic figure that can deliver them from the activities of witchcraft.

Witchcraft and economic conditions of Ghana

Africa, despite being the most endowed continent (material wealth and human potential) amongst the seven (7) continents of the world is the most materially impoverished continent on earth and her people are the poorest.⁵⁰ The desperation and brokenness of the African continent need to be addressed holistically, but it seems Africans prefer to assume the role of victims as they blame some external factors beyond their reach (colonialism, United Nations, inadequate foreign aid, etc). "Before independence, every African country was self-sufficient in food production: today most depend on imports and others stand at the brink of famine"⁵¹ Miller and Scott further argue that before independence, the average growth rate of African countries was three percent. By 1980 it had declined to one percent and during the 1990s, a negative 2.8 percent was recorded.

Ghana situated in West Africa is not an exceptional case concerning the ensuing economic plights of Africa. Gifford asserts that "since 1983 Ghana has been undergoing structural adjustment imposed by The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Ghanaians did not need to be convinced that life was incredibly hard"⁵² Sagas of corruption, exploitation, nepotism, leadership failures, poor governance and dependence on foreign grants continually worsen the plight of the nation.

⁵⁰ Darrow L. Miller, & A. Scott, *Against All Hope: Hope For Africa*. (Nairobi: Samaritan Strategy Africa Working Group, 2005), 18.

⁵¹ Miller and Scott, *Against All Hope: Hope For Africa*, 25.

⁵² Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*, 3.

Ghana's economy should have been one of the best if a nation's wealth parallels her endowment of natural resources: Ghana has Gold, Timber, Cocoa, Bauxite, Manganese, Diamond, Oil, etc. Despite her endowment in most valuable mineral resources, she depends on other countries for support. Ghana seems to see the solution beyond herself and the search for greener pastures from external sources also seems a mirage.

Ghana's economic plights have been attributed to witches or evil spirits who have gone on a rampage against the Ghanaian economy. The woeful state of the economy moreover affirms the belief that witches have bewitched the nation so that it may not prosper. Ghanaian popular musician A.B. Crentsil in his song conveys the Ghanaian belief in this regard, *Akwasi broni nanyan, anyan papa, wo de ahehye pelen* which means 'the witchcraft of the westerners is better because they have used it to manufacture an airplane.' The musician further suggests that the witchcraft of the Africans is for destruction which is directly opposite the witchcraft of the westerners who have used their witchcraft to develop their nations. Hence, the nation's plight as far as the economic conditions, bad governance and negative issues arising in the political life are concerned implies that witches are hunting the nation.

In recent years, a worldwide initiative was launched, aimed at relieving the financial burdens and constraints on the world's most heavily indebted countries termed HIPIC. Forty-two countries were eligible for HIPIC designation out of which thirty were from Africa and Ghana was part of the HIPIC countries during the era of President John Agyekum Koffour.⁵³ Nevertheless, since 1983 till date, Ghana has been undergoing structural adjustment imposed by the IMF.⁵⁴ There are still countless towns and villages in Ghana without the basic amenities for human beings like electricity, road network, mobile phone network and schools despite the supposed assistance from the international aid agencies. In the table below the World Health Organization (WHO) compares Ghana's economy to other countries as of 2016.

⁵³ Miller and Scott, *Against All Hope: Hope For Africa*, 20.

⁵⁴ Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*, 3.

Country	Ghana	United Kingdom	Tunisia	Singapore
Population (million)	27.41	64.72	11.25	5.6
Life expectancy at birth (male/female)	61/64	79/83	73/78	80/86
Probability of dying between 15 and 60 years per 1000 population (male/female)	261/222	88/55	130/69	69/38
Total expenditure on health per capital (USD)	145	3,377	785	4,047
Total expenditure on health as % of GDP	3.6	9.1	7.0	4.9

Table 1. WHO country economic statistics⁵⁵

The table above indicates the high death rate prevalent in Ghana as a result of unfavorable economic situations, poverty and inability to secure better health care. Ghana's economic predicament depicts that of a place where the indigenes are in plights that need an urgent remedy and as such most people attribute their predicament to the witches, colonial masters, IMF and others. 21 respondents in the interview agreed with the assertion that witches can influence the Economy of Ghana whiles 9 said they cannot influence the economy or they were not quite sure. Some people attribute Ghana's economic woes to external forces: colonialism, unfair terms of trade by the IMF and international bodies.⁵⁶ Unlike the belief of some Ghanaians with regards to who is responsible for Ghana's economic and political plights, Kofi Annan of blessed memory said at an OAU summit in Togo in July 2000.

This plight of Africa is not something others have done for us. It is something we have done to ourselves. If African is bypassed, it is because not enough of us are investing in policies which would promote development and preserve peace. We have mismanaged our affairs for decades and we are suffering the accumulated effects.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ P.K. Mante, *Foundation For Financial Independence* (Accra: Network for Change, 2017), 15.

⁵⁶ Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*, 6.

⁵⁷ Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*, 6

Kofi Annan hit the nail right on the head and the case of Ghana is not different from what has transpired in most African countries and as a result, Ghanaians are experiencing the mess of their fabrication. It seems Ghanaians are interested in blaming their plights on others rather than taking the bull by the horn and solving their own challenges. Ghana's economic woes can be attributed to its style of governance and political culture which seems to favor 'party faithful' than the interest of the entire nation.⁵⁸ Ghana's state institutions, structures and judiciary, serve the interest of the sitting governments.⁵⁹ National grants and contracts are given to family members, friends and party loyalists (nepotism). Ghana has been hit by so many scandals, with regards to this form of governance and political leadership, but it seems the stakeholders are not learning from these events as citizens continue to blame external agents (IMF, witches, etc.) for the nation's plights. That notwithstanding, about 66% of the respondents interviewed argued that witches can influence the behavior and integrity of individuals to destabilize the economy of the Ghanaian society. If the argument is true, then no one should be squarely blamed for the mess created in the economy of Ghana. The question then is this, can the rampant and incessant dubious scandals recorded in Ghana's political and religious terrain be attributed to negative external forces? Should the response be confirmatory, then there is absolutely no doubt, why Ghana and by extension Africa grapples with the roadmap to development. Ghanaians' notion of who is disconcerting the economic setting of Ghana underlines her belief in witchcraft.

Witchcraft belief and unemployment in Ghana

The gloomy and unfavorable economy is enough reason to justify the mass unemployment trend in Ghana. There once existed a union in Ghana dubbed Unemployed Graduates Association which had a large membership. The IMF a few years ago ordered the government of Ghana to halt the employment of people into the public sector for a period during the regime of President John Dramani Mahama in 2012 which rendered most trained teachers, nurses and other graduates who had completed their education jobless. This trend seems to depict the kind of structures in place in Ghana as far as the administration of the economy is concerned. However, the trend of unemployment in Ghana has also been attributed

⁵⁸ Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*, 6.

⁵⁹ Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*, 8.

to witchcraft activities by some people. The current government led by Nana Akufo Addo gave the unemployed masses of Ghana so much hope when he was voted as Ghana's president during his first term in office, with the launch of the Nation Builders Corps (NABCO) scheme meant to employ over one hundred thousand (100,000) people in the country in 2018. Many unemployed persons have been engaged in this package. However, these have not been without challenges in the implementation of this programme.

Though some of the graduates who suffered from the injunction of IMF have been employed, it seems unemployment in Ghana has not been dealt with and the citizens are still grappling with the issue.

The author is of the view that government should pay particular attention to the education system and infuse innovation and creativity in the school curricula so that graduates will not keep waiting till they are employed by government agencies since they can commence a business venture on their own. Also, the government should encourage individuals to set up businesses as that can curtail the unemployment trend in Ghana instead of attributing the unemployment rate to other negative external forces (witches). The government ought to devise strategic and pragmatic initiatives to sustain and promote private organizations. The challenge to access jobs in the marketplace in Ghana has also been attributed to the actions of witches by some individuals. Leadership must therefore act accordingly by rolling out appropriate measures and programs to eradicate or reduce unemployment in Ghana and Africa.

Witchcraft belief on poverty, sickness and social vices

In Ghana witches are believed to be the forces behind poverty, sicknesses, stealing and other social vices. One of the respondents explained that “witches buy sicknesses, poverty, corruption and others for their prey with the help of other witches from one's own family”. It is common parlance in Ghana, “I am poor or sick because they bewitched me”. “Sick neighbors and family members readily voice suspicion that someone has harmed or bewitched them.”⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Stephen D. H. Rasmussen, & H. Rasmussen, Healing Communities : Contextualizing Responses to Witch Accusations. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 39(1) (2008):12.

There is this notion in Ghana, that poverty and sickness often emanate from spirit forces especially witches. A respondent alleges that “witches can possess people to tell lies or steal. The above assertion seems to suggest that, telling lies or stealing can be instigated by witches on their victims and if that be the case, will it be fair to hold them responsible for vices beyond their control?”

Witchcraft belief on misfortune

Witchcraft activities in contemporary Ghanaian society can be described as a theory of evil that allows Ghanaians to concretize evil by making it specific and identifiable with an external agent mostly referred to as a witch.⁶¹

Human existence is construed as permanently invaded by witches at all points who inflict them with all kinds of misfortunes. Witches are believed to be the causal agents of famine, pestilence, wars, accidents, etc. “Witchcraft provides the philosophy by which the relations between men and unfortunate events are explained and a ready and a stereotyped means of reacting to such events are established.⁶² Pritchard in the quote above postulates that witchcraft accusation is a ready answer to all misfortunes so as to relieve the individual involved from responsibility and accountability.

Conclusion

The chapter discussed the foundations of witchcraft belief in the Ghanaian culture. The challenge the nation is engrossed with is seen to stem from what the author terms the ‘dependency theory’ which suggests that one’s plight is attributed to another source and hence the challenges faced by Ghanaians (in marriage, health, finances, economy, and politics) are mostly caused by witchcraft activities or external agents other than the Ghanaians themselves. The support or bases for the belief in Ghana are colossal. However, those with opposing assessments that differ from the conventional Ghanaian witchcraft philosophy discussed above perceive such thoughts as outlandish and not conversant with their ecological understandings.

⁶¹ Akrong, Neo-Witchcraft Mentality In Popular Christianity,1.

⁶² Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among The Azande*, 18.

CHAPTER 5

Akan and Konkomba Witchcraft Investigations

Introduction

The Akan are among the four major ethno linguistic groupings in Ghana.⁶³ They are a meta-ethnicity in Ghana and Ivory Coast. Akan is the largest ethnic group in Ghana, making up 47.3% of the total population of Ghana, according to the Ghana statistical survey conducted in 2013.⁶⁴

Akan Witchcraft Test

In the Akan context, witchcraft accusations and inquiries are reliant on numerous factors including the conduct of an individual. When the person curses or pronounces doom and it comes to pass, he/she becomes suspect to witchcraft phenomenon. Additionally, when the priest of a deity exposes events and actions by their oracles or gods, it can confirm witchcraft possession in the context. Above all when misfortunes or evil happens around a person strangely, like at]fo *wuo* (unnatural death) and when the *abosom* (gods) strikes or catches those possessed with witchcraft of which Akan term as *bosom abono* (the god have struck him/her). These can be attributed to witchcraft activities.

Kofi Badu, a former traditional priest at Nkawkaw posits, that in the traditional Akan ethos, relatives or persons normally seek security from a deity or *bosom*

⁶³ Gifford, Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalising African Economy, 1.

⁶⁴ Seth Kissi and Ernest Van Eck, "Reading Hebrews through Akan Ethnicity and Social Identity," *Scielo* 73, no. 3 (2017).

to counter evil and witchcraft caustic controls who may be after their life's and achievements. When the families or individuals who are being protected by the *abosom* are attacked by witches, the *abosom* has a duty to strike the witches and make them confess their evil deeds. Generally, those who are stricken by the *abosom* for attacking the people they protect often die after confessions of their evil deeds are made. Badu narrated an incident, where a woman whose children were not prospering in life despite all their hardworking and drudgeries, came to his shrine to seek help from his *bosom*. The *bosom* later struck the same woman who petitioned it, as she was the witch causing the family's endeavors to fail and after her confessions, she died.⁶⁵

Onyinah asserts that, originally, it was the king's/ chief's courts that handled witchcraft issues in the Akan context. Onyinah further suggests that, if an individual cursed and the declarations came to pass, it exposes the person's association to witchcraft and was arraigned at the chiefs' palace hearing and trial. The accused witch was allowed to chew the bark of the *odum* tree (guineense) and the vomiting of the poison was ingenious to be a sign of blamelessness on the phenomenon.⁶⁶ Supplementary witchcraft trials to determine the validity of witchcraft ownership according to Onyinah was the *ofunu soa* (corpse carrying), where the spirit of the dead was beseeched to assist the living to find who killed them. The *ofunu soa* trial method is such that, the spirit of the deceased is said to possess the carrier of the corpse and thus pouncing on the culprit or witch who killed the person after which the accused would be sent to the chief's court for trial.

Konkomba Witchcraft Test

This study amongst the Konkomba was carried out at the Gnani Witch Camp in the Yendi Municipality where the accused are mostly Konkomba. Gnani *Tindan*, as it is locally known, is one of those harmless places where the *Usoan* (the Konkomba rendition for accused witches) and wizards escaping torture or death may find refuge. It is the only witch camp in the northern region of Ghana that houses wizards (males who have witchcraft spirits). Witch camps in Ghana often house women but the Gnani *Tindan* witch camp has men. Their life lacks the most

⁶⁵ Kwasi Atta Agyapong, "An Evaluation Of Akan And Konkomba Witchcraft Trials & Beliefs In Ghana : In Dialogue With The Biblical, Anthropological And Psychiatrists Perspectives" 1, no. 7 (2020): 92–102.

⁶⁶ Opoku Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism: Witchcraft and Demonology in Ghana* ,60.

basic needs: food, water, shelter, and clothing, but most of all, human recognition, friendship, and affection.⁶⁷

It is a common incident in the Yendi Area where the camp is found to be suspected of *Kisoak* (witchcraft) when evil befalls another person. One of the respondents at the witch camp said “One girl went to fetch water and was bitten by a snake and on her way to the hospital she died and I was the suspected snake who bit her to death.”⁶⁸

Powuni asserts that “a family member complained of having dreams of me chasing her and I was accused of witchcraft and sent to the camp.”⁶⁹ When one is accused, the next line of action is to test the veracity of the accusation and thus rituals are performed on the accused at the witch camp. It was observed that some of the witch camp dwellers were not pleased with their stay at the witch camp but currently had no option. Life at the camp is horrible and very pathetic as they lack the basic amenities needed for human survival. The Chief Priest and *Utindana* (landowner) of the witch camp Shei Alhassan said during the interview that, the camp is a respite to suspects of witchcraft as their families and relatives do not want to see them anymore, but at the camp, they will have peace.⁷⁰

This camp was founded some 380 years ago when a hunter discovered the shrine at the place and stayed there. The hunter’s sister was suspected of witchcraft possession and was sent to that shrine to test for legitimacy in the accusation; consequently, the camp became a place where witchcraft accusations are either avowed or censured.

⁷¹ The *Utindan* are the heirs of this hunter who discovered the shrine and lived there. The chief priest in the interview said that the *liwaal* (god) in charge of the witch camp and all the rituals is *Shamshei*. The *liwaal shamshei* is responsible for the confirmation or disavowal of witchcraft accusations. Utindan Shei Alhassan

⁶⁷ Jon P Kirby, “Toward a Christian Response to Witchcraft in Northern Ghana,” 19. *20 International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 39, no. 1 (2015).

⁶⁸ Personal interview conducted by author with Jayon Mpagna (accused witch) at Gnani witch camp on November 11, 2018)

⁶⁹ Personal interview conducted by author with Powuni idongnan (accused witch) on November 2, 2018 at Gnani witch camp.

⁷⁰ Interview by the author with Shei Alhassan (Chief Priest of Gnani witch camp) on November 2, 2018 at Gnani witch camp.

⁷¹ Interview by the author with Shei Alhassan (Chief Priest of Gnani witch camp) on November 2, 2018 at Gnani witch camp

said in the interview that, when one is accused and he/she confesses to witchcraft, the rituals done will lessen the witchcraft powers and make the witch immobilized and inoffensive. This is how the rituals are performed according to the Utindan: water is poured in the *kiyik* (calabash) and a ukolo (fowl) is slaughtered and its blood poured into the calabash. Soil from the shrine is also put in the calabash to make the concoction wherewith the accused witch shall drink. The accused witch must confess his/her evil if he/she is a witch, otherwise, death is unavoidable after drinking the concoction. On the other hand if the accused denies the accusation and is truly not guilty, though he/she may drink the concoction, he/she would not be harmed by the *liwaal shamshei*. Thus, the concoction is meant to kill witches who deny the accusation and also minimizes the powers of witches who sanction the accusation. If one is affirmed a witch or otherwise, it depends on the accused and the relatives to determine whether he/she goes back to where they stayed or joins the people at the witch camp; nevertheless, the *liwaal shamshei* permits them to stay at the witch camp.

Appraisal of Witchcraft trials of the Akan and Konkomba

The witchcraft trials in Akan and Konkomba claim that witchcraft when legitimized in a person is often minimized through the potions they are made to drink at the trial grounds. It was also understood that the accused witches were required to confess the truth before the rites are performed on them, otherwise; they will die when the potions prepared are drunk. The author finds many compelling reasons as to what the real constituents of the potion are made up of, which may kill the accused when guilty as submitted. Could it be that, it is the spirits of the deity which kills or the concoctions itself that kills?

It is suggested that more research be conducted by clinically examining the potions and to find out if they have the predisposition to terminate life. The nation Ghana has laws prescribed by the constitution of the land, and how appropriate will it be, for a rite that conveys inside its own volition, the appropriateness to end the life of a person? The author recommends that further research should be conducted on the number of people that die as a result of witchcraft allegations and trials in Ghana so as to help lawmakers understand what is at stake. The satisfactoriness of the trials cannot be avowed nor repudiated as both the Akan and Konkomba claim that the spirits in charge of the rituals during the trials lead and there are no test

tubes for the activities of spiritualists. That notwithstanding, the priests who have custody over the gods must receive approval from the Food and Drugs Authority before administering the concoction or potions to supposed accused witches. There is also a need to unfold a comprehensive educational curricular that will re-psyche Ghanaians on witchcraft ideologies, as accusing and harassing their own people in the name of a phenomenon that cannot be adequately substantiated is more than archaic and therefore unwarranted. The stigma associated with the accusations is also a major blow to nation-building and psychologists must brace themselves to act in that direction by adequately preparing study material and rolling out programs that can reach those who have been affected.

Conclusion

The trial of witchcraft pertaining to the Akan and Konkomba of Ghana has been investigated and the strength and weaknesses unraveled. It behooves on all Ghanaians together with public and private institutions in the quest for development and peace to put on the right perspective and as well help re-psyche those with this parochial perspective so the nation Ghana may become a haven of rest, devoid of misperception. Any nation with a similar belief pattern thrives little with regards to developments in all dimensions. The witchcraft trials or validation of accused witches in Ghana mentioned and discussed have copious repercussions on the nation as innocent people may be stigmatized and victimized as a result of others' belief, thereby robbing the nation of her precious resources .

The subsequent chapter will delve into some of the practical effects of subscribing to these beliefs.

CHAPTER 6

Witchcraft Belief, Practice and Consequences in Ghana

Introduction

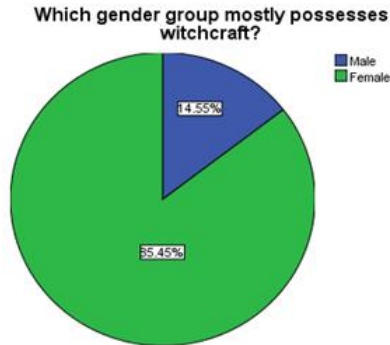
Violence emanating from witchcraft belief permeates Ghanaian life and that cannot be without effects on the nation.⁷² The belief and activities of witchcraft in Ghana suggest that the metaphysical controls the material world and it is out of the reach of the people of the land, as they seem helpless unless another stronger supernatural being intervenes to remedy the situation or trend. The belief unequivocally have a bearing on the Ghanaian society, as it has the propensity of raising people who are irresponsible as none can be blamed squarely for inefficiency or flaws because there are external agents who control what they do. Poverty, sicknesses, barrenness, unemployment, poor governance, the culture of nepotism and corrupt political life, accidents, deaths, and many others are generally believed to be caused by witches who are external agents. This renders the Ghanaian helpless as it seems, as they are victims of supernatural powers who impose their will on them. The belief, practice and consequences of witchcraft belief in Ghana have been outlined and explained in the portions below.

Gender and age discrimination

It is conspicuous from the study conducted that women are often tagged as possessing witchcraft compared to their male counterparts. The supposed assertion can be buttressed by the number of witch camps in Ghana and their acceptance of men in the camp. Out of the six existing witch camps in Ghana, it is only the Gnani witch camp that accepts wizards (*bema bonsam*). Any nation that discriminates based on gender and age thrives little because most of the nation's potential and human resources are relegated to the background. A study of the Gnani witch camp gives data that reveals that the witch dwellers in the camp are mostly female and

⁷² Kirby, 'Toward a Christian Response to Witchcraft in Northern Ghana', 19.

children. As of July 2016, there were 1028 inmates, comprising 313 women, 105 men and 610 children. The author interviewed 50 respondents in 2016, about which gender group is most likely to possess witchcraft and the diagram below is the outcome.



Source: Author's field study 2016

From the figure above it can be seen that females are alleged to possess witchcraft more than males. The views of some of the interviewees also revealed that females possess witchcraft more than males. The following are some of the reasons given by some participants in the focus group discussions as to why females are mostly accused of witchcraft than their male counterparts:

- Women do not show mercy as compared to men
- Women are more cruel as compared to men

Moreover, the number of children who are accused of witchcraft is above that of the adults, making witchcraft a phenomenon believed to be practiced by children rather than adults. The ordeals meted out to some of these children accused of witchcraft are unpleasant. The nation Ghana is hugely affected negatively, as women and children are discriminated against as far as witchcraft is concerned. The universal declaration of rights of 1948 set out a list of specific human rights that all countries of the world should respect and protect. These rights can be grouped under the following: Security rights, Due process rights, Liberty rights, Political rights, Equality rights and Social or Welfare rights.⁷³ Surprisingly witchcraft

⁷³ M.O. Afful, The Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms. (Accra: LIEC, 2011), 4.

dealings in Ghana defy all these stipulated rights apart from political rights. Can a nation continue to sustain a phenomenon that defies the legislative framework that governs the land? Any nation that allows the rule of law to be violated in the name of individual or societal belief is treading on dangerous grounds. Article(21) (c) of the Constitution of Ghana guarantees the right to religious belief, but the practice of the belief is subject to controls in the interest of public health, morality, and safety.

A critical study of the phenomenon suggests that the belief and activities of witches in Ghana seem to impose one's belief on another which defies the above assertion because the case here is that an individual is stigmatized because another person believes some spirit of evil intent dwells within the said individual. A study of the development of human rights laws in Ghana postulates that the independence constitution in 1957, the 1960 constitution, the 1969 constitution, the 1979 constitution and the 1992 constitution highlights the dignity of the rights of Ghanaians which cannot be trampled upon. Despite the above constitutional mandate that protects the dignity of Ghanaians; most people are accused of witchcraft and mishandled. Witchcraft accusation often leads some to be detained in witch camps which defy the constitutional mandate of security rights, due process rights, liberty rights and equality rights. Others are camped at traditional shrines when accused of witchcraft. Samuel Kofi Badu a former traditional priest who had practiced for 43 years posited that, when someone is identified as a witch by a god (*se obosom bo obia*), the witch will confess all sins and afterward, a fowl shall be killed to appeal to the god to ascertain the entirety of the truth in the confession made. Then all the hair of the accused witch will be shaved off, to minimize the witchcraft powers. To the author, any nation that accepts their natives to be humiliated to such an extent will end up having indigenes whose ego or self-confidence are marred. It is imperative that the nation's legislature will work as far as curbing the trend where females and children are discriminated against and leveled as witches and chastised for perhaps a phenomenon they might not know so much about.

Educational Challenges

The huge masses of children accused of witchcraft are confined to either witch camps, prayer camps, traditional shrines and other designated places for exorcism. A nation that thrives on the belief that tends to truncate the education of her children

might live in regret and poverty in the years ahead. The nation Ghana has held on to these beliefs about the phenomenon for a very long time and the state of the nation's socio-economic development seems to be at par with some of the belief systems. Ghana cannot grow beyond its thinking and if its thinking or belief is faulty, it inadvertently affects the entire development of the nation. Article 25 of the 1992 constitution declares that all persons have the right to equal educational opportunities and facilities and with a view to achieving the full realization of that right: (a) basic education shall be free, compulsory and available to all.

Despite every child's right in Ghana to access education freely, some children are accused of witchcraft and confined to camps which often prevents them from schooling as their rights in the Ghanaian constitution mandates. The judiciary, in particular, should arise and enforce the rule of law in this regard. A lot of talents in Ghana are wasted or unharnessed due to the neglect of this constitutional mandate. Any nation that needs development cannot undermine education as it serves as the foundation, without which it can only 'build in the sand.' which informs of how the future will be like. The future of Ghana becomes gloomy if the children cannot access quality education which should be accessible by all.

The Increased Rate of Poverty

The setbacks leading to poverty in Ghana is because some people attribute their ineffectiveness in the performance of their duties to witchcraft manipulation and hence will do nothing about improving because they are not responsible for their actions. Two agricultural analogies are used to present the relationship between ideas and real-life: The seed (ideas, belief) that is sown will determine the yield (real-world consequences like poverty).⁷⁴ To an extent, poverty is neither accidental nor invoked upon by an external agent but a choice one makes. None is poor by accident but one can become poor by the choice one makes. Most Ghanaians argue that poverty is caused by witches. People often go to churches to pray against the spirit that makes them poor. Just as the quality of the soil and roots of a tree determines the quality of the fruit produced, so it is with the ideas and beliefs one has.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Miller and Scott, *Against All Hope: Hope For Africa*,31.

⁷⁵ Miller and Scott, *Against All Hope: Hope For Africa*,31.

The Ghanaian belief system and its development are intertwined and dependent on each other. The right belief produces the right and expected development. It should be noted that those Ghanaians who believe they are poor because of witches will do nothing beneficial to find solutions to their challenges. The right antidote to a disease can only be prescribed when the right diagnosis is made. Ghana's poverty can only be dealt with when the mindset of its people on the reason for the increased rate of poverty is refined.

Medical challenges

The data gathered from interviews and other related literature postulates that witches can cause sicknesses in human beings. The challenge to battle with becomes what particular diseases are witchcraft induced and which ones are not. Most people resort to a spiritual solution when they are sick than to seek medical attention. Most respondents narrated how they lost their relatives due to ignorance. People with divergent medical challenges are confined at prayer centers, which the author does not oppose, however denial of medical attention and care on the reason for supposed witchcraft induced illnesses must be checked. Prayer is not opposed to medical care. An interviewee lamented about how she lost a twin sister to typhoid fever. She asserted that the disease was perceived to be an attack from the witches in their family and by the time they realized medical attention was the antidote, it was twilight. If Ghanaians and for that matter, Africans can work at minimizing this belief because some people who would have passed on will live to contribute their quota to the development of Africa.

Estrangement of relationships

Witchcraft accusations tear families apart as one may intend to flee from the danger that the witch relative or friend might inflict on them. At the Gnani witch camp it was realized that most often when husbands die, the widow ends up living at the witch camp because the possibility of someone accusing the widow of being a witch is very high. The belief and the activities of witchcraft in Ghana tend to create enemies amongst relatives as one is accused of witchcraft. The stigmatization of witchcraft automatically creates family disputes. At the prayer camp of Prophet Ebenezer Adarkwa Yiadom in Kumasi, suspected witches are often sent to him for approval or disapproval of the suspect's possession of the phenomenon which is often shown on his television station, just like what transpires at the Gnani witch

camp. The witchcraft test of suspects to access its veracity also takes place at the prayer camp of Rev. Obofour and it is being telecast almost daily on some media networks. He mentioned in one of his services that “ if somebody buys from your shop and you notice that business is not booming, don’t sell to him again.”⁷⁶ A common belief in Ghana goes by the statement or assumption that, when things are not thriving as expected, then a witch might be hunting. Why are all forms of retrogression tied to witchcraft? Is it possible that inefficiency, laziness and wrong methods can also cause setbacks?

Rev. Obofour in one of his services also made an altar call for witches in his church and about 15 people responded and confirmed that they were witches. About 60% were children, while females constituted about 98%.⁷⁷ Among the fifteen people who said they were witches, only one was a male. The male said he is not sure if he has witchcraft but was accused by his family and wanted to come for verification. One child boldly said that her mother had declared her a witch. Rev. Obofour however responded that because she had not accepted the situation, even if he casts the spirit out, the witchcraft will return. Rev. Obofour went on to say that the head of the child is a dog and she will go mad later. Thus, the parents should bring the child to him when that occurs. This child will however suffer this stigma all her life and the family might somehow neglect her because of the assumption that she possesses witchcraft. One of the children said she did use her witchcraft to kill some people in her family and has destroyed the work of her parents. These events further lead to the disintegration of most families to the detriment of society.

The Incidence of Lawlessness

In Ghana where witchcraft belief and activities are rampant, people will always want to attribute their inefficiencies and lawlessness to witchcraft manipulation. It seems the normal parlance for people when they seek forgiveness for their wrong actions is “it’s not me, but witches influenced me.” This syndrome has a way of encouraging vices as waywardness often goes unpunished in many Ghanaian homes and the community. It’s glaring that many people are not law-abiding people because they often escape punishment. God is just and it means sin must not go unpunished. Any nation that may continue to believe that lawlessness is influenced

⁷⁶ Excerpts of a programme aired on Sweet TV on Sunday 25th November, 2018 at 7:53.

⁷⁷ Excerpts of a programme aired on Sweet TV on November, 25 2018 at 8:17am.

by witches will continue to encourage vices because their evil will be attributed to unverified spirits (witches).

The Exploitation of the weak and the vulnerable by the strong and affluent

The phenomenon of witchcraft simply tramples on the weak and vulnerable in the nation. It has already been stated that the stigma of witchcraft mostly affects women and children who are known to be weak per the Ghanaian context. Why will the weak mostly possess witchcraft other than the supposed stronger ones? Why will most witch camps in Ghana exist to only house females and not males? Does witchcraft equal the weak or the marginalized in Ghanaian society? Among the women, who are most vulnerable, it very rare to come across a rich female accused of witchcraft. Most often it's the poor ones that are accused of the phenomenon. Ghana as a nation is supposed to protect the weaker ones, but on the contrary, her belief in the activities of witchcraft is rather inflicting harm on the vulnerable and the marginalized in the society.

Conclusion

The negative effect of witchcraft belief and activities in Ghana is extensive and a few have been addressed in this chapter. Ghana's challenge in this regard can be attended to when the perspective regarding the belief in activities of witchcraft is properly assessed holistically. It should be made clear that the solutions to the country's challenges are embedded deep within the human heart and the power of the Holy Spirit can help the Christian to apply the wisdom of God to remedy the situation. The next chapter will delve into the Biblical, Anthropological, and Psychiatric perspective of witchcraft belief in Ghana.

CHAPTER 7

Biblical, Anthropological and Psychiatric Perspectives of Witchcraft Belief in Ghana

Introduction

This chapter examines some witchcraft views as discussed in the previous chapter from the biblical, anthropological and psychological perspectives. The belief and activities of witches in Ghana have been studied within these three standpoints to test its authenticity and to suggest the way forward on how to approach such issues in Ghana. The terms witch and demons are used interchangeably. The bible coverage of the phrase ‘witch’ is quite insignificant for any evocative discussion but demons are often inferred to and since both seemingly carry the same connotation in the Ghanaian context, they are used interchangeably.

Biblical Perspective⁷⁸

Witchcraft belief on marriage and fertility

The first marriage between Adam and Eve was instituted by God in the Garden of Eden, where He commanded them to be fruitful (procreate). Marriage, therefore, is the oldest institution established by God. “And God created man in his image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Genesis 1:27). God’s blessing to his children thus includes having a successful marriage and giving birth to children.

“Thou shalt be blessed above all peoples: there shall not be male or female barren

⁷⁸ All biblical passages are quoted from the American Standard Version (ASV) except otherwise indicated.

among you or among your cattle” (Deuteronomy 7:14). “And God blessed them: and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth” (Genesis 1:28). The scriptures above suggest that infertility of any kind becomes a humiliation or a sign of witchcraft manipulation against the victim. In spite of the command to get married and be fruitful (giving birth), there are situations where some biblical characters did not marry and others married but struggled to give birth. Ghanaian belief and the activities of witchcraft hypothesize that witches destroy or inhibit marriages and also wreak marital couples with sterility. Abraham and Sarah struggled with the promise of fertility and the Lord had to re-assure him of His promise.

“And I will bless her, and moreover I will give thee a son of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be of her. Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is a hundred years old? And shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear”? (Genesis 17:16-17).

Abraham and Sarah’s infertility was not seen as a reproach from witches or demons because God was at the helm of affairs. Biblical characters like Isaac and Rebecca (Genesis 24:60), Jacob and Rachael (Genesis 29:31) and Elkanah and Hannah (1 Samuel 1:1-2) had cases of infertility for a period as follows: “And Isaac entreated Jehovah for his wife because she was barren. And Jehovah was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived” (Genesis 25:21).

“And he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. And her rival provoked her sore, to make her fret because Jehovah had shut up her womb” (1 Samuel 1:2, 6). In the case of Hannah’s infertility, God had shut her womb thus preventing her from being fruitful. Juxtaposing the act of God in shutting the womb and the Ghanaians belief in witchcraft inflicting one with barrenness has points of congruence as well as divergences. The resemblances lie in the fact that spirits can shut the womb and cause barrenness whiles the departures lie in the fact that, in the Ghanaian case, the one who shuts the womb is the witch, whereas the biblical

example brings out that God is the one who shuts the womb. Also, in the case of Rachael as recorded in Genesis 29:31, (“And when the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren”.) her barrenness was connected with God and not any spirit with evil intent.

Why will Ghana’s case be different from what transpired in the Bible in this regard? The biblical characters involved teach the lessons that, God can sanction infertility in some women for his own purpose, so they can carry out special mission or assignment at his own time.

Biblical perspective however postulates that God is a spirit (John 4:24) and can cause barrenness in marriage, leading to a conjecture that spirits like witchcraft can cause infertility in marriage. Witchcraft is a counterfeit and satanic spirit whose influence cannot subdue those with the Holy Spirit of God or the children of God. It, therefore, can be clinched that all children of God who may be experiencing infertility cannot attribute their plight to witches. If a believer of Christ assumes or thinks that a spirit might be causing infertility in him/her, then he/she can be sure that God is at work just like his dealings with Sarah, Rebecca and Hannah. That notwithstanding there are other physical challenges that may cause infertility amongst spouses. The Bible also affirms that infertility is a reproach as seen in Genesis 30:23, “And she conceived, and bare a son: and said, God hath taken away my reproach” and as Elizabeth said in Luke 1:25, “Thus hath the Lord done unto me in the days wherein he looked upon me, to take away my reproach among men”. On the other hand, God does what is good for his people and can choose to make one sterile, for his own glory.⁷⁹

Biblical perspective on the belief that witches fly at night

Most Ghanaians believe that witches fly in the night to attend meetings or to cause harm. However, examining this belief from a biblical perspective, Angels are created by God and can fly as indicated in the following Scriptures:

- “And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: and he was seen upon the wings of the wind” (2 Samuel 22:11).
- “And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind” (Psalm 18:10).

⁷⁹ Agyapong, “An Evaluation Of Akan And Konkomba Witchcraft Trials & Beliefs In Ghana.”

- “Above it stood the Seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly” (Isaiah 6:2).
- “Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation” (Daniel 9:21).
- “And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time from the face of the serpent” (Revelation 12:14).

The above biblical passages reveal that angels fly and people can be empowered to fly as in the case of the woman in Revelation 12:14. In the author’s view, there is no real reference in the Bible with regards to witches flying at night as gathered from the Ghanaian perspective, but that notwithstanding, the allies of Satan who were sent down from Heaven also fly because they were once angels of God. It, therefore, stands that witches flying at night to meetings is not a biblical teaching, however, most Ghanaians believe that witches fly in the night to embark on their evil agendas and to attend meetings. There is a contention when Ghanaians including some church leaders interpret dreams in which people fly to imply witchcraft manipulation. Dreams can occur due to various reasons, thus equating dreams in which people fly as witchcraft makes the phenomenon weird and unfounded. That notwithstanding, the woman in Revelation 12:14 was empowered to fly, whether literal or figurative, hence people can be empowered to fly as the biblical perspective seems to suggest.

Biblical perspective on witches drinking human blood and eating human flesh

The phenomenon under investigation in the Ghanaian view suggests that witches eat the flesh of humans and drink their blood. This aspect of the study will examine the possibility of witches eating human flesh and drink their blood from the biblical perspective. The bible has instructed that eating blood is forbidden as shall be seen in the below passages from scripture.

- It is recorded in the Bible in Genesis 9:4 that, “flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.”
- Moses the prophet of God also admonished the people of God in Leviticus 7:26 that “ye shall eat no manner of blood, whether it be of fowl or of beast,

in any of your dwellings.”

- The Bible further indicates the reason for forbidding the people of God in the eating of blood. “For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off” (Leviticus 17:14).
- Additionally, Leviticus 19:26 indicates that “Ye shall not eat anything with the blood: neither shall ye use enchantment, nor observe times.”

The above Scriptures teach that no person is allowed to drink the blood of any manner or kind and not even through the employment of witchcraft powers to do so. That notwithstanding it had been gathered from the data collected about the belief and activities of witches in Ghana that some persons who are witches drink human blood and eat human flesh which scripture vehemently frowns upon. An incident in scripture where two women agreed to boil their children and eat them is found in 2 Kings 6:28-29.

And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, this woman said unto me, give thy son that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow. So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son.

From a Ghanaian perspective, witches are capable of handing over relatives to be eaten by colleague witches at meetings and could that possibly be related to the incident in 2 Kings 6:28-29? Is there a possibility of these two women being equated to the Ghanaian concept of witchcraft as they ate the flesh of human beings like the witches in Ghana are believed to do? The women fell afoul of the law of God regarding the drinking of blood. John 6:53 postulates Jesus saying: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves”. Jesus has stated that humans can eat his flesh and drink his blood which seems to violate the initial statutes declared by God that no human is permitted to drink blood (Lev. 19:26). Jesus further authenticated an aspect of the command that blood eating is forbidden by referring to that same text that, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves.”

John 6:53b affirms that life is in the blood. Why will Jesus break the initial premise of the blood being forbidden but affirm the latter part of the same text that, the life of a person or animal is found in his blood? Does it suggest that, if one eats the blood of another, he has eaten another person's life into himself? How does this contrast with the process of blood transfusion? Can the Jehovah's Witnesses Sect be justifiable as they refuse blood transfusion due to the life which is in the blood? The two women in 2 Kings 6:28-29 and Jesus's assertion in John 6:53 seem to suggest that humans can eat the human body and drink their blood if the passages are to be translated literally. The two women who ate the child was a real incident, but Jesus's assertion seems figurative and should be accorded as such. Since the two women of whom the bible did not define their spiritual state as either possessing witchcraft or being demon-possessed persons, it cannot be categorically said that they are witches. Cannibalism where some people eat human flesh as a cultural practice and the treatment of some diseases like Parkinson's disease with an aborted fetus of pregnant mothers may also be implied as witchcraft, if eating human flesh and drinking blood equates witchcraft possession.

Biblical perspective on witches causing poverty, sickness and other social vices

The bible speaks of how God created man to become fruitful and multiply in all their endeavors (Genesis 1:22, 28, 8:17, 9:1, 9:7, 17:20, 28:3). God never intended that the man he created may suffer lack and want and not to talk of poverty. However, the sin of man marred the beauty of God's repository and agenda for mankind to prosper.

Most Ghanaians, therefore, believe that poverty is bad and the life-threatening forces (witches) are often responsible for it. In the bible, there are incidences of people suffering from poverty and some were: Naomi (Ruth 1:20-21, 2:2), the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:10) and Lazarus (Luke 16:20). In the scenario of the poor who are mentioned above, none accused evil spirits or witches of afflicting them with poverty. Naomi on the other hand said "God Almighty has afflicted me" while the widow of Zarephath and Lazarus seem to blame none for their poverty. The biblical implication on poverty seems to suggest that, there were no incidences where individuals were afflicted with poverty by witches. The story of the widow of Zarephath further suggests that children of God could be poor as the prophet

who perhaps died in poverty leaving behind debts to be paid by his widow and children.

The incongruity lies with how God might instruct man to be fruitful but some of his children, even God's prophet dying in poverty (2 kings 4:1), just as Lazarus a righteous person who went to heaven after death but lived as a poor man on earth (Luke 16:25). The biblical passages above suggest that poverty is not necessarily inflicted by witches or evil spirits. Poverty can even be an act of God as Naomi declared.

Additionally, there are incidences in scripture where Christ will cast out a demon out of a person to heal their diseases (Matthew 4:24, Luke 9:42) implying that evil spirits can cause sicknesses in persons. Jesus further attributes some sicknesses to sin (Matthew 9:2, Mark 2:4-5). It can also be implied that disobedience to God's word can make one sick: greed, anger, bitterness, overeating, or wrong eating habits have been proven to cause sicknesses and the scriptures admonish man to refrain from them. The belief that witchcraft is spiritual affirms that, since evil spirits can cause sicknesses as Jesus said, then it's possible that witches can make one sick, that is not to say that all sicknesses are witchcraft induced as biblical perspectives have suggested divergent causes of sicknesses.

Biblical perspective on witches causing misfortune

Witchcraft is believed to be responsible for all bad events or misfortunes including-illness, poverty, accidents, and a host of other social and political problems bringing spiritual insecurity.⁸⁰ Misfortune may include illnesses, a bad marriage, rebellion of children, financial difficulties, inexplicable troubles, and many other challenges.⁸¹ Ghanaian Pentecostal stress not only the need for regeneration but also warfare against evil spirits who are believed to be the underlying causes of poverty, suffering and other vicissitudes of life.⁸²

Ghanaians mostly struggle with misfortune because their contextualization of misfortune mainly stems from two angles: misfortunes are always caused by

⁸⁰ Allan Anderson, *Witchdemonology. Witchcraft And Deliverance In African Pentecostalism.*, L. & C. R. C. Elorm-donkor, Ed.. (Oregon: Pickwick Publications 2018),122.

⁸¹ Quayesi-Amakye, "Coping with evil in Ghanaian Pentecostalism.", 259-262.

⁸² Quayesi-Amakye, "Coping with evil in Ghanaian Pentecostalism.", 259-262.

witches or evil spirits and God's goodness will not permit nor sanction misfortune.⁸³ Some arguments based on the notion that evil and suffering taint God's goodness is often related more to the lack of faith in the goodness and sovereignty of God.⁸⁴ It is noteworthy to consider that Parrinder's argument that an "enlightened religion, education, medicine and better social and racial conditions will help to dispel witchcraft belief" seems not validated because all the above classes in the society seem to affirm the belief just as all the other Ghanaians.⁸⁵ The bible perhaps records various misfortunes that happened to different people at different times and periods because of different reasons or "causal orders". The bible traces misfortunes to sin, Genesis 3:16-19, explains the death declared for Adam and Eve for disobedience to God, Numbers 12:10-12 and also narrates the case of Miriam's Leprosy for speaking against God's servant, Numbers 16:29-32 addresses Korah, Dathan, and Abiram's rebellion and their unusual death's, Romans 6:23 states that the wages of sin is death, Acts 5:1-6 comments on how Ananias and Saphira's lies caused their subsequent death, Acts 13:8-13 touches on the blindness of Elymas the sorcerer.

Misfortune could also be natural (Genesis 25:8: Abraham's death, 1 Chronicles 29:28: David's death). Quayesi- Amakye places natural evil under moral and societal evil. Moral evil is a deviation from natural or moral laws and the subsequent repercussions, while societal evil emanates from a society's negative attitude or negligence toward life and its ramifications. Misfortunes may also be sanctioned by God for His purpose and glory.⁸⁶ 1 Kings 14:14-18: Jeroboam's son died because God found something good in him, Job 1:11-12: Job's troubles were permitted by God, 2 Corinthians 12:7-8: Paul had a thorn in his flesh, John 9:1-3: a Man was born blind for Gods glory. These are various examples. Misfortunes may also be the work of evil spirits (2 Timothy 4:14-18: Paul's deliverance, Acts 19:14-16: the seven sons of Sceva who were rendered naked and wounded by evil spirits). It has therefore been identified that misfortune can be an act of God as well as being a natural phenomenon or orchestrated by evil spirits including witches.

⁸³ Quayesi-Amakye, "Coping with evil in Ghanaian Pentecostalism.", 259-262.

⁸⁴ Quayesi-Amakye, "Coping with evil in Ghanaian Pentecostalism.", 265.

⁸⁵ George Parrinder, *A Critical study of the belief in Witchcraft from the records of witch hunting in Europe Yesterday and African today*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1958), 202-203.

⁸⁶ Quayesi-Amakye, "Coping with evil in Ghanaian Pentecostalism."265.

Biblical Perspective on Curbing the activities of witches through witch camps

King Saul embarked on a campaign to do away with all persons who practiced witchcraft or wizardry and those who had familiar spirits in the land of Israel in 1 Samuel 28:3. Saul might have taken a cue from the scriptures below as far as annihilating witches are concerned.

- Exodus 22:18 KJV, ‘Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.’
- Leviticus 20:27 KJV, ‘A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them.’

The bible passages suggest a kind of eradication agenda towards those possessing witchcraft and familiar spirits. Could this be equated to the current challenge of Africa and brutalities launched on supposed witches? “Witchcraft accusation is a fatal epidemic in Tanzania, leading to an average of ten murders per week”⁸⁷ An Indian javelin thrower Debjani Bora in 2015 recounted how he was blamed for all these deaths in the village, he was them wrapped up in fishing nets, and beaten up severely in the northeastern Indian State of Assam.⁸⁸

Erstwhile to the enlightenment in Europe, thousands of accused witches had been killed.⁸⁹ Martha Corey and seven others were convicted of witchcraft and hanged in Salem, Massachusetts, on September 22, 1692.⁹⁰

In Ghana, six witch camps are in existence to house accused or suspected witches who are often beaten and chastised, dumped there despite the difficult situation prevalent due to the lack of access to the basic needs of humankind. There is, therefore, a need to consider the plights of these accused individuals by all stakeholders. According to Priest et al:

From the street children in Kinshasa to the killing of male witches in Peru or of elderly female widows in Tanzania, to the witch villages of Ghana or the witch burnings of New Guinea, it would be difficult to come up with a

⁸⁷ Philip Gibbs, Beyond the Fence : ‘Confronting Witchcraft Accusations in the Papua New Guinea Highlands’ *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 39(1), (1973): 19-22; C. Tsekpoe, *Response to witchcraft and Demonology in Ghana*, L. and C. R. C. Elorm-donkor, Ed.. (Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2018), 144.

⁸⁸ Priest et al., *Witchcraft and Mission Studies*, 1.

⁸⁹ Gibbs, *Beyond the Fence*, 10.

⁹⁰ Priest et al., *Witchcraft and Mission Studies*, 2.

Missiological topic that is more timely, or a topic that missionaries, pastors, and theologians, in general, are less prepared to engage.⁹¹

The New Testament data of the Holy Scriptures do not endorse the eradication or torturing of witches as captured in the Old Testament. Onyinah postulates that the word “witch” is not found in the synoptic gospels.⁹² Jesus Christ made no reference to the term witchcraft in the scriptures and therefore did not prescribe any form of sanction for supposed or accused witches. Witchcraft was mentioned among the works of the flesh by the Apostle Paul in Galatian 5:19, hence no description or sanction was prescribed for them as in the Old Testament where they could be stoned to death.

Since the bible is holistic in its teaching and should be interpreted as such, how should the supposed Ghanaian witches be handled in the light of scripture? The stigmatization of accused witches and their camping at witch camp, when weighed holistically, denies the victim the love God demands that is expressed towards one another. Jesus stated that the greatest of the entire commandment is love which supersedes all the other laws in the Scriptures (Mark 12:28-31). It should then be understood that the bible frowns on all beliefs and practices that hurt one’s fellow human beings and deny them of the love of God which is the central theme of the Scriptures.

Anthropological Perspective

Anthropology is the study of human races, origins, societies and cultures.⁹³ Anthropology is the science of human beings, especially the study of peoples and their progenitors. With the definition above as the foci for this particular perspective, witchcraft has been an age-old social challenge that has to be battled with by almost all societies. The histories of witch tortures during the European inquiry prior to the Reformation have flavored witchcraft belief in more recent times. The utmost notable contribution of anthropological studies has been the evidence that witchcraft has been encountered in virtually all continents of the world and it is still an important feature in contemporary times.

⁹¹ Priest et al., *Witchcraft and Mission Studies*, 3.

⁹² Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism: Witchcraft and Demonology in Ghana*, 239.

⁹³ Merriam Webster Dictionary, s.v. “Anthropology.”

Anthropologists have not dealt with the reality of witchcraft or the real activities of witches but they have sought to understand the social factors underlying witchcraft belief.

Social anthropologists have been forced to focus on spirit possession as a theme because they have been confronted with it personally in their field research.⁹⁴ The western world battled with the same phenomenon years ago and people were accused and killed for witchcraft possession till the status quo was challenged to pave way for a scientific society that will make decisions based more on empiricism than on belief.⁹⁵ Africa has long held on to this phenomenon and its impact has greatly been felt which seems to prevent its citizens from reasoning scientifically, which could be said to account for the misery and poverty that abounds.

Anthropologists like Richard Shweder have indicated that some societies, like that of Job's comforters, systematically articulate a moral causal ontology-where every misfortune is due to one's sin (maybe in an earlier life). But other societies operate with interpersonal causal ontologies, where other evil persons are understood as causing misfortune such as infertility, sickness, poverty and in such societies Christians pray regularly for God to protect them from witches, something that Korean and contemporary American Christians do not do.⁹⁶

The Ghanaian terrain is saturated with the belief in the activities of witchcraft and a deviation from the accepted belief makes one look weird or being termed as a skeptic. In the Ghanaian religious (Christian, traditional) terrain, it's odd not to pray against the work of witches that instigate misfortune and evil. It is evident that Ghanaians from historical antecedents have believed in witchcraft to date and the data gathered from the research stem from the culture and paradigm that has pertained from time immemorial and there is perhaps a need to reshape some of the hypotheses or belief that may be found wanting as they are being tested in other laboratories across the world. Some of the social factors outlined by some social anthropologists as being among the causes of witchcraft belief are misfortunes, poverty, the outbreak of diseases among others. The above-mentioned factors

⁹⁴ Alan R Tippett, *Spirit Possessions; It Relates In To Culture And Religion: In Demon Possession*. (J. W. Montgomery, Ed.). Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1975), 145.

⁹⁵ Priest et al., *Witchcraft and Mission Studies*, 2.

⁹⁶ Priest et al., *Witchcraft and Mission Studies*, 37.

however do not justify nor defy the belief and there is a need to further resort to the other means of testing the belief and activities of witchcraft.

Psychiatrists Perspective

This particular laboratory will examine some of the beliefs and activities of witchcraft in Ghana from the psychiatrist's perspective. The study analyzes and ascertains if the belief and activities of witches can be explained psychiatrically to affirm Field's case study and assertion that witches are mainly those "mentally afflicted with obsession"⁹⁷

Cases like people's confession of flying in the night could be psychiatrically viewed as hallucinations or delusions. Hallucinations is a mental disorder that can cause one to see images, hear sounds or smell things that may seem real to the victims but do not exist. Hallucinations are perceptions of objects with no reality, usually arising from disorders of the nervous system. Ghanaian witchcraft belief and activities view flying in the night, drinking human blood and eating human flesh as witchcraft practice, but psychiatrists often attribute this to mental disorders which need medical attention to rectify.

Additionally, delusions being a mental disorder in psychiatry can make an individual subscribe to a belief that is not true. This can be used to explain the situation of those who confess the possession of witchcraft powers, also, the Ghanaian belief that misfortunes, poverty, unemployment, poor governance are the work of witches can be explained away with this mental condition.

Most psychiatric conditions like depression, dementia, paranoid schizophrenia, hebephrenic, catatonia, etc., to an extent, resemble the Ghanaian view of the evidence of witchcraft. Can the psychiatrist's view here discuss affirm Field's theory that witches are mainly those mentally afflicted with the obsession? It can be justified to an extent but that does not deny the existence of witchcraft or people possessed with evil powers because the biblical perspective has affirmed the presence of people who are possessed with evil powers, some of which Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul cast out of afflicted people.

⁹⁷ Field, *Search for security: An Ethno-psychiatric study of rural Ghana*, 136.

On the issue of catalytic exteriorization phenomenon as proposed by Carl Jung, a student of Sigmund Freud where the psyche is supposedly projected outwards to do either good or bad (witchcraft). It should be thus understood that Ghanaian witchcraft is spiritual and complex according to them. Kofi Badu posits that, Carl Jung's experience could be equated to *Sukusare* of the Akan of Ghana where people who have them could project it to do good or evil. He cited occurrences, where food prepared for husbands and carried by their wives was poured down when the *sukusare* were projected out to accomplish that task. He explains that the *sukusare* is fetish (*suman*) and not witchcraft. Badu's final remark during the interview with the author, regarding Jung's response to witchcraft is that witchcraft is real and an occupant in persons, who reasons evil for men and with no philosophy, can refute its actuality.

Conclusion

Witchcraft belief and activities are ubiquitous in Ghana and the assumptions have been corroborated using Biblical, Anthropological and Psychological perspectives to ascertain the legitimacy of the belief in the phenomenon. This chapter revealed that some of the beliefs of the Ghanaians were buttressed by some of the laboratories, while others were not. The divergent laboratories depict that, the belief and the activities of witches in Ghana could either be supported or disproved by reason of the background of the one assessing the phenomenon.

CHAPTER 8

Witchcraft Belief and Christian Ethics in Ghana

Introduction

This chapter seeks to develop an ethical code aimed at reducing challenges associated with the Ghanaian understanding of the activities of witchcraft. Every society is impacted by her belief, values, and socio-cultural as well as religious ideologies. There is a need to unravel Africa's beliefs, values, history and socio-religious ideas in order to address its present political, economic, psychological, emotional and spiritual condition which is being discussed in this study. A proper diagnosis of African ethics will be the catalyst to move towards developing an ethical system that is both African and Christian. Ghana, where this study was conducted has its ethics and morality which guide the people of the land. Ethics and morality in Ghana will be discussed in this chapter to come out with Christian ethical and moral codes that can herald Ghana to overcome her unique challenges associated with the belief in witchcraft.

Ethics in the Christian perspective

“Ethics refers to the theoretical overview of morality, a theory or system or code.”⁹⁸

While morality is the actual human conduct assessed from the backdrop of its right or wrong and good or evil, ethics are either personal or societal.

Different environments determine whether personal ethics will be given priority over society's ethics or the other way round. The African society concept of “I am because we are”⁹⁹ informs citizens of the priority given to the society over the individual or personal ethical standards.

To an extent in Africa, individuals are bound with societal values and ethics

⁹⁸ Samuel Waje Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, (Michigan: Hippo Books, 2008),5.

⁹⁹ Mbiti, *African Philosophy and Religion*.

and disobedience can warrant punishment. Ghana generally derives its ethical codes from customs, taboos, stories, tales, oral traditions, myths, legends, songs, riddles, liturgies, proverbs, riddles, wise sayings and the community as a unit. The community is central in African ethics, hence the idea of “we” and “us” is entrenched in the citizens’ right from childhood.¹⁰⁰

Christian ethics on the other hand derive its ethical codes from Christian theology which admits that Christian ethics must come from God through special and general revelation. Special revelation can be both verbal (written word) and personal (word personified),¹⁰¹ which implies that it emanates from scriptures and the person of Christ. According to Grenz, “If we would develop a Christian ethic today, we must engage with scripture.”¹⁰²

The model of Christian ethics is Jesus Christ and the rule is from God while the power to energize the Christian to persistently apply the ethical codes is the Holy Spirit. General revelation is God’s revelation of himself through nature.¹⁰³

It should be noted that most Christian ethics practiced in Ghana are a blend of Christian ethics where with western ethics have been smuggled into them in combination with African ethics. Western ethics thrives on western philosophy which was influenced by the enlightenment (Renaissance and reformation) in the eighteenth century and the technological and electronic revolutions. The enlightenment period shook people’s confidence in certainties or absolutes that had been previously accepted unquestionably by communities resulting in that, values becomes a personal choice rather than an adherence to community standards.¹⁰⁴ That notwithstanding, African ethics is founded on community principles unlike western ethics, which upholds individualism. The situation makes the current Christian ethics practiced in Ghana a confused one as two conflicting ethical codes or standards seems to be subscribed to.

¹⁰⁰ Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, 21.

¹⁰¹ Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, 47.

¹⁰² Stanley .J. Grenz, *Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics*, (Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1997),96.

¹⁰³ Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, 46.

¹⁰⁴ Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, 30.

The author wishes to introduce an ethical code for Christians in Ghana termed “Ghana Pentecostal Ethics”, which seeks to unpack all the western ethics attached to the current labeled Christian ethics, thereby having a “naked Christian ethical code” generated from the general and special revelation of God and fusing them with Ghana’s ethical standards which originate from Ghana’s customs, taboos, oral tradition, stories, myths and legends and the community, devoid of standards or codes that will conflict the revelation of God as encapsulated in scripture holistically. Ghana Pentecostal Ethics can then be defined as the fusion of Ghanaian ethical codes and naked Christian ethics, with the Holy Spirit taking pre-eminence in all ethical dilemmas.

It is conspicuous that ethical codes can conflict, but with the Ghana Pentecostal ethics, a premium is placed on annihilating western ethical codes and replacing them with Ghanaian ethical codes while giving premium to the Holy Spirit in all matters that may conflict.

In western ethics, theories like teleology, utilitarianism, deontology are referred to when one wants to ascertain what is ethically right or wrong, but with the Ghana Pentecostal ethics, Ghanaian ethical codes, scripture and the leading of the Holy Spirit drives the ethics.

The above ethical code is formulated to curtail the challenges of the belief and activities of witches in Ghana and will be grounded on two basic truths: Love and the Holy Spirit. Ghana’s ethical code or standards need to be assessed by the quality of love embedded in the ethical code and the entire scripture also is grounded in Love (1 Corinthians 13:13).¹⁰⁵ The Holy Spirit also is the giver of love to mankind (Romans 5:5). If a custom in Ghana demands that accused witches should be beaten and driven to a witch camp, it should be assessed in the light of love. The Ghana Pentecostal ethics may examine this scenario from the following strands: how much love is embedded in beating a fellow human being because others accuse him/her of being a witch? As a Christian who is born again by the Holy Spirit, how much love is found in accusing someone and dispossessing them of their rights (families and properties)?

¹⁰⁵ Grenz, *Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics*, 277.

The definition of love in this ethical standard is premised on 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 (ASV). Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; bearish all things, believeth all things, hoped all things, endured all things. Love never failed.

When love is measured from these tangents, and Christians adhere to the set standard, the nation of Ghana will thrive. Ghana Pentecostal ethics has the potency to impact the lives of Ghanaians to re-examine witchcraft belief and activities in the nation.

An appreciation of the ethical implications of belief and practices of witchcraft in Ghana.

To an extent, one can appreciate the belief and activities of witchcraft in Ghana because when they were tested at the laboratories, not all the beliefs and activities were disproved. That notwithstanding some of the witchcraft beliefs and activities were defective because they were disproved by the Laboratories.

Marriage and fertility

Marriages can be wrecked when spouses fail to understand and appreciate their differences and human temperaments and fail to uphold or adhere to the principle of love as enshrined in the Scripture. Moreover, the biblical laboratory clarified the issue of barrenness with instances where God made some women like Sara, Rebecca and Hanna barren for a period, for his purpose. How ethical will this then be to propose that; marriage breakdowns and barrenness are the work of witches? God, being a Spirit can make one fertile or sterile and could that not also mean that, witchcraft practices that are perceived to be perpetuated by evil spirits can also make sterile or fertile?

Flying in the night

The Biblical laboratory does not provide clear evidence of the phenomenon in the area of witches flying at night as assumed by the Ghanaian belief and the activities of witchcraft. The psychiatrist's laboratory however provided evidence that flying in the night could be a mental disorder (delusions, hallucinations). However,

Anthropology being the study of human races, origins, societies and cultures seems to support the view that witches fly in the night. It is known from antiquity in Ghana that witches fly and though cannot be proven empirically, Ghanaians subscribe to that belief.

Camping of witches

Is it right to compel other persons to desert their homes for witch camps because they are suspected of witchcraft possession? The torturing and beatings they go through after the witchcraft accusation at times destroy or mars their ego as stigmatization from many ends set in. Ethically a belief that can dehumanize mankind should be frowned upon. *Se okoto se aboa bi si onua bi so a, nka nkyere ne se sore ne so, na kakyere ne se sore yenso* is an Akan proverb that can be transliterated as “if you meet an animal sitting on a fellow human being, don’t tell it to get up from him/her, but rather say get up from us”. The proverb in relation to the ethics of camping witches suggests that all Ghanaians must kick against the camping of witches because it’s possible that in the future, anyone could be driven to the witch camp. The challenge the victims go through at the witch camps including extreme poverty and hunger makes the camping of witches an unethical approach that must be curtailed. Is it also possible that witch camps rather protect the accused witches who could have been beaten to death as was suggested by the priest of the Gnaani witch camp in the Yendi municipality? Is it ethical to keep the suspected witches at the witch camps instead of beating the accused witches which can lead to death as occurs in Tanzania? The author suggests that it’s not good to camp witches and neither is it good to beat accused witches or harm them.

Conclusion

The ethics of witchcraft belief and practice in Ghana was discussed to devise an ethical code to enact orderliness and sanity as far as the belief system is concerned. ‘African Pentecostal ethics’ as a new ethical code has been birthed in academia by the author to chart an ethical option to eliminate the Ghana witchcraft belief and practice. The next chapter recommends several pastoral and theological responses to curtail the implications of witchcraft belief and activities in Ghana as discussed in the entire study.

CHAPTER 9

Pastoral and Theological Response to Witchcraft Belief and Activities in Ghana

Introduction

Witchcraft belief and activities in Ghana have impacted every facet of Ghanaian life. Ghana's spiritual and physical development in the years ahead is directly dependent on the mindset of the people and their worldview of reality and spirits especially witchcraft, which has been a major challenge for Ghana. Onyinah described clearly how the belief in witchcraft was understood and how people from all classes constantly seek protection from these life-threatening forces (witches) among the Akan people of Ghana.¹⁰⁶ According to Onyinah, the methods adopted to exorcise witches in Ghana includes: appeasement of spirits of evil intent, chewing of the poisonous *odum* tree bark, corpse carrying by the accused witches, minimization of witchcraft by the tutelary god's (*aman abosom*), and exorcism by the anti-witchcraft shrines (*abosom abrafo*).¹⁰⁷

At the early stages of Christian mission in Ghana, it was observed that the historic mission churches infiltrated Ghana but could not provide the people with the antidote to their fear, but only taught them that, the primitive and animistic belief was demonic and that further strengthened their stance on witchcraft issues. The African Initiated Churches (AIC's) took advantage of the situation and appropriately contextualized the gospel of the missionaries to meet the needs and aspirations of the people. The prominence and success of the ministries of Samuel Nyankson in the 1910s, William Wade Harris's in the 1914's and John Swatson was due to the proper contextualization of the gospel to address the fear of the people through healings, prophecy and exorcism. The lapse (sexual promiscuity, exploitation, witchcraft accusation, etc.) of the AIC's paved the way for the classical Pentecostals

¹⁰⁶ Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism: Witchcraft and Demonology in Ghana*, 58.

¹⁰⁷ Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism: Witchcraft and Demonology in Ghana*, 58.

to emerge. The classical Pentecostals thrived because they assimilated the culture of the Ghanaian people which allowed them to oscillate between being Christians and addressing the fears of the Ghanaians. Exorcism and procedures in addressing the fear of Ghanaians in the classical Pentecostals also came under attack from the leadership of the classical Pentecostals as exploitations, witchcraft accusations and sexual promiscuity that demoralized the essence of the AIC's emerged among the Classical Pentecostal fraternity. The need to streamline the situation tends to make classical Pentecostals lean more toward the missionaries approach of which some Ghanaians were not contented with and as result paved way for the neo-Pentecostals who major in exorcism and provide spiritual consultation (*akwankyerɛ*) to clients. There were attempts to correct unscriptural practices like the blessing of water, the use of the titles such as prophets, prophetess, etc. by lay leaders and accusations of witchcraft in the church of Pentecost on August 12, 1958, in Accra which led to all the Prophets and prophetess leaving the mother church, except Maame Dede, who was later involved in immorality, was disciplined and later went mad in 1962.¹⁰⁸ A summary of the context in Ghana merits the author to propose pastoral and theological responses to the belief and practice of witches in Ghana.

Pastoral responses

The following recommendations will be made to address the witchcraft belief and activities in Ghana. The tendency in Ghana where females have become the object of witchcraft accusation should be brought to a halt as that may suggest misogyny. The author suggests that gender-inclusive programs should be added to the school curricular and taught from the Kindergarten level through to the tertiary level to suppress the issue of male dominance over the female.

The educational structure should be the mouthpiece for the marginalized (female, children and the poor) in the Ghanaian societies who are most often victims of witchcraft accusations.

All persons should be given equal rights and access to what they need in society and not discriminated against. Moreover, the government and churches should map up strategies to take out all the children housed in witch camps and relocate them, so they can have access to education in the interest of the Ghanaian society and the

¹⁰⁸ Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism: Witchcraft and Demonology in Ghana*, 155.

individuals involved. Those children who are not cared for nor schooled often turn out to be liabilities to the nation instead of assets and hence the need to dispossess the witch camps of the hostage children.

Every Ghanaian child has the right to education but some customs or cultural beliefs of some Ghanaians have dispossessed some of these children of their rights which is against the constitution of the nation.

All persons who pervert the orders of the society and blame them on witches should not be considered as an excuse at all but made to face the law as and when deemed necessary. Most Ghanaians would beg to be forgiven when they violate the laws of the land, on the premise, that the committed act was as a result of witches or evil spirits that took hold of them. The author does not suggest that evil spirits cannot possess someone to do something wrong, but if all Ghanaians are to be possessed and act otherwise, what would be the story of Ghana?

All persons must work hard to succeed and somebody's negligence should not be covered with the intention of blaming them on witches as the case has always been in society. Any person who spills the beans must be asked to gather them back at his /her own expense and the Ghanaian society will thrive. The Ghanaian society cannot thrive under lawlessness and citizens cannot continue blaming external agents like witches for their woes and plights. The government, institutions, churches, and NGOs should continue to educate the Ghanaian society on the need to seek medical attention when they are sick and stop the chaining of mentally deranged people at traditional shrines, prayer camps, Mallams, etc.

Jesus Christ is the healer and he is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). That notwithstanding, medical attention is not something the Bible speaks against. Paul the Apostle admonished Timothy to take some medications because of his sickness (1 Timothy 5:23).

The Ghanaian society should be taught to wake up from their slumber since most of the sickness they claim to be witchcraft-induced can be explained scientifically and treated. Some of the people accused of witchcraft are victims of mental disorders (depression, hysteria, dementia, hallucinations, etc.).

Absolute dependence on God and his word must be the standard and Ghanaians must disapprove of the belief of finding solace in IMF grants or attributing the country's woes to witchcraft manipulation. The leadership of Ghana seems excited when grants or loans are received from foreign donors for the development of the nation. Ghanaians are responsible for the development of their own country and not otherwise. The budget of the nation must not be tied to foreign grants from donors or lenders but efforts should be made to internally generate funds to develop the nation.

The author suggests that Ghanaians must subscribe to Ghana Pentecostal ethics which seeks to put love and the Holy Spirit ahead of all ethical decisions. In the presence of love, violent acts will not be perpetrated against persons accused of witchcraft to the extent of driving them out of their communities and denying them their basic human rights. Love should spearhead all ethical decisions.

Christian leaders and Ghanaians must also accept people who fear witchcraft as having genuine problems that need to be worked on.¹⁰⁹ Leaders should conscientiously provide solutions for the people of Ghana using the word of God to address the issues of poverty, sickness, barrenness, servitude, and all forms of human affliction.

The church should not however lose sight of the fact that witchcraft exists in the Ghanaian terrain. Christians have to embrace those who express their fear of witchcraft and address all their problems with the word of God. At times, the need to oscillate between the Ghanaian belief and Christian teachings is very useful but extremes are not helpful.

A story is told of a man who reported to a pastor that witches often came to his room to steal his car keys. Upon counseling him, he realized that it was not an act of witchcraft but rather his carelessness in handling his keys. The man was however not willing to accept the fact of his carelessness, so the pastor prayed over the left key and told him to hang the key in front of his bed in the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost every night. The man diligently followed that spiritual direction known as *akwankyere* in Ghana, to prevent the witches from

¹⁰⁹ Anderson, *Witchdemonology, Witchcraft And Deliverance In African Pentecostalism*, 124.

stealing the last key. The key never got missing and upon his coming back to offer his thanks, the pastor used the scripture to engage what he feared and finally told him that, it was not witches that stole the keys but his carelessness in handling his keys. The man was very grateful for this revelation.

The church should, therefore, devise strategies to meet the social and physical needs of its members as well as providing for their spiritual nourishment. The church cannot continue to ignore the suffering masses in the various communities. Meeting their physical needs includes supporting them financially by way of providing apprenticeship training and other lucrative activities.

Additionally, the church should design a syllabus where members will be taught how to become initiative in their various endeavors to remain financially independent. Individuals in the nation should be made aware that, the government cannot provide jobs for all the unemployed in the nation.

It cannot also be kept under the carpet that the church in Ghana has done very well in the area of education. The Church in Ghana to an extent has more schools than the government and the church is encouraged to continue exploring other avenues that will bring growth and development to the nation.

Christians should start training their members and the public on the virtues of integrity and faithfulness to avert corruption, nepotism, clientelism and tribal politics which often leaves the nation with a chunk of unemployed people which increases the rate of poverty in the country.

The Theological response to the belief and activities of witchcraft in Ghana

Christians are about 70% of Ghana's population according to the 2010 national statistical department. Any good theology that can grow the nation should be from the Christian perspective because they are the majority and therefore a major stakeholder in the country. A comprehensive theology should be formulated that can adequately help Ghanaians to overcome their fears and thereby promote growth and development in the nation. The following theologies have being propounded or formulated by the researcher to address the witchcraft belief and practice in Ghana:

Man, the Imago Dei (Image of God)

Man is created in the image of God making man a unique creation among the millions of God's creations on the earth (Genesis 1:26-27). God choose himself as the pattern in the creation of man.¹¹⁰ Men are not products of evolution as some secularists speculate. God is the overall maker of all that exists, choose to give mankind this earth to occupy till he comes and to nurture the land (Luke 19:13). God's instruction to the man He created in the garden of Eden was to work the land and thereby bringing transformation and growth to improve upon the quality and the state of the resources entrusted to their care. God is always concerned about the development and growth of whatever He has entrusted to mankind. The reason he applauded the servants who worked and multiplied the talents that were entrusted to them in the parable of the talents was their ingenuity, creativity and innovation which actually portrays the *Imago Dei* in man as in Genesis 1:27-28 and Luke 19:13-20.

God never compromises when it comes to the development and growth of individuals, communities and nations. The *Imago Dei* in man requires that God's creation on earth becomes progressive as far as sustaining and improving upon the quality of whatever He has entrusted to man's care is concerned. The study brought to light that, the Ghanaian belief and practice of witchcraft have affected the development of individuals and the nation as a whole and Ghanaians ought to resort to harnessing the potential or resources embedded in them as the *Imago Dei* on earth. The world today seems to favor those who are continually growing and developing and that explains what God said in the parable of the talent in Luke 19:24. The one who had much was given the talent of the one who was lazy and never increased his talent. Ghana's mineral resources far supersede the entire wealth of most western and advanced nations of the world put together, but remains poor, because of corruption, nepotism, bad governance coupled with many other problems. It's glaring that some foreign companies and wealthy nations are taking advantage of the country and its citizens and are exploiting the nation because most of its human and mineral resources provided by God are kept underground and the government and citizens do not tap into these resources to make wealth just like the lazy and unfaithful servant in Luke 19:13-20.

¹¹⁰ Miller and Scott, *Against All Hope: Hope For Africa*, 15.

Ghanaians are not among the third world countries by accident or by the design of God, but because of the worldview or paradigm that provides information on priorities. If the *Imago Dei* in man (man and woman) is properly harnessed, bringing to halt gender inequality and child bullying, the nation Ghana may see growth and development at both individual and national levels.

God's image in man is dignified and a huge investment that cannot be overlooked thus denying the nation of its capacity to prosper. Witchcraft belief and practice tend to overlook the *Imago Dei* in man, thereby accusing people and subjecting them to beatings, mass lynching, stoning, stigmatization and confinement either at prayer camps, traditional shrines, or witch camps. When the dignity of man is stressed and taught in the Ghanaian community, it will admonish those who exploit other human beings in the name of witch-hunting to put a stop to that demeaning or demoralizing act. The image of God in man is such that, men should not be treated as mere objects that can be maltreated.

The *Imago Dei* in man is an immense capital and this great wealth is inherent in each individual: a mind to reason and think God's thoughts after him without cruelty and brutality geared towards development.

Additionally, God gave man a heart to dream, imagine and have emotions that will feel for his/her fellow human beings and treat them with dignity, thereby becoming innovative and creative which inures into the betterment of the nation.

God also gave all men a personality to develop a kind temperament. The witchcraft belief and practice in Ghana and the way it handles human beings defy the essence of the image of God in man and Ghana's development hinges on the need to treat fellow human beings with dignity and respect.

Enthronization of the Holy Spirit

The term enthronization of the Holy Spirit means that the Holy Spirit will be given pre-eminence or duly acknowledged in all issues and decisions of Christian lives. The enthronization of the Holy Spirit in the Church and individual life must be stressed. Those that are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God (Romans 8:14). It should be noted that the greatest challenge is not the existence of witches,

but the sideline of the Holy Spirit who gives strength to the believer to overcome all evil powers. There seems to be so much artificiality in the Christian terrain, leading to the humanization of the gospel and materialization of life by the church in Ghana. The center of gravity is continually shifting from Christ to the periphery. The test tube is gradually taking over from the Spirit of God to the Laws of which Christ redeemed believers from (Galatians 4:4-6). It seems what Christians were redeemed from is gradually creeping back to the church again. Christians must be taught in church to have an intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:13). The Holy Spirit is the teacher and the supreme guide of the church (John 16:13-15). The Holy Spirit should be allowed to reign in the church and in the lives of individual believers and they will not be held captive by witchcraft belief and practice in Ghana. The Holy Spirit is the power that can transform the “victims” of witchcraft in Ghana into “victors” who can help build the nation. The economy, governance and the spiritual life of Ghana will see light when the victims are transformed into victors.¹¹¹

The Affirmation of Believers Authority

The issue of witchcraft has gained so much ground and prominence in Ghana because most Christians are not aware of who they are (privileges and rights of the sonship of God). All who believed and received Christ were given the power to become the children of God (John 1:12). The numbers of Christians in Ghana who fear witches are alarming and they most often express their fears through their praying. The keen tension in church when witches are being prayed against vastly makes it appear as if, it’s the most important thing amongst the prayer themes raised. The power given to Christians must be the focus and not witchcraft power. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him (Romans 8:17 ASV). Being a Christian means that Christ has taken the center stage of one’s life and therefore believers are fully possessed of Christ: since they are fully possessed there is no emptiness for the witches to captivate. This should not be understood as without misfortune or any evil befalling a Christian.

¹¹¹ Kwasi Atta Agyapong, “Pastoral And Theological Responses To The Effects Of Witchcraft Beliefs In Ghana,” *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (EHASS)* 1, no. 5 (2020): 174–84, <https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.2020096>.

“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Mathew 16:24). And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me (Mark 8:34). Christianity should not be understood as a problem-free religion, but Christ the master has assured believers that, he will deliver them out of all troubles (Hebrews 13:5) and also will strengthen them to endure temptations or evil and not necessarily delivering them out of the trouble always (2 Corinthians 12:7). The believer is empowered to overcome all evil if it’s not ordained by God. Ordained by God here means that, God often allows, believers, to go through trouble to purge them of all unrighteousness and filth and also to modify their character. The believer’s authority is premised on the fact that Jesus overcame the devil on the cross at Calvary and that victory was won for all believers (Colossian 2:14).

“Ye are of God, my little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4). All believers don’t struggle with witches for victory, the battle between man and the evil powers of this world is not for Christians to fight, Christians only need to appropriate the victory won by Christ to their advantage. The right to Christ’s victory is the “Sonship” to God (Romans 8:17). If believers will understand the work of Calvary and accept it, with all its rights and privileges, witchcraft belief and activities will not be a challenge.

Conclusion

The suggested practical pastoral responses adequately curtail the belief, practice and consequences of witchcraft belief in Ghana whiles the theological responses adequately arms believers with the required ammunition to ground a person on scripture other than superstitions or myths which has have no roots in scripture.

Concluding Remarks

The pastoral and theological response to the belief and activities of witchcraft in Ghana will effectively help Ghanaians to overcome the fear of the life-threatening forces and thereby promote growth and development in the nation if adhered to. Moreover, the Christian fraternity who are the majority of the population in the nation, non-governmental agencies, government institutions, the judiciary, and the legislature should all be involved in the pursuit for the continuous development of Ghana, while challenging the belief and practice of witchcraft in Ghana with the suggested pastoral and theological responses by the author. The belief or worldview of a people has a story to tell and it is connected or tied to their development.

The wrong belief hinders the development, while the correct belief or worldview triggers the growth, development and prosperity of a nation. The book has explained how the Ghanaian belief and practices in witchcraft activities have impoverished the nation in many aspects and spheres.

All people and cultures have certain beliefs that shape their paradigm of the universe and how they relate with the universe, which inadvertently determines the prosperity, poverty and development of the people. The book in many aspects has argued that Ghana is not saddled with poverty and reliance on loans or grants by accident but it is so because of what they have chosen to believe.

A worldview or belief that can put into shape the Ghanaian landscape and bring development should neither be animistic (belief that spirit control nature) nor secularist (the belief that man controls nature) but Christian, with roots from the Bible as has been recommended in the book as theological responses to the witchcraft belief in Ghana. The pastoral recommendations or responses resonate with the realities of the Ghanaian situation while the theological responses address the belief from a biblical standpoint. The right worldview is the antidote to Ghana's woes.

Bibliography

- Afful, M. O. *The Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms*. Accra: LIEC, 2011.
- Agyapong, K. A. Beliefs in the Activities of Witchcraft in Ghana. *E-Journal of Religious and Theological Studies -5th Anniversary Special Edition*, 6 no.6(2020): 281–289. <https://doi.org/10.38159/erats.2020092>
- _____. “Pastoral And Theological Responses To The Effects Of Witchcraft Beliefs In Ghana.” *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (EHASS)* 1, no. 5 (2020): 174–84. <https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.2020096>
- _____. “An Evaluation of Akan and Konkomba Witchcraft Trials & Beliefs in Ghana:In Dialogue with the Biblical, Anthropological and Psychiatrists Perspectives.” *Pentecostalism, Charismaticism and Neo-Prophetic Movements Journal (PECANEP)* 1, no. 7 (2020): 92-102–84. <https://doi.org/10.38159/pecanep.2020121>
- _____. *The Effects of the Belief in the Activities of Witchcraft in Ghana: A Case Study of Asuboni District of the Church of Pentecost*. Berlin: LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2020.
- Akrong, A. Neo-witchcraft mentality in popular Christianity. *Research Review New Series*, 16(1), (2000):1–12.
- Aribike, O. *Kwaku Marriage, Registration And Divorce in Ghana: Law and Procedure*. Accra: Aridola Consult, 2018.
- Anderson, A. *Witchdemonology, witchcraft and deliverance in African Pentecostalism*. (L. & C. R. C. Elorm-donkor, Ed.). Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2018.
- Asamoah-Gyadu, K. J. Witchcraft accusations and christianity in Africa. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 39(1), (2015):23–27.
- Brempong, Owusu. They Have Used a Broom to Sweep My Womb: The Concept of Witchcraft in Ghana. *Research Review (NS)* 12, no. 1&2 (1996): 42–50.
- Burrell, Gibson & Morgan Gareth. *Sociological Paradigms And Organisational Analysis*. London: Heinemann Educational, 1979.

- Busia, K.A. *The Position Of The Chief In Modern Asante*. London: Oxford University Press, 1951.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison. K. *Research Methods In Education* (6th ed.). London: RoutledgeFalmer, 2007.
- Creswell, J. W. *Qualitative Inquiry And Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions*. London: Sage Publications, 1998.
- _____. *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.). New Jersey: Pearson Education, 2005.
- _____. *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting And Evaluating Quantitative And Qualitative Research* (3rd ed.). New Jersey: Pearsey Education, 2008.
- Crampton, Alexandra. "No Peace in the House : Witchcraft Accusations as an " Old Woman's Problem " in Ghana," *Anthropology & Aging Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (2013): 199–212.
- Debrunner, H. W. *Witchcraft In Ghana: A Study On The Belief In Destructive Witches And Its Effects On The Akan Tribes*. Accra: Presbyterian Book Depot Ltd, 1959.
- Denscombe, M. *A Good Research Guide For Small-Scale Social Research Projects*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 2003.
- Evans-Pritchard, E. *Witchcraft, Oracles And Magic Among The Azande*. Clarendon: Oxford, 1937.
- Field, M. J. *Religion And Medicine Of The Ga People*. London: Oxford University Press, 1937.
- Field, M. J. *Search For Security: An Ethno-Psychiatric Study Of Rural Ghana*. London: Faber and Faber, 1960.
- Meyer F., *Religion, Morality And The Person*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Forson, M. K. "Split Level Christianity in Africa: A Study of the persistence of Traditional religious Belief and Practices among the Akans." Asbury Theological Seminary. 1993.
- Gibbs, P. Beyond the Fence : Confronting Witchcraft Accusations in the Papua New Guinea Highlands. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 39(1), (1973): 8–11.

- Gifford, P. *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism In A Globalising African Economy*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004.
- Grenz, S. J. *Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics*. Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1997.
- Gray, D. E. *Doing Research In The Real World*. London: Sage Publications, 2004.
- Joyner, R. *Overcoming Witchcraft, Combating Spiritual Strongholds Series*. U.S.A.: Charisma House, 2008.
- Kincheolo, J. L. *Teachers As Researchers : Qualitative Inquiry As The Path To Empowerment*. London: Falmer, 1991.
- Kunhiyop, S. W. *African Christian Ethics*. Michigan: Hippo Books, 2008.
- Kirby, J. P. Toward a Christian Response to Witchcraft in Northern Ghana. 20 *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 39(1), (2015).
- Mante, P. K. *Foundation For Financial Independence*. Accra: Network for Change, 2017.
- Miller, D. L. *Discipling Nations: The Power of Truth to Transform Cultures*. Seattle: YWAM Publishing, 1984.
- Miller, D. L. & Scott A. *Against All Hope: Hope For Africa*. Nairobi: Samaritan Strategy Africa Working Group, 2005.
- Marvasti, A. B. *Qualitative Research In Sociology*. London: Sage Publications, 2004.
- Mbiti, J.S. *African Philosophy and Religion*. New York: Doubleday, 1970.
- Miles, M. B. & Huberman M. *Qualitative Data Analysis* (2nd ed.). London: Sage Publications, 1994.
- Marshall, P. A. *Worldviews And Social Science*. Lanham: University Press of America, 1989.
- Merz, Johannes, "I Seek Life:Witchcraft Beliefs & Moral Dualism in the Northern Atakora of Benin." Thesis, Leiden University, 1998.
- Olukoya, D. K. *Praying To Dismantle Witchcraft*. Lagos: The battle cry ministry publishers, 2002.
- Onyinah, O. *Akan Witchcraft And The Concept Of Exorcism In The Church Of Pentecost*. The University of Birmingham, 2002.
- Onyinah, O. African Christianity in the Twenty-first Century. *Word and World*, 27(3), (2007): 305–315.
- Onyinah, O. *Pentecostal Exorcism: Witchcraft And Demonology In Ghana*. Blandford Forum: Deo Publishing, 2012.

- Parrinder, G. A. *Critical Study Of The Belief In Witchcraft From The Records Of Witch Hunting In Europe Yesterday And African Today*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1958.
- Priest, R. J. The value of Anthropology for Missiological engagements with context: The case of witch accusations.(2015).
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0091829614553541>
- Priest, R. J. et al, Witchcraft and Mission Studies. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 39(1), (2015).
- Quayesi-Amakye, J. Coping with evil in Ghanaian Pentecostalism. *Exchange*, 43, (2014):254–272.
- Rasmussen, S. D. H. & Rasmussen, H. Healing Communities : Contextualizing Responses to Witch Accusations. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 39(1), (2008).
- Schmidt C. The analysis of semi structured interviews. In U. Flick, E. V. Kardoff, E. V. & I. Steinke (eds). *A Companion To Qualitative Research* (pp.253-258). (E. V. & I. S. (eds) Flick, E. V. Kardoff, Ed.). London, 2004.
- Timmons, J. P. *Mysterious secrets of the Dark kingdom: The battle for planet earth*. U.S.A.: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1984.
- Tippett, A. R. Spirit possession as it relates into culture and religion: in *Demon Possession*. (J. W. Montgomery, Ed.). Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1975.
- Tsekpoe, C. *Response to witchcraft and Demonology in Ghana*. (L. and C. R. C. Elorm-donkor, Ed.). Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2018.
- Verma, G. K. & M. K. *Researching Education: Perspectives And Techniques*. London: Falmer Press, 1999.
- Weber, M. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Scribner and Sons, 1958.
- Wragg, T. Interviewing in Research methods in educational leadership and management. (M. C. & A. R. J. Briggs, Ed.). London: Paul Chapman Publishing, 2002.
- Weinstein, M., Matt H., & Nick F. *A Short Introduction To Social Research*. London: Sage Publications 2006.

Appendix I - Interviews

Adu Samuel, Interview by Wiredu Kumi Francis for Researcher, Nkawkaw, October 24, 2018.

Ama Asantewaa, Interview by Emmanuel Omari Darfour for Researcher, Nkawkaw, October 28, 2018.

Abenaa Boatemaa, Interview by Emmanuel Omari Darfour for Researcher, Nkawkaw, October 31, 2018.

Akos, Interview by Emmanuel Omari Darfour for researcher, Nkawkaw, October 29, 2018.

Arthur Emmanuel, Interview by Emmanuel Ofori Darfour for Researcher, Nkawkaw, October 29, 2018.

Auntie Mansah, interview by Emmanuel Omari Darfour for Researcher, Nkawkaw, October 29, 2018.

Ajara Razak, Interview by Kumi Wiredu Francis for Researcher, Nkawkaw, October 28, 2018.

Binma Mbinmgnanba, Interview by Nalari L. Isaiah for researcher, Gnani witch camp, November 2, 2018.

Dennis Opoku, Interview by Researcher, Nkawkaw, October 28, 2018.

Dennis Marvelous, Interview by Arhin Frederick for Researcher, Nkawkaw, October 26, 2018.

Doris Akuamoah, Interview by Kumi Wiredu Francis for Researcher, Nkawkaw, October 24, 2018.

David Amoagtey, Interview by Arhin Frederick for Researcher, Nkawkaw, October 26, 2018.

Shei Alhassan (Chief priest of the Gnani witch camp), Interview by Nalari L. Isaiah for researcher, Gnani witch camp, November 2, 2018.

Nadam Lakawu, Interview by Nalari L. Isaiah for researcher, Gnani witch camp, November 2, 2018.

Kuiba Bikpidam, Interview by Nalari L. Isaiah for researcher, Gnani witch camp, November 3, 2018.

- Powuni Idongnan, Interview by Nalari L. Isaiah for researcher, Gnani witch camp, November 2, 2018.
- Niakpene Joseph, Interview by Nalari L. Isaiah for researcher, Gnani witch camp, November 2, 2018.
- Nyeba Ninnsikia, Interview by Nalari L. Isaiah for researcher, Gnani witch camp, November 3, 2018.
- Nina Ndadung, Interview by Nalari L. Isaiah for researcher, Gnani witch camp, November 3, 2018.
- Mpoe Lidin, Interview by Nalari L. Isaiah for researcher, Gnani witch camp, November 3, 2018.
- Chigma Nnapin, Interview by Nalari L. Isaiah for researcher, Gnani witch camp, November 2, 2018.
- Yayar Mpangna, Interview by Nalari L. Isaiah for researcher, Gnani witch camp, November 3, 2018.
- Kessewaa Leticia, Interview by Researcher, Nkawkaw, October 30, 2018.
- Oteng Asamoah, Interview by Researcher, Nwinso- Nkawkaw, October 30, 2018.
- Kwasi Amoako, Interview by Arhin Frederick for Researcher, Nkawkaw, October 26, 2018.
- Lucy Agyapong, Interview by researcher, Nkawkaw, October 22, 2018.
- Mensah Christiana, interview by wiredu Kumi Francis for Researcher, Nkawkaw, October 26, 2018.
- Mamunatu Sully, Interview by Wiredu Kumi Francis for Researcher, Nkawkaw, October 29, 2018.
- Opoku Frederick, Interview by Emmanuel Omari Darfour for Researcher, Nkawkaw, October 29, 2018.
- Hilda Boateng, Interview by Interview by Emmanuel Omari Darfour for Researcher, Nkawkaw, October 24, 2018.
- Serwaa Donnah, Interview by Arhin Frederick for Researcher, Nkawkaw, October 26, 2018.
- Kwaku Ansong, Interview by Arhin Frederick for Researcher, Nkawkaw, October 26, 2018.
- Ebenezer Siaw, Interview by Kumi Wiredu Francis for Researcher, Nkawkaw, October 24, 2018.
- Effah Samuel, Interview by Kumi Wiredu Francis for Researcher, Nkawkaw, October 24, 2018.

Matilda Asiedu, Interview by Emmanuel Omari Darfour for Researcher, Nkawkaw, October 25, 2018.

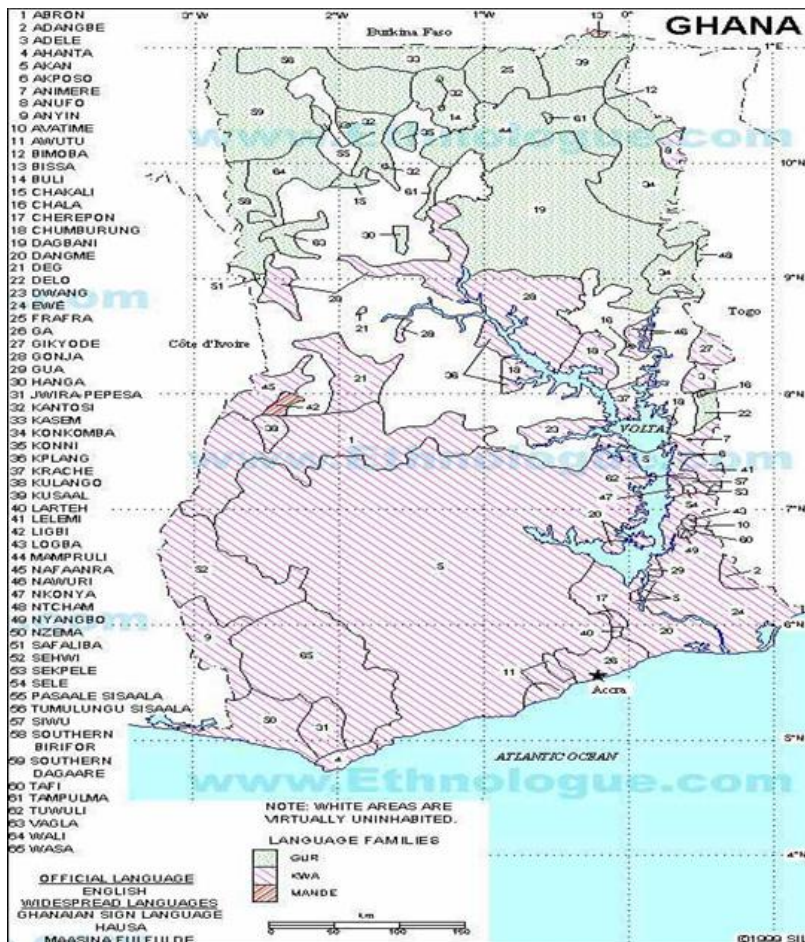
Mrs. Mercy Osarfo, Interview by Emmanuel Omari Darfour for Researcher, Nkawkaw, October 31, 2018.

Samuel Kofi Badu, former traditional priest, Interview by Researcher, October 24, 2018.



Appendix II

Ethnologic Map of Ghana



Appendix III -

Glossary of Asante And Konkomba Words

I have provided the basic interpretations of Ghanaian languages used in this study. The purpose is to provide the elementary understanding for the benefit of all, who might not be abreast with the language.

Sing.	Singular
Pl.	Plural
Lit.	Literally

AKAN (ASANTE TWI)

A

Abisa	lit. Divinatory consultation, in contemporary times in Ghana amongst the Neo-Pentecostal termed counseling
Akwankyerɛ	lit. Spiritual direction a spiritual person provides to those who consult
Akɔm afa no	lit. Possessed by a deity
Agya	lit. Father
Apakan	lit. Used to carry chiefs at public places like a big umbrella (Palanquin)
Aman abosom	lit. god's belonging to a community
Abosom abrafo	lit. Executioners for the gods or deities
Atra nkonya	lit. The chief and his team of leadership

B

Bayie	lit. Witchcraft pl. abayifo],
Bɛma bonsam	lit. male witch
Bonsam	lit. Satan, Pl. abonsamfo] (referring to those who do the works of Satan)

M

Mogya lit. Blood

N

Ntoro lit. The patrilineal spirit clan that protects a person from enemies or harm (e.g. From the Akan Busumuru, etc.)

}

bosom pl. abosom, lit. Deity or gods of a family or communities

S

S[obosom bo obia lit. When one is stricken by a deity, especially a witch so as to confess sins. Deities are seen as protectors who guard those who lean on them from witchcraft spirits and are known to strike witches who come close to those who consult the gods..

KONKOMBA

K

Kiyik - calabash

Kisoak - witch

L

Liwaal - god

S

Shamshei - The god of the Gnani witch camp in charge of the rituals performed on witches

T

Tindan - local name for the land where the witch camp is situated

U

Utindana - Land owner

Usoan - Accused witch

Ukolo - fowl



ABOUT BOOK

The book seeks to find ways to understand the Ghanaian belief in the activities of witchcraft and to quantify its impact on the socio-economic, religio-cultural and psychological development of Ghanaians. This book is based on research conducted by the Author to find out the effect of witchcraft belief on Ghanaian Society. The nine-chapter book discusses the concept of witchcraft belief in Ghana, the acquisition of witchcraft and the living conditions of these accused witches in some selected witch camps in Ghana. The book also looks at the activities of witches and wizards from the Ghanaian perspective as well as the effects of their activities on the economy and social lives of the people. It finally discusses the biblical, anthropological and psychiatric perspectives of the belief and activities of witchcraft in Ghana.

ABOUT AUTHOR

Kwasi Atta Agyapong, BTh, MA Pentecostal Studies, Research Associate, School of Theology and Missions, Pentecost University – Ghana and a Member of the American Anthropological Association. He is an Ordained Minister of The Church of Pentecost, and currently the District Minister for Nkawkaw Asuboni, Eastern Region - Ghana. His areas of interest in academics are Biblical Studies, Witchcraft Studies, Pentecostal Studies, and Anthropology. He has authored several articles on Witchcraft Studies and Pentecostalism in several peer-reviewed journals. He is a reviewer for some journals. He is also the author of the novel book entitled, *The Effects of the Belief in the Activities of Witchcraft in Ghana*, published by Lambert Academic Publishers in Germany with editions in Polish, Italian, French, Portuguese and German.

 Noyam

