

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

A BIBLICAL SOLUTION TO KONGO WITCHCRAFT

BY

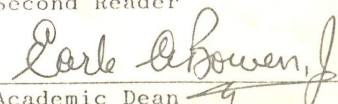
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A Thesis submitted to the Department of
Missiology in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree
of Master of Theology

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July 1989

ABSTRACT

Various traditional beliefs and practices, especially those related to kindoki (Kongo magic and witchcraft), still exist among the Bakongo in the Lower Zaire, and form an obstacle to the spiritual growth of the Kongo Christians.

The second chapter, after the introduction, describes the traditional Kongo world view, while the third chapter describes the traditional role and place of kindoki in Kongo society. This chapter also compares Kongo and European witchcraft, discusses the danger of demonic influence through involvement in occult activities, and finally explains what the Bible teaches on witchcraft in general.

The fourth chapter discusses various proposed solutions to the problems among the Kongo people, created by kindoki beliefs and practices. Since witchcraft is fundamentally a spiritual problem, only the Bible offers a complete solution. This biblical solution forms the last part of the chapter.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am sincerely grateful to God for His constant help and guidance during this study.

I also wish to express my gratitude to

Dr. R. Gehman, missionary with the Africa Inland Mission in Kenya, and member of the Board of Governors for NEGST,

Dr. T. Adeyemo, General Secretary of AEAM, and professor at NEGST,

Dr. M. Taylor-Pearce, principle of NEGST,

Dr. D. Bowen, librarian and professor at NEGST, for their academic advice for this thesis;

Mr. C. B. Sorrels, librarian at NIST, who corrected my Dutch English;

Dr. A. S. Moreau, professor at NIST, who helped me to respect the rules of Turabian,

Miss Elizabeth Mathu, secretary at NIST, whose perseverance in typing the manuscript has been a real encouragement to me.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The Christian and Missionary Alliance started its work in the Belgian Congo, now Zaire, at the end of the last century. When the Evangelical Community of the Alliance in Zaire (C.E.A.Z.) celebrated its centennial in 1984, it counted 176 ordained ministers, 11.694 organized churches, and over one hundred thousand baptized church members. In 1984 alone 4.312 persons were baptized.

The growth of the church is continuing at a rapid pace. The leaders of the C.E.A.Z. are faced with the task, not only to teach the many new converts, but also to lead the other church members to spiritual maturity.

One of the obstacles to spiritual growth is the attachment to traditional religious beliefs and practices, especially those related to Kongo magic and witchcraft (kindoki).

According to the traditional Kongo world view, nothing happens by chance. Everything has a spiritual, supernatural cause. The daily affairs of man are mainly determined by the world of spiritual beings, good as well as evil. In general, the spirits of the ancestors provide man with the good things of life, but there are many evil spiritual beings who, often in collaboration with their

human allies, the bandoki or Kongo witches, cause accidents, sickness and death, and various other kinds of misfortune.

To find protection against these forces of evil, help will be sought from the diviner (nganga ngombo) or the magician (nganga nkisi), to discover the cause of misfortune, or to thwart off the attacks of the evil spirits and bandoki. Traditionally, the Bakongo see themselves as victims of these powers of evil, and constantly exposed to danger through attacks from the spirit world.

Unfortunately, the church has not taken the Kongo world view very seriously. By denying the reality and existence of kindoki, and sometimes by ridiculing those who believe in it, these traditional beliefs were suppressed, but never disappeared. In times of crises, many still revert to traditional practices and methods, to find spiritual protection, and a solution to their daily needs.

It seems that modern education and medical institutions have done little or nothing to eliminate the fear of witchcraft, or the belief in it. It also seems that a century of evangelism has not succeeded either to change the traditional world view of many Kongo people.

Charles Harvey, a missionary for many years among the Kongo people and especially interested in the problems of witchcraft, notes that the church has done little more than ignoring the problem of kindoki, or denying its

existence, and that most Christians still live in fear of Kongo witchcraft.²

M.J. McVeigh, who also worked in the same region, writes,

The truth of the matter is that the belief in witchcraft has not been reduced by missionary influence or contact with the West. On the contrary, it is possible to argue that belief in witchcraft has never been greater and that it is in fact growing rapidly in present-day Africa.³

Meinrad Hebga asks, "Can we say that the preaching of the Gospel during more than one century has reduced the power of magic and witchcraft? We must say that they never have prospered so much, in the villages as well as in the cities."⁴

The Kongo people do indeed not seem to be alone in their belief in, or fear of witchcraft.

Professor John S. Mbiti states,

Whatever reality there is concerning witchcraft in the broad and popular sense of the term, the belief in it is there in every African village, and that belief affects everyone, for better or for worse. It is part of the religious corpus of beliefs.⁵

Osadolor Imasogie notes that "this world view is so entrenched in the subconsciousness of even the most sophisticated African scientist that it breaks through every facade of Christianity and Western civilization and comes to the surface in moments of personal crisis."⁶ Some may believe that this was the world view of the nineteenth century, but that it is not so any more today. Imasogie states, "Our answer is that such people are living in an ivory tower and out of touch with the African

way of thinking and perceiving. It may be good for them to come down to where the action is and mix with the people to learn the truth from them."

Learning the truth that belief in witchcraft still exists, and that it dominates a great part of the daily life of the Kongo people, is only the first step.

It is the purpose of this thesis, not only to study the traditional beliefs and practises of the Bakongo, but also to examine what the Bible teaches, regarding such beliefs and practices, and to discover what solution the Bible offers to the various problems, created by Kongo magic and witchcraft.

Major Hypothesis and Minor Hypotheses

Major hypothesis

That witchcraft is fundamentally a spiritual problem which requires spiritual solutions according to the Scriptures.

Minor hypotheses

- (1) That the Bible offers a sufficient and effective solution to the problem of witchcraft.
- (2) That Kongo Christians need an understanding of biblical teaching regarding this problem.
- (3) That studies on occultism and witchcraft, done in Western countries can contribute to a better understanding of the nature of witchcraft among the Kongo people, and to a solution of the problem.

Methodology

First, the historical and religious background of the Kongo people will be given, as well as a description of the traditional Kongo world view.

Then the Kongo society, its institutions and functions will be described.

A more detailed study will follow on Kongo witchcraft, what it is, how it functions, and its place in the society of the Kongo people.

To arrive at a better understanding of the spiritual nature of Kongo witchcraft, the question will be studied how the findings on occultism and witchcraft in western countries bear on the problem of Kongo witchcraft.

Especially, the effects of involvement in Kongo magic and witchcraft on the spiritual life of the Christians will be examined.

Finally, the teaching of the Old and New Testament will be studied regarding magic and witchcraft, and the solutions which the Bible offers to this problem.

The collection of data for this study was done through,

- (1) many discussions with pastors, church members, and students from high schools, the Bible Institute at Kinkonzi, and the Bible College at Boma, Zaire
- (2) reports and research papers from Bible College students
- (3) articles and letters, written by C&MA missionaries since 1885

(4) material (books, articles, research papers, theses) written by researchers, living and working among the Bakongo

(5) intensive research in the following libraries in Nairobi, Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, Nairobi International School of Theology, Daystar University College, Pan-African Christian College, East Africa School of Theology, Hekima, Centre de Recherche, d'Echange et de Documentation Universitaire, MacMillan Memorial Library, Nairobi University, Kenyatta University, and Kenya National Library.

Limitations

The Bakongo belonged to the Kongo kingdom, which in the fifteenth century covered the Lower Zaire, the North of Angola, and the South of Congo-Brazaville. This territory has been divided, since 1895, among the Republic of Congo, the Republic of Zaire, and Angola with Cabinda, formerly a Portuguese colony. The Bakongo in the Lower Zaire number some 2,500,000 people, while there are another 2,000,000 in the surrounding countries. It is with the Bakongo in the Lower Zaire, that this study is mainly concerned.

The ethnic group of the Bakongo is divided into several tribes, of which the Bayombe and the Bamanianga are the most important. These different tribes have the same Kongo culture, and speak the same Kongo language. It is assumed that the minor differences between these

groups will not influence the efficacy of the biblical solution, which will be proposed.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Minutes of the General Council 1987 and Annual Report for 1986 (Nyack, NY: The Christian and Missionary Alliance, 1987), pp. 72-73.
- ² Charles H. Harvey, La Crainte de ndoki et le moyen d'en sortir (Kinshasa, Zaire: C.B.Z.O., 1986), pp. 77, 81, 107.
- ³ Malcolm J. McVeigh, God in Africa (Cape Cod, Mass.: Claude Stark, Inc., 1974), p. 168.
- ⁴ Meinrad Hebga, Sorcellerie: chimère dangereuse...? (Abidjan, Ivory Coast: Inades Editions, 1979), p. 293.
- ⁵ John S. Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy (Nairobi, Kenya: Heinemann Kenya Ltd., 1987), p. 202.
- ⁶ Osadolor, Imasogie, Guidelines for Christian Theology in Africa (Achimota, Ghana: Africa Christian Press, 1983), p. 70.
- ⁷ Ibid., pp. 69-70.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

Historical Background

The origin of the Bakongo

Not much certainty exists about the origins and history of the populations of Central Africa, since most information comes through oral tradition.

It is commonly held that the Bantu migrations started in the first centuries and that peoples moved from the north to the south because of epidemics, famines, overpopulation and, especially during the Middle Ages, because of the pressure and aggression of the Arabs.¹

When the Bantu descended to the south, they found the land occupied by hunters, probably Pygmies, while the Bantu were agriculturists. The aborigines disappeared and in the eighth century the agriculturists covered the whole area.

The great migration of the Bantu ended before the twelfth century, and after the upheavals caused by these movements of people, many kingdoms were formed with a centralized political structure, typical for many Central African states.²

When the Portuguese arrived in the fifteenth century, they found two great kingdoms on the west coast, Kongo and Loanga. Kongo is one of the best known kingdoms

in Bantu Africa, not so much because it was the largest or most powerful, but because it had the largest oral tradition. Also, many reports of missionaries, traders and government officials were published in the sixteenth and seventeenth century and many of these were translated and republished in later editions.³

The Kongo originated probably in the region to the north of the Congo river.⁴ In the thirteenth or fourteenth century, Nimi a Lukeni (also called Ntinu Wene), the son of a chief of a small kingdom, emigrated because of a quarrel to the south of the Congo river. The legend has it that Nimi was accompanied by nine or twelve women, from whom all the Bakongo descend.⁵

Nimi a Lukeni conquered the Plateau west of the Nkisi River, founded the capital Mbanza Kongo, actually San Salvador, and gave himself the title Mani (Lord) Kongo. Soon the kingdom consisted of four provinces: Mpemba, the main province with the capital in the centre, Nsundi in the north east including a part of the Lower Zaire and perhaps reaching as far as Gabon,⁶ Mbamba in the south and Sonyo at the coast, south of the Congo river. Two other provinces in the east, Mpangu and Mbata, were added later on. By the time the Portuguese arrived, Ngoyo, Kakongo and Loanga north of the Congo river, had probably become independent states, but Affonso, the first Christian ruler of the Kongo kingdom (1506 - 1543) signed his letters to the Portuguese government as "Affonso, king of Kongo, Loanga, Kakongo and Ngoyo..."⁷ Through his

trade contracts with the Portuguese, he probably had been able to extend the power of the Kongo kingdom to the north again.⁸

The region where the Kikongo language is spoken today is roughly bounded by the River Kwilu and Niari in the north, Maleba Pool and the River Kwango in the east, the Dande in the south, and the Atlantic Ocean in the west.⁹

First missionary efforts

When Diego Coa arrived at the mouth of the Congo River in 1483, Nzinga Nkuvu, the sixth ruler since Nimi a Lukeni, was in power in the Kongo kingdom.¹⁰ During his second journey Diego Coa visited the Mani Kongo and was cordially received. The Kongo ruler asked the king of Portugal to send missionaries to his country. When they arrived in 1491, Nzinga Nkuvu was baptized, soon followed by the queen, his son Affonso (Mvemba Nzinga), and other leading personalities at the court.

Immediately the new faith started to impose its new principles.

A historian wrote that the priests especially attacked polygamy because they were appalled by the host of wives that surrounded every chief. The new converts were told to "select one and to make a sweeping dismissal of the rest". Forbath believes that "it was the most unwise move of all", since polygamy was central to the political and social structure of the Kongo. Many wives were not only a measure of prestige, power and wealth, but

also a vital political instrument, since alliances were made through marriage, transforming enemies into family members.¹¹

Another, "attack" that shook the foundations of Kongo society was the command to burn all the minkisi and biteke, the fetishes and idols. These, like the big families and many children, had to do with the important principle of ngolo, power and vitality, and were believed to guarantee not only the harmony and balance within the society, but also the survival of the Kongo people.¹²

Under strong pressure Nzinga Nkuvu, the first baptized ruler of the Kongo kingdom, decided to go back to the fu kia nsi, the customs of the country.

Affonso, who faithfully continued in his new belief, was sent away to Nsundi, the province in the north, after having been accused of kindoki, witchcraft, causing unrest and trouble among the Bakongo.¹³

In Nsundi a strong Christian church was established with the help of Portuguese missionaries and, according to oral tradition, newly baptized Africans spoke even in foreign languages, Portuguese and Latin.¹⁴ Some believe that it must have been something really remarkable, since oral tradition preserved this phenomenon for more than three centuries, and that the possibility of New Testament glossolalie should not totally be disregarded.¹⁵

First Christian rule

When Nzinga Nkuvu died, Affonso descended with a

small army to Mbanza Kongo, defeated his pagan brother, and became the first Christian ruler of the Kongo kingdom in 1506. Where his father had given in to the pressure of culture, Affonso stood firm for the principles of his new faith. Polygamy was forbidden again and nkisi-bonfires burned all over the country. It did not prevent Affonso from becoming the most popular of all Kongo rulers and the period between 1506 and 1543, the year of his death, is known as the best in Kongo history.¹⁶ He not only fought against the slave traders and unjust domination by the Portuguese government, but also for a real breakthrough of Christianity in the whole country.¹⁷ He was an ardent preacher of the Gospel himself¹⁸, and many people were converted and churches built in several provinces. It is estimated that two million people, half of the entire population, were baptized during his reign.¹⁹

In 1521 the first Kongo bishop, son of the king, was ordained by the Catholic Church.²⁰

The first catechism in Kikongo (also the first in any Bantu language) was printed in Lisbon and other books were translated into Kikongo.²¹

Relapse into paganism

Unfortunately, after Affonso died, the banganga (Kongo priests) took over again and regained control.

The church did not have sufficiently trained clergy - the first seminary for priests was opened in San Salvador in 1625 - while the tens of thousands who had been baptized were mostly without any instruction.²²

Also, tribal wars and the slave trade made people flee from their homes and destroyed the society of the Kongo people.

A report, sent to Rome by a Catholic Bishop in 1619, says: "Everywhere in this kingdom, in all its provinces, among Christians as much as among pagans, the worship of idols, black magic, sorcery and divination, and other kinds of superstition are practised."²³

The 18th and 19th century are characterized as "the period of banganga dominance"²⁴ and when new missionaries arrived at the end of the 19th century, minkisi in the form of crosses and crucifixes were some of the few traces that remained of missionary activity in the past century.²⁵

Traditional Kongo World View

Introduction

The world view of the Kongo people includes their view of man, the Supreme Being, spirits, magic and witchcraft.

Since these subjects are interrelated in the religious beliefs of the Bakongo, a more detailed study of the traditional Kongo world view is necessary.

Concept of the cosmos

According to Fu-Kiau, the first Zairian anthropologist who defined the principles of Kongo cosmology, the Bakongo conceive the universe as divided into two parts, but which are related to one another. The

people themselves speak of the two parts most often as nza yayi, this world, and nsi a bafwa, the land of the dead. Water, traditionally called kalunga, forms the barrier through which the dead have to pass from this world to the other. Only those who have lived according to the rules and customs of the ancestors will enter into the nsi a bafwa and enjoy the reign of harmony and order and the absence of suffering and pain. They are still conceived as human beings but with a different body, and living in a different sphere.²⁶

Concept of man

Four different elements are distinguished in man: the body (nitu); the blood (menga), which is the seat of the soul (moyo or mwela); the double or second soul (mfumu kutu); and the name of the person (zina)

The term nitu is used for man and for spirits, but never for animals. When a man dies, he takes another nitu, after which he continues his life in the community of the dead.²⁷

The blood contains the soul and life of man. The loss of blood means a diminishing of life. Therefore, a little wound which causes bleeding, is far more serious than a heavy blow, if bleeding is not the result.²⁸ This conception also explains the role of blood in Kongo witchcraft. More on this will be said later.

It is the soul of man that will live on after death and which takes another body.

The origin and destiny of the double soul are not clear. When it enters a child at the moment of birth, it "comes from far" and when a man dies, it goes "far away", nobody knows where. The mfumu kutu is the origin of man's shadow, which follows him everywhere. Animals, also having a shadow, do not possess a mfumu kutu, because their shadow is different.²⁹

When the mfumu kutu leaves the body during the night, man starts dreaming. When it leaves the body during the daytime, man loses his consciousness: the expression fwa ngambu is used, "die by separation"; the mfumu kutu has separated itself from the body.

Some believe that a witch has an evil mfumu kutu which leaves the body during the night with the specific purpose to do harm.³⁰

The name of a person is a part of his personality and has real meaning. At the moment of initiation or of other important personal events names can be changed or added.

Mengi remarks that missionaries, unaware of this importance, have sometimes caused an identity crisis in newly baptized believers, who were obliged to give up their "pagan" name.³¹

Names also play an important role in magic and witchcraft. To make a curse effective the name of the person to be cursed must be known and mentioned. Therefore a Mukongo would hesitate to give his name to a

stranger, fearing that it might be used against him through evil practices.³²

A nkisi, to have real power, must also have a name. When a nganga wants to activate his nkisi, he would say: Ngeye, muntu ye zina... "You man, who possess a name. . . ."³³

Belief in a Supreme Being

It is generally accepted that the Bakongo of the 15th Century believed in a Supreme Being, called Nzambi Mpungu, described by Van Wing as an invisible but very powerful being who has made everything, man and things, even the fetishes, which he gave to man for his benefit.³⁴

The exact, original meaning of the words Nzambi and Mpungu remains unknown. Sometimes the term mpungu is connected with the verbs to speak or to sing³⁵, but more often the idea of power and strength is mentioned.³⁶

The idea that a Supreme Being created everything is predominant among the Bakongo.

In the beginning Nzambi created the first couple. When a child was born, Nzambi gave the command never to bury the child if it died, but to put it into the corner of the house and to cover it with firewood; after three days the child would rise again. The parents did not believe this and when the child died, it was buried. Nzambi told them that, because of this disobedience, all their descendants would be subjected to sickness and death.³⁷

One could perhaps ask if the idea of "resurrection after three days" must not be traced back to Biblical revelation or, more directly, to the activity of missionaries since the fifteenth century.

Many beliefs, which generally are not found in other African religions, were present among the Bakongo of the 19th century.

Van Wing writes that people believed that after death they go to Nzambi Mpungu.³⁸ It is Nzambi who gave his laws to the ancestors and he will do final justice to all.³⁹ The people also distinguished clearly between sumu ku Nzambi, the sins which concern God and those which concern society.⁴⁰

Van Wing states that the Bakongo in the east were never systematically evangelized, that no fundamental Christian ideas were found among them by the missionaries of the 19th century, and that their ideas about Nzambi Mpungu were authentic for the Bakongo.⁴¹

Makanzu, former national evangelist of Zaire and a Mukongo himself, pointed out that the ancestors believed in a saviour, born from a virgin and who would save his people through crucifixion. They believed in the Holy Spirit and in the trinity, in the existence of the devil and in eternal life.⁴²

Since these beliefs are not found in other African religions, it is more likely that they could be traced back to the first missionary enterprise in the sixteenth century.

The fact that missionaries, arriving in the Lower Zaire around the turn of this century, found crucifixes and crosses, preserved by the Bakongo as powerful minkisi, would also point in that direction.⁴³

It should be noted that among Protestants as well as Catholics, constant efforts are made to discover as much continuity as possible between Kongo religion and Christianity.

Bishop Bokeleale, head of the Evangelical Church in Zaire, said in a message during the centennial celebration of the C.E.A.Z. (The Evangelical Community of the Alliance in Zaire) in Boma, that as the ancestors already knew the Father when the missionaries came, they only had to preach the Son.⁴⁴

Cardinal Malula, opening an international colloquium on African religions and Christianity in Kinshasa in 1978, said that the Incarnate Word came to dwell among Africans, not to destroy the religion of the ancestors, but to perfect it (45). MacGaffey added that, to demonstrate that African values amounted to a "proto-gospel", a number of theological "smugglers" have reported on them in Thomistic categories.⁴⁶

The term "intellectual smugglers" comes from Okot p'Bitek, criticizing African and European theologians and philosophers for smuggling European concepts into African contexts and then passing them off as African religion.⁴⁷

Asa Dalma, who has a very sympathetic attitude towards Kongo culture and religion, believes that it is

impossible to define the role and place of a Supreme Being among the Bakongo before the arrival of missionaries in the 15th century. It seems that Kongo tradition attributes creation also to other spiritual powers than Nzambi Mpungu, and that it is commonly agreed that no images were made of him, no worship organized on his behalf, and that Nzambi Mpungu was not the object of prayer of the Kongo people.⁴⁸

It also seemed that the name Nzambi Mpungu was not uniquely reserved for the Supreme Being. When the Bakongo saw the enormously rich gifts sent to the Manikongo by the king of Portugal, they called him Nzambi Mpungu, a title which was given also to the Manikongo himself, "because he was not like ordinary mortals".⁴⁹

Forbath states that the Bakongo believed in a high God but who, because of his highness, was so exceedingly remote and beyond human influence, that their daily worship centered on the "lesser gods", who were more involved with the matters of daily life. So, the ancestors, the nature spirits, witchcraft and sorcery, the medicine man, and the diviner constituted Kongo religion.⁵⁰

Belief in spirits

Van Wing remarks that one should not look for a precise definition of spirits among the Bakongo, since their concepts are often confused and unreconcilable.⁵¹

In general, however, all spirits are considered to be human beings who, after their death, continue to live in another nytu.

Hierarchy

Speaking of the Kongo ontological hierarchy, Mahaniah says that Nzambi Mpungu comes first, second are the bakulu or ancestors, while the living on earth take third place.⁵²

Though all spirits had once been human beings who had lived on earth, different groups can be distinguished. Concepts, terms and functions may also vary, according to time and place.⁵³

Bakulu

The first group of spirits are the bakulu, especially the ancestors or founding fathers of the Kongo clans, the leaders and elders who have won respect among the people, but also all the deceased persons who have lived according to the laws and customs of the Bakongo. In fact, for every village of the living exists a village for the departed. They live under the ground, close to the village of the living, and enjoy an abundance of meat, fish and palm wine. Among some of the Bakongo, this community is called "the village of the ripe bananas".⁵⁴

As it has been said of other African societies, communion with the ancestors dominates the lives of the Bakongo.⁵⁵

The ancestors possess the land, the forests, the rivers and the animals. Before going to the forest, cutting trees, preparing new land, the ancestors have to give their approval. Before an important hunting party, the chief, together with the hunters and the dogs, go to the cemetery to bring an offering of palm wine and ask the ancestors for help, guidance and blessing. Palm wine is poured out by the chief, first on all the tombs of the ancestors, then on the hunters who have kneeled down behind him. Then he kneels down himself to implore their benediction.⁵⁶

A good harvest, a successful marriage, strong health, all depend on the approval and blessing of the bakulu.

Mahaniah describes the land of the dead as an "idealized replica of the world", where the way of life is a continuation of this life. People are both young and old, they get older and can die again, even as many as five times.⁵⁷

Bisimbi, bankita

When the ancestors die a second death, they become true spiritual beings, called bisimbi, of which there are two kinds: the black ones living in the hills, and the white ones, living in the water. They are the protectors of the land, rivers, forests and bridges. They have lost their personal characteristics and have become a collective spiritual body.⁵⁸

Others describe the bisimbi as spirits of ancestors who have died a violent death, for example, in war,⁵⁹ while still others believe the bisimbi are "men of the water" as we are "men of the earth", but not of true human origin.⁶⁰

Spirits of heroes, who have died a violent death,⁶¹ are also called bankita.

The bisimbi (bankita) play an important role in magic. They are invoked by the nganga, can animate or reside in minkisi, which are then considered to be especially powerful, while they also guarantee the efficacy of certain magical and religious rites.⁶²

Minkuyu

As mentioned already, not all the deceased are admitted into the village of the bakulu.

The witches, the murderers and those who did not respect the rules of the clan, will join another group of spirits, the minkuyu. They are the vagabonds who have no real place and who wander about the villages and through the forests, with the purpose to harm people.

Their role in magic and witchcraft will be discussed later.

Nkadi ampemba

Since the 15th century the Bakongo are known to believe in a spirit called nkadi ampemba, the name that is used in the Bible as translation for devil.

Olfert Dapper, a Dutch explorer of the 17th century, tells that birds looking like owls and called kar a mpemba were symbolic for the devil. Drapper translated the word by "evil spirit".⁶³

The author of Missionary Practice, written in 1747, reports that the Bakongo worship the devil, called curiampemba, which etymologically could mean "destroyer" or "devourer". He adds that, in spite of their devil worship, they also believe in one true God, called Nzambi ampongo.⁶⁴

Hilton, writing about sixteenth and seventeenth century Kongo religion, describes Nkadi Mpemba as the head of the sky spirits, whose functions were ambiguous. They could be destructive, but also serve for protection, or help individuals to acquire wealth.⁶⁵

It does not seem that the Bakongo ever believed in an evil spirit (devil) as personification of evil.

Mahaniah, who describes more the later religious concepts of the Bakongo, writes that the influence of Christianity can be detected in present Kongo beliefs about nkadi ampemba. He describes it as a supernatural being which dwells in the sky and has madiabulu, or devils, in his service, who are continually sent to earth to deceive human beings.⁶⁶ He is "as powerful as God" and Mahaniah uses the term Supreme Beings in plural, which may well reflect the dualistic concept of the Bakongo about God and Satan.⁶⁷

Today, witchcraft activities are attributed by the Bakongo to the influence of nkadi ampemba.

Although magic and witchcraft are considered important parts of the religious life of the Bakongo, these subjects will be dealt with in another chapter.

Conclusion

The Kongo people were reached with the Gospel for the first time in the fifteenth century and many authentic results came from these first missionary efforts.

Hundreds of thousands of people were baptized, literature was printed in the Kikongo language and the first Kongo bishop was ordained at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

However, due to weak leadership of the country and insufficient training of the clergy as well as of newly baptized church members, the Bakongo turned back to heathenism towards the middle of the sixteenth century.

The traditional Kongo religion contained belief in a Supreme Being, but the main focus was on the relationships with the ancestors, belief in spirits, magic and witchcraft which dominated the Kongo people in the following centuries.

When new missionary activities started at the end of the nineteenth century, almost no traces were left to remind that centuries ago a Christian church had existed among the Kongo people, at the West coast of Central Africa.

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CHAPTER III

KONGO WITCHCRAFT

Kongo Witchcraft and Kongo SocietyDefinitions

In describing Kongo culture and religion, various terms have been used in the past: superstition, cannibalism, animism, fetishism, magic, sorcery and witchcraft.

It may be useful to mention how some of these terms have been defined. A more detailed discussion of these subjects, however, will follow later in this study.

Animism and fetishism

Animistic belief does not only include belief in the existence of spirits but, according to Edward Tylor, that natural objects possess souls.¹

Placide Tempels developed his Bantu philosophy of "force vitale", vital force, equating this concept with "being".² He suggested that the Bantu conceive the universe as a strictly organized hierarchy of beings/forces, and that God, human beings, animals, plants and mineral objects all participate in this same vital force.

In his article "Le Sorcier, le Père Tempels et les jumeaux mal venues", Luc de Heusch accuses Father Tempels

of an erroneous interpretation of symbolic processes in Bantu magic.⁴ De Heusch believes that, for example, the choice of material used for charms is only determined by symbolic criteria, based on the principle of analogy, and not by beliefs that a certain material would guarantee the presence of a particular spirit, or special spiritual power.⁵

Doutreloux confirms that nothing permits the thought that the Bayombe, belonging to the Kongo people, believe that animated or inanimated beings of nature, except man, possess "une sorte de principe spirituel", a kind of spiritual principle. He states that in past times a human being had to be sacrificed, so that the soul of the victim would enter into the charm to endow it with special power.⁶

De Heusch writes that it is now believed that, through the invocations and rituals of the priest, a spirit will inhabit the charm, or exercise his influence through it.⁷

Parrinder also questions "whether primitive men did clearly attribute souls and personalities to inanimate objects". He confirms, however, that "animals and plants also have souls, though they are lower in the hierarchy of forces than those of human beings".⁸

It seems sometimes difficult to define what people actually believe.

Magic and religion

Marwick writes that magic refers to the activities of the magician, who performs rituals aimed at controlling impersonal, supernatural forces held responsible for certain events. He adds that in these rituals, material substances, often with characteristics symbolically related to the objectives desired, are used to accompany the verbal formulae.⁹

Marwick does not believe that personal, spiritual beings can be active in magic; he supposes that magical activities only deal with impersonal forces. Therefore, magic is sometimes separated from religion.

The psychological attitude of the person who practices magic is said to be different from the one who worships, the latter having more an attitude of submission, sacrifice and prayer, while the former puts himself above the powers, which he wants to manipulate.¹⁰

We agree however, with Melville J. Herskovits, who states that magic is an essential part of the total religious structure of African beliefs and that the two cannot be separated.¹¹

Relating witchcraft and religion, J. R. Crawford writes that the fact that Evans-Pritchard was able to describe beliefs in witchcraft among the Azande, without making references to their religious beliefs, may illustrate that the link between religion and witchcraft may not be inevitable, but that there usually is such a

link and that it is often impossible to describe the one without reference to the other.¹²

It will be shown that belief in magic is definitely a part of the religious life of the Kongo people.

Sorcery and witchcraft

When Evans-Pritchard wrote Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande in 1937, he made a distinction between the two which has become classical.

Sorcerers are conscious and deliberate evildoers who use evil magic to injure and destroy people. They operate day and night using magical substances or poison and are open and boastful about their activities. They can also be employed by people to destroy their enemies.

Witches are living persons, often women, believed to be able to make nocturnal visitations in a spiritual body or to change themselves into animals and to go out alone or with other witches to inflict material loss, cause barrenness and incurable diseases.¹³

Their most feared activity is the killing of their victims, sucking their blood, eating their flesh, or stealing their soul.

However, this distinction between sorcery and witchcraft is not made in all African societies. John Mbiti remarks that this latter kind of witchcraft is probably extremely difficult to substantiate and, according to him, comes close to fiction.¹⁴

The Kongo people, however, do believe in this second kind of witchcraft and the Kongo term ndoki, which

is used in this study, designates both the sorcerer and the witch.

But before entering into a more detailed study of Kongo witchcraft, it is necessary to give more information about the human society, in which Kongo witchcraft is practiced.

Kongo society: institutions and functions

Traditional Kongo society is formed by four social units: family, lineage segment, clan, and village.

Family

A family, nzo, in a restricted sense consists of a man, his wife or wives, and their children.

Although the Bakongo are matrilineal, the father is the head of the family and the father and mother are in charge of the family's welfare.

The concept of the extended family is also found among the Bakongo, which makes one responsible not only for his parents and children, but also for nephews, brothers and uncles.

Property belongs to the extended family. Among the Bakongo it is the maternal uncles who control their nephew's property. In Kongo society wives and children have no claim on their husband's and father's property.¹⁶

Diawaku, a Mukongo himself, remarks that in order to cope with modern imperatives, a review is necessary of the concept of the family, which could be restricted to the father, the mother and the children.¹⁷

Lineage segment

When, according to traditional customs, the children of one woman return to their maternal relatives and clan (normally after the father dies or when they become adults) they form a lineage segment, consisting of the children of one woman, brothers and sisters of the same generation.¹⁸ Several segments, whose members have the same maternal grandmother, within the span of two generations, live near each other and are headed by a senior maternal uncle, ngwa-nkazi or ngudi ankazi.

Clan, village

A clan, dikanda, may include many lineages, all tracing descent from a common ancestor. It is led by the chief of the clan, mfumu dikanda, assisted by the senior men of the lineages.

Several clans form a village, headed by a chief and a council of clan elders.

Functions

Mahaniah writes that the main function of the clan or village government is to ensure the socio-political and religious harmony in the clan or village. The responsibility of the chief and the council of elders is to maintain protection against the enemies from the visible as well as from the invisible world. They have to protect the members of the village or clan against crimes such as theft and adultery, but also against witchcraft, sorcery, and evil spirits. Therefore, family

leaders and men in public authority have to be experts in¹⁹ the activities of the invisible world as well.

In fact, Mahaniah divides the Kongo people into two groups: the people who have meso mazibuka, open eyes, who possess special knowledge and power, coming from the invisible world, and the bantu bampamba, common people who do not have this kind of knowledge. In Kongo society, knowledge is divided into mayela mamwini, or daylight knowledge which is obtained by public apprenticeship, and mayela mampimpa, or nighttime knowledge, which refers to expertise learned secretly. This knowledge and power is²⁰ called kindoki or witchcraft.

Mfumu dikanda, nganga ngombo,
nganga nkisi, ndoki

Buakasa, a Kongo anthropologist, lists four kinds of persons in Kongo society each of whom is believed to possess this occult power: first, the chief of the clan or mfumu dikanda, who needs kindoki power and intelligence to protect the members of his clan; second the diviner or nganga ngombo; third the magician or nganga nkisi; and²¹ finally, the witch or ndoki.

MacGaffey notes that two criteria differentiate these various holders of kindoki: the criterion of ends (public versus private) groups the chief and the diviner against the self-interested witch and magician; and the criterion of effects (destructive versus therapeutic), which groups the violent chief and witch against the²² diviner and magician.

This differentiation suggests that the diviner always has a positive role in Kongo society, the ndoki always a negative one, while the chief and magician can be²³ both: good and evil.

These four functions also represent the four institutions in Kongo society: kimfumu or chieftainship, kinganga ngombo or divination, kinganga nkisi or magic and kindoki or witchcraft. MacGaffey links the four holders of kindoki power with the various classes of the dead, recognizing however that the people themselves do not see this so clearly: the chiefs and the elders are the priests of the ancestors; the diviners are the priests of the local spirits, bisimbi or bankita; the magicians serve special charms, which are often also related to the spirit world, and the witches or bandoki who are in contact with²⁴ the malicious ghosts or minkuyu.

Because of their ideological orientation towards an occult world,²⁵ MacGaffey qualifies these institutions as religious. He states that in fact the religion²⁶ of the Bakongo centers on these four kinds or persons in Kongo society.

The religious or spiritual dimension of some of these functions will be discussed and explained later on.

Kongo witchcraft or kindoki

Introduction

As explained above, the Kikongo word kindoki covers all the activities which are normally described as magic,

sorcery and witchcraft, and also the exercise of kindoki power by the chiefs.

Speaking about the classical distinction made by Evans-Pritchard between sorcery and witchcraft, Masamba ma Mpolo remarks that the Bakongo do not make such a distinction, and that the activities of the ndoki can cover both those of a sorcerer and of a witch.

Mulago states that the Bakongo do not clearly distinguish between magic and witchcraft either, and that the European distinction between white and black magic cannot be applied automatically. In a more general way he confirms that African magic is always a delicate and dangerous art, and that the criteria of evil and good mainly depend on the way in which the holder makes use of his special power.²⁸

Buakasa, a Mukongo himself, says that there are no good minkisi that only protect, and evil minkisi that only harm, but that they can do both: heal and protect or destroy.²⁹

The words kindoki (witchcraft) and ndoki (witch) are derived from the verb loka which, in general, is translated as "to bewitch",³⁰ but has also a much broader sense.

Van Wing remarks that the verb loka is even especially connected with the use of charms. When a nganga (priest) wants to activate his nkisi the expression loka nkisi is used.³¹

The verb loka is also used to designate the activities resulting from the extraordinary and superior power of ancestors and family or village chiefs towards their descendants or inferiors. When a maternal uncle uses his power towards his nephew the expression loka kibuti is used.³²

In a general way however, it can be said that the ndoki is seen as the main cause of all evil.

Activities of the ndoki
as causes of evil

According to the Bakongo, evil can have six different causes:

- a. Nzambi is seen as the cause of death of old people, which is considered to be natural.
- b. The ghosts, or minkuyu, who have been denied access to the village of the ancestors and who go around, sometimes in the service of the bandoki (plur. of ndoki), to harm and injure people.
- c. Angry ancestors (bakulu) who feel neglected by their descendants or who want to discipline those who do not live according to Kongo rules and customs.
- d. Minkisi (plur. of nkisi) can also cause misfortune if the possessor does not obey the restrictions given to him by the nganga nkisi.
- e. A moral offense can result in suffering; if a woman has committed adultery during pregnancy, she will not have a normal delivery.

f. The ndoki, or witch, who can cause all kinds of misfortune, suffering, sickness and death.³³

In spite of these various reasons, the ndoki is most often seen as the real cause.

Natural causes, as for example in accidents, are not denied, but behind natural and "unnatural" causes, the activity of the ndoki is often suspected.

Makanzu, former national evangelist of Zaire, who has worked many years among the Bakongo and is a Mukongo himself, says that ninety percent of all deaths are attributed to bandoki.³⁴ Van Wing mentions even a higher percentage.³⁵

Related to this belief, a well known proverb is often quoted: "Vo ka bandoki ko, nga babingi twena!" If there were no bandoki, we would be very many.

Speaking of the verb loka Masamba remarks that it is not even the popular term to describe activities of the ndoki: normally the verb dia is used, to eat, which shows how the Bakongo perceive the machinations of the ndoki.³⁶ It is the most feared activity of the ndoki. He possesses a mystical power which permits him to leave his physical body during the night and to travel in the form of a spirit or animal even over very long distances. In a mysterious way the ndoki can then enter into the houses of other people and attack them during their sleep. He can catch or steal their soul and suck their blood and then share his spoil with other bandoki, gathered on the top of an isolated tree or hill, where they will have a nocturnal

meal of human flesh, complete with cooking pots and cooking fires, sharing their experiences and making further plans for future attacks.³⁷

A person whose soul has been "caught" by a ndoki may continue to live for a short time, but unless he gets the help of a nganga whose power is greater than that of the ndoki, he is doomed to die.

Distinctive characteristic

Van Wing attributes this possibility of leaving the physical body during the night to the mfumu kutu, the second soul. A ndoki has an evil mfumu kutu which urges him to harm people.³⁸

Anne Retel-Laurentin, who conducted research on witchcraft and trial-ordeals among 362 ethnic groups in Africa, attributes the power of the Kongo ndoki to an abdominal organ, a gland, called kundu, equipped with teeth and claws "pourvu de griffes, de dents ou de bouche contractile".³⁹

Mahaniah writes about a kundu, a "swollen gland" in the stomach of some bandoki,⁴⁰ while Buana writes: "There is no ndoki without kundu and there is no kundu without ndoki."⁴¹

An autopsy can reveal the witchcraft substance in the body of the ndoki, but would not convince the unbeliever, since only those who are initiated to the art of witchcraft are able to recognise the kundu.⁴²

Dalmalm writes however that the opinions of the people are contradictory and that the kundu is probably not the primordial criteria to define the ndoki.⁴³

Buakasa confirms that an immaterial power, not related to a physical organ, permits the ndoki to exercise his mystical activities.⁴⁴

This subject will be discussed again later in this study.

Sphere of activities

Another proverb often used in connection with kindoki is: "Ndoki kadilanga kwanda ko, va lukufi kaka kadilanga!", which means that a ndoki does not eat strangers but only relatives.⁴⁵ The Bakongo believe that kindoki power is only effective in the maternal lineage or clan.

Masamba ma Mpolo, who worked several years as a pastor in the Lower-Zaire and in Kinshasa, reports that of the 605 interviewees, who believed they had been bewitched by a ndoki, 598 persons accused a member of their maternal clan.⁴⁶

This fact can be explained by the Kongo concept of human life.

Placide Tempels, for many years a missionary in the Lower Zaire, introduced the term "force vitale", vital force, to denote the basic Bantu concept of the ultimate nature of being. Vital force is the supreme value.⁴⁷

Vincent Mulago develops the concept of vital force and vital union, or participation.⁴⁸

Vital union is the relationship of being and life between all members of the same family and clan. They all draw from a common source, the life of the forefathers, in which all members participate.⁴⁹ This common life, of which blood is the main factor,⁵⁰ is like a vital circuit;⁵¹ it is not static, but can increase and decrease and there is interaction of beings and forces.

A ndoki is someone who knows how to enter into this circuit of life and decrease or destroy the vital force of his victim; however, he must be of the same blood.⁵²

Suspected bandoki

Speaking of the sociological dimension of kindoki, Masamba ma Mpolo not only confirms that the ndoki is always a member of the maternal clan, but that the number of female bandoki is higher than the male witches,⁵³ although the difference is very small.

Women whose social status is higher than that of their husbands, and whose capacities are superior, risk being accused of kindoki by their husbands. In general, wives will be outsiders of the maternal clan of their husbands, but they can be suspected of being a ndoki because of the interpersonal, psychological, and social dynamic, which links them to their husbands.⁵⁴

In a general way, it can be said that anyone who gives cause for jealousy by material success, or by surpassing other people in any other way, is thought to have extraordinary powers and is thus suspected as a

ndoki. Jealousy is often considered as a main motive behind accusations of witchcraft.⁵⁶

Arguments and disagreements between members of the same clan, and personal likes and dislikes can also be decisive in accusing somebody of being a ndoki.

Nkasa trial-ordeal

Traditionally, if someone was accused of kindoki, a nganga ngombo, or diviner, was summoned to investigate the case. In most cases the nkasa trial-ordeal was then administered.⁵⁷

In his article "Nkasa Giving" John Symington, one of the C. & M. A. missionaries, writing in 1895, described the nkasa trial-ordeal as "the direct enemy of progress, civilization and Christianity". He added that the practice destroyed millions of lives, and that more people died by the hands of the fetish-priest through poisoning than from any other cause.⁵⁸

This may have been the judgement of one of the early writers, who did not know all the different aspects which were involved in this kind of dealing with problems in Kongo society, but most people today would agree, that it was one of the most tragic practices among traditional Kongo customs, which has cost the lives of many innocent people.⁵⁹

Mahaniah gives a vivid description of the procedures.

Each person accused of kindoki, witchcraft, drank two glasses of the solution, sitting in the centre of the crowd. Before the accused began to drink, the priest inserted a suppository of fibers from palm kernels into the anus of each accused, to keep the solution from

being voided. This suppository was left in place unto the following day. After drinking the solution, the accused walked to three separate hills, accompanied by a dancing crowd. At the first hill, the crowd encircled him as he sat at the base of a tree. Drummers began to play and the crowd danced. From time to time, the accused was expected to get up and try to dance. This procedure would be repeated at the two remaining hills. If the accused got diarrhoea, he was taken away and killed by members of the crowd, usually young men. Vomiting was considered proof of innocence. If the solution was "well-mixed", meaning laced with stronger poisons, in only a few hours the person who drank it would die. If the accused managed to arrive as far as the third hill, which would be about five o'clock in the evening, he was taken back to the starting point of the ceremony. Accompanied by the dancing crowd, he returned to the village in triumph. Everyone danced happily. The ceremonies would continue for the entire night . . . however, the accused really proved his innocence only the next morning, when the administrators removed the suppository. Again, if the accused had diarrhoea, he was taken away and killed.⁶⁰

The victim could then be cut to pieces with knives or be buried or burned alive.⁶¹

Dalmalm adds that the accused had to drink about two litres of liquid, that he was not allowed to manifest natural needs, and that an accusation of kindoki practically meant death.⁶² The nkasa trial is not administered any more.

Adelman believes that today perhaps 75% of the accused bandoki are publicly reprimanded and ridiculed in front of the whole village and suffer public denunciation, while the remainders are expelled from the village or choose to leave because of social pressure.⁶³ The picture he gives seems to be too optimistic.

A person accused of being a ndoki can be sentenced by the state court to pay heavy fines, while he risks

being beaten and empoisoned, or assassinated secretly by the family members of the witchcraft victim.⁶⁴

Confessions of the ndoki

Often, after having been publicly accused of kindoki, the person accused would admit his guilt and confess that indeed he had "eaten" somebody.

Asa Dalmalm gives a detailed report of a trial by government officials of a person being accused of having "eaten", together with other witches, nine members of his family. The man, a respected member in the village and one of the leaders of the local church, accepted the accusations and the responsibility for the death of the nine victims. The trial took place on December 5, 1972 in Luozi, Lower Zaire.⁶⁵

It is believed that the confessions of accused witches have, more than anything else, strengthened the belief in kindoki.

In these days confession is often the easiest way out for an accused person, since reconciliation with the bewitched person and the paying of a fine may be the only punishment.

But even in the past, when after confession death would probably follow anyway, the confessions of witches were no exception.

Parrinder tries to give an explanation for this phenomenon. He states that confession of witches seems incomprehensible, until it is studied in the light of modern psychology. Quoting Sigmund Freud, who introduced

the "Omnipotence of Thought", he suggests that the frequent death wishes by a person towards his fellow beings, whatever the reasons might be for such thoughts, could perhaps explain the confession of witches. The sense of guilt may produce the conviction that indeed they are responsible for the death of other people. He also quotes M. J. Field, who examined hundreds of cases of confession by witches in Ghana, which seem to confirm that the "power of thought" plays an important role.⁶⁶

Makanzu adds another explanation. Since witchcraft is sometimes considered as an unconscious and involuntary act, an activity of the "double soul" during the sleep, a person, after having been accused by a diviner, may confess: "I confirm before God that I do not know anything about all this and that I am not a sorcerer, but since I do not know all of what my "second soul" does, I admit that it is possible that I am responsible for the death of Bidundu".⁶⁷

Harvey tells of people being convinced of being a ndoki, after having heard the cleverly formulated evidences by the nganga ngombo, while in fact they themselves are very surprised and even sad and ashamed of being a witch.⁶⁸

Very often, when the problem of witchcraft is studied and discussed, the main focus is on the witchcraft victims and how they can be helped and counseled.

More attention, however, should be given to the persons who are very often falsely accused of kindoki and

who have become in a very real sense "victims of the
69
society".

Seeking protection against
kindoki

The most effective protection against the attacks
of a ndoki is to get the help of a nganga nkisi who
possesses a greater mystical power than the ndoki.

And here starts, what Dr. Wolford calls, the
"Sorcery Cycle". Somebody purchases sorcery power to harm
someone or hires a sorcerer with that power to commit a
crime for him. This crime necessitates revenge on the
part of the relatives of the victim. It requires first
some form of "white magic" to identify the guilty
sorcerer. Then the act of revenge is accomplished with
further sorcery action, which brings one back to the
starting point of the cycle. "Thus the cycle is complete,
70
only to start all over again".

Kongo and European Witchcraft

In talking with the Kongo people, one gets the
impression that it is their honest conviction that
witchcraft is something that only belongs to Kongo culture
or perhaps, to African culture, that only Africans believe
in the reality and power of witchcraft, and that it is
useless to discuss this subject with Europeans, since they
do not understand anything about it.

However, belief in witchcraft is not an isolated
but a universal phenomenon, and Europe has also known

witchcraft with almost all of its characteristic
activities as they are known among the Bakongo today.

A study of European witchcraft, medieval or modern,
and of its interpretation, may furnish useful insight in
the nature of Kongo witchcraft.

Medieval European witchcraft

Description and similarities

Witchcraft: European and African, written in 1958
by Geoffrey Parrinder, was probably the first effort to
combine a survey of European witchcraft with an account of
71
African witchcraft.

Parrinder's conclusions were that "European and
African beliefs are easily comparable" and that there is
"an astonishing resemblance between these modern African
72
beliefs and those of Europe centuries ago".

What are the similarities between European
witchcraft of the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries and Kongo
witchcraft as it is still found today?

Activities. It was believed that witches, who were
mostly women, were able to leave their bodies during the
night, fly through the air for great distances, penetrate
the houses of the people in a mysterious way, steal the
soul-substance of the victims, and then fly away to the
73
witch-meeting to share their prey with other witches.

They were also believed to cause barrenness and all
kinds of sickness, to strike people with lightning, to turn
them into animals, or to kill them by a simple look or a

threatening word. In fact, they could be held responsible for as many evils "as there were plagues of Egypt". The most common accusation, however, was that someone had been bewitched and had died.⁷⁴

Animal familiars. Witches were also associated with animal familiars. The traditional picture showed the witch with a black cat, an animal also greatly feared by many Bakongo, but dogs, goats, pigs, birds or lizards were equally mentioned. To attack people, witches were also believed to be able to send animals in their places, who would suck the blood of their victims.⁷⁵

Transformation into animals. Witches could also transform themselves into animals.

Two different stories may illustrate the similarity between European and Kongo witchcraft.

The first story happened in the Auvergne, France in 1588, the second among the Bakongo in Lower Zaire in 1962.

In 1588, in the Auvergne, a man asked a hunter to bring him some game. The hunter was attacked by a wolf, but succeeded in cutting off one of his front paws. He showed this to the gentleman, who saw that the paw had a ring on it like that belonging to his wife. When he got home his wife was hiding her arm under her clothing, and when it was drawn out she was seen to have lost the hand. She confessed and was burnt".⁷⁶

In 1962 Makaya Ngimbi succeeded in killing a myudi (buffallo), while hunting in the Kakongo area. At the last moment the animal changed back into a human person who then accused him of murder. Makaya, however, had already succeeded in cutting off one of the animal's legs.

When he was summoned before the state judges in Boma, he took the leg of the animal with him as a certain proof that at the moment he fired, there had been an animal before him. The surest proof of human transformation into an animal was, that the accuser presented himself before the judges with only one leg.⁷⁷

Physical sign. The witches could be recognized by a physical sign, sometimes on their body. The statement: "It is said that there is no witch who is not marked in some part of her body" seems identical to Buana's: "There is no ndoki without kundu and there is no kundu without a ndoki".⁷⁸

Ordeal. When somebody was accused of being a witch, a trial would be set up - the water ordeal was the most common to prove guilt or innocence -, or judgement would be pronounced after having obtained the confession of the witch. This confession was considered as sufficient evidence. External evidence could never be obtained, since witchcraft activities could not be observed by "outsiders".⁸⁰

Interpretations of medieval European witchcraft

It should be very clear that Parrinder does not write about European witchcraft to give more credibility to its African counterpart.

He realizes the danger that Africans will think there must be something in it, because Europeans once believed in witchcraft also. On the contrary.

Parrinder endorses wholeheartedly the opinion of the European anthropologists and foremost authorities on African witchcraft, Evans-Pritchard and Margueret Field, that "witchcraft cannot exist because it is impossible, and because it is impossible, it must be symbolic."⁸¹

Witchcraft as an illusion. For Parrinder, be it European or African, witchcraft is a "tragic error", a "pathetic fallacy", a "dangerous illusion", a "false explanation of the ills of life" which has cost the lives of many poor and innocent people.

According to Parrinder, witchcraft has no real existence, it just exists in the imaginations of mentally disturbed people and Parrinder studied European witchcraft so that it might help "to dispel the illusions of Africa".⁸²

He quotes the Council of Ancyra in the ninth century to show that the church also interpreted witchcraft as an illusion. Dealing with the profession of wicked women that ride at night on certain beasts over immense distances, the Council decided that:

priests everywhere should preach that they know this to be false, and that such phantasms are sent by the Evil Spirit, who deludes them in dreams. Who is there who is not led out of himself in dreams, seeing much in sleeping that he never saw waking? And who is such a fool that he believes that to happen in the body, which is done only in the spirit?⁸³

This decree, known as the Cap. Episcopi, served to qualify all night-flying as illusory and people were not allowed to believe in the reality of it.⁸⁴

What changed the conviction of the church and public opinion regarding witchcraft, even to the point that one could speak of a real witch-craze going over most of Europe?

Parrinder mentions three causes. He sees witch-hunting as an expression of "the disease of society", and when the dark period of the middle ages came over Europe, the beliefs of the people changed. Especially when one-third of the entire European population died of the bubonic plague, people looked for scapegoats who were accused of having caused the plague, and other evils and misfortunes which were so common in medieval Europe. After having persecuted various groups of people,⁸⁵ attention was turned to the witches.

In 1484 Pope Innocent VIII, "a man of scandalous life" according to Catholic historians, published his famous bull which marked open declaration of war against the witches and gave full authority to the inquisitors for persecution. According to Parrinder it was this papal recognition of the reality of witchcraft, which created the witch-craze all over Europe, especially in France and Germany. Not to believe in the reality of witchcraft would almost be equal to doubt the doctrine of the church.⁸⁶

A third cause for the growing, popular belief in witchcraft were the "confessions" of the witches.

According to Parrinder, many confessions were⁸⁷ obtained under torture, and false statements were put into the mouths of the victims by the way the questions were formulated by the witch finders. Many of the accused witches were poor and uneducated people, not able to stand up against the accusations coming from "learned people" and "leaders of the Church", some of whom were described by Parrinder as "the wickedest men of the country" or as⁸⁸ "dangerous and evil-minded fanatics".

In spite of the fact that belief in witchcraft almost belonged to the official doctrine of the Catholic church, several people took a courageous stand against the persecution of witches.

Francis Bacon called the witchcraft stories "fables" which were the effect of the imagination. He wrote "The witches themselves are imaginative and believe⁸⁹ often times they do that which they do not".

Salazar, an inquisitor in Spain, who did much to check persecutions by careful and firsthand investigations of charges against witches, after having examined hundreds of cases, concluded that "there were neither witches nor⁹⁰ bewitched until they were talked and written about", meaning that the growing belief in witchcraft was just an unhappy result of the innumerable stories about witchcraft activities.

Reginald Scot, who wrote in 1584 The Discovery of Witchcraft and who deplored the "tragic superstition" of so many people in Europe, expressed his opinion in the following way:

For if any adversity, grief, sickness, loss of children, corn, cattle, or liberty happen unto them; by and by they exclaim upon witches. As if there were no God in Israel that ordereth all things according to his will . . . but that certain old women here on earth, called witches, must needs be the contrivers of all men's calamities . . . In so much as a clap of thunder, or a gale of wind is no sooner heard, but either they run to the bells, or cry out to burn the witches"⁹¹.

Parrinder states that the beliefs in witchcraft remained "until the coming of better education".

When the spirit of rationalism finally got hold of most of Europe "reason revolted and the persecutions were stopped". In England the law requiring the death penalty⁹² for witches was abolished in 1736.

This ended, officially at least, a tragic period of witch-hunting in several parts of Europe.

Rev. W. C. Van Dam, a well known pastor in the Netherlands, who has a special ministry among people who have become victims of evil spirits through occult practices, believes that witch-hunting in Europe was the result of a "collective neurosis".⁹³ However, he also calls it "neurotic" to insist that witches never existed. He does not agree that illusion is the only possible interpretation of witchcraft.

An in fact it has not been the only interpretation of medieval European witchcraft.

Witchcraft as a religion. In order to prove that European witchcraft was never more than an illusion with "nothing in it", Parrinder used the argument that it was never a part of European religion, not even a heresy. In fact, the church made a big mistake in promoting European⁹⁴ witchcraft to an official heresy.

Herewith Parrinder refuted a thesis developed by Margaret A. Murray, that European witchcraft was a pre-Christian religion of Western Europe.

Murray argued her case in The Witch-Cult in Western Europe, written in 1921, but republished in 1972.

Murray also gave a rationalistic interpretation of witchcraft, not in denying its reality, but in stating that it was a definite religion with beliefs, rituals and a highly developed organization, which could match any other cult in the world. She even writes about a "joyous religion" and compares the witches who made voluntary confessions with the early Christian martyrs, "determined to die for their faith and their god".⁹⁵

She admitted that the witches actually performed many of the deeds of which they were accused, but not by supernatural power. The killing of children was probably done by real poison, the transformation into animals was ritual but not actual: they just wore animal skins and masks, while the idea of night-flying may have resulted from the use of drugs.⁹⁶

Murray, whose work is generally recognized as "one of the most outstanding modern books on witchcraft",⁹⁷

approached the subject as an anthropologist and took an intermediate position between those who rejected the reality of witchcraft and those who attributed it to supernatural power. Summarizing the various positions on European witchcraft, she wrote:

On the one hand are the writers who, having heard the evidence at first hand, believe implicitly in the facts and place upon them the unwarranted construction that these facts were due to supernatural power; on the other hand are the writers who, taking the evidence on hearsay and disbelieving the conclusions drawn by their counterparts, deny the facts in toto.⁹⁸

According to Margaret A. Murray the author Montague Summers probably belongs to the first group.

Witchcraft as demonism. Parrinder presents Summers as "an author of a number of diffuse and fanatical books on witchcraft"⁹⁹, while Sir Steven Runciman wrote in a foreword of The Witch-Cult in Western Europe, that Summers rejected the theories of Murray, because they "could not be reconciled with Satanism of the deliciously sensational kind" favoured by Summers.¹⁰⁰

However, John W. Montgomery calls Montague Summers¹⁰¹ a foremost specialist in the field of witchcraft and, in a list of five, recommends his books, together with those of Kurt Koch, for further reading.¹⁰²

Summer's book, The History of Witchcraft and Demonology, written in 1926 and reprinted in 1965, 1969, 1973 is the result of more than thirty years of systematic and intensive study of first-hand, original sources and judicial records. He states that, because of a biased and rationalistic point of view which denies flatly the

supernatural,¹⁰³ some dark aspects of witchcraft have been neglected in recent studies on this subject.¹⁰⁴

Summers does not deny that there were "gross superstitions" and "unbridled imaginations" and that all examples of ignorance and trickery might easily be multiplied "twenty times over and twenty times again", yet when every allowance has been made, every possible explanation exhausted, there remains a "mass of solid proven facts", which even by medical and psychological knowledge cannot be accounted for, "save by acknowledging the reality of witchcraft and diabolic contracts".¹⁰⁵

Summers believes that in many cases "material interpretation" of witchcraft phenomena, such as suggested by Murray, can and must be applied.¹⁰⁶ But he also believes that the devil can have manifested himself to the witches during the midnight-meetings, that instances of actual levitation can have taken place, that curses can kill by non-material means, and that many other phenomena actually took place through demonic influence.¹⁰⁷

In the confessions of witches, relationships with the devil and demons were often mentioned, confessions which according to Parrinder were extorted, though Montgomery believes that in most cases the witches got a fair trial and judgement.¹⁰⁸

Summers wrote in the wake of an "extraordinary vogue of and adherence to Spiritism" in his own days. In fact, he relates European witchcraft directly to spiritism and he describes spiritism as "modern witchcraft".¹⁰⁹

Summers's conclusion, beyond any doubt, was that satanic and demonic influence and activity occurred in medieval European witchcraft.

Conclusion

Parrinder considers Medieval European witchcraft as something that just existed in the imaginations of the people, but which had no real existence in itself. He expresses the opinion that belief in witchcraft will disappear with the coming of better education.

Murray defines European witchcraft as a pre-Christian religion.

While Kongo belief in witchcraft alone cannot be presented as the Kongo religion, it is certainly linked to the religious beliefs of the Kongo people.

At the same time, the possibility of demonic activity in witchcraft, as pointed out by Summers, must not be taken too lightly.

The modern uprising in the West of occultism in general and witchcraft in particular, and their interpretation by evangelical scholars, suggest that there can be in these phenomena a spiritual dimension which is of demonic nature.

This religious and spiritual dimension in Kongo witchcraft will be discussed later in this study.

Modern European witchcraft

Description and similarities

Though there are more similarities between Kongo

and European witchcraft of the Middle Ages, a look at the increase of occultism and modern witchcraft in Europe will be of interest.

Innumerable books have been written on this subject, and the most unbelievable examples mentioned, to show that occultism is a fast growing "religion" in Europe and the United States.¹¹⁰ To satisfy the curiosity in the occult, 50% of the newspapers in Britain, France, Belgium, Switzerland and the USA publish daily astrological columns.¹¹¹ Astrology is only one of the many aspects of occultism which fascinate modern man. Parrinder remarks that it is most remarkable that one could speak of a revival of belief in witchcraft.¹¹²

It is said that modern witchcraft embraces hundreds of different beliefs and practices.¹¹³ This is not the place to enter into a detailed study of it, but it seems that many of the modern rites and practices have been used by witches for centuries.¹¹⁴

Some modern witches claim that they can manipulate people and situations to their own advantage, cause pain, sickness and suicidal thoughts, and that they have midnight meetings. Many stories exist of unusual means of arriving at their place of destination.

Some claim to have animal familiars who assist them in their activities, while others claim to have the power to transform themselves into animals.¹¹⁵

Interpretation of modern European witchcraft

Many Christian counselors, who have dealt with people involved in some kind of modern occultism or witchcraft, see the danger of demonic influence through these activities. Some make a direct link between modern witchcraft and satanism.¹¹⁶ The difference seems to be more in degree than in kind: in satanism people openly acknowledge that their power comes from satan and demons, while a witch may be uncertain about the source of the power he is tapping.¹¹⁷ Some may even claim not to believe in the devil, and that they exercise their activities by neutral forces of nature.¹¹⁸

Kurt Koch, in the course of a worldwide ministry, has counseled thousands of people involved in modern magic or witchcraft. He has seen the effects of these beliefs and practices, and states that it is "criminal" to talk about "harmless forces of nature".¹¹⁹ He concludes: "My counselling work continually supplies evidence to the effect that magic in any form is the work of the devil, whether it sails under a black, white or neutral flag".¹²⁰ Some people use only "white magic", and at the same time Bible verses and prayer. According to Koch it remains "black magic under a different disguise".¹²¹

Others have described magic as "satan's imitation of God's miracles" and divination as "satanic counterfeit of biblical prophecy".¹²²

These judgments have been made by those who are well aware of the dangers of superstition and deceit and also of the modern findings of psychiatry, psychology and para-psychology.

Montgomery reserves a certain place for the paranormal, but notes at the same time that it is a short step from the paranormal to the demonic, a step which is easily taken.¹²³

He also states that Montague Summers has amassed sufficient data to show the inadequacy of explanations limited to human abnormality or para-normality.¹²⁴

Expressing his judgment about modern witchcraft, Montgomery notes that

this subject poses the fewest complexities of interpretation. The reason is simply that here one reaches the "black" end of the occult spectrum; grayness disappears and all becomes clear - hideously clear. The problem involved in determining whether demon possession occurs and whether witchcraft works is absurdly simple. The documentation is overwhelming. Even if ninety-nine percent of all witchcraft cases are thrown out - and that would be very difficult to do - the remainder would easily establish the reality of the phenomenon.¹²⁵

As mentioned before: the existence, activity and presence of demons cannot be proved. Three principles, however, should be noted:

- Para-psychology research has never yielded evidence of power as extensive as is necessary to account for the full range of attested phenomena.¹²⁶
- The Bible testifies clearly of the reality and existence of demonic spirits, and also describes the nature of their activity.

- The effects of involvement in occult activities on the lives of people, physically, psychologically and spiritually, clearly point in the direction of demonic activity.

As Montgomery remarks: "The old philosophical adage seems to apply here that if something looks, smells and tastes like an onion, and someone wishes to maintain that in reality it is a turnip, the burden of the proof rests on the latter to prove his case not on those who accept it as an onion".¹²⁷

Kongo Witchcraft and Demonic Activity

Introduction

As was seen earlier, many similarities exist between European and Kongo witchcraft. Can demon activity be added to the list as another similar characteristic?

In the interpretation of African witchcraft, many anthropologists have considered belief in witchcraft as pure superstition, caused by a lack of modern education and knowledge. Behind their view may lie a denial of the existence of a personal God, satan, demons and of the supernatural.

However, especially in the past, missionaries have sometimes described belief in witchcraft as primitive superstition, and ridiculed those for whom witchcraft was a constant reality. It was supposed that through the teaching of the Gospel these beliefs would eventually disappear and therefore they did not deal directly with

this problem. The possibility of demon activity was only considered in a remote and indirect way.

In describing European witchcraft, Montague Summers left a place for "unbridled imaginations, fraud, trickery and superstition" and these have certainly not been absent among the Kongo people.

Also, Summers' definition of a witch as somebody who has a conscious pact with the devil, cannot be applied to Kongo witchcraft. In the popular opinion of the Bakongo today, the ndoki exercises his activities through the power of satan, but this is a conception, which results from Christian teaching.¹²⁸ It has been shown that in the traditional religion of the Bakongo, the devil, as personification of evil, did not exist.

The question arises, however, whether, through belief and involvement in magic and witchcraft, there can be a link with demon activity, without perhaps people realizing this. Something like serving an "unknown god", as is the case with Europeans today who "try" modern witchcraft and fall into the snares of the devil.

Where is the possible link between kongo magic, witchcraft, and demonic activity?

The religious dimension in Kongo magic and witchcraft

As mentioned before, several writers attribute African magic and witchcraft to human, natural, psychic powers, without any relation to the supernatural or to religion. It is a human manipulation of natural forces.

If this were the case then demonic activity is of course out of the question.

However, it is hard to imagine that, where African religion and life are inseparable, belief in witchcraft and magic, which play such an important role in every-day-life, and is concerned with health and sickness, life and death, would not be a part of the religious beliefs of the Bakongo.

Many African theologians and anthropologists do not agree with this separation. Mbiti believes that the power in magic and witchcraft is spiritual power, coming ultimately from God, that charms and amulettes are used for "seriously religious intentions", while barrenness, misfortunes, diseases, accidents - often believed to be caused by witchcraft - are "mystical experiences of a deeply religious nature". He concludes: "Whatever reality there is concerning witchcraft in the broad and popular sense of the term, the belief in it is there in every African village, and that belief affects everyone, for better or for worse. It is part of the religious corpus of beliefs".¹²⁹

The spiritual dimension in Kongo magic and witchcraft

A close look at the beliefs of the Bakongo will show that Kongo magic and witchcraft, in one way or another, are often connected with belief in spirits.

Minkisi

The most effective and almost unique protection against the attacks of the ndoki is the nkisi, the fetish or charm. The nkisi is often a collection of rare materials from inanimate matter, parts or products of animals and plants, and sometimes of human beings, assembled in a sack, called nkutu.¹³⁰ The kind of material, however, does not guarantee the power of the nkisi;¹³¹ the source of power is the spiritual world.¹³² It is believed that through the invocations and rituals of the nganga a spirit will inhabit the nkisi, or exercise his influence through it.¹³³

Mahanian states that the minkisi which are used for positive purposes derive their power from the bakulu, who have died two or three times and thus have become true spiritual beings.¹³⁴

Some believe that minkisi, which obtain their power from the ancestors who have died a violent death, (bisimbi or bankita) are considered especially strong and effective.¹³⁵

Sometimes it is believed that the nganga has the power to "capture" these spirits and then to "imprison" them in the nkisi, after which he is able to dominate and manipulate them.¹³⁶ A nganga can address himself to the nkisi in the following manner:

<u>Mono i nani?</u>	Who am I?
<u>Mono i nganga.</u>	I am the <u>nganga</u> .
<u>Mono i mfumu eno.</u>	I am your chief. ¹³⁷

The fact, however, that, in this case, the nganga would be able to manipulate the power of the nkisi, does not eliminate the spiritual dimension of this aspect of magic; it is still dealing with a spirit.

Others seem to reserve this idea of "capturing" and "dominating" only to minkuyu, who are used by the nganga for evil purposes.¹³⁸ This not only shows that belief in the power of minkisi is related to belief in spirits, it also makes clear that the nganga himself deals with the spirit world, especially with the spirits of the ancestors.¹³⁹

Nganga

This comes out clearly also in Buakasa's description of a seance by a nganga as one of his methods to heal the sick, coming to him for help.¹⁴⁰

During the seance the assistants of the nganga enter into a state of possession, which enables them to enter into contact with the spirits of the ancestors (especially with those who have died a violent death), and to receive from them the necessary information about the methods of healing, which then are passed on to the nganga. He does not become possessed himself, but directs the seance and listens to messages coming from his assistants (masamuna ma nganga). This state of possession can sometimes continue for several days, during which their whole personality changes; they speak another language with a different voice, sing and dance, walk over burning coals, roll themselves over the ground, walk over

the roofs of houses and sometimes become very violent. It seems that they belong to another world, where they serve as messengers or intermediaries between the spirits of the ancestors and the nganga. It seems that the possession occurs under the influence of the nkisi, but under the authority and direction of the nganga.¹⁴¹

This is only one method the nganga uses for his treatment of sick people, but it shows the spiritual nature of his activities and the source of his power.

Ndoki

It is often supposed that the priest and the witch use the same kind of power, but for different purposes.

Although the opinions seem to vary, most of the Bakongo believe that the ndoki derives his power from a different source. Some believe that a ndoki has an evil mfumu kutu (double soul) which enables him to leave his body during the night and attack his victims.¹⁴² Others attribute this power to a physical substance in his body, the kundu.¹⁴³

This does not exclude the belief in the activity of spirits in the works of the ndoki. On the contrary, many believe that the concept of the mfumu kutu or kundu as a source of power ("substance force motrice") is not essential.¹⁴⁴

Many believe that, where the nganga derives his power from the bakulu (if he uses it for good purposes), the ndoki derives his power from the minkuyu, the spirits of the evil persons (like bandoki, murderers and those who

have not obeyed the rules of the clan), who have not been accepted in the village of the ancestors. When these minkuyu or ghosts become more and more removed from the present, they are used by the bandoki for their evil practices.¹⁴⁵

A ndoki can also make use of a nkisi. The ingredients of this nkisi obtain their power from a ghost or from the spirit of a departed relative, who has been killed by a ndoki for this special purpose.¹⁴⁶

If a ndoki wants to cover himself, he can also send a nkuyu in his place to attack his victim.¹⁴⁷

Here again it becomes clear that belief in the power and activities of the ndoki is often related to belief in spirits, in this case in evil spirits.

Possibility of demonic activity

This is not to say that all Kongo magic and witchcraft is demonic. As already said, superstition, fraud and trickery have not been absent in kindoki.

Masamba ma Mpolo suggests that several phenomena in kindoki can perhaps be explained with the help of parapsychology (ESP, psychokinesis, telepathy).¹⁴⁸

However, as Summers concluded in speaking of medieval, and Montgomery of modern witchcraft in Europe, Masamba must admit that kindoki must be considered on the level of the supernatural, the inexplicable, the incomprehensible, the elusive, and that it is here that belief in the possibility of an ontological existence of evil and belief in the evil power of satan come in.¹⁴⁹

Speaking in a more general way about African magic and witchcraft, Mbiti confirms that there are "fantastic experiences" and "mysterious phenomena" which defy any explanation by means of modern science.¹⁵⁰

Once again medieval and modern European witchcraft and Kongo witchcraft seem to meet each other. The characteristics and final conclusions show many similarities.

Mbiti believes that the power used by the ndoki comes ultimately from God. However, many affirm that the power which is working in witchcraft is evil and destructive by nature. Such power cannot be ascribed to God.

Moreover, the Bible makes it very clear that, without teaching dualism, there are two opposite powers working in the universe: divine and satanic power. In spite of the fact that God is totally sovereign, it cannot be denied that the Bible presents the kingdom of God and the kingdom of satan as two hostile realities.

E. Milingo, the former archbishop of Lusaka, known world-wide for his ministry among possessed people and witchcraft victims, does not seem to have any doubt about the true nature of witchcraft. He defines a witch (and it may be assumed that he means a real witch, not a falsely accused person) as somebody,

. . . who has the power - and it is a massive power - to use what is commonly known as black magic. In other words, a witch is a person who is a faithful and committed disciple of the devil. He shares the powers of destruction which are the essential nature of the

devil, which is why a witch, in this strict sense, is the devil incarnate.¹⁵¹

He also quotes Francis McNutt as saying:

My experience and study lead me to believe that evil spirits exist, that they can cause sickness, and that they can also heal by removing the sickness they cause. In most nations and cultures . . . there are witches or spiritualists who claim to curse and to heal. . . . I see no reason to deny that there is a power in spiritualism that works. The pastoral practice of the Catholic Church has always accepted the power of spirits as a real force in human affairs, although recent times have seen the ministry of deliverance played down in the Church. . . . These powers are ultimately destructive and enslaving; it is important to recognise them rather than to deny them, and to learn to apply the power of the Holy Spirit in healing, so that sick people will not be driven to seek help from an alien and dangerous source.¹⁵²

Not only has the rational anthropologist denied the reality of witchcraft, but the church also has often denied that real spiritual powers can be at work in it.

Therefore the church has not only failed to recognise a serious spiritual problem among its members, it also has failed to offer a Biblical solution.

It is not without reason that the Willowbank Report makes the following statement:

We wish to affirm, therefore, against the mechanistic myth on which the typical western world-view rests, the reality of demonic intelligences which are concerned by all means, overt and covert, to discredit Jesus Christ and keep people from coming to him. We think it vital in evangelism in all cultures to teach the reality and hostility of demonic powers, and to proclaim that God has exalted Christ as Lord of all.¹⁵³

Conclusion

In view of everything that has been said about witchcraft in general, and Kongo witchcraft in particular, and without declaring everything in it demonic, it can be

stated that belief and involvement in Kongo magic and witchcraft opens the door for demonic influence upon the lives of people.

Even if people do not intend to manipulate demonic powers, or have no knowledge or understanding of the existence and activity of evil spirits, they can come under their influence and bondage all the same.¹⁵⁴

The influence and effects of kindoki on Christian life will now be studied in greater detail.

Kongo Witchcraft and Christian Life

It is often suggested that the power, working through magic and witchcraft is a neutral force, coming ultimately from God.

This position however does not reckon with two fundamental and Biblical truths. First, the Bible teaches that there are two different, opposing and hostile powers working in the universe: divine, and evil, or satanic power. Second, the practice of magic and witchcraft is clearly forbidden in the Bible.

These two principles will now be examined.

Satanic and demonic reality according to the Scriptures

The statement that no sensible person can accept the real existence of witches, much less demons, summarizes modern thinking on this subject.¹⁵⁵

Rudolf Bultmann argues that demons are to be seen as our own evil impulses, and not as external forces

outside of us and acting upon us, and that demonology is irrelevant and invalid.¹⁵⁶

At best, belief in spirits is seen as a higher step in the evolutionary process of religion.¹⁵⁷

According to Biblical teaching, however, one stated purpose of the coming of Christ was to destroy the works and the kingdom of the devil (1 John 3:8; Acts 10:38) of which demons are an essential part.¹⁵⁸

The Bible describes Satan as a real, personal being:¹⁵⁹ personal pronouns are used in reference to satan (2 Cor. 11:14; Jas. 4:7), intelligence is ascribed to him (Luke 4:1-12; 2 Cor. 11:3) and satan is held morally accountable (Matt. 25:41),¹⁶⁰

Satan is also presented as "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4), demanding worship of man, and as "the ruler of the kingdom of the air" (Eph. 2:2), demanding his obedience.¹⁶¹

Christ Himself affirmed that satan is the prince of this world (John 12:31; 16:11; 14:30), that he rules as head of a kingdom (Luke 11:18, Matt. 12:26), and that natural man and angels are under his dominion (John 8:44; Matt. 25:41).

Jesus described satan's objectives as stealing, killing and destroying (John 10:10), and the signs of his kingdom are indeed sin, sickness, disease and death.¹⁶²

When Christ started His public ministry, He immediately began preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God (Mark 1:5), opposing His power and rule against the

kingdom of satan. At that moment "open warfare began",
a war which was decisively won, when Christ died on the
cross and rose again on the third day (Col. 2:15; Eph.
1:20:21).

Therefore, it is not surprising that it has been
said that the message of the kingdom of God is the central
theme of the Gospel and the heart of Pauline theology as
well.¹⁶⁴

Old Testament teaching

Although the idea of the kingdom of God is found
throughout the prophets, the expression itself does not
occur in the Old Testament.¹⁶⁵

At the same time there is only a limited amount of
information about satan and demons. The Old Testament
recognizes their existence and reality but they do not
form a dominant theme.¹⁶⁶

Passages like Isa. 14:12-14 and Ezek. 28:12-15
probably refer to satan's fall, but only in an 'indirect
way.¹⁶⁷ Direct passages are found in Job 1, 2; Zech. 3
and 1 Chr. 21:1.

References to demons are found for example in Deut.
32:17; Ps. 106:37; Lev. 17:7; 2 Chr. 11:15; Isa. 13:21;
34:14.¹⁶⁸

Israel was surrounded by nations and cultures where
the demonic was a prevalent factor (Egyptian, Canaanite,
Assyro-Babylonian). That the teaching of the Old
Testament regarding the existence and activity of satan

and demons is yet rather scarce is perhaps best explained
by D.F. Kinlaw in his following statement:

The Old Testament obviously takes seriously the
doctrine of creation ex nihilo. In the beginning there
was Yahweh plus nothing. The monotheism is radical.
There is one ultimate cause, there is one primus and
that is Yahweh. There is no world either good or evil
that exists alongside Him as equal or rival. He reigns
and reigns alone.¹⁶⁹

In the Intertestamental period Jewish angelology
and demonology took an important place in Jewish
thinking.¹⁷⁰ Also, the idea of a divine kingdom,
destroying the powers of evil, began to develop.¹⁷¹

Glasser states:

Both Jesus and Paul accepted the basic presuppositions
of the apocalyptic-eschatological tradition of their
day. But they rejected its cruder implications and
recast the total corpus in such a fashion that they
deliberately discouraged either philosophizing about
the existence of evil or defining its exact nature.
Both took a very pragmatic position, being concerned
solely with the actual influence of the powers on
individuals, on history and on the cosmos.¹⁷²

New Testament teaching

The New Testament shows that neither Jesus nor the
early church had the slightest doubt as to the real
existence of satan or demons.¹⁷³ It even offers a rather
extensive teaching regarding demonology.

The existence of demons (Jas. 2:19; Rev. 9:20),
their nature (Luke 4:33; 6:18), their activity (1 Tim.
4:1; Rev. 16:14), their organization under satan (Matt.
12:26; Eph. 6:12), their abode (Luke 8:31; Rev. 9:11) and
their final doom (Matt. 25:41) are all clearly pointed
out.¹⁷⁴

Other passages, like Matt. 12:24; 25:41 and Rev. 12:4, 7 seem to indicate that demons are fallen angels who satan drew with him during his revolt against God.

As Unger remarks: "If Satan's angels and the demons are not identical, then no other origin of demons is anywhere explicitly revealed in Scripture"¹⁷⁵

The New Testament not only clearly describes the personality of satan, but teaches that demons also are intelligent and voluntary beings.¹⁷⁶ Their spiritual (Luke 10:20, Mark 9:25), intellectual (Mark 5:7-10; Luke 4:34) and moral nature (Matt. 12:45; Rev. 16:13) prove beyond any doubt that demons are personal beings.

2 Pet. 2:4 suggests that two groups of demons can be distinguished: those demonic spirits who have been imprisoned and assigned to Tartaros, awaiting judgement, while others live and operate in the "heavenly places", probably the region "above the earth but below the heaven", from where they oppose God's kingdom and attack the saints.¹⁷⁷

The terminology used by Paul to describe demonic spirits suggests that there are various levels of authority and responsibility among them.

Different expressions are used for example in 1 Cor. 15:24; Rom. 8:38; Col. 1:16, 2:10, 2:15; Eph. 1:21, 3:10, 6:12, some of whom may include holy angels.¹⁷⁸ The angelic beings mentioned in Eph. 6:12 are all evil, since the Christian is required to fight against them.¹⁷⁹

It becomes clear that the teaching of the Old as well as of the New Testament leaves no doubt about the existence and reality of satan and demons.

Witchcraft according to the Scriptures

Belief in magic and witchcraft has been universal at all times and Israel was surrounded by nations and cultures where occult practices dominated the affairs of life.¹⁸⁰ In order for Israel to remain faithful to Yahweh, the Old Testament warns against those practices and pronounces even the death penalty on several occult activities.

The Biblical terminology is not always easily defined, and the Biblical notion of magic and witchcraft may differ in details from modern occultism, but the basic principles remain the same.

The first passage in the Old Testament that speaks of witchcraft (or sorcery) is found in the book of Exod. (22:18) and it is possible that Israel, during its stay in Egypt, had learned some of the occult practices of this pagan nation.¹⁸¹

Kurt Koch believes that magic is as old as the fall.¹⁸² When God created man, He gave him power and knowledge to fill the earth and to subdue it (Gen. 1:28). This should be done in submission to, and in accordance with, the will of God. But satan offered to man a different kind of knowledge and power in opposition to God's will (Gen. 3:5). Instead of voluntary submission to

the will of God, man chose rebellion against divine statutes and ordinances, caused by "a greed for power and knowledge." Koch states that magic is "at its root rebellion", it is the very antithesis of the commandment of God as it reveals a hunger for knowledge and a desire for power in opposition to the will of God".¹⁸³

Koch adds that parapsychology still recognizes something of this "double nature of magic". It differentiates between Psi-Gamma phenomena, which have to do with knowledge, and Psi-Kappa phenomena, which are associated with power. Power and knowledge are the two basic elements of magic.¹⁸⁴

It is interesting to note that kindoki is also described with these two terms. Kongo witchcraft is seen as mavela mampimpa, knowledge of the night, but also as lulendo, power to control the invisible forces and to apply them either for good or for evil purposes.¹⁸⁵ It is a manipulation of invisible powers, but without submission to the will of God.

In his book The Biblical Concept of Power, Cyrill H. Powell confirms that this is indeed the Biblical notion of magic.

By use of magical procedures, man has attempted a short-cut to power in an exploitation of the psychic and the supernatural. Magic is always an endeavour engineered from the human end, without reference to the will of God. It seeks, rather, to compel divine forces.¹⁸⁶

The Biblical concept of magic and witchcraft is not only rebellion, but also idolatry. Lev. 19:31 says, "Do not turn to mediums or wizards . . . I am the Lord your

God". Magic substitutes something else in the place of God.

Alan R. Tippett believes that divination, necromancy, and sorcery can all be covered by the Biblical word "idolatry".

We could break down the whole animistic system of the biblical word into categories for study, but in the last analysis the Bible disposes of them as a single category in the first two commandments (Ex. 20:2-6) - anything that usurps the Lord's place in the life of his people is grouped together as "over and against Him" and idolatrous.¹⁸⁷

The most complete range of occult activities the Old Testament speaks out against is found in Deut. 18:10, 11. Among the "detestable practices" mentioned are:

- divination
- sorcery
- interpretation of omens
- witchcraft
- casting of spells
- acting as a medium
- acting as a spiritist
- consultation of the dead (NIV).

The various English translations do not all agree as to the specific meaning of the practices, mentioned in this text. There is an overlapping in the terms as well. The NIV translates the Hebrew word anan as sorcery, while the Hebrew term rather means soothsaying.¹⁸⁸ The word kashaph is translated as witchcraft, but the Hebrew refers to magical activities which involve the use of material objects.¹⁸⁹ According to modern anthropological terminology the word sorcery is more correct.

Commenting on this passage, Gehman remarks that the first three expressions in the text all present various forms of divination: occult practices to explain the

unknown or predict future events. Witchcraft designates the activity to bring about supernatural effects for the harm or protection of other people, while casting a spell refers to a magician who uses words or things to cast a spell on a person. The last three practices mentioned in this passage refer openly to association with the spirit world, while the former activities do not necessarily involve overt activity of spirits. Gehman concludes, however: "The Evangelical who believes in the spirit world recognizes that any supernatural activity involved in divination, sorcery, or magic is attributed to demonic spirits.¹⁹⁰

In summarizing the content of this passage we can conclude that the first three activities can be classified under the heading divination, which is especially concerned with knowledge, the fourth and fifth practice under magic and witchcraft, which are associated with the concept of power, while the last group can be classified under spiritism.

Divinatory practices were the most prevalent and several Bible passages refer to this: Gen. 44:5; Lev. 19:31; 20:6, 27; Deut. 18:10-13; Isa. 44:25; Jer. 29:8; Ezek. 21:21; Hos. 4:12; Mil. 3:6-7; Zech. 10:2.

The Old Testament pronounces the death penalty on those who practice divination (Lev. 20:6-27), which is also the case for sorcery (Exod. 22:18).

Other passages referring to witchcraft or sorcery are, for example 2 Kgs. 9:22; 2 Chr. 33:6; Isa. 47:9, 12;

Mic. 5:12; Nah. 3:4 and in the New Testament Acts 8:9, 11; 13:6, 8; Gal. 5:20; Rev. 9:21, 18:23; 21:8, 22:15.

It is important to note that the Bible not only condemns those who practice these occult activities, but also those who turn to them for help. God forbids the people to turn to mediums or spirits. He will set His face against such persons and they will be cut off from His people (Lev. 19:26, 31; 20:6).

A passage that speaks out strongly against the use of magical charms is Ezek. 13:20-23.

Wolford summarizes the teaching of the Old Testament:

No activity relating in any way to the spiritual powers of the universe is acceptable for God's people. He expects his people to look to him and to him alone for life and guidance. It is a life and death matter: death surrounds any hint of sorcery practices and life is found in God alone who is over all power.¹⁹¹

While the occult activities in the Old Testament had their roots in heathenism and were a sign of rebellion and idolatry, the occult phenomena in the New Testament were a sign of conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of satan;¹⁹² they are evidence of satanic opposition to God's kingdom.

The Gospels show very clearly the demonic opposition Christ had to deal with.

But the early church also faced the same resistance. When the Gospel was first preached in Samaria (Acts 8), when Paul started his first missionary journey (Acts 13), when he set foot for the first time in Europe

(Acts 16), occult and demonic opposition was
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encountered.

The fact that belief in witchcraft is often considered as the greatest obstacle to true spiritual life, should be ample proof that the practices of magic and witchcraft are associated with the hostile powers, opposing the kingdom of God.

Gehman concludes:

For these reasons the practices recorded in Deut. 18 are described as "detestable things". They are forbidden not because of some arbitrary will of God. They are forbidden because they are associated with the adversaries of the Kingdom of God. To participate in them not only reflects unbelief and disobedience, but involves the participant in the works of the devil himself.¹⁹⁴

Involvement in the works of the devil has serious consequences. Not only does the person undergo the destructive influences of satanic activity, he will also, sooner or later, be subjected to divine wrath and judgment.

The consequences of involvement in magic and witchcraft will now be studied in greater detail.

Effects of witchcraft on Christian life

It may be astonishing that, after a century of evangelism, witchcraft can still be one of the most difficult problems the church has to deal with.

A fact is, however, that belief in witchcraft and its influence on the Kongo society in general still play a very important role in every day life. This is true, not only for the Bakongo in the Lower Zaire, but for most of

Africa. It seems that in the past one hundred years, in which most of Africa has been reached with the Gospel, and thousands of Christian churches have been planted everywhere, witchcraft has lost little or nothing of its power and influence on most of the African population.

Effects of witchcraft on society

Martin Sinda states that witchcraft continues to perturb modern African societies, that it still inspires great fear among the people, and that the problems created by witchcraft remain, in general, without any solution. He believes that the situation today is identical with
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that of the fourteenth and fifteenth century.

Many non-African missionaries or anthropologists agree with Sinda's somber diagnosis.

In Concepts of God in Africa M. J. McVeigh writes the following conclusion:

The truth of the matter is that the belief in witchcraft has not been reduced by missionary influence or contact with the West. On the contrary, it is possible to argue that belief in witchcraft has never been greater and that it is in fact growing rapidly in present-day Africa.¹⁹⁶

Belief in witchcraft is not only strong among illiterate people in some remote villages, but it dominates the thinking of university graduates and leading politicians of Africa, when confronted with misfortunes, sickness or death.
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Masamba ma Mpolo states, for example, that most African students in Europe still
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attribute their sickness to witchcraft.

Speaking of the mysterious death of Dr. Ernest Boka, former Minister of National Education in Ivory Coast, President Felix Houphouet gave the following statement and explanation: "For the Westerners, belief in witchcraft may seem childish, but it is a great tragedy which takes place in Africa. From the African archbishop down to the most insignificant Catholic, from the great marabout down to the most insignificant Muslim, from the pastor down to the smallest Protestant, we all have in us an animistic past and perhaps only two or three generations of Catholics, Muslims and Protestants".¹⁹⁹

His statement suggests that 75 years of Christianity is not enough to change the traditional African worldview and to destroy belief in witchcraft.

There seem to be various reasons why witchcraft, instead of losing its influence, is rather on the increase.

Speaking about the Bakongo in the Lower Zaire, Asa Dalmalm believes that the economic situation creates an atmosphere of anxiety in which the dynamism of witchcraft beliefs is easily activated. Also, the failure of modern medicine makes the people turn back to traditional treatments. The positive results from the beginning created unrealistic expectations, while today medical authorities cannot provide the necessary equipment, maintenance and medical supply to make hospitals function in a sufficient way. Sometimes the people have to walk long distances, before reaching a dispensary, where often

unqualified personnel administer medical treatment. Education was often seen as an important key to progress. The theoretical knowledge, often without relevance to local situations and problems, and sometimes the poor quality of the education which was offered, have disappointed the expectations of the people for a better life, and make them return to traditional methods to solve their problems. The political philosophy of "Recours a l'authenticite", made popular by the Zairian government in 1971, and which urges the Zairian people to respect their traditional culture, should also be mentioned. The people do not always discern what should be preserved and what should be rejected.²⁰⁰

Balandier adds one more reason for the rapid growth of belief in witchcraft.

Moreover, modern economic conditions have intensified competition, thus creating new forms of inequality. Personal envy becomes a factor of increasing social importance, bringing with it all the dangers, especially that of sorcery, that it has always engendered.²⁰¹

This confirms what Mahaniah writes about the traditional economic life of the Bakongo.

Jealousy and envy could result from the success of some and the failure of others. Prosperity in hunting, fishing and trading as well as in farming, could bring envy and jealousy; especially if people suspected that the prosperity resulted from witchcraft, and the accumulated wealth was not used for the welfare of the community but for individual advancement, jealousy could cause illness and death.²⁰²

It is noted by most authors who write about this subject, that jealousy is often the main motivation to pursue sorcery or witchcraft, and people often fear

economic advance because of the danger of being accused of witchcraft.

Professor J. Mbiti rightly suggested that the fear of bad magic, sorcery and witchcraft is the most disturbing element in African life, and that they are some of the greatest enemies of African society.²⁰³

How much more should they be considered as enemies of the Christian church.

Effects of witchcraft on the church

Professor Mbiti notes that there were, in 1972, about 150 million Christians in Africa, but he adds: "It should be remembered that the majority of those who were counted as Christians . . . still stuck to some of their African religious ideas and practices. Therefore, in effect many millions of Africans are followers of more than one religion . . . Among indigenous Africans, this is often African Religion plus Christianity".²⁰⁴

It seems, indeed, that 75 or 100 years of Christianity have not succeeded in deeply changing either the African world view, or the African traditional religion.

Meinrad Hebga asks, "Can we say that the preaching of the Gospel during more than one century has reduced the power of magic and witchcraft? We must say that they never have prospered so much, in the villages as well as in the cities".²⁰⁵

The problem is, however, that several elements of the African world view and religion are hostile to the

Christian faith. As Mbiti has qualified the fear of bad magic, sorcery, and witchcraft as enemies of society,²⁰⁶

Aylward Shorter goes one step further in declaring that magic is the enemy of true religion.²⁰⁷

For example, Wolford states that in sixty years of mission work in the United Methodist Church in Zaire, the result has been a large body of mainly nominal Christians, and he believes that the continued existence of witchcraft is the main reason for the lack of spiritual depth among the many Christians of this church.²⁰⁸

Speaking of the situation among the Bakongo in the Lower Zaire, Mabiala Kenzo says, "A close look will show that areas where the Church is not growing are the same areas where demonic practices such as kindoki are flourishing".²⁰⁹

It is not astonishing that, where belief in witchcraft creates fear, suspicion, false accusations and hate in Kongo society, these results are devastating for the life of the church, if this belief remains alive among Christians. Some concrete examples will illustrate the destructive effects of involvement in witchcraft on local churches.

The cousin of a Bible teacher in a certain village in the Lower Zaire became seriously ill. One day she told her mother that it was her uncle, the Bible teacher, who had made her sick. It was his turn among the bandoki to offer someone of his family, after having "eaten" a man from the family of another witch. One day later the girl

died. Her father, who was a local government official, accused the Bible teacher of witchcraft. The man accepted and was sentenced to give a pig and pay a big amount of money. The Christians of the village refused to keep this man as a Bible teacher.²¹⁰

A Bible College student told what happened at the death of his grandfather, who was considered by the village people to be a ndoki.

When the people carried the coffin to the cemetery, it suddenly became so heavy that it could not be carried any further. At the same moment there was a whirlwind in front of the coffin. When they carried the coffin a little distance further, the whirlwind also moved; when they put the coffin down, the whirlwind stayed in front of the coffin. At a certain moment his uncle, a Bible teacher of the church, threw himself in the midst of the whirlwind. The people concluded directly that the Bible teacher also would die soon. His father had obliged him to accompany him. Not long after, the Bible teacher also died. This event caused a great upheaval in the church. The man who had taught them the Gospel had been involved in witchcraft. People refused to go to his church and many other older Bible teachers were suspected of kindoki.

The student added: "This is not a story which other people told me, but something that I have seen with my own eyes".²¹¹

A pastor of another church in the same region was accused by his own wife of being a ndoki. Because of

this, the village people forbade the pastor to preach in his church. The church leaders decided to transfer the pastor to another village.²¹²

A third-year student of the Bible College had to do practical work in a village of his home area. Upon his arrival he discovered that not only the village people, but the church members as well, including the pastor's wife, were paralyzed by fear. Several days previously a pig had spoken three times in two different languages: French and Lingala. This happened shortly after the death of an important man in the village.²¹³

The truth of this story could not be investigated, but it shows, as do the others, the belief of the people and the fear and suspicion it creates, even in the church. And several similar cases could be mentioned.

In his article "Demonism on the Mission Field" G. W. Peters describes four different levels of demonic influence, of which the first one is an oppressive atmosphere of suspicion, fear and animosity.²¹⁴

This seems often to be the case in African villages, as is shown in the examples above.

Mbiti writes: "This whole psychic atmosphere of African village life is filled with belief in this mystical power. . . . Everyone is directly or indirectly affected, for better or for worse, by beliefs and activities connected with this power, particularly in its manifestation as magic, sorcery and witchcraft".²¹⁵

If this is the case, then it is all the more difficult to understand why the church has never really dealt with the problem of witchcraft, especially among its members.

The approach the missionaries often took in the past was, just to deny its existence and reality and to even ridicule those who believed in it. Some churches even took disciplinary measures against simply believing in the reality of witchcraft.²¹⁶

The only result was that, very often, the belief in witchcraft and the fear of it just continued, but was never mentioned or discussed in the presence of missionaries. Pastors of local churches often just followed the examples of missionaries and rarely mentioned the subject or preached about it.

The revival of occultism in Europe and the United States and a new awareness of satanic and demonic reality in occult phenomena have changed the mind of new missionaries, now coming to the mission field. Also, many of the young pastors of the Kongo churches recognize the potential, spiritual dangers in witchcraft, which does not necessarily mean that they are afraid of it.

Yet, witchcraft is not a subject that is often taught or preached about.

Dalmalm mentions various reasons for this fact.²¹⁷

Many pastors still feel that they cannot go against the early teaching of the missionaries, that witchcraft

just does not exist and that the best attitude is never to talk about it.

There may also be the sincere hope that through the teaching of modern science and Christian education, beliefs in witchcraft will eventually die out.

A third reason is, that the pastors never learned how to deal with the problem.

Students of a certain theological seminary complained that they never learned how to help people who believe that they are bewitched or who confess to be a ndoki. Their course in Pastoral Theology was taught by European or American professors, and all they learned was just to trust in the power of God, but they never studied the problem in depth.

A fourth reason why Kongo pastors hesitate to talk about kindoki is the conviction that only the initiated know about the profession of the witch. Who would like to expose himself to suspicion?

The result of this silence, however, is that a serious spiritual problem continues to exist among the members of the Kongo churches, without any effort from the church to find a solution for it.

Marjorie Hardyman believes that many young people, who are now third-generation Christians with perhaps a secondhand and weak faith, turn easily to traditional beliefs and practices, because the power of Christ has not been sufficiently taught to them.²¹⁸

At best they may turn to the ngunza, the prophets of independant churches - of which the Kimbanguist Movement in the Lower Zaire is a well known example who claim to help the people and to offer protection against the attacks of the ndoki through the Holy Spirit.

In fact, the independant churches have been called "the unpaid bills of the historical churches" and many believe that people leave traditional churches because of spiritual hunger and because their spiritual needs are not really met.

These aspects will be studied later on.

To conclude this chapter, we will see the effects of witchcraft, not only on the church as a whole, but also on the lives of individual Christians.

Effects of witchcraft on the individual Christian.

It has been shown that witchcraft beliefs and activities are enemies of Kongo society in general, and of the Kongo Christian churches in particular.

It is, however, the individual Christian who suffers in the first place, from their destructive influences.

First, fear, rivalries, jealousy, suspicion, false accusations, and hate destroy the relationships among relatives and neighbours, which is especially tragic among Christians.

Second, magic and witchcraft activities are clearly forbidden in the Bible and provoke God's anger and judgment on those who are involved in it.

Third, there is a real possibility of demonic influence through magic and witchcraft, and this possibility should not be taken lightly. Contact with, or involvement in, occult phenomena seem to come very easily in African villages.

J. Mbiti writes:

Every African who has grown up in the traditional environment will, no doubt, know something about this psychic power which often is experienced, or manifests itself, in form of magic, divination, witchcraft and mysterious phenomena that seem to defy even immediate scientific explanations.

Speaking of the parapsychic dimensions in kindoki, Masamba ma Mpolo states that in the past almost all Africans were endowed with extra-sensorial power.

If people come under demonic influences, the results are extremely harmful, especially for Christians. During the 40 years of his ministry, Kurt Koch has visited more than 120 different countries and counseled about 20,000 people all over the world who were in one way or another involved in occult activities. Based on his experiences, he states that the principles, methods and results of occultism are basically the same worldwide.

As a general conclusion, he writes: "For years I have witnessed the truth of this fact, that magic and almost all other occult practices either destroy the Christian faith of a person or just prevent it from developing".

As specific results of involvement in occult activities, he mentions:

a. in the spiritual realm: no sense for spiritual things, no peace, indifference, lack of concentration in relation to the Bible, cynicism, hardness of heart, sheer unbelief, doubt, being closed to the Holy Spirit, and opposition to religion.

b. in the psychical realm: anxiety states, depression, sexual perversion, lack of restraint, fits of temper, gossiping, blasphemous thoughts, lust, neuroses, feelings of revenge, suicidal thoughts, quarrelling, addiction, nightmares, alcoholism, unforgiveness, hallucinations, and compulsive actions.²²⁶

c. he also confirms that many physical illnesses result from demonic attacks.²²⁷

Many Christian authors who have written about magic and witchcraft confirm their negative and harmful results for true spiritual life, even those who do not count with real demonic influence through magic and witchcraft activity.²²⁸ For example:

- a. it is an obstacle to true conversion²²⁹
- b. it prevents people from confessing their sins²³⁰
- c. it is opposed to the mentality of prayer and supplication²³¹
- d. it is an obstacle to true faith in God²³²
- e. it perpetuates personal sins, like greed, jealousy, hatred, fear²³³
- f. it destroys the relationships between people²³⁴
- g. it hinders the working of the Holy Spirit²³⁵

Another negative influence of belief in witchcraft on spiritual life results from the constant, mutual accusations of having bewitched somebody.

As was explained earlier, once accused, people often admit to have "eaten" somebody. Almost everyone has sometimes hard feelings, negative thoughts, hateful dreams, and pronounces unkind words to his fellow men. Since the Bakongo believe there is real power in feelings, thoughts, dreams and words, once accused of kindoki, people - even Christians - easily accept the charge. They feel guilty for things they never did.

Some American anthropologists have even described Kongo society as a "guilt culture", where accusations and public confessions play a very important role.²³⁶

This constant fear of becoming guilty of kindoki, and consequently of suffering, sickness, and even murder, diminishes or even destroys the Christian's assurance and joy over forgiveness of sins.

A few concrete examples will show the destructive influence of magic and witchcraft activities on Christian life.

A Christian school-teacher was brought to the hospital in a violent condition, although the man had normally a soft character. From the talk of this young man, the missionary nurses concluded that he was demon possessed. Prayer and exorcism resulted in a slow recovery. Later he testified that immorality had led him

to the use of minkisi, after which he became involved in witchcraft, until he had become demon possessed.

A third year student of the Bible College told what happened in his family in 1983. A student, son of a Bible teacher in an Evangelical denomination, was finishing his studies in a bible institute. Because of some problems in the relationship with his father, the latter had threatened him and warned him: "You'll see what will happen to you!" Not long after that, the boy became seriously ill and was hospitalized. During his stay in the hospital his parents never visited him. On the day of his death he told his wife: "I know that I am going to die. May the Lord forgive my father. What have I done to him?"
237

This kind of kindoki is called nwa ndudi, literally "a bitter mouth". It is the power through which certain people can do harm to others, just through words.

A very intelligent six-year student of a Christian secondary school took drugs and obtained minkisi from the nganga to become still more intelligent. He bragged that now he did not have to study any more and that on the day of the exams his pencil would do all the writing for him. He became sick and was sent home. One day, he came back to the mission station in the evening to marry one of the missionaries. He forced his way into the house, blaspheming, destroying all the furniture and turning

everything upside down. Next day he came back to the station, naked and throwing stones at people.

Several weeks later he showed up again, this time at six o'clock in the morning. The night before, two missionaries had the distinct feeling of demonic presence and activity. This left after two hours of intense struggle in prayer. This time he left without doing any harm, saying to one of the missionaries that they could cast out demons, but lacked faith.

The boy went back to the village and later died of an overdose of some drug.

Conclusion

Kongo witchcraft, in its various forms, has always played an important role in Kongo society and culture, and it is far from diminishing today.

However, witchcraft is not a specifically African or Kongo phenomenon. It results from universal beliefs which, for example, were held during the Middle Ages in Europe and have even come alive again in modern times.

But magic and witchcraft can be traced further back. Old Testament teaching shows that it was present among Israel and even dominant among its neighbours.

As human manipulation of powers in independency of God, it goes as far back as the fall, when satan offered to man new power and knowledge, but in disobedience to divine command. Therefore the Bible forbids all form of occult practices and considers them as idolatry and rebellion against God.

Magic and witchcraft belong to the spiritual weapons. Satan and his angels are using in the struggle against the kingdom of God and their effects are spiritually destructive. Belief and involvement in magic and witchcraft bring people under the influence of satanic power and separate them from God, and the problems created by these occult practices are, therefore, basically of a spiritual nature.

Only the Scriptures can show the way to true deliverance from and victory over these powers of evil, which are at work, not only in Kongo society, but in the Christian church and individual lives as well.

The Biblical solution to Kongo witchcraft will now be studied.

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people.

agree that belief in it creates serious problems among the

However witchcraft may be interpreted, most seem to

of the church to deal with the problem of witchcraft.

Edjenguel insisted that it belongs to the prophetic task

pastors that witchcraft does not exist or is dying out.

pastors protested against the common assertion by other

Evangelical Church of Cameroon in 1962, where some young

Mbo" (1966), reports on a pastor's conference of the

"La Puissance de l'Evangelie face au paganisme Minieh des

Theological College at Ndoungue Cameroon, in his thesis

became visible. Rev. H. Edjenguel, Principal of the

however, the first signs of a new attitude among pastors

Leny Lagerwert remarks that during the 1960's

speak about these matters at all.

very seriously, and sometimes made it even difficult to

churches did not take their members' fear of witchcraft

It must also be acknowledged that very often the

reality in the lives of many African Christians.

more than a century, sorcery and witchcraft are still a

Although the Gospel has been preached in Africa for

Introduction

A BIBLICAL SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF WITCHCRAFT

CHAPTER IV

Since there are many aspects to witchcraft, several solutions, depending on various interpretations, have been proposed. Each has its own significance and value and is not necessarily in opposition to a Biblical solution.

Therefore, a short summary and discussion of these solutions will follow.

Various Proposed Solutions

Modern education

Many anthropologists share the common opinion, that belief in witchcraft is due to a lack of modern scientific knowledge, and that modern education will eventually destroy these traditional beliefs.

In discussing the decline of Medieval European witchcraft, Parrinder states: "But it was the enlightenment brought by modern education and a reformed religion [supposedly without belief in satan, demons and witchcraft] that finally scotched the superstition in Europe". "The forces released by the Renaissance finally undermined the belief in witchcraft".² And so it is thought that education would also scotch the same "superstition" in Africa.

For example, in summarizing Edwin W. Smith's opinion about witchcraft, McVeigh writes: "The impression he leaves is that education and science will ultimately resolve the problem for Africa as it did for the West".³

Yet, Parrinder also affirms that "education alone cannot root out such a deep-seated belief". "Religion is the only spiritual force that can give a better faith than

that of witchcraft. In the conflict of ideas, which counts so much in the modern world, a pure religion is the only alternative to a debased one".⁴

Another author, the Rev. John T. Munday, does not expect so much from religion, in spite of the fact that he worked for twenty-five years as a missionary in Northern Rhodesia. He states that the decline of Medieval European witchcraft "was caused by no great religious movement, but solely by the increase and spread of scientific knowledge". "Religion could not prevent a belief in witches", probably because it confirms the presence and activity of evil powers in the spirit world.⁵

Munday concludes:

The belief in witchcraft can be cured, it has been cured in England. Religion cannot cure it, but simple scientific knowledge of the laws of cause and effect, knowledge of the processes of nature . . . these are the one cure for the ancient world-wide false belief . . . we can, by education, kill belief in witchcraft.⁶

A more convinced believer in the power and possibilities of modern education will probably be hard to find.

In reality it seems however, that modern education and reason do not have so much power over the beliefs in witchcraft.

Parrinder affirms that, in spite of many social and educational changes in Africa, witchcraft belief and magic flourish as ever, even among educated and Christian people.⁷

Professor Mungai of Nairobi University writes in an article "Witchcraft Clings On Where Christianity Took Over":

It must be emphasized however that in times of personal crises like parliamentary elections . . . and in serious illness, there are many highly educated and highly placed members of society who are known to consult their witchcraft doctors".⁸

In 1969 a seminar on "Witchcraft and Healing" was held at the Center of African Studies at the University of Edinburgh. During this seminar Gustav Jahoda reported on research he had done among 280 final-year students at the University at Legon, Ghana. The aim of the research was to study the effect of university education in general, and of scientific training in particular, on the prevalence of supernatural beliefs, especially relating to witchcraft. His conclusion was: "It is therefore evident that even university education, as such, has little, if any, impact on beliefs; nor was there any indication of science students being more sceptical than any others".⁹

Dr. R. G. Willis, one of the participants of the seminar, confirmed during the discussion that he also had remarked that, in spite of western education, belief in witchcraft and sorcery "had certainly not decreased and had even, according to most informants, increased" and he concluded: "One wonders why . . . witchcraft and sorcery have proved to have such survival power".¹⁰

Statements that education is not the decisive solution to the problems of witchcraft are in fact abounding.

Of course, G. W Broomfield is right in saying:

Science has revealed the causes, or at any rate the immediate causes, of many physical diseases and of many other natural phenomena. . . . If, therefore, an African receives a scientific education, and believes what he is taught, he will no longer imagine that his ill-health is caused by the activities of witches or that thunderstorms are an expression of the wrath of offended spirits. Scientific education must certainly play its part, and it is a necessary part, in the removal of imaginings of this kind and of all the hatreds and fears which necessary accompany them".¹¹

But Broomfield also underlines that there is another side to the matter. He points to the danger in thinking that science covers the whole field of reality, and that scientific methods are applicable to everything. He states: "The real problem with regard to witchcraft lies outside the scope of physical science".¹² Behind witchcraft lies the African belief in a spirit world that is as real as the material world, and that the latter is influenced by the former, and this fundamental belief is shared with Christianity. Broomfield concludes: "We should hesitate to destroy the African's belief in the existence of a spirit world. We need rather to recover it ourselves".¹³

Education can have a positive value in dealing with the beliefs in witchcraft, but it is very clear that it does not have the potential to go to the root of the problem.

Modern medicine

Since belief in witchcraft is closely related to physical suffering, sickness and death, it was generally

expected that modern medicine would greatly contribute to the abolishment of witchcraft beliefs.

In Chapter III reasons have been mentioned as to why modern medicine has disappointed the expectation of the Kongo people, which caused many of them to turn back to traditional ways of dealing with the problem of human suffering.

Evaluating in a more general way the role of modern medicine in Africa, even the World Health Organization has proposed native resources and traditional medicine as a more feasible solution. Experts believe that most African nations are too poor to maintain a sufficient level of health care, since health service is related to many other sectors, like economics, finance, transportation,¹⁴ education and communication.

But there is a deeper, and more important reason why modern medicine has not been the final answer to the problems created by belief in witchcraft.

In an article "Science and Magic Collide in African Medicine", Ruby Mikulencak writes:

One of the greatest hindrances to the improvement of health and living conditions in developing African countries is the conflict between the Western scientific world view and the African's traditional world view. . . . Scientific medicine believes . . . that germs enter people and cause sickness. . . . The traditional African world view, on the other hand, emphasizes invisible powers operating in ordinary everyday living. . . .

The Western idea of becoming sick because of invisible germs does not answer the deeper question of why".¹⁵

She argues that in medical treatment the traditional African belief in spiritual forces should be

taken into account, especially since "the African's thinking on the reality of the spirit world is much closer to the biblical data than Western scientific thinking". She concludes that all too often medical practice has not met the real need of the African people, and that "it is time for medical missionaries also to consider themselves as members of the church of Jesus Christ that has been charged to heal the sick. It is time to bring God's¹⁶ intervention back into our medical work".

Under the title "African Criticism of Medical Missionary Activity", Jac Hetsen confirms that the traditional African interpretation of sickness was often replaced by a rather superficial and secularised western view. However, the struggle against sickness should have been put into the context of the struggle against alienating forces and hostile spiritual powers. He states: "There can be little doubt that the western Church has not taken sufficiently into account some of the insights in the typical African approach to sickness", and that this is one of the reasons why "the Christianity of the Mission Churches has not penetrated deep into African religiosity".¹⁷

In a paper, entitled "Medical Science and Pentecost: The Dilemma of Anglicanism in Africa", read at a meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society in Cambridge, T. O. Ranger analyzed the differences between the Western and African approaches to healing. He explained that most African societies had a cosmology of

health and disease which divided afflictions up into two categories: the diseases of God and the diseases of Man. The diseases of God were those which were regarded as natural, as tolerable, as part of God's plan. There was no special explanation necessary to account for them and they were properly treated by secular herbal remedies. The diseases of Man however were not part of the divine intention, but produced by sorcerers, witches, or by angered ancestor spirits. Paradoxically then, diseases of God were the sphere of herbal and other secular remedies, while the diseases of Man were the sphere of spiritual treatment of diseases. According to the African view, western medical treatment was appropriate to the diseases of God, as a supplement or replacement of indigenous secular medical knowledge, but it did not deal with the need for spiritual remedy for the afflictions which had a spiritual cause.

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It is interesting to note that Ranger speaks in favour of African Pentecostalism, which made a real effort to abolish the dichotomy that existed between these two kind of illnesses.

He states:

Pentecostalism did not seek to persuade people that diseases of Man had never existed or that they could be eradicated completely. What African Pentecostalism did was to make available the healing power of the Holy Spirit as a counter to all other spiritual agencies. Thus God was brought into the diseases of Man, not as willing them or as eradicating them, but as regularly combatting them through the openness of human beings to His Spirit. At the same time African Pentecostalism redefined the other category of the diseases of God where hitherto recourse had been both to traditional and Western medicine. Here, too, the Holy Spirit alone

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had power. . . . Thus the dichotomy was abolished.

He tells, for example, about the healing of Dorcas, the crippled daughter of Muredzwā, who was a rain-maker in Manicaland, the administrator of the poison-ordeal to witches. He had consulted with more than 25 witch-doctors, but all had failed to heal her.

Then came John Cheke and David Mandisodza, full of the Holy Spirit, who commanded the daughter: "Dorcas! In Jesus' Name you rise up and walk!" Dorcas sprang up and shouted: Friends, I am healed, Jesus Christ has healed me. I am no longer a cripple. Halleluya, Halleluya!" All the . . . people saw her jumping up high in rejoice [sic]. News of this healing spread everywhere".²⁰

As a conclusion to his paper, he states:

My own belief is that the Churches of the Spirit have confronted the traditional cosmology, and in the only possible effective way. It is they . . . who have been attempting to transform the dualism of the diseases of God and the diseases of Man, while Anglican missionary medicine has merely added to the technique for dealing with one part of the dichotomy.²¹

Ranger believes that not anglicanism alone, but the mission churches as a whole, have not participated significantly in this process of reformulation and transformation of the African dichotomy between the diseases of God and the diseases of Man.

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In the last part of our paper, this subject will be discussed again, more in detail.

Psychotherapy

To give an example of an African pastoral psychological approach to victims of witchcraft and sorcery, Leny Lagerwerf describes the psychotherapeutic method of Dr. Masamba ma Mpolo, actually director of the doctoral program of the Faculty of Protestant Theology in

Kinshasa. Masamba believes that in dealing with bewitched persons, social elements such as traditional beliefs, religious practices and values, and interpersonal and social structures have been neglected, which has led to a mechanical-medical professionalism that deals with things rather than with persons, seeking health and growth. The counseling of bewitched persons should be done on different levels. On the social level one deals with a maladjusted personality; on a supernatural level the inexplicable, the incomprehensible, the elusive play a role, which leads to belief in the activity of satanic power. Masamba seems to concentrate on the social therapy. Witchcraft beliefs function as a channel through which people can deal with guilt, frustration, hate and jealousy; they create social abreaactions which prevent the formation of neurosis. There is a "discharge of aggression", a "displacement of a threat from within to the outside", because it is easier to deal with external than with internal danger. The aggression also serves as an "unconscious means of assuring one's capacity for maturation". It is an "unconscious affirmation of one's worth". In using the symbolism of kindoki to present his problem, the bewitched person "expresses a positive concern to engage himself in the process of individuation. He uses kindoki as a process of identity formation, a means of affirming oneself in the context of the social system of thought and relationships." Masamba pleads for a contextual African psychotherapy, that

reckons with the African conception of the nature of the
23
problem.

At the international colloquium "Religions Africaines et Christianisme", held in Kinshasa in 1978, Masamba read a paper on "L'Impact de la religion africaine sur la psychologie et la pastorale des Eglises chrétiennes d'Afrique" (The Impact of the African Religion on the Psychology and the Pastoral Care of the Christian Churches in Africa). He underlines three important principles, characterizing the therapy by traditional healers or in prophetic churches.

(1) Identification: terminology is used which is adapted to the hypothetical world of the patient; his own diagnosis is accepted as well as the prescription of treatment. This makes the patient for the first time feel that he is really understood.

(2) Suggestion: this can be direct, through an encouraging affirmation; ritual, for example, through prophecy; symbolic, through imposition of hands, anointing with oil, or using certain objects, such as the wooden figure of a pregnant woman to a barren patient; suggestion by testimony, through the account of what God has already done for others.

(3) Confession, which is one of the most important current techniques in African communities. The patient shares, often publicly, his feelings of guilt, accompanied by an "emotional unburdening" and a sense of relief, while

the congregation responds with an attitude of
24 forgiveness.

Masamba tells about a case which illustrates some
of the principles, mentioned above.

Let us take the case of Mafwana whom I saw in 1969 in Kinshasa. This patient, married, with one child and in her late twenties, came for therapy. After she was divorced, she experienced acute anxiety neurosis. She had a repetitive dream in which her dead grandfather told her to go to the village and kill a goat for her uncles who never approved of her marriage which was not done in the traditional form. She thought that her grandfather was asking her to have a special church service for him. After a few sessions, she agreed to go to the village to do what her grandfather suggested in the dream. In the village she experienced a total catharsis and returned to Kinshasa a new person.²⁵

Probably most evangelicals find it difficult to go that far in the contextualization of biblical counseling, but Masamba writes: "We must certainly not encourage superstitious attitudes, but it is impossible to avoid a certain syncretism in actions, for only in this way can we reach men and women in their culture in order to announce the word of Christ which reaches into their inmost being".²⁶

Each Christian counselor is free to develop his own method of counseling, according to biblical principles, but I disagree with Masamba when he states categorically that a "certain syncretism in actions" is the only way to reach effectively people with the Gospel of Christ. It seems that here too much is expected from the psychological method and too little from the power of God. This danger is all too often present in the Christian churches in the West.

In his editorial "Lordship and Fullness" and quoting B. Warden, Dr. M. R. Irvin makes the following statement:

In this day we are much too hung up on the psychological approach to living the Christian life and solving its problems . . . We downplay or do not mention at all the power of the Holy Spirit as being the major factor in our transformation from defeat and despair to triumphant Christian living. Has the church . . . bought into psychology too heavy? Do our pastors have such heavy counselling loads because we have neglected to lead people into the full surrendered Spirit-filled life?²⁷

Father Hebga in his book Sorcellerie, Chimère Dangereuse . . . ? makes the following remark about the psychological approach of Masamba towards bewitched persons. Hebga recognizes that this serious approach is much better than the mockeries, humiliations and even excommunications of the early days. But at the same time he warns against the belief that theology or psychology is sufficient in the struggle against the powers of darkness. He pleads for a special ministry, a spiritual cure for bewitched persons, in which supernatural power intervenes. We have to fight the competing powers with the same weapons ("Il vaudrait mieux nous battre contre nos concurrents païens sur le même terrain à armes égales"), and he concludes that to be credible in a society where some people claim to be able to triumph over sickness and witchcraft and other evil powers, the preaching of the Gospel must be accompanied by signs and wonders as was the case with Jesus and the apostles.²⁸

Exorcism in independent churches

Under the title "Indigenous African Christian Churches: Signs of Authenticity", the theologian Kofi Appiah-Kubi states that these indigenous churches are the fastest growing body of Christian believers in Africa and he calls them a third force in African Christianity.²⁹

Kubi believes that the main factors which have led to the emergence of the independent churches are not political, social, economic or racial, but that spiritual hunger has been its main cause.³⁰ Especially, the supernatural

powers of the prophets and the healing miracles, which counteract the forces of evil, disease and witchcraft, are sought by those who are unhappy and dissatisfied with the strictly western nature of most of the mission churches.³¹

The independent churches "supply a need in the intellectualized Christianity of the missionaries".³²

Few would deny that the mission churches have failed to recognize some basic spiritual needs of the African people.

McVeigh writes:

There is a sense in which the Christian God was not really brought near to African life and thought in the first place. There has been considerable talk of His nearness . . . but at the crucial points of life, He has remained largely transcendent, for He has not been pictured as interested in man's mundane problems. . . . The consequence is a new absenteeism, which affirms God's theoretical presence while denying the practical effects of that belief.³³

He also recognizes that the independent churches were the first to integrate the Christian conception of God into African traditional life.³⁴

The question remains: Have the independent churches dealt with these problems in a satisfactorily biblical way?

This is not the place to make an extensive analysis of the African indigenous churches, and many authors have written about them.

Kofi Appiah-Kubi gives a rather positive evaluation of their beliefs and practices.

For these Indigenous African Christian churches Jesus Christ remains the supreme object of devotion. He is the Saviour, the baptizer in the Spirit, the Soon-Coming King, and the Healer. . . . The Bible is central to their religious and daily life. They have great love for reading the Bible, a love rarely found in clergy or religious people of other churches. Members are quick to state that their religious practices are truly Christian, justifying themselves by the Bible. They read the Bible eagerly, souls hungry for the word of God, devouring and savoring every word. They read the Bible so assiduously that they have been nicknamed "the people with the dirty Bible".³⁵

However, in discussing why these independent churches have attracted so many adherents, he writes: "Another important area of attraction is the importance these churches place on veneration of ancestors".³⁶ Also, that "the churches allow for full expression of emotional outburst through drumming, clapping, dancing, and spirit possession",³⁷ and that Western educated people in Ghana find it difficult to accept and respect these services, because of their superstitious tendencies.³⁸

In an article "Conflict in Mission: Historical and Separatist Churches", C G. Baeta describes how Christianity is understood by the separatist churches:

The Christianity offered by the separatist churches may be described as a power for overcoming the ills of the

secular aspect of life. Human need is conceived almost entirely in terms of these ills. While such terms as "sin", "grace", "the precious blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ", and other Christian themes are constantly spoken about, the central preoccupation is and remains how to cope effectively with the ills of worldly life. For instance, "sin" is really relevant only in so far as it is a potent cause of bodily, mental, and social disorders; the significance of "the blood of Christ" resides in the fact that, by doing away with sin, it prepares the way for, or itself directly affects, bodily health; "faith" is to entertain no inward doubt whatsoever that the particular help sought for will be received.³⁹

Beata wonders if the separatist churches really express the essence of the Christian faith, because they confuse the "beneficial by-products" with the whole of Christianity.⁴⁰

Marie-Louise Martin, the Swiss professor at the Kimbanguist Faculty of Theology at Kinshasa, also mentions some of the dangers which the independent churches present to the life of the Church:

There are unquestionably deviations in doctrine, and there are in some of them strong syncretistic tendencies; there is undoubtedly an element of anti-messianism in the fact that here and there a new messiah takes, for all practical purposes, the place of the crucified Christ. Interest is focused upon gifts, upon the restoration of life-power through healing ceremonies, and upon exorcism; the power of the Holy Spirit is often confused with vital force and ancestor-shades who possess their medium and make themselves known through dreams.⁴¹

Speaking about the Kimbanguist movement, one of the most well known independent churches in Africa, and which has many members among the Bakongo in the Lower Zaire, W. MacGaffey writes that the actual leader of the movement, Diangienda, one of the sons of Simon Kimbangu, "is guided in his decisions by Kimbangu, whom he sees in dreams and in visions".⁴² "Diangienda . . . is the prophet's

successor and, through his custody of the mausoleum, the means of access to his father's coffin".⁴³

In spite of the fact that the independent churches have indeed recognized some basic spiritual needs of the African people, which the historical churches have denied or neglected, the spiritual dangers which these independent churches create for the African Christians, must not be taken too lightly. They rather emphasize the importance of McVeigh's statement, when he writes: "For one thing, it is clear that Christianity must take more seriously than it ever has to date the challenge of healing and exorcism".⁴⁴

Witchcraft as a social function

In an effort to soften the problems in witchcraft, and to present it in a more positive way, several authors have tried to discover or underline some positive values of witchcraft in African society.

Asa Dalmalm argues that the church has seen kindoki only as an explanation and therapy for sickness and death, while she understands kindoki as a symbolic language through which the Kongo people express attitudes and experiences, related to several aspects and areas of life: social, political, economical and ethical. While certain elements of kindoki, like the accusation and liquidation of witches, are irreconcilable with the Gospel, other aspects could contribute to a better understanding of the social life of the Bakongo and a new and more African formulation of Christian truths. Instead of ignoring or

condemning witchcraft, the church should enter into dialogue with kindoki on a theological and practical level which could shed new light on subjects like dualism (God/satan), God's love and His attitude towards suffering, definition of sin, the relationship between Christians and traditional Kongo ethics, the interaction between the spiritual and material world, and on problems of poverty, unity and reconciliation. She says however, that the right method of approach has not yet been worked out.⁴⁵

Dalmalm also makes very little effort to prove that kindoki is really only "symbolic language" for the Kongo people. She seems to ignore totally the spiritual dimension of Kongo witchcraft.

Under the title "What is 'Natural' About Witchcraft and Sorcery?" Miriam Ann Adeney states that witchcraft and sorcery perform some needed functions in many societies. The threat of witchcraft, for example, can have a legal function in helping to maintain law and order among the people. The witches are then "supralegal instruments of justice". It can also act as a stimulus for economic distribution, because the person who becomes too wealthy, runs the risk of a jealous witch's attack. Thus sharing becomes a paramount virtue. Then, witchcraft and sorcery can have a positive function in the political organization, because the threat of witchcraft backs up the authority of the chief, since the common man lives in fear that the chief may bewitch him. Another positive

function of witchcraft is, that it can rupture social relations which have become too cramping. Finally, belief in witchcraft provides an outlet for anxiety, intense emotions and aggression. Because culture allows people to make accusations of witchcraft, they are able to release the hostilities which otherwise would be bottled up inside them under a surface of docility. Adeney suggests that, in order to solve the problems of witchcraft, one should first find out what its possible functions are, what kind of outlets it provides and what needs it is meeting. Then these specific needs should be met more adequately than witchcraft or sorcery can.⁴⁶

Among the Bakongo, witchcraft seems indeed to perform several social functions.

For example, the authority of family elders and village chiefs is indeed backed up by the threat of witchcraft, since they are thought to be potential witches.

But as A. F. C. Wallace writes: "To be sure, the emotional flavour of this pervasive sanction is a bitter one and it may yield a situation of superficial politeness that conceals a generalized fearfulness in human relationships".⁴⁷

There also exists among the Bakongo a fear of becoming too wealthy or too successful. But instead of acting as a stimulus for economic distribution, the fear rather functions as an obstacle to development and growth.

Belief in witchcraft also provides for the Bakongo an outlet for feelings of aggression and anxiety, as Masamba ma Mpolo has pointed out.⁴⁸ But, even apart from biblical norms, it is difficult to evaluate positively this aspect of witchcraft beliefs. One wonders how anthropologists can speak of a "harmless outlet in imagination for impulses forbidden in real life"⁴⁹ or of effective "conflict-resolving mechanisms" in society,⁵⁰ while at the same time the death of thousand and perhaps millions of often innocent, people has resulted from this belief.

Nadel argues that sometimes witchcraft beliefs and practices attack undesirable behavior, resolve conflicts and relieve tensions and anxieties, and he writes: "One might conclude that societies can do no better than foster beliefs in witchcraft".⁵¹ He adds, however:

Let me stress that I presume no such absolute utility of witchcraft beliefs . . . for if witchcraft beliefs resolve certain fears and tensions, they also produce others. . . . They are the kind of remedy which both becomes a drug and poisons the system. Or, to change the metaphor, we . . . may liken witchcraft beliefs to a safety valve: but let us be clear that the engine which needs it has been badly constructed; nor is the safety valve itself safe.⁵²

To deal with the problems of witchcraft, one should know as much as possible of the society in which witchcraft beliefs function, but the final and decisive solution cannot come from such knowledge alone.

Kindoki as a basis for African theology

In a preface to the book L'Anti-Sorcier face a la Science (The Anti-Sorcerer in the light of Science)

written by Lufuluabo Mizeka, cardinal Malula, archbishop of Kinshasa, congratulates the author for having made a significant contribution to the elaboration of an African theology. At the same time, Malula writes that Lufuluabo "nous plonge d'emblée dans le monde des forces vitales occultes: sorcellerie, divination, guérisons par magnetisme, etc." (he plunges us straightaway in the world of occult vital forces: witchcraft, divination, healing by magnetism, etc.). Malula also recognizes that, in spite of 80 years of evangelism, 80% of the population⁵³ lives in a world of interaction of occult forces.

Lufuluabo states that during the "Semaine Théologique" in Kinshasa in 1968, African theologians decided to elaborate an African theology. However, nine years later these pious desires have resulted in nothing ("ces pieux désirs en sont toujours au point mort"); the African theologians are paralyzed and in a deadlock (c'est l'impasse la plus totale!). Apart from a little brochure, indicating the conditions for the elaboration of an African theology - which belongs to the preliminary phase -, nothing has been written.

Lufuluabo believes that he understands why no progress has been made. He argues that a theology must be elaborated according to the basic world view of the people. However, the church until now has not recognized the value and reality of that world view. In spite of all the sermons and eloquence of priests and pastors, Christians continue to believe very strongly in the evil

powers of witchcraft. But it is not to the priests that the people are going for help; they turn away from the priests and seek help and protection from the witchdoctors. Lufuluabo asks if the African theologians ignore the essence of the world view of the people. They probably know that it is dominated by a search for an intense vital force, but they do not understand or realize how far this vital force can go. They totally ignore the depth of this vital force and how and where it can reach its maximum intensity. It is this ignorance which paralyzes their efforts to elaborate an African theology. At the basis of an African theology should be a profound knowledge of the occult forces. Lufuluabo rejects the objection that occultism is not a specific African phenomenon, and that Europeans have even done more scientific research on the subject. He states that occultism is only marginal in Europe and very often not even recognized as a serious reality, while African life is totally impregnated with the reality of occult forces, and that it will take centuries before the African mentality will have changed into a European mentality. He concludes that African theology will be elaborated on the level of the "force mystico-vitale", or it will not exist at all ("La théologie africaine sera élaborée au niveau de la "force mystico-vitale", ou elle n'existera pas").⁵⁴

It seems unlikely however, that Lufuluabo will find many followers among the African theologians, who

recognize the spiritual dangers of occultism, be it European or African, and one wonders how cardinal Malula could write such a positive preface to Lufuluabo's book.

More spiritual insight in these phenomena seems imperative, not only among the common people, but among the leaders of the church as well.

Conclusion

Throughout this study it has become clear that there are different aspects to the problem of witchcraft.

Various solutions have been offered, each with a certain positive value.

Modern education can abolish superstitious beliefs.

Medical treatment can help to restore the health of a bewitched patient.

Knowledge of the social context in which witchcraft functions does contribute to a better understanding of the problem.

A psychotherapeutic approach takes into account the psychological disposition of the witchcraft victim and then applies psychological principles.

Several principles are not in opposition to a biblical solution and will be mentioned again in the last part of our study.

However, since the basic problem of witchcraft is of a spiritual nature, relating to religious beliefs and faith in, and obedience to God, the final, decisive solution must be found on a spiritual level and according to the Scriptures.

Wolford concludes: "There is no other possibility for deliverance, but with God's perfect plan there is no need for another".⁵⁵

This "perfect plan", this biblical solution, will now be studied in greater detail.

A Biblical Solution

Introduction

It has been shown that there is no separation, in the Kongo world view, between the visible world of man and the invisible spirit world: a constant interaction exists between the two. Even behind natural events, the Kongo people suppose a supernatural cause. Especially, various kinds of misfortune, sickness and death, are believed to be due to the activity of angry or evil spirits.

To obtain protection against these evil powers, or to find an answer to the question why these unfortunate events happen, the people seek help in Kongo magic and witchcraft. The Bakongo believe that supernatural knowledge and power can be found there to solve their problems and to answer their needs.

The question which arises, is, "Has Christianity a message which offers knowledge and power, which are superior to what is found in kindoki?" Not just functional substitutes, or dynamic equivalences, but

something that goes far beyond anything, that Kongo magic and witchcraft are offering the people?

The answer is a resounding, Yes!

It is unfortunate that, in general, the church has ignored and even ridiculed the fear of Kongo people of satan and demons, but Christ Himself stated very clearly, that the purpose of His coming was to destroy the power of the devil and to set his captives free (Luke 11:22).

Deliverance from the power of satan and demons is not a secondary aspect or result, of the death of Christ on the cross: this is the reason Christ came (Col. 2:15, 1 John 3:8).

Christ offers help to the Kongo people, not, as is the case with Kongo magic and witchcraft, in a context of fear, jealousy and hate, but in a context of love, faith, joy and peace. Kindoki is an open enemy of the Bakongo at its worst, or a false friend at its best, but the salvation which Christ offers is pure and divine.

It is the purpose of this thesis to study what the Gospel of Jesus Christ offers as a complete and perfect solution to the problems, created by belief and involvement in Kongo witchcraft.

First, divine truths and the subject of divine power will be studied, especially as they relate to the problems of witchcraft.

On the basis of these findings, a strategy for spiritual warfare will be developed, which will permit the

Kongo Christian, not only to defend himself against the attacks of satan, but to defeat and destroy satanic and demonic strongholds in the lives of other people as well.

Divine truths

Divine sovereignty

The first truth, to be understood and believed by the Kongo Christian, who seeks deliverance from or victory over the power of satan and demons, is that God is absolutely sovereign.

Absolute monotheism. Israel, in the times of the Old Testament, was surrounded by nations and cultures, where belief in gods and demons was dominant. To protect God's people against any form of dualism or polytheism, they were constantly taught that Yahweh is God, and that there is no one else.

Moses declares, "You were shown these things so that you might know that the Lord is God; besides him there is no other" (Deut. 4:35). This truth is repeated throughout the Old Testament, again and again (for example in Deut. 4:39, 6:4, 32:39, Isa. 45:5, 18, 21, 22).

D. F. Kinlaw has been quoted as saying:

The Old Testament obviously takes seriously the doctrine of creation ex nihilo. In the beginning there was Yahweh plus nothing. The monotheism is radical. There is one ultimate cause, there is one primus and that is Yahweh. There is no world either good or evil that exists alongside Him as equal or rival. He reigns and reigns alone.⁵⁶

The existence of sin and evil leaves many unanswered questions for the Christian, as do other doctrines, yet God does not hesitate to state clearly:

See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life. I have wounded and I will heal, and no-one can deliver out of my hand (Deut. 32:39).

Isaiah transmits God's truth as follows:

I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. . . . I am the Lord, and there is no other. I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the Lord, do all these things (Isa. 45:5-7).

Expecting an affirmative answer, the prophet Amos asks, "When disaster comes to a city, has not the Lord caused it?" (Amos 3:6).

This belief in God's absolute sovereignty was not, as sometimes is suggested, due to ignorance regarding the existence or activities of satan and demons. Jesus Himself confirmed God's sovereignty, when He said: "Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows" (Luke 12:6, 7).

The Old as well as the New Testament confirm that God reigns indeed. And He reigns alone!

The pitfall of dualism. Speaking of the Kongo ontological hierarchy, Mahaniah says that Nzambi Mpungu is at the top, the Supreme Being, who created everything and who is the master of every being. He ascribes it to the influence of Christianity, that in the Kongo concept of

forces another being has found his place, called nkadi ampemba (satan). Mahaniah expresses the popular belief of the Kongo people, when he states that nkadi ampemba is "as powerful as God", and he goes on, speaking of the Supreme Beings, in plural.⁵⁷

Practically, however, it seems that satan not only gets a place beside God, but in daily life the Kongo people count more important the existence and activity of satan and demons than God, especially when unfortunate events happen.

Speaking about sickness, accidents, lightning, earthquakes, floods, drowning, and death, John S. Mbiti declares that magic and witchcraft are most often seen as the real causes, while "God is normally left out of the picture".⁵⁸ This often seems to be the case among the Kongo people, as well.

Maybe the church is indeed, as Mahaniah suggested, partly responsible for this dualistic thinking. Even Christians have not always had a clear view on the spiritual hierarchy.

L. Ravenhill states:

In the lineup of "great powers", that is, in the power list, the Church has all too readily and without Biblical support conceded second place to the devil. This should not be. Satan and "principalities and powers" are mighty. Let none underestimate them. But the truth is that next to the power of triune God comes the power of the Church (not the power of the devil and then after that the power of the Church). Next to the power of God comes the power of the Spirit-anointed Church.⁵⁹

This basic truth must be grasped by the Kongo Christian: God is absolutely sovereign. He reigns and He reigns alone. The Christian may and must see God as the only and sovereign One, who laughs at hostile powers (Ps. 2:4), and because he is on God's side, he may laugh at the enemy also. Satan and his demons are not equal in power to God. They belong, like man, animals and plants, to the created order. Divine power is so superior to satanic power, that Christ can break the strongest oppression or opposition, so to say, with one finger (Luke 11:20), or with the breath of His mouth (2 Thess. 2:8). There is no place whatsoever for dualism. Satan and his demons are not even second. Next to the sovereign God come the Spirit-anointed church and the spirit-anointed Christian.

Of this basic truth, the Kongo Christian must be deeply convinced.

Divine incarnation

One of the most unique characteristics of Christianity is its belief in the doctrine of divine incarnation.⁶⁰ Motivated by love and a desire to enter into the needs of man in order to help, to save and to deliver, the almighty, holy and eternal God became man, in Jesus Christ.

A clear understanding of what incarnation means practically is an important aspect of the Biblical solution to the problem of Kongo witchcraft.

Divine closeness. It is difficult to define the traditional belief in a Supreme Being among the Bakongo before the arrival of missionaries in the 15th century. It is commonly agreed, however, that Kongo people believed in a Supreme God, who created everything that exists. But Buana Kibongi states that Nzambi, after having created man, ". . . withdrew because of a mistake which Muntu [man] committed. Thereafter, Muntu is mercilessly subjected to evil which manifests itself, in particular, as illness and death".⁶¹ When the nganga (Kongo priest) mediates, it is never between man and God, but always between man and the spirits or agents of evil.⁶²

Mahaniah also confirms: "Like most African people, the pre-colonial Kongo came to see God as being removed from human activities after creating the world",⁶³ while Mengi states that the Bakongo believe that Nzambi is so far removed from man, that he cannot be involved in their daily needs.⁶⁴

The unique message of the Bible, however, is that God is not an "isolated God", or an "absentee God", but the God who "became flesh and dwelt 'among us' (John 1:14)".⁶⁵

When Christ was born, one of the names given to Him was: Immanuel, meaning "God with us" (Matt. 1:23).

The results of Christ's incarnation go even further than that. God is not only with us, He is even in us.

When Jesus promised the Holy Spirit, He said: "On that day you will realise that I am in my Father, and you

are in me, and I am in you" (John 14:20). This oneness between God and man was the divine purpose of Christ's incarnation.

The glorious truth, that the One who is in us is greater than the one who is in the world (1 John 4:4), guarantees the Kongo Christian that deliverance from, and victory over, the powers of evil, is indeed possible.

God is present in the Christian, not only in His almighty power, but also in His divine love.

Divine love. If traditional belief in a Supreme Being included the idea that God sees and observes everything that happens on earth, the Kongo people did not believe that this was accompanied by compassionate concern. Therefore, in times of need they would normally turn to the nganga nkisi for healing and protection. A God of love, who not only desires to help man in all his needs, but who even wants to establish a love relationship with him, was totally unknown to the Kongo people.

O. Lucas, who describes the relationship between the Yoruba people and the Supreme Being, states: "Love for the Deity certainly does not exist", and T. Adeyemo adds, that this statement applies to all African traditional religionists.⁶⁶

The communion and fellowship are not with God, but with the ancestors, because "the blessing of the ancestors provides whatever is needed by the living. All that an individual must do is to be obedient to them".⁶⁷

Makanzu writes that it astonished the Kongo people that Christianity presented a God, who is accessible to man.
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It is astonishing news indeed, that it is possible to "approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

The incarnate Christ, who is the perfect image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15, Heb. 1:3), manifested this divine compassion and desire to help, when confronted with human need and suffering. Matthew reports: "When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick" (Matt. 14:14). When two blind men begged Jesus to heal them, He had compassion on them and touched their eyes (Matt. 20:34). When a man with leprosy came to Jesus and begged Him on his knees: "If you are willing, you can make me clean", Jesus was filled with compassion, reached out His hand and healed the man (Mark 1:40-41).

The Bible presents a loving God, a compassionate Christ, a willing Saviour, who is always present. Christ is not just a 'functional substitute' or a 'dynamic equivalence' for the nganga nkisi, or for protection against kindoki. Christ is the unlimited, almighty and perfect source of divine help, filled with love and divine power. Once, the Kongo Christian has come to know Christ as such, he will not easily turn back to the traditional ways of seeking help.

Divine salvation

Incarnation is only the first step on the way of salvation, offered by God to the Kongo people.

The death of Jesus Christ on the cross is the most important act of God, through which He procures deliverance from, and victory over the powers of evil, on behalf of man.

From sin to righteousness. It is at this point that a clear understanding of the priority of human need becomes crucial. The various kinds of misfortune which can happen to the Kongo people, like poverty, accidents, sickness or death, do not form their greatest needs, however painful they may be. Their deepest misfortune is being separated from God through sin and rebellion against His holy will.

As in most African traditional religions, sin is not seen by the Bakongo as a wrong act against the Supreme Being, but against the Kongo community, including the living dead. T. Adeyemo states that sin is mostly seen as social ills, which disturb the equilibrium of society or personal relationships, while forgiveness comes down to acceptance by the community. African peoples, when breaking moral law, think in terms of shame, rather than guilt. The maintenance of harmonious relationships is the basis of all morality in African traditional religion. African religion does not terminate with heaven, but with "the maintenance of social and cosmological balance in the

here and now", a balance which is constantly threatened
 also by evil forces, like sorcery and witchcraft.⁶⁹

It is here that the Bible makes an important correction of the religious beliefs of the Kongo people. The Bible affirms that sin, resulting from man's sinful nature, concerns first of all God Himself, His holy nature and His perfect law (Ps. 51:6, Isa. 1:4, Ps. 19:7, 8). The Bible also affirms that it is in sin and rebellion against the holy will of God, that the final cause for the presence of evil in human life is found (Gen. 3:7-24, Rom. 8:19-24). The final cause for accidents, calamities, pain, sickness and death is in man's original disobedience towards God's commands. It is sin against God that destroyed the harmony in personal relationships, and the equilibrium in the cosmological balance.

The Bible also teaches that through the death of Christ harmony and equilibrium is restored, first on a personal level through the free gift of righteousness, which God offers to all who believe (Rom. 5:1, Eph. 2:13-18, 2 Cor. 5:17-19), but eventually also on a universal level, at the end of the ages (Col. 1:16-20, Eph. 1:9-10). This gift of righteousness concerns, first, man's position in relation to God, but becomes also an experiential reality through a new life in obedience to the Word of God.

Therefore, to experience peace and harmony, the greatest need of man is to enter into a right relationship with God, through repentance of sin and faith in Christ

Jesus. This is the ultimate condition for deliverance from, and victory over, the powers of evil and satanic domination.

From satan to Christ. It is tragic that sometimes the church has ridiculed the Kongo people, because of their fear of satanic and demonic power, while Christ Himself taught that man needs salvation for the very reason that he is under the power of satan.

Jesus compared the kingdom of satan with the house of a strong man. He states that the purpose of His coming was to enter into that house, to attack, overpower and bind the strong man, and to carry away his possessions (Matt. 12:26-29, Luke 11:17-22).

Christ did not hesitate to declare that the Jews belonged to the devil, because they refused to believe in Him (John 8:44).

When Paul gave his testimony before Agrippa and Festus, he stated that God had sent him to the gentiles, in order to turn them from the power of satan, to God (Acts 26:18). The core of conversion is that man turns away from satan, and surrenders to Jesus Christ. As such, conversion must be an experience of power encounter. A clean-cut choice must be made between the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light, between sin and righteousness, between satan and Christ. An example of such a power encounter at the moment of conversion is found in Acts 19. The gentiles in Ephesus, who

surrendered to Christ, confessed openly their sins, and those who had practised sorcery gathered their books of magic and burned them publicly (Acts 19:18-19).

It seems that in the early church, conversion to Christ remained a spiritual power encounter and it is worthwhile to study its baptismal liturgy. It becomes clear that Christian initiation and the preparation for baptism was not taken lightly.

According to the Apostolic Tradition of St. Hippolytus, the catechumens were to spend at least three⁷⁰ years as "hearers of the word", but sometimes baptism was even put off much longer. E. Yarnold remarks that "baptism involved such a radical change in life that one⁷¹ would not receive it, until one felt completely ready".

Before someone was accepted as a candidate for baptism, his life was seriously examined. It was also the view of the church that all those "in whom the Holy Spirit had not made a dwelling must necessarily be possessed by⁷² the devil".

St. Hippolytus wrote:

Then from the time that they are separated from the other catechumens, hands shall be laid upon them daily in exorcism and, as the day of their baptism draws near, the bishop himself shall exorcise each one of them that he may be personally assured of their purity. . . . They who are to be baptised shall fast on Friday, and on Saturday the bishop shall assemble them and command them to kneel in prayer. And, laying his hands upon them, he shall exorcise all evil spirits to flee away and never to return; when he has done this he shall breathe in their faces, seal their foreheads, ears, and noses, and then raise them up. They shall spend all night in vigil, listening to reading and instruction.⁷³

The exact details and moments of the various parts of the liturgy could vary according to time and places, while the act of exorcism could take place several times.

Often, on the day of baptism itself, the candidates made an act of renunciation of the devil and of adherence to Christ. After the opening ceremony, the candidates entered the baptistery, kneeled down in humble acknowledgement of their slavery to sin and satan, their faces turned to the West, the region of the sun's⁷⁴ departure, darkness and demons. Then the candidates would make the bold declaration to the devil, as if he were present himself: "I renounce thee Satan, and all thy service and all thy works", or : "I renounce Satan, and all his works and all his angels and all his pomp."⁷⁵ Then the candidate was required to blow upon the devil, thus driving him away as in an act of exorcism. Some liturgies mention that St. Ambrose required the candidate to spit in the devil's face, as a clear act of⁷⁶ renunciation.

Then the candidate would turn to the East, the region of the rising light, the symbol of the resurrected⁷⁷ and victorious Christ, and make a new contract, now with Christ his Saviour, and declare: "I enter into Your service, o Christ". After this act of renunciation and adherence, the candidates would be anointed with oil. St. Ambrose gave a symbolic interpretation to this anointing: he compared it to the preparation made by an athlete before going to wrestle; in the same way the Christian

athlete is anointed before he wrestles with the devil. In the Apostolic Tradition the anointing is clearly an exorcism. St. Hippolytus writes: "And when he has renounced all these things, the presbyter shall anoint him with the oil of exorcism, saying: 'Let all spirits depart from thee'"⁷⁹

It is unfortunate that Christian initiation and the preparation for baptism in the C. E. A. Z. is often not much more than teaching and memorizing of Bible verses, the Apostolic Creed and the particular rules of this denomination. It is during this period that the pastor should teach about the spiritual dangers of involvement in Kongo magic and witchcraft, and examine how far each of the candidates for baptism was personally involved in such activities. He then must decide about the proper spiritual counseling. More about this will be said under "Spiritual warfare".

It seems that the ceremonies of baptism in the early church could be very useful, perhaps after some modification, for the Kongo church. Especially in Africa, where people are very sensitive to dramatic expression of important truths, a renewal of Christian initiation and the ceremony of baptism could have an important impact on the spiritual life of the Kongo Christian. Moreover, Christian initiation seems to be the natural moment for this spiritual experience of power encounter. Of course, it does not have to be restricted to Christian initiation, but it would contribute much to the laying of a sound,

biblical foundation for a victorious spiritual life and warfare. In any case, it must be clear for the new Christian, that he has been rescued from the dominion of darkness, and brought into the Kingdom of God's Son, (Col. 1:13) where he himself can live in fellowship with God, who has become to him, through faith in Christ Jesus, like a loving Father. The Aramaic word Abba, used in Rom. 8:15 and Gal. 4:6, emphasizes the intimate relationship, which exists between father and child, like the word 'daddy'. About this fundamental truth, there should not remain the slightest doubt.

Divine community

The newly converted Christian has not only been delivered from the power of satan and entered into a loving relationship with the heavenly Father, he also has become a member of a divine community: the church of Jesus Christ.

The church. Being part of a community is very important in the traditional lives of the Kongo people. John S. Mbiti, although writing in general, describes perfectly the place of the individual in the Kongo community.

Only in terms of other people does the individual become conscious of his own being, his own duties, his privileges and responsibilities towards himself and towards other people. When he suffers, he does not suffer alone but with the corporate group; when he rejoices, he rejoices not alone but with his kinsmen, his neighbours and his relatives . . . Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say: "I am, because we are: and since we are, therefore I am."80

The idea of vital force, which is the supreme value for the Bakongo, and vital union are closely linked.

Vital union is the relationship between all members of the same family and clan. They all draw from a common source, the life of the forefathers, in which all members participate, and which is like a vital circuit that can increase and decrease.⁸¹

It is interesting to note that Balandier, examining the causes of suicide among the Bakongo, observed that most cases were associated with witchcraft. He states:

Whether the suicide was accused of practising sorcery or was himself the victim of sorcery, the individual concerned was no longer fully integrated with society nor subject to the laws affecting the relations between people and ensuring their protection. The effects of being accused of sorcery or subjected to the nefarious influences of the ndoki were much the same.⁸²

He added that, since the individual no longer belongs to the community, he loses his sense of security and does not know where to turn.⁸³

It is here that the church becomes an important part of the solution to the problem of Kongo witchcraft. As a member of the church, which is the body of Jesus Christ, the Kongo Christian participates in a new vital force, and he can draw from a new common source: the divine life of the Head of the church. He not only finds, in the church, security and spiritual protection infinitely superior to what his traditional community could offer, but, as a member of the body of Christ, he has been put into a position of power and authority superior to that of satan and demons (Eph. 1:18-23, 2:4-

7). The practical significance of this truth will be studied more in detail under "Spiritual warfare."

Although the believer remains a member of the Kongo community, his relationship with the church will become more and more important. Here he finds spiritual nurture, material help, love, encouragement, counseling, and a kind of fellowship, which no human community can offer to him. It is in the presence of the Christian community where, at the moment of baptism, the new believer can publicly renounce satan and declare his adherence to Jesus Christ. Here can take place the spiritual power encounter: the burning or destroying of charms and other objects, associated with magic and witchcraft.

The testimony of Symons Onyango shows how the church can function as a healing community. One night he suddenly woke up, because his room was filled with strange voices, talking to him in piercing tones, and threatening to kill him. Other times ugly-looking beings, about two feet high, became visible, attacking, burning and torturing his body with sharp and hot objects. Sometimes demons entered his body and conversed with those remaining outside. On certain days, his whole body would be swollen and burning with pain. On other occasions the demons would send hundreds of flies, which would feast on his body, as if it were decaying. One of the many witchdoctors, whom he consulted, told him that the demons were sent by angry relatives, who were bewitched and had died prematurely. The witchdoctors would cut several

parts of his body with a razor blade and rub hot ashes into the bleeding cuts. Another made him sit on a ram while it was strangled to death. The skin of the dead animal was then removed, and pieces of it were tied to his body. His bed was filled with magical charms. Nothing, however, kept the demons away; the treatment of the witchdoctors seemed to turn them even more aggressive.

One day, in total desperation and close to death, he took a Bible and started to pray. He poured out his heart to God, weeping and confessing his sins. Suddenly he heard another voice, telling him to go to church on Sunday, to repeat the same confession in front of the whole congregation, and ask them to pray for his deliverance. He tells in his own words what happened on that Sunday morning:

I stood on the platform and tearfully greeted the congregation . . . I confessed all of my sins: drunkenness, immorality, pride, greed and selfishness: I was a sinner overall. I related how I had been tortured mercilessly by the demons and how the family spent much money for treatment from witchdoctors who completely failed to help me. I told them how I had prayed and how God had directed me to them. As I stood there, the whole congregation prayed earnestly. As I wept, asking the Lord to deliver me from the demons, I could hear many of the other church members, weeping and praying with me. The church was set on fire from heaven, as they prayed for my deliverance. The demons which had come with me into the church were rebuked and commanded to leave me in the name of Jesus.⁸⁴

After the church service, some members of the congregation went with him to his home, where all the paraphernalia of the witchdoctors were put together in a heap and burned, while they prayed: "In the name of Jesus, we are burning these drugs because we believe and trust in

the precious blood of Jesus for complete deliverance from demons!" This experience of public confession and power encounter, changed his life totally. His health was completely restored, his home-life became happy, and, at the moment of his testimony, he was working as editor-translator for a religious newspaper.

God has indeed destined the church to be a healing community, where confession of sins, physical healing, and deliverance from satanic power can occur in an atmosphere of love, faith, and understanding.

The kingdom of God. The believer not only becomes a member of a loving community, he also obtains a place in the kingdom of God. This truth emphasizes the fact, that every Christian is involved in spiritual warfare.

Although the church and the kingdom can not be separated, neither can they be identified. The kingdom is a broader and more comprehensive concept,⁸⁸ while the church can be described as its "servant," or "instrument."⁸⁷ George Ladd states that the kingdom is the rule of God, while the church is a society of men.⁸⁸

In the New Testament the word kingdom signifies especially 'royal power', 'dominion'. It was the central message of Jesus Christ and a prominent theme of the apostles.⁸⁹ Jesus stated that the Gospel of the kingdom must be preached in the whole world until the end (Matt. 24:14).

One of Jesus' key statements about the kingdom is found in Matt. 12:28. His coming into this world meant that Christ had invaded the kingdom of satan, and the casting out of demons is a visible sign of His victory.

Arthur Glasser states:

The more Jesus proclaimed the coming of the Kingdom -- by deeds as well as by words -- the more apparent it became that the dominion of darkness was being penetrated, the strong man was being bound, and his prisoners released.⁹⁰

It is the view of many evangelical theologians today, that signs and wonders, healing and deliverance, manifest the present aspect of the kingdom of God.⁹¹ This double aspect of the kingdom -- present and future -- must be recognized. The full realization and manifestation of Christ's victory over satan and demonic powers belongs to the future; there is a divine "not yet" (Heb. 2:8). But Christ has commanded His church to proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom of God (Matt. 24:14), and this should be done not in words only, but also in power (Mark 16:15-20, 1 Cor. 4:20), Rom. 15:18, 19).

The Willowbank Report declares:

We think it vital in evangelism in all cultures to teach the reality and hostility of demonic powers, and to proclaim that God has exalted Christ as Lord of all . . . We wish to emphasize that the power belongs to Christ.⁹²

It is the task of every Christian to evangelize and to proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom. Therefore, every Christian is involved in spiritual warfare and conflict with satanic powers.

It is unfortunate that the universal priesthood of each believer has never really been explained to the Kongo Christian. It seems sometimes, that the Catholic separation between clergy and laity has penetrated also into the evangelical churches in the Lower Zaire.

However, every Kongo Christian, however unlearned he may be according to worldly standards, is in Christ Jesus a divinely anointed priest, to intercede in spiritual warfare together with, and on behalf of, his fellow Christians. He also has a prophetic task to announce the wonderful works of salvation and deliverance through the blood of Christ, to the Kongo people around him. And, as a spiritual king, every Kongo Christian has, through his position in Jesus Christ, absolute and unquestionable divine authority over all the hostile powers of satan and his demons.⁹³ This will be elaborated under "Spiritual warfare."

The Bible makes it clear, that every Christian has been endowed with divine power and authority, enabling him to participate victoriously in this conflict and warfare with satanic powers.

Divine power

It is fundamental for the Kongo Christian to have a clear understanding of the truths, discussed above. He must be convinced, that he has been delivered from the dominating powers of sin and satan, has entered into a loving relationship with a heavenly Father, and into a

loving community which is the body of Christ, and has joined a spiritual army, engaged in a battle with the powers of darkness.

Yet, knowing these truths is not sufficient, and human power will not enable him, to live up to the new positions, in which he has been placed. But God has made provision for this need also.

The Holy Spirit in Christian initiation

Whatever our position may be regarding the baptism with the Holy Spirit, the book of Acts makes it clear, that receiving the Holy Spirit was an important element of Christian initiation in the early church.

John the Baptist presented Jesus to the Jews as the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, but also as the One who baptises with the Holy Spirit (John 1:29,33).

Just before His ascension, Jesus confirmed this with the promise: "You will be baptised with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5). This promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came down on the believers, gathered at Jerusalem. However, the Holy Spirit was not for them alone. Peter declared: "This promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, for all whom the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:39). The Samaritans received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17), Paul had this same experience (Acts 9:17), while Peter declared that Cornelius and his house received the

Holy Spirit in the same way, as the believers in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 11:15). It was at least twenty-five years after the first Pentecost in Acts 2, that Paul still asked the question to the Ephesians: "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" (Acts 19:2). This question, and many other Bible references (Acts 2:38-39, 1 Cor. 12:13, Rom. 8:9) suggest very strongly, that receiving the Holy Spirit is a part of Christian initiation. Conversion, baptism in water and the receiving of the Holy Spirit are closely linked to each other, and can easily be detected in the various cases in Acts, mentioned above.

It is worth while to have a look again at the ceremonies of Christian initiation in the early church. The Apostolic Tradition of St. Hippolytus represents particularly the practice in Rome in the later second century, but the rites of initiation in other churches do not seem to have been very different.⁹⁴

After the candidates for baptism had performed the act of renunciation of satan and adherence to Christ, another important act would take place. Dom Gregory Dix describes it as follows:

After this the Candidates dress and present themselves to the Bishop. And the Bishop shall lay his hands upon them invoking and saying: "O Lord God who has counted these thy servants worthy of deserving the forgiveness of sins and the laver of regeneration, make them worthy to be filled with the Holy Spirit and send upon them thy grace that they may serve thee according to thy holy will: for thine be the glory . . ." and a doxology. After this, pouring the consecrated oil (chrism) and laying his hand on (the Candidate's) head (the Bishop) shall say: "I anoint thee with holy oil in God the Father Almighty and in Christ Jesus and in the Holy

Ghost." And sealing him on the forehead, he shall give him the kiss of peace and say: "The Lord be with you."⁹⁵

The exact meaning of this act has led to much controversy, but it is generally believed that it underlined the receiving of the Holy Spirit. So, it seems that three important truths were underlined in baptism: the candidate was delivered from satanic and demonic power, washed and cleansed from sin by the blood of Christ, and filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. About these fundamental truths, there needed not be any doubt. The meaning of all that happened during the baptismal service, had clearly been explained during the many months, preceding this ceremony.

The presbyter and the deacons could have a part in the baptismal rites, but it was believed, according to Acts 8, that the imposition of hands and the last anointing for the infilling of the Holy Spirit could only be done by the bishop himself.

When, for historical reasons, the number of baptisms increased greatly during the fourth and fifth century, the presence of a bishop at each baptismal service was not longer possible. Consequently, a separation was made between the act of conversion and baptism on the one hand, and the imposition of hands for receiving the Holy Spirit on the other. This occurred only when the bishop himself happened to pass through the region.

As is well known, this act later became the sacrament of Confirmation.

At the same time, child baptism had replaced the baptism of believers, and so, the three fundamental and biblical elements of Christian initiation: conversion, water baptism and the receiving of the Holy Spirit, were separated altogether.

The controversies about water and Spirit baptism continue to this day.

In the C.E.A.Z. church, in the Lower Zaire, baptism upon conversion is practised. However, little or no attention is given to the receiving of the Holy Spirit in Christian initiation.

As a result, much doubt exists among many Kongo Christians about this biblical experience of the receiving of the Holy Spirit. While the presence and activity of evil spirits is very real to them, the presence and power of the Holy Spirit are, at best, vague.

It is very common for those who lead others to Christ to tell them to ask Jesus to come into their hearts. After having prayed, the question is asked: "Where is Jesus now?" expecting the answer that Christ is now in their heart. Often Rev. 3:20 is used as a Bible reference for this method.

There is no biblical objection to this.

Paul prayed for the Ephesians, that Christ would dwell in their heart through faith (Eph. 3:17), and he

encouraged the Colossians with the words: "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).

Yet, it should not be forgotten, that it is through the Holy Spirit that Christ is present in this special way (John 16:7). It is the Holy Spirit who makes the presence of the Father and the Son a reality in our lives (John 14:23).

More emphasis should be put on the fact, that Christ is seated in heaven, in glory and power, at the right hand of God where he rules and reigns over all principalities and powers. The Kongo Christian needs such a vision of Christ.

Nzita Kiaku gave the following testimony:

I accepted Christ as my Saviour when I was seven years old. But I had a wrong image of Jesus. Because my parents had always asked me to "open the door of my heart to Jesus who was knocking at my door," I pictured Him as one of those people who used to knock on the door of our house and beg for money. I thought of Jesus as a beggar for whom I would be doing a favour by accepting Him.⁹⁷

This is certainly not the biblical picture of Jesus.

Christ Himself, just before His death, declared: "From now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God" (Luke 22:69).

It was thus that Peter presented Jesus to the Jews, on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:33, 34), and when he wrote his first letter, he still saw Jesus as the One who had gone into heaven, seated at God's right hand, while angels, authorities and powers submitted to Him (1 Pet. 3:22).

This was also Paul's view of Jesus, seated at God's right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule authority, power and dominion (Eph. 1:20-21). He encouraged the believers in Colossus to set their hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God (Col. 3:1).

The author to the Hebrews also encouraged the Christians to fix their eyes on Jesus, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb. 12:2); at the same time he presents Christ as our high priest, seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, interceding for us (Heb. 8:1, cf. Rom. 8:34).

Again, there is no biblical objection against picturing Christ as living in our hearts.

Yet, the more general presentation in the Bible -- as the Apostolic creed confirms -- is, that Christ died and rose again, went to heaven and is now seated at the right hand of God, where all power in heaven and on earth has been given to Him, where He reigns and rules, far above all principalities and powers, and from where He will come back to earth in power and glory. In the meantime, the Holy Spirit represents God the Father and God the Son in our lives.

Such a powerful vision of Christ will certainly encourage the Kongo Christian in his spiritual warfare.

It seems imperative that the whole process of Christian initiation be restudied by church leaders, in

the light of biblical teaching, historical information, and in the present context of the Kongo culture.

During the periods of instruction preceding baptism, much attention must be given to the biblical teaching on magic and witchcraft, while involvement in occult practices should be examined and dealt with properly. More on this will be said under "Spiritual warfare."

Not only must there be biblical understanding and conviction regarding deliverance from and victory over sin and Satan through faith in Christ Jesus, but also about the anointing with the Holy Spirit which alone will enable the believer to do God's will, to live for God's glory, and to participate victoriously in spiritual warfare, for the expansion of the kingdom of God.

A renewal of the rites of baptism could contribute to a more visible expression of these various truths.

The Holy Spirit in Christian life

Speaking of basic African values, T. Adeyemo states: "Man's religious pre-occupation is life-affirmation: good life, full life, fulfilled life."⁹⁸ It is the main concern of the Bakongo to accumulate this⁹⁹ makindangolo, this vital force, which produces, strengthens and preserves such a fulfilled life.

The Holy Spirit is God's 'vital force', through which He offers to man not only a fulfilled life here on earth, but an abundant life that continues, even in eternity (John 4:14, 10:10).

At the same time, God gives this force to man to enable him to do His will and to conquer sin. And here is another aspect of the biblical solution to the problem of Kongo witchcraft.

It is generally agreed, that sin is at the roots or basis of witchcraft. Greed, jealousy, resentment, and hatred are the sins which fuel the fire of witchcraft.¹⁰⁰ Jealousy is often considered as the main motivation behind witchcraft accusations. J. van Wing quotes the Bakongo as saying: Beto Bakongo kimpala kieto kiele kingi,¹⁰¹ "Among us, Kongo people, there is much jealousy." And they recognize this as the main reason for kindoki.¹⁰²

Broken human relationships are often the starting point for witchcraft activities. Feelings of guilt, fear, anxiety, and suspicion create a fertile soil for accusation of others.¹⁰³

The Bible defines such attitudes as manifestations of sinful human nature (Gal. 5:13-21). Paul warns very strongly against strife, anger, jealousy, envy and hatred, and he says: "If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other" (Gal. 5:15).

But the Bible not only condemns such attitudes, but also offers the possibility for change, in individual lives as well as in human society, if man surrenders himself to Christ and to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Paul exhorts the Galatians to live, or to be

led, by the Holy Spirit, who wants to produce in the lives of the believer the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal. 5:22,23), and he adds: "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires" (Gal. 5:24). This is the only solution to the problems of sinful human nature, but it is a perfect solution. And there, where the fruit of the Holy Spirit creates an atmosphere of love, joy and peace, the powers of kindoki cannot function.

While the power of the Holy Spirit enables the Christian to conquer sin, and the fruit of the Holy Spirit manifests the new and divine nature or character of the believer, the gifts of the Spirit permit the Christian to exercise an effective ministry, as a member of the body of Christ. Again it is unfortunate, that biblical teaching about spiritual gifts is almost non-existent among the Kongo Christians, and very few of them are aware of the fact, that every Christian has a task to fulfill in the body of Christ.

The great majority of the gifts are mentioned in Rom. 12:4-8, 1 Cor. 12:7-11, Eph. 4:11-12, but there is no common agreement on the exact number. C. Peter Wagner mentions 27 spiritual gifts, and he suggests that there may be even more.¹⁰⁴ He believes that discernment - exorcism, gifts important for this study, belong to the hyphenated gifts such as pastor-teacher. He defines the gift of discernment as "the special ability God gives to

some members of the Body of Christ which enables them to know with assurance whether certain behaviour purported to be of God is in reality divine, human or satanic," while he defines exorcism as "the special ability that God has given to certain members of the Body of Christ to cast out demons and evil spirits."¹⁰⁵ He does not deny that, according to Mrk. 16:17,18, every Christian has the authority to cast out demons, but underlines only that certain persons have a special ministry in this area.

These and other spiritual gifts are essential for the spiritual warfare and will be discussed again under that heading.

The authority of the Christian

Traditional Kongo society is characterized by a hierarchical organization, in which power and authority are well defined.

The leader of the Kongo kingdom was regarded with religious awe, and was sometimes called Nzambi Mpungu, the name which is also used for the Supreme Being.¹⁰⁶ When the kingdom broke down, the hierarchy in Kongo society did not disappear. Although the Bakongo are matrilineal, the father is the authority of the family (nzo), the ngudi ankazi (maternal uncle) is the head of a lineage segment (yumu), the mfumu dikanda is head of the clan, formed by several lineages, while the mfumu bwala directs the Kongo village.¹⁰⁷

The powers and authority among religious leaders of the Bakongo are also well established.

To disrespect or to challenge established authority, or to try to usurp power is considered by the Kongo people as one of the most serious crimes.

This deep respect for authority has probably contributed to the apparent separation in the Kongo church between 'clergy' and 'laity', which, in turn, has prevented a biblical understanding of the meaning and practical significance of the universal priesthood of the believer. The pastors have not made many efforts either to teach this important doctrine to the Kongo Christians.

Yet, the Bible teaches that every Christian not only possesses spiritual power, as was shown above, but also is invested with divine authority in regard to hostile spiritual powers, with whom he is engaged in battle.

It was God's intention from the beginning to endow man with power and authority. It is not a mere coincidence, that the words, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness," are immediately followed by "Let them rule . . . over all the earth, and over all the creatures" (Gen. 1:26). Various opinions exist about the exact meaning of man, being created in God's image, but that God mentions power and authority as one of man's first characteristics, is not without significance. Some suggest that satan's fall may have come after the creation of man, and that his jealousy of man, created in God's

image, and crowned with glory and honour (Ps. 8:5), may have contributed to satan's fall.¹⁰⁸

The fall destroyed much of man's glory and authority, but something of God's image in man has remained (Gen. 9:6, 1 Cor. 11:7, Jas. 3:9), and God never abandoned His plan to give to man power and authority to rule. Also, this divine image is restored in the lives of those who have surrendered to Christ and become, once again, His people (Rom. 8:29, 2 Cor. 3:18).

God's people in the Old Testament were destined to rule over the surrounding, pagan nations (Deut. 28:7, 10,13), but this was also symbolic of the spiritual authority, which God's people were going to have later. Ps. 91:13 states: "You will tread upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent." This promise has a spiritual dimension, as is shown clearly by the words of Jesus. When the seventy-two returned to Christ and told Him how even the demons submitted to them, Jesus said, "I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you" (Luke 10:19). Jesus confirmed that the seventy-two disciples had indeed authority over demonic powers. Earlier, He had already invested the twelve with the same authority. "When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and He sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick" (Luke 9:1-1).

Commenting on this passage, John Wimber states, "Power is the ability, the strength, the might to complete a given task. Authority is the right to use the power of God."¹⁰⁹

This power and authority was not a unique privilege, reserved for the twelve or the seventy-two. Jesus, before returning to heaven, announced that this is a privilege or right for all those who believe in Jesus Christ, and in the power of His name (Mark 16:17-18). For example, Philip, who did not belong to the inner circle of the apostles, had the power and authority to cast out evil spirits (Acts 8:7).

Paul's teaching on the church, and on the position of the believer in the body of Christ, explains, why every Christian has such authority. Christ, through His death and resurrection, defeated satan and his demons, and, as a result, God placed all His enemies under His feet (Eph. 1:19-22). Therefore, since the Christian is a member of the body of Christ, he is in a position, superior to that of satan and demons.

The Bible also affirms that God, after Christ's resurrection, "seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age, but also in the one to come" (Eph. 1:20-21). At the same time the Scriptures teach that "God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6).

Also, Jesus gave the believer the legal right to use His name in spiritual warfare against the powers of evil (Mark 16:17, Acts 3:6, 16:18). It is only in the name of Christ that the power and authority reside, but the Christian -- who bears this name -- may share His power and authority also.

In the coming age the Christians will judge angels (1 Cor. 6:3), and reign with Christ in the kingdom of God (2 Tim. 2:12).

Traditionally, the Kongo people easily see themselves as victims of the powers and forces surrounding them. This "victim-sentiment"¹¹⁰ must be broken, and be replaced by a biblical sense of responsibility, and a deep awareness of spiritual authority. This, perhaps, cannot be emphasized too often. As T. Warner remarks: "Belief in our authority in Christ is fundamental. A biblical concept of this authority will make all the difference."¹¹¹ Such a concept and belief will only come through biblical teaching (Rom. 10:17). This must be a part of the preparation for baptism, and then continue through the whole of Christian life.

The practical exercise of this authority will be studied under "Spiritual warfare."

The authority of the Word

The believer has not only been invested with the power of the Holy Spirit and the authority of Christ, God has also given to him His written Word. God's power and

authority may never be exercised arbitrarily, but only according to biblical truths.

The importance of Scripture in the battle against satan is most clearly seen in the temptation of Jesus. Although Christ had been filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:1) and possessed divine authority, yet He made use of the written Word to defeat satan (Luke 4:1-13).

The dimension of truth over against satan's deceitful suggestions come to the foreground in Christ's use of the Scripture, but authority and power become plainly visible after the third temptation, when Jesus commands the devil, "Away from me, Satan! . . . Then the devil left him" (Matt. 4:10-11). Matthew reports that Jesus "drove out the spirits with a word" (Matt. 8:16). It was this aspect of authority that struck the Jews, when Christ drove out the evil spirits (Mark 1:21-28, Luke 4:36). The centurion, who came to Jesus for the healing of his servant, asked for "the word" only, because he believed in the authority behind it (Matt. 8:8).

However, the Bible as source of truth is equally important in the battle against satan. Speaking about his characteristics, Jesus said: "There is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44). In spiritual warfare it is fundamental to know truth, and the Bible is the believer's only source of truth, divine truth. It is the only basis for faith and assurance. Practically, the most important question for the Kongo Christian is: Will

God's Word be the final authority and the last word or will traditional thought patterns, inspired by satanic deception, prevail? This is the crucial issue, as the following illustration will show.

Jonathan, a 14 year old boy, was raised in a nominal Christian family. His parents had a profitable business, while their model son was the envy of the village. This aroused the jealousy of a relative, who threatened the family with disaster. Help from the medicine man could not prevent misfortune. The business had to be closed down, the father began drinking, while Jonathan became sick, and failed at school. They all were convinced, that they had been bewitched by their relative. During a Sunday School seminar, Jonathan was led to a personal faith in Christ. Hearing about the problems in his family, the pastor told the boy, that he had nothing to fear and explained 1 John 4:4 to him: "The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world". Coming home, Jonathan told his parents that they should remove all the fetishes and put their trust in Christ. They agreed, but wanted a medicine man to remove the charms. The boy, who clung to the promise the pastor had given to him, said that this was not necessary. With his own hands he removed all the charms from the house, and then led the whole family to faith in Christ. Immediately, God began to bless the boy's trust in His Word. Jonathan's health was restored, his marks in school

shot up, and prosperity came back to the family, when the father started again his former business.

The choice which man had to make before the fall, must still be made today: Will adherence be given to the Word of God, or to the deceitful suggestions of satan?

This decision is fundamental, as the study of "Spiritual warfare" will show.

Spiritual warfare

As was shown in this study, the idea of spiritual warfare is not at all uncommon to the Kongo people. A comparison between the Kongo and the biblical concept of such a warfare shows similarities as well as differences.

Kongo concept of spiritual warfare

In the Kongo world view, the daily affairs of man are mainly determined by the world of spiritual beings, good as well as evil. Generally, the bakulu, the spirits of the ancestors, provide man with the good things of life, good health, successful marriages, many children, bountiful harvests and prosperity in business. Therefore, the Bakongo will make every effort to obtain their approval and blessings.

At the same time, there are many evil spiritual beings who are hostile to man, and who try everything to make human life miserable. They are the minkuyu who, often in collaboration with their human allies, the bandoki or Kongo witches, cause barrenness, accidents, sickness, death, and various other kinds of misfortune.

Although the Bakongo see themselves as very vulnerable, and often as helpless victims in regard to these evil forces, they will seek help and protection in this spiritual warfare with the nganga ngombo (diviner), or the nganga nkisi (magician). The diviner can discover the cause of the misfortune, and what can be done about it, while the nganga nkisi can procure charms (minkisi) and thwart off the attacks of the spirits and bandoki, if he has at his disposal a spiritual power, superior to that of the enemies.

In general, the Bakongo see themselves constantly exposed to danger and live in daily fear of attacks from the spirit world, especially since so very often the evil forces seem to have the greatest power.

A biblical concept of spiritual warfare

The real spiritual warfare started in heaven, when satan and his angels rebelled against God.¹¹³ Satan wanted to rob God of His glory, and exalt himself above His authority. From that moment on satan has been God's archenemy, and he is still motivated by the same desire and purpose (2 Thess. 2:3, 4). Knowing however, that he cannot succeed in defeating God, his purpose is now to destroy man's relationship with God, so that man will not bring glory to God either.

The first rupture in relationship between man and God occurred at the fall (Gen. 3), when man willingly disobeyed God and gave allegiance to satan. This is the

basic cause for today's evil. Through man's sin and disobedience to the God of heaven, suffering entered into the world. Disobedience to God resulted in separation from Him and in God's curse over the entire creation.

Moreover, satan obtained legal right over the earth and the whole world came under his dominion. The Bible recognizes his power and authority (Matt. 4:8, 9; John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11). Since he established his kingdom (Luke 11:18), satan and his demons cause natural calamities, poverty, broken relationships, physical and mental suffering, and above all spiritual alienation, suffering and death. Man is indeed living in a world, invaded by evil spirits, who have tremendous power over human life. A. R. Tippett remarks: "Man is caught up in a power encounter bigger than himself. . . . Man is the victim. He is bound. He is under an enslaving authority, trapped and imprisoned. The situation is such that it is quite beyond human power for man to save himself or escape".¹¹⁴

Therefore, the Kong people mistakenly seek help from other human beings to obtain protection in this spiritual warfare. The Bible shows, however, that Jesus invaded the kingdom of satan, and introduced another kingdom, the kingdom of heaven (Luke 11:14-22). Jesus' ministry before His death showed that He had supreme authority over all powers of evil (Mark 1:27, 3:14, 15; Luke 10:17-19), and when He had conquered satan and his demons on the cross (Col. 2:15) and was raised from the

dead, His victory could be proclaimed and experienced by all those who believed in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior (Col. 1:12, 13). No human works or efforts are needed any more; no sacrifices have to be made. Deliverance and victory are offered freely to every man who puts his faith in Christ.

God's purpose however, is not only to offer freedom to man; God wants to recruit every believer in His spiritual warfare against the demonic forces. When God seated Christ in the heavenlies, far above all principalities and powers (Eph. 1:20-21), He made the believer share in this position of spiritual authority (Eph. 2:6). The believer has therefore in Jesus Christ the legal right to bind and cast out the powers of satan,¹¹⁵ and through the Holy Spirit he has the power to do so (Matt. 12:28, Mark 16:15-18, Rom. 15:18, 19).

It is in this way that the present aspect of God's kingdom, and Christ's victory over the hostile powers, become visible (Matt. 12:28, Luke 11:20).

This spiritual warfare will continue until the second coming of Christ, and will even intensify when His return approaches (Rev. 12:12, 2 Thess. 2:3, 1 John 2:18).

C. Peter Wagner writes, "The Kingdom of Satan has been definitely invaded by the Kingdom of God. Jesus defeated the enemy on the cross, but we now live in an age of spiritual warfare until Jesus comes again and Satan's defeat is total".¹¹⁶

It is in this wider context, that the part of the Kongo people in this spiritual warfare, must be seen. The ultimate goal of this warfare is not to solve the problem of Kongo witchcraft, or other problems of human suffering, but it is the glory of God. T. Warner states that this is the "key issue" in the conflict between God and satan.

The issue is the glory of God. Satan is gripped with envy desiring to have the glory which God has. He realizes that he will never have it; so he is now out to gain all the satisfaction he can, by depriving God of all the glory he can. From an eternal perspective that is impossible, but in the present order of things, he can achieve his objective partially and gain some satisfaction by causing man to live at a level below their privileges as God's children.¹¹⁷

Every Kongo Christian is engaged in this warfare, if he wants it or not. To participate victoriously, however, he must rise to a biblical level of spiritual privileges and responsibilities. Willingly and consciously he must enter the army of Jesus Christ, and meet certain conditions.

Entering the army

It is at the moment of conversion, that spiritual warfare begins. Every unbeliever is a child of the devil and belongs to him (1 John 3:10, John 8:41, 44). Since he is doing the works of the devil (John 8:41), and follows his ways (Eph. 2:2), there is no opposition. But when he turns from darkness to light, from the power of satan to the true and living God (Acts 26:18, 1 Thess. 1:9), then spiritual battle becomes a reality. Therefore, Paul exhorts every Christian to take a firm stand in this warfare against satan and his demonic powers.

Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Eph. 6:11-12).

Peter admonishes the believer in the same way:

"Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith" (1 Pet. 5:8-9).

There is no possibility to serve two masters, and the pastor who prepares the new convert for baptism must help him to make a thorough and clear-cut decision between the two. The pastor must also determine if satan has had a special grip on certain areas of his life through involvement in occult practices. Although many new Kongo converts come from a Christian background, contacts with the occult come very easily, since they live in a society with an animistic world view.

Theoretically, new believers could be divided into three categories: those who have never been involved with Kongo magic or witchcraft, those who have consulted the nganga ngombo or the nganga nkisi for help and protection, or perhaps for revengeful purposes, and those who have acted themselves as a diviner or magician. It could then be suggested that no special ministry of deliverance is needed for the first group, exorcism should be done for the last, while spiritual discernment is needed to decide how the second group can be helped. At least, confession, with destroying of all occult objects, is necessary.

However, spiritual experiences do not necessarily fall into human categories. Honest confession by those who belong to the third group have sometimes brought complete deliverance, while others who were less or not at all involved personally in occult practices, needed a special ministry of exorcism.

Generally, there seem to be various points of entry for demonic influence.

John Wimber states that demons can gain a foothold in the lives of people through sinning. He notes that hatred, revenge, unforgiveness, lust and drug and alcohol abuse commonly open the door to demonic influence.

Secondly, he mentions the danger of involvement in the occult, and states, "If a person has been involved actively with occult workings such as . . . witchcraft, astrology, fortune-telling, etc., then there is a strong possibility that he has been invaded by demons".¹¹⁹

Thirdly, Wimber mentions the possibility of transference, meaning that demons can pass from one generation to another.¹²⁰

Mark I. Bubeck defines: "By transference we mean the passing on of demonic powers from one generation to the next".¹²¹ He adds that Ex. 20:5, 34:7, Deut. 5:9 perhaps give hint to this possibility. Although these texts are far from convincing, those who have a deliverance ministry confirm that they occasionally find such cases.¹²²

This confirms for the Kongo pastor the importance and necessity of dealing with such spiritual problems, if they occur in the lives of new believers.

Ensign and Howe remark,

Becoming a Christian will bring forgiveness of sins to the sinner through genuine faith, repentance, and baptism into Christ; but this often does not cancel the specific control over some areas of his life if he has given the devil legal rights earlier.¹²³

Tom White affirms "that many believers are struggling with the reality of an evil invasion into their lives," and states,

The vast majority of cases of demonic oppression of believers trace directly back to an open door of advantage before conversion, where the enemy got a "handle" on a life, most typically through sin of the occult, sexual immorality, incest, hate, drugs, deceit, etc. . . . I take the position, then, that the believer may be afflicted in body and soul by the lingering activity of evil spirits rooted in most cases, in a pre-conversion exploitation of sin.¹²⁴

Unfortunately, many pastors in the West do not deal with these spiritual problems, when they instruct new believers for baptism. All too often, Kongo pastors seem to follow their example, which may well be one of the causes for the "superficial commitment to Jesus-Christ", about which Osadolor Imasogie complains.¹²⁵ But if the new believer enters into the army of Jesus Christ at the moment of conversion, and if he is expected to participate victoriously in spiritual warfare, it is imperative that, right from the beginning, spiritual invaders be expelled from his life.

The natural moment to deal with such problems, is during the period prior to baptism. More on this will be said under, "Engaging in battle".

However, a word of caution must be given here.

Because the church has often ignored the Kongo world view, and also the spiritual dangers in involvement in Kongo magic and witchcraft, special attention must be given to this aspect of spiritual warfare. Yet, a biblical balance must be kept.

Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, explains that the spiritual warfare of the Christian is "multidimensional",¹²⁶ and that three different enemies must be fought, the flesh or sinful human nature, the world and satan (Eph. 2:1-3). When Paul explains the spiritual meaning of baptism, he emphasizes what "being baptised into Christ Jesus", and "being united with him" means in relation to the old sinful nature, and to the struggle against sin (Rom. 6:1-14). It can be said that the whole New Testament emphasizes this dimension of spiritual warfare. Although there is interaction between sinful human nature, the world and satan, these three different aspects of spiritual warfare must be distinguished. Moreover, personal victory over sin and the sinful nature, contribute much to the victory over the problems of witchcraft, as will be shown in the next point.

Although not all aspects of spiritual warfare can be taught and explained exhaustively during the

instruction period, prior to baptism, certain basic principles must be clearly understood by the new believer, who has entered the army of Jesus Christ. Conversion implies an authentic power encounter. There must be a complete breakaway from sin and satan, and from all occult objects and practices. Total allegiance must be given to Jesus Christ. It is strongly suggested that imposition of hands, to underline the reality of receiving the Holy Spirit, should take place, perhaps at the moment of baptism. The new believer must understand that, through his position in Jesus Christ, he has all the security, protection and authority that is needed in spiritual warfare. Through the Holy Spirit he has all the spiritual power that is needed. He also has the spiritual anointing, which enables him to function as a priest for God, in intercession on behalf of his fellow Christians and the people around him. He can function as a prophet, anointed by the Holy Spirit, to proclaim the Gospel of deliverance to the Kongo people, who are still bound by the powers of satan. He also can act as a spiritual king, exercising authority over satan and his demons. Finally, in God's Word, the Bible, he has all the spiritual truth and knowledge that is needed, to participate victoriously in spiritual warfare.

Only when these basic principles are understood and believed, is the Kongo Christian ready to engage in the spiritual battle.

Engaging in battle

Spiritual warfare not only concerns the personal life of the believer. Very often the spiritual battle must be fought on behalf of others. These two dimensions of warfare, the personal level and the ministry level, will be studied separately.

Personal level. The believer is facing three different enemies, sin and his own sinful nature, the world, and the devil (Eph. 2:1-3).

Sin. There are various reasons, why the battle against sin must be studied first. Not only does the New Testament emphasize this dimension of spiritual warfare, but, as was shown earlier, the sins of envy, jealousy and hatred are the fuel which kindles the fire of Kongo magic and witchcraft. Thirdly, the Bible teaches that sin is an entry point for satan into the life of the Christian (Eph. 4:27).

Paul explains that baptism symbolizes that the old sinful nature was crucified with Christ, and that the believer died to sin (Rom. 6:1-14). Paul exhorts, "Count yourselves dead to sin" (Rom. 6:11). Before God, man and satan, the Christian is legally delivered from sin. Positionally, he is free, truly free from sin, and he can and must consider himself as such, in order to experience the reality of it. This has nothing to do with the power of positive thinking, because the Holy Spirit confers to the believer the spiritual power to be victorious over

sin. For this reason the Holy Spirit was given. He enables the Christian not to be enslaved any longer to his old sinful nature, but to be guided and led by His divine power (Rom. 8:13-14, Gal. 5:16, 18, 25). The Holy Spirit substitutes love, joy and peace for hatred and jealousy (Gal. 5:19-23).

However, the Christian, through deliberate sinning, can grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30), or, as Paul says, put out the Spirit's fire (1 Thess. 5:19), and thus give a foothold to the devil (Eph. 4:27).

The seriousness and consequences of sinning by the believer are clearly shown in the life of Saul (1 Sam. 15-31). Disobedience to God's command, the sins of jealousy and hatred, and involvement in witchcraft, resulted in the loss of his kingship, his own death and that of his son, and in the total defeat of God's people.

But the Christian never has to experience such spiritual defeat. His position in Jesus Christ, the power of the Holy Spirit, and an unconditional commitment to obedience to the Word of God, will enable him to be victorious in the warfare against sin and sinful nature.

The attitude of the believer towards the Bible must be emphasized. Jesus Christ knew the Scripture, and He also knew how to apply it when He was tempted to sin (Matt. 4:1-11). For the Christian such use of Scripture can only result from a life of prayer, and faithful, daily Bible study.

Bubeck states forcefully,

Memorization and meditation upon the Word of God is perhaps the single greatest step a believer can take in helping him overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil.¹²⁷

Satan is a deceiver (Rev. 20:10) and the father of lies (John 8:44), and in tempting the Christian to sin, he will try to inject his deceitful suggestions into the mind of the believer. Knowing, believing, and obeying divine truth is the only way to remain victorious in the spiritual warfare against sin.

The world. Mark I. Bubeck defines this enemy, the world, as follows:

The main Greek word used to describe our enemy, the world, is the word kosmos. The main usage of this word describes the order or system that runs this inhabited earth. It is a spiritual system of things that is opposed to God and the Lord Jesus Christ.¹²⁸

He affirms that both man and satan have a vital part in formulating the world system in its values and activities. It includes and is an extension of satan's warfare against God and His plans for the believer. At the same time, this world system is an extension and expression of man's sinful nature, which then provides an atmosphere or climate, which promotes fleshly sins. He¹²⁹ states, "Worldliness is a matter of heart attitude".

This also seems to be God's concept of worldliness. The Bible says, "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15). James challenges the believers, asking, "You adulterous people, don't you know

that friendship with the world is hatred towards God?"

(Jas. 4:4).

Various elements of Kongo culture belong to this hostile world system, and can exercise enormous pressure on the Kongo Christian, testing his commitment and loyalty to Jesus Christ. In times of sickness and death, family members can put strong pressure on the believer, urging him to seek protection with the nganga nkisi (magician), or to ask the nganga ngombo (diviner) about the cause of these events. When important choices or decisions have to be made, he can be pressed to revert to traditional religious practices. Family members, friends and neighbours often strongly advise the Christian to seek reconciliation with the ancestors, if unfortunate events occur regularly. Also, it is not at all uncommon that believers, and even elders of the church and pastors, are accused of kindoki (witchcraft). In such circumstances the faith of the Christian can be severely tested. Giving in to the pressure of the world would grieve the Holy Spirit, and give satan a strong foothold in his life. Security and protection in Jesus Christ must then be experienced. Wisdom and guidance are found through God's Word and Holy Spirit. Fellowship should be felt with other Christians, who would support him in difficult circumstances. Spiritual gifts, for example the gifts of wisdom, knowledge, faith, and healing, should be functioning in the church, and provide needed help.

Victory in spiritual warfare against the world has been promised (John 16:33, 1 John 5:4-5), but total commitment to Christ and to His Word must be the first priority of the Christian (Rev. 12:11).

Satan. Through His death and resurrection, Christ disarmed the powers and authorities, and triumphed over them (Col. 2:15). After His ascension Christ was seated at the right hand of God, "far above all rule and authority, power and dominion" (Eph. 1:20-21). The glorious message of the Gospel is, that every believer has been seated with Jesus Christ in this supreme position of authority (Eph. 2:6). Christ has given him power and authority to drive out demons (Mark 16:17). It is not the Christian who has to flee from the devil; the believer has the divine promise, that satan will flee from him, if he resists the devil in the right way (Jas. 4:7). In the spiritual warfare against satan and his demonic forces, the Christian may be assured of total security, protection and victory (Luke 10:19).

However, it must be understood that protection and victory do not come automatically. In his book, What Demons Can Do to Saints, Merrill F. Unger states, "Victory over Satan and demons, like victory over the world and sin itself, is by faith". He explains that, in his position, the believer is absolutely protected from satan and demons, but, as far as his experience is concerned, protection against demonic attack is only in proportion as the believer knows and believes in his position, and thus

makes it a reality in his experience. If the Christian fails to resist the devil and yields to his pressure, the enemy will take all the territory allowed to him. Unger affirms,

When evil spiritual forces are allowed to operate unchecked upon the mind, the will, the emotions . . . influence imperceptibly becomes greater and greater. Demonic pressure grows stronger and stronger. If demonic attack is not resisted, the result is demonic invasion of the personality.¹³⁰

Connie Kisuke tells about a university student, who had left a witchcraft society, when he became a Christian. After some time he became weak in his newfound faith, and began to doubt the power of Jesus to protect him against the forces of evil. One day he saw his former colleagues (in their spirit form) come to him, armed with knives, and stab him. Soon after that, the boy died.¹³¹

When a Christian gives in to sin, sin will overcome him. When he gives in to the pressure of demonic forces, these demonic forces also will overpower him. It proves that the spiritual warfare of the believer is real.

Yet, the Christian does not have to experience defeat. Paul exhorts, "Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes" (Eph. 6:10-11). This mighty power, about which Paul writes, is not something abstract or far away. It is divine power within the Christian. Paul exclaims,

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in

Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen (Eph. 3:20-21).

It is imperative that the Christian, in his spiritual warfare, becomes power conscious, convinced of his position in Christ and of the presence of the Holy Spirit within him.

Paul goes on to describe the divine armour, which the believer must put on.

The belt of divine truth is the ultimate protection against satan's lies, through which he wants to sow doubt into the mind of the Christian. Knowing and believing objective eternal truth protects, when satan tries, in deceitful ways, to influence thoughts and emotions.

When satan accuses of sinfulness, and injects feelings of false guilt and self-condemnation, the breastplate of Christ's righteousness, imputed to the Christian, must be brought against the enemy. The sandals symbolize spiritual mobility, readiness, activity, obedience.

The Roman shield was at least 120 centimeters high and 75 centimeters wide and covered all the other pieces of the armour. Faith makes all the other weapons function efficiently. The helmet of salvation protects the mind against doubt about the outcome of the battle. The war is already won by Christ, but there is also the hope--without any doubt--towards the full, completed and ultimate victory which will be manifested at Christ's second coming. The sword of the Spirit points to the spoken word (rhema) in the power of the Holy Spirit, but also to the truth and power of the written word, the Scriptures.

It is not only protective, but also offensive. Bubeck, notes that the Bible is the only inspired sourcebook on spiritual warfare, and that therefore a personal program of Scripture memorization and meditation ought to be first in importance.

John Wimber believes that prayer, the last weapon mentioned by Paul and not likened to any piece of the Roman armour, is perhaps the Christian's greatest weapon. In the context of spiritual warfare, a special type of prayer is often suggested, which could be called, authoritative, aggressive warfare prayer.

Bubeck writes,

Those serious about warfare should daily use a prayer of this type . . . Heavenly Father, I bow in worship and praise before You. I cover myself with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ as my protection during this time of prayer. I surrender myself completely and unreservedly in every area of my life to Yourself. I do take a stand against all the workings of Satan that would hinder me in this time of prayer, and I address myself only to the true and living God and refuse any involvement of Satan in my prayer. Satan, I command you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to leave my presence with all your demons, and I bring the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ between us . . . I do, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, take my place in the heavenlies with all principalities and powers . . . under my feet . . . I declare that all principalities and powers and all wicked spirits are subject to me in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If the Kongo Christian understands his position in Jesus Christ, is aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit within him, and believes in the truth and promises of Scripture, then victory in the spiritual warfare against sin, the world, satan and demons, will become reality in his daily life.

However, to obtain victory over the powers of evil, the life of the Christian must be Christ-centered, and not demon-centered.¹⁴¹ Bubeck warns, not to develop a "demon

behind every bush" mentality.¹⁴² Many problems and weird happenings may occur that are not caused by satan and demons, while personal problems, related to sinful nature, cannot be solved by casting out demons.¹⁴³ Sometimes,

demons of hate, anger, fear and insecurity are driven out of people,¹⁴⁴ but Jesus taught that normally moral evils come out of the heart of man (Mark 7:18-23).

To determine the right strategy, it is important to recognize the real enemy, which must be fought against.

Bubeck states,

If I earnestly seek the defeat of one of the fleshly sins through the biblical methods previously discussed but without results, if I find a worldly temptation defeating me even though I am aggressively using my providing victory over the world, I must now consider the fact that my problem well may be some demonic hold of Satan's power which must be broken.¹⁴⁵

If demonic influence results from involvement in Kongo magic and witchcraft, then confession--perhaps even publicly--must take place, occult objects must be destroyed, satan must be renounced, and the commitment to Jesus Christ must be renewed. If it results from transference, the believer can pronounce a prayer of renunciation.

Bubeck remarks,

None of us knows what works of Satan may have been passed on to him from his ancestry. Therefore, it is well for every child of God to make the following renunciation and affirmation. It is advisable to speak it out loud. "As a child of God purchased by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, I here and now renounce and

repudiate all the sins of my ancestors. As one who has been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, I cancel out all demonic working that has been passed on to me from my ancestors. As one who has been crucified with Jesus Christ and raised to walk in newness of life, I cancel every curse that may have been put upon me. I announce to satan and all his forces that Christ became a curse for me when He hung on the cross. As one who has been crucified and raised with Christ and now sits with Him in heavenly places, I renounce any and every way in which satan may claim ownership of me. I declare myself to be eternally and completely signed over and committed to the Lord Jesus Christ. All this I do in the name and the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:4; Gal. 2:20, 3:13; Eph. 1:7, 2:5-6; Col. 1:13).¹⁴⁶

In most cases, the Christian will experience deliverance and victory, by using the spiritual authority Christ has given to him, without the help of other Christians.

Mrs. Ekow told how she and her husband took authority over the powers of witchcraft. Since her marriage, all her pregnancies ended up in miscarriages, without any medical reasons. She had terrible nightmares and severe abdominal pains, after which a miscarriage followed. They believed the devil had a hand in this and decided to pray and fast and claim authority over the devil in the name of Jesus. Not long after she conceived, she again had a horrible nightmare, seeing a huge viper squeezing her abdomen. She woke her husband, they went on their knees, addressed themselves to satan and claimed authority over him in the name of Christ. This time the pregnancy developed into a healthy mature baby.¹⁴⁷

Sometimes, however, the spiritual help of other Christians may be called upon, if deliverance or victory cannot be obtained alone.

Ministry level. Some Christians, not necessarily pastors, may have a special ministry in the area of spiritual deliverance. However, from time to time every pastor will get involved in such a ministry. Especially when he prepares new converts for baptism, the pastor must examine the spiritual past of the catechumens.

It must be emphasized again, that pastors should not become demon hunters or, as T. Timmons states it, demon inspectors, "continually looking over their shoulders for another demon".¹⁴⁸ But the Kongo pastor must recognize, not only the traditional religious beliefs and animistic background of the Kongo people, but also the spiritual dangers of involvement in Kongo magic and witchcraft, and the possibility of demonic influence, which may result from such activities.

Much controversy exists over the question to what degree demons can influence the lives of those who have accepted Christ as their Saviour, and believe in Him for the forgiveness of their sins. Often, believers are delivered from spirits when they are saved, but this is not always the case.¹⁴⁹ Also, after conversion new demonic influence may occur through sin or new involvement in Kongo magic and witchcraft.

Various authors distinguish different levels of demonic influence on Christians. In her book, War on the

Saints, which has become a classic on the subject, Jessie Penn-Lewis describes demon possession as "a hold of evil spirits on a man in any shade of degree; for an evil spirit 'possesses' whatever spot he holds".¹⁵⁰ But the term most commonly used today is demonization, indicating demonic influence which may occur in rather mild or very serious degrees.¹⁵¹

M. I. Bubeck distinguishes between demonic oppression, demonic obsession, and demonic possession. He notes that all Christians are under attack from satanic forces and are facing demonic oppression in varying degrees. The attacks come from the outside intended "to oppose, hinder, hurt, and destroy if at all possible". Satanic forces try to "inject their temptations into our minds, to tamper with our emotions, to soften and condition our wills, and to assault our bodies". Demonic obsession is a more intense level of demonic attack, which also can be experienced by all believers. This concerns especially the functioning of a Christian in his ministry for Christ. It also can mean an almost "uncontrollable preoccupation with demonic forces or phenomena". Demonic possession, in its literal sense, can only happen to unbelievers. Bubeck argues that the spirit of the believer has become "the Holy Spirit's unique center of control and operation", which precludes the presence of an evil spirit. But if the Christian gives ground to satan through sin or involvement in the

occult, he opens the door for demonic activity in his soul
 152
 and body.

T. Warner describes four degrees of demonization, oppression and obsession which occur from the outside, and inhabitation and possession, which occur inside a person. Inhabitation of demons can happen to a Christian, if he gives satan a "hold" or "ground" in his life through
 153
 sin.

Other expressions are being used but, to come down to a more practical level, T. White states, "It is time to move past semantic battles and to recognize that many believers are struggling with the reality of an evil invasion into their lives that makes victory seem light
 154
 years away".

At this point the pastor is confronted with the problem of a right diagnosis.

T. Timmons notes that the most common problem at the ministry level of spiritual warfare is the faulty diagnosis of demonization, and he states,

Many self-appointed exorcists recklessly diagnose everything as demonic. The real tragedy is to the person who has been pronounced demon-possessed from no clear evidence of demonic activity. Usually the diagnosis is followed by a long two or three hour session of trying to cast out demons. Aside from complete exhaustion and spiritual defeat, the "demon-possessed person" becomes threatened by the possibility of demons inside him. This is a perfect time for real demonic forces to move in and have a ball encouraging his or her deep anxiety and depression. This can lead to actual demonization. 155

T. White suggests the following procedures as aids in discerning the activity of evil spirits, as distinct from mental or emotional illness.

(1) Direct, authoritative prayer, using the name and blood of Jesus Christ, should, if enemy spirits are present, stir and agitate them. If there is no spiritual oppression, the counselee should remain comfortable during such prayer.

(2) Reading of the Scriptures should also produce agitation.

(3) Engage in conversation on total submission to Jesus Christ. If evil spirits are present, they will become agitated.

(4) Determine if there are specific hindrances to spiritual growth, inability to read the Bible, oppression during times of prayer.

(5) Take note of any intensity of hate or hostility directed at the counselor.

White affirms that, if a person is really indwelt by demonic powers, there will be reaction against prayer and confrontation with the truth of Scripture. 156

He mentions ten different symptoms as potential indicators of demonic influence.

(1) Uncontrollable urges, attitudes or actions, like anger, lust, cursing, hatred.

(2) Bizarre dreams and/or night experiences.

(3) Power of mind (ESP).

(4) Unusually strong fears or doubts.

(5) Unremovable feelings of guilt and worthlessness.

(6) Compulsion to sin.

- (7) Mental confusion.
- (8) Extreme, medically undiagnosed exhaustion.
- (9) Physical nervousness or sickness around a discerning, Spirit-filled believer.
- (10) Increasing sense of isolation.

White emphasizes that "identification of either a few or many of these signs as potentially relevant points to, but does not necessarily prove, the presence of oppressing enemy spirits".¹⁵⁷

These procedures could be tried, and if needed, be modified by Kongo pastors according to their particular situation. Perhaps other symptoms might prove to be more indicative of demon activity, than those mentioned here. Ultimately, it is the Holy Spirit who must give insight regarding the presence of evil forces. Michael Harper notes that three spiritual gifts are particularly appropriate in the ministry of deliverance, the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, and the discerning of spirits. The first two give inspired understanding of situations and of people's needs.¹⁵⁸

When the Holy Spirit has given the conviction, that demons are at work in the life of the counselee, the next step for deliverance can be taken.

Various authors who have a special ministry in this area give detailed procedures for expelling demons.¹⁵⁹ Only some main points can be mentioned here...

G. H. Ensign and E. Howe suggest that first specific prayers are given, to bring the demons under the

authority of Christ. Then some hymns are sung about the power and blood of Christ, and various Scriptures are read (Ps. 32, 91, 103; Mark 5:1-13; Eph. 1:18-22, 6:10-18). Then the demons are bound under the blood of Christ, and the ruling demon is commanded to identify himself. Christ is asked to force the demon to reveal if he has any legal grounds or rights (special sinful acts committed by the demonized person), to remain in the person. These rights are then cancelled by the blood of Christ, sometimes after confession and renunciation of the counselee. If enough information has been obtained, then the person is anointed with oil, according to Jas. 5:14-16, and the demons are commanded to leave in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. If there is resistance, the commanding continues, while the blood and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ are mentioned repeatedly, to reinforce the command to leave. Then prayer is said for the counselee, to be filled with the Holy Spirit.¹⁶⁰

John Wimber suggests, that prayer for demonized people be done in a private setting, by a team of two to five people under one designated leader. He notes that he never calls anything a demon, until he has actually talked to the demon. He forces the demon to give his name, by saying, "In the name of Jesus, I command you, spirit, tell me your name". Sometimes, more information is asked about the demon's activity. He then expels the demon with a simple command: "I command you in the name of Jesus to come out!" When a demon refuses to leave, he says:

"Jesus, here is a demon of hell, that is standing against you and your church. You take care of it". Often, the demon will leave immediately. After demons have been expelled, Wimber interviews the person about his relationship with Christ, and invites him to accept Christ, if he has not yet done so. He will lead the person in prayer to confess his sins and renounce occult practices. After repentance and forgiveness, prayer is offered for the infilling of the Holy Spirit.¹⁶¹

Kurt Koch argues, that confession of sins and faith in Christ should precede the actual prayer for deliverance.¹⁶²

Tom White mentions three phases in the deliverance procedure,

- (1) exposing the enemy: uncover demonic activity
- (2) engaging the enemy: identify the names, activities, entry points
- (3) expelling the enemy: force the demons to leave, in the name of Jesus Christ.¹⁶³

It seems that methods and order of phases are not of primary importance. It is essential to be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who will direct according to the different needs of each person.

The final outcome

In spiritual warfare, the Christian may suffer personal and temporal defeat, but the war can never be lost. When Christ died on the cross, He defeated the enemy decisively. As Kurt Koch remarks, "The battle has

been decided. The victory is won. Liberation from subjection to the kingdom of Satan requires only a regressus ad perfectum, a return to the finished work".¹⁶⁴ The believer does not have to become a victor. In and through Jesus Christ, he is a victor already. Yet, while he has authority and power to tread and trample on satan and demons (Luke 10:19), when Christ comes He will bruise and crush them under His feet completely (Rom. 16:20). At Christ's return the battle with the devil will be ended. Satan, and all his forces will be bound in the bottomless pit for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-6). Ultimately, they will be thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10).

While traditional beliefs never offered assurance to the Kongo people, regarding the outcome of spiritual battles, the Kongo Christian, although engaged in intense spiritual warfare against the powers of evil, can go forward without the slightest doubt about the final outcome.

Conclusion

Although there are differences between the Kongo and the Biblical concept of spiritual warfare, the Bible confirms that man is engaged in a battle against the powers of evil.

The Bible also teaches that deliverance from, and victory over these hostile powers is possible.

In His divine love God, who is absolutely sovereign, gave to this world His only Son, Jesus Christ, who became man Himself. He invaded the kingdom of satan,

defeated him through His death on the cross, and after His resurrection was seated at the right hand of God, far above all principalities and powers.

Christ now offers deliverance and victory to all who repent of their sin, renounce, in a spiritual power encounter, satan and his works, and put their faith in Jesus Christ. The Kongo Christian then belongs to a new community, the church, i.e. the body of Christ, and has also entered the kingdom of God for which he has become a spiritual warrior.

Because he shares Christ's position of authority over satan and demons, and because he has been endowed with the divine power of the Holy Spirit, the Kongo Christian can experience, in his daily life, victory over the powers of evil. Faith in God's Word, fervent prayer, and the functioning of the gifts of the Holy Spirit are essential in this warfare.

Every Kongo Christian shares this position and power, and therefore has a divine calling to function for God and man as a spiritual prophet, priest and king, exercising authority over his sinful nature, the world, and demonic forces.

Some Christians have a special ministry for deliverance and can come to the help of those, who have not found victory on their own.

The ultimate victory will come when Christ returns. Satan will then be bound in the bottomless pit, and eventually be thrown into the lake of fire.

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CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

When, at the end of the fifteenth century, the first missionaries arrived among the Kongo people, they discovered that belief in God (Nzambi Mpungu), the Creator of everything, formed a part of the Kongo religion.

Yet, God was not considered as being directly involved with what happens on earth, neither was there direct communication between Nzambi Mpungu and man.

The traditional Kongo religion is centered on the world of the spirits, who determine most of what happens in the Kongo society. Although the good spirits, those of the ancestors, outnumber the evil spirits, the daily attention of the Bakongo is mainly centered on the activities of the evil spirits who, often through human witches (bandoki), are the main cause of human suffering. Therefore, it is not exaggerated to say that the daily life of the Kongo people is dominated by constant fear. If the right balance or harmony is not maintained between the world of man and the world of the spirits, disaster will strike. The only protection and help available come from the magician and diviner, who possess supernatural power and knowledge, enabling them to neutralize the attacks of the evil spirit world. Thus, for the Kongo people, the world is indeed a "spiritual arena,"¹ in which

is seen a warfare between good and evil spiritual forces, and in which too often man becomes the helpless and unfortunate victim.

As was shown in this study, this world view is still shared by many Bakongo today and, especially in times of personal crisis, comes to the surface, even among Kongo Christians.

It can be said that the Kongo understanding of their spiritual needs, although incomplete, comes close to the teaching of the Bible.

The Bible confirms that there is spiritual warfare going on between good and evil forces, and that events in the world of man are decided in the invisible world. The Bible also teaches that there is a host of evil spiritual beings, seeking to "steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10).

However, the Bible goes much further than that.

If, in the traditional Kongo world view, satan is not always and only evil, and God not absolutely holy, the Bible teaches a clear-cut separation and opposition between the two. The Bible also explains, that human suffering results in the first place from man's willing rebellion against God and allegiance to satan. Human sin destroyed the harmony and balance between the world of man and the spirit world. No religious rituals or sacrifices, offered by man, can restore the harmony, or protect man against the powers of evil. As was noted, traditional

help and practices are, if not an open enemy, at best a false friend.

When Jesus Christ invaded satan's kingdom and defeated the hostile spirits through His death on the cross, reconciliation between God and man became reality. Peace with God, and deliverance from the power of satan, is the core of the Gospel message. But God does not only offer protection and deliverance, but even authority, power, and victory over satan and demons. Through turning away from satan, repentance from sin, and total commitment to Jesus Christ, the Kongo believer becomes a child of God, object of the daily love and permanent care of a heavenly Father. But he also shares Christ's position of authority over the forces of evil, and receives the power of the Holy Spirit, which enables him to exercise such authority.

There is no real biblical objection against "asking Jesus to come into your heart," when leading somebody to Christ. Yet, the new Testament puts strong emphasis on the fact, that Christ is now seated in divine glory at God's right hand, far above all principalities and powers, from where He baptizes the believer with the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit, who indwells the believer, endues him with divine power, enabling him to be victorious over sin, the world and satan.

These basic truths must be taught, explained and emphasized during the period preceding baptism, and be expressed symbolically through the rites of baptism.

Unfortunately, the church has often denied the reality of witchcraft, and also ignored the spiritual dangers of involvement in it. The traditional Kongo world view, as well as the possibility of demonic influence on the lives of people through kindoki must be recognized and appropriately dealt with, especially during the period of Christian initiation.

Therefore, a complete renewal of the procedures and teaching related to Christian initiation, including the ritual of baptism, is strongly recommended.

Also, biblical teaching on the subject of spiritual warfare is essential for the spiritual growth of the Kongo church. This can be done through preaching in church services, but should be done also in special seminars for pastors, TEE classes, in the Bible Institute, and Bible College.

To know his heavenly position in Christ, to experience daily the power of the Holy Spirit, and to possess unyielding faith in the promises of God's Word, are necessary conditions for the Kongo Christian to be victorious in the spiritual warfare against sin, the world and the powers of satan.

In the message of the Gospel, the Kongo church possesses tremendous potential, to deal with the problems of Kongo magic and witchcraft.

This study intends to be a step on the way towards a solution. It is hoped that others, better informed and more capable, will continue a biblical reflection on the

subject. Many aspects of Kongo magic and witchcraft remain unknown to this author, who comes from another culture. Yet, occultism as such is not an unique Kongo phenomenon, but exists universally, since the fall. Also, the revelation of divine truth regarding this problem concerns all men, in all times, and in all places.

The Bible teaches that in the end times an uprising of demonic forces will occur, and this is happening, all over the world. More than ever, the church must be prepared to face this challenge, and to deal victoriously with this last attack from the powers of evil.

That this study may contribute a small part to this victory, has been the main purpose of this thesis.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- CEAZ: Communauté Evangelique de l'Alliance au Zaïre
ISTEB: Institut Supérieur de Théologie Evangelique de
Boma (Zaïre)
NEGST: Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology
NIST: Nairobi International School of Theology

CURRICULUM VITAE

Rev. Lammert Hukema was born in Ter-Apel, The Netherlands, March 29, 1934.

Brought up in a Christian family, he surrendered his life to Christ through personal involvement in Youth for Christ evangelism. He graduated in 1953 from the Teacher Training College in Winschoten, and started his theological training at the Brussels Bible Institute in 1960.

From 1961 to 1962 he served with the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Irian Jaya, where he taught in the Teacher Training School at Tiom, Baliem Valley.

He graduated from the Brussels Bible Institute in 1963. Since 1964, he together with his wife, Britta, have been serving with the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Zaïre, Central Africa.

From 1964 to 1973, he taught at the Maduda High School, where he served as director for five years.

He continued his theological training in 1973 at the Faculté Libre de Théologie Evangelique de Vaux-sur-Seine, France, and earned a Master's degree in Religious Sciences (Maîtrise es Sciences Religieuses). Since 1975 he taught at the Institut Supérieur de Théologie Evangelique de Boma, Zaïre, at the Bible Institute at Kinkonzi, and in Theological Education by Extension.

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