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Witchcraft and Witch-Hunting
A Theological Reflection on Attitudes towards Witchcraft from Ghana Christians
Perspectives (A Case Study of the Ewe and the Akan Tribe of Ghana).

ACADEMIC THESIS
TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF INTERCULTURAL REFORMED THEOLOGY

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Abstracts

This work focuses on the theological reflection on attitudes towards Witchcraft from Ghana Christians Perspectives (A Case Study of the Ewe and the Akan Tribe of Ghana).

Witchcraft practices and witch-hunting has been a recurring phenomenon in Ghana embedded in her customs and cultural practices especially in the northern, Volta and the Ashanti region of such that majority of her families are faced with so many challenges. To this effect, this study, seeks to find out how Ghanaian Christians relate to Witchcraft and Witch hunting in the context of ATR and what would be a biblical-theological response.

The study employed a qualitative phenomenological research approach in both collecting and analysing the data. In the collection of the data the researcher interviewed 8 participants from churches within Dodowa town in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana (Shai Osudoku District), within the Pentecostal and the Presbyterian denomination via an online virtual conversation(zoom). They are respectively the Missionary/African initiated, and the Pentecostal.

The data were coded and analysed for common themes. At the end of the research, based on the data collected through library resources and interviews, the conclusion was that the witch-hunt is very prevalent in the Ghanaian Society due to the misconception with ATR belief system of spirituality, the oversights of the early missionaries' events in Ghana and the misinterpretation of the bible/gospel by some churches and individual religious leaders to their followers. However, it has been noted that the reality of witchcraft is not a mirage but very much exist and must be dealt with love and care through the power of the Holy spirit, just we saw Christ demonstrate in scriptures. People fall victims of witchcraft practices is as a result of cultural/ancestral bond of inheritance, Financial constraints, Jealousy, Envy and the lack of self-love or care from families or the society they belong.

Knowing these results does not only educate Christians but also create room for Christians to work very effectively having in mind that Christ is coming soon with his rewards in his hands to give to the devoted Christians who are into the business of winning souls for the Kingdom of God by caring for one another rather than bulling or abusing them.

Student's Declaration

I Nicholas Dorgbadzi Chidie do solemnly declare that this project is the product of my original work titled; A Theological Reflection on attitudes towards Witchcraft from Ghana Christians Perspectives (A Case Study of the Ewe and the Akan Tribe of Ghana). Relevant works and materials consulted and cited during the course of this work have been duly acknowledged in accordance with conventional academic traditions and that this capstone project, either in whole or in part, has not been presented for any other degree elsewhere.

Signature:

Date:.....

Supervisor's Approval

Jos Colijn

Signature: Date:.....

DEDICATION

This project work is dedicated with Supreme reverence to Almighty God, the Alpha and Omega, the owner of my soul and my strength and dedicated specially to my Student Buddy Houtman L. Ludger, his entire family and Verre Naasten Christian Organization.

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With all reverence to God, I deposit my sincere gratitude to God Almighty, the Beginning and the End, My Joy, My Power, My Strength, My Provider, the reason for my living and my all in all for his sustenance and guidance. There are people of unparalleled reputation who have contributed their quota in making ease my educational pursuit both in kind and/or cash. I express my profound appreciation and, hence, I acknowledge this with all my heart.

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Nicholas!

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

I grew up in a small village in the Volta region of Ghana called Dorgbadzi Kope at Mamfi Adedome (we are known as the Ewes). As a young man growing I can recall the countless of time people are brought to the shrine to swear before the gods if they were innocent of the allegations levelled against them (some are alleged to killed their own spouse or relatives with witchcraft spells, others are said to be responsible of their children being born mentally retarded or abnormal, etc). In some case these victims are not even given the opportunity to be judged fairly before their execution or punishment.

In Ghana everything bad is attributed to the hand work of evil spirits most especially witches. We are certainly not alone in this world with other spirit beings who may be unseen but definitely felt by presence and atrocities. This is the mindset of the average Ghanaian. People suspected with witchcraft also takes the blames of misfortunes and are made to face the consequences of their evil deeds. Witchcraft to the average Ghanaian goes beyond just the idea of illusion. Witchcraft is a cultural reality in my country especially among the Ewe tribe to which I belong, the Northerners and the Akan tribes regardless of any scientific evidence of its validity. While most countries could easily adapt to terms like fate, irony, luck and karma whenever they face unforeseen circumstances, some others will attribute or blame it to witchcraft manipulations.

It is very essential to note that most Ghanaian traditional believers and also Christians will attribute every bad omen to the power and reality of witchcraft. Hence, there is spiritual implications to everything that happens to a person unexpectedly. For example: Why did the child die all of a sudden without being sick? Why was the young man's Visa application incomplete immediately he told his uncle in the Village about his intentions to travel overseas? Why is she being turn-down by every potential husband? Why is the old man still

strong and healthy while everyone in his family are dying premature? Why did he or she become suddenly wealthy, who did he or she use for his sudden success? Are the misfortunes of the Ghanaians as a result of being bewitched by someone who hates them and their progress? For this reason, people suspected to be witches or wizards are hunted down in a hostile manner in most cases.

Presently, the law in Ghana fails to strike a balance between the rights of the departed victim violated through manslaughter and those of the defendant who genuinely trusts that he or she or a family member was a victim of witchcraft. In a recent update on one of the famous radio stations situated in the heart of Accra Ghana (Peace FM Online), it was reported that a young boy slaughtered his father in a suspected witchcraft attack on him. When interrogated by the police, the boy confesses that he went for church prayers and a prophet told him his father was the cause of his misfortunes and joblessness, and until his father dies he cannot be liberated.¹ In this situation why could the boy not blame it also on the economic hardship of Ghana leading to the lack of job opportunities instead of resulting to commit murder?

Seemingly, also, the churches in Ghana have embraced the campaign for witch-hunting mostly with Exodus 22:18 as their biblical justification. However, the question is: are these churches really justified by the supposed Scriptural justification, as they claim? In what sense are Pastors or Christian leaders justified by giving prophecies that are aimed at fishing out people suspected to be witches in the homes of their church members? In most cases in Ghana the victims of these accusations are publicly shamed, some are being burnt or stoned to death by their family members, others homes are set ablaze with fire and so on and so

¹ Peace FM Online. Political Will, Witchcraft Accusations in Ghana. Accessed: 06/06/2024. Retrieved From: <https://www.peacefmonline.com/pages/local/social/202112/457106.php>

forth. Unfortunately, presently in Ghana; the issues of people being violated, abused and attacked as alleged witches or wizards is spreading like wildfire. It is almost becoming the headlines of news bloggers or broadcasting co-operation in Ghana, especially in the Volta and the Ashanti regions. This situation has given the researcher two major concerns. Firstly, where did this idea of witch-hunting come from or what is the root of this phenomenon? (*Is there any justification for killing another over one's predicament? Is witch-hunting an indirect way of some Ghanaians shifting blames to other fellows over what could have a natural cause or perhaps one's own bad attitude towards life? How do we determine whom to be called a witch or wizard? What has destroying of life and properties linked with one's contact or participation in witchcraft?*). Secondly, what should be the biblical response to the act of witch-hunting? *What will Jesus do if he was in Ghana to witness these acts? Is there really any scriptural justification for such cruel acts? Is the victim that is the witch or he or she is just possessed with an evil which needs to be cast out just as we saw in Jesus' examples?* Hence, these thoughts stated above are the basis for formulating my research problem. The researcher will first discuss the African Traditional Religion. This is because everything the average African is deeply influenced by his/her religion which later informs his/her perspectives or worldview. African Traditional Religion informs the belief systems and the way of life of the Traditional native African.

A. Introduction to African Traditional Religion.

The question of witchcraft is deeply embedded in the traditional African religious worldview. African Traditional Religion (ATR) is practiced predominantly on the African continent. A discussion of Africa's traditional religions presents several problems. First, the languages of many African ethnic groups lack a term for religion in the Western sense, as an

activity or entity separate from everyday life.² Whereas Westerners conceive of religion as an independent system of beliefs or an organizational structure, in Africa religion is a complete way of life. Second, the term traditional is misleading, suggesting to the Western mind something ancient or unchanging. In reality, all religions change as they adapt to historical events and social circumstances, and African religious traditions encompass both continuity with the past and innovation.³

Finally, the phrase "African traditional religions" risks implying uniformity among African cultures, whereas cultural diversity characterizes the continent. More than 40 modern nations, each with its particular history, occupy the African continent south of the Sahara. Each nation encompasses numerous ethnic groups with different languages, customs, and beliefs, and African religions are as diverse as these ethnic groups, while north of the Sahara, Islam has long been the dominant religion.) Nevertheless, certain features enable us to distinguish between East and West African religions.⁴

These features result from distinctive geographic conditions and long histories of trade and culture. Even though nobody's beliefs and practices of African Traditional religion vary, certain similarities in worldviews and ritual processes cross geographical and ethnic boundaries as far as religion is concerned. The use of beliefs, the understanding of the sacred,

² Abimbola W., *"The Place of African Traditional Religion in Contemporary Africa: The Yoruba Example" in Olupona*, ed. Kingship, Religion, and Rituals in a Nigerian community: a phenomenological study of Ondo Yoruba festivals (Stockholm, 1991) p. 51-58. & The Editors of Britannica. African Religions; History Society. Accessed 27th April, 2024. Retrieved From: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/African-religions>

³ Abimbola , *"The Place of African Traditional Religion in Contemporary Africa: The Yoruba Example" in Olupona*, 51-58. & The Editors of Britannica. African Religions.

⁴ Abrahamsson H., *The Origin of Death*, Studies in African Mythology (Studia Ethnographica Upsaliensia III, Uppsala, 1951) & Benson Ohion Igboin. I am An African. Department of Religion and African Culture, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko 342106, Ondo State, Nigeria. <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-144>(Accessed 27th April, 2024).

and certain practices to reach the seen and unseen powers to achieve aims makes ATR a worldview/religion.⁵

Riesebrodt defines religion as ‘an empirically given system of practices related to superhuman powers... Or: ‘religion is a complex religious practice and the promise of salvation of practices that are based on the premise of the existence of superhuman powers, whether personal or impersonal, that are generally invisible.’⁶

In essence, religion has an orderly way by which believers relate to the higher authority, man, and the immediate environment. This implies that as a religion, there must be a pattern to follow to be a faithful worshipper. The inclusion of the African daily activities of life in ATR makes it a "way of life" and informs peoples worldview⁷

Most Ghanaians likewise practice African Traditional Religion, which embrace the idea that there are sundry spirits in the domain of humans and they have their habitation in various locations (such as rocks, graves, spooky houses, and trees, etc). However, these spirits are believed to be rewarded or punished in the future depending on their activities. When it comes to matters regarding power or hierarchy, they come after God and lesser divinities. Among these spirits is the reality of witchcraft and its practices in Ghana. The major places known for this dark magic or powers is the Northern, Ashanti and the Volta region of Ghana.

B. Introduction to Witchcraft / Witch-hunting

Although there are in some case the term ‘white witches’ who are ascribed as good witches, witchcraft in general is the practice of being in touch with the occult world/power to do evil things.⁸ It is also the act of producing through certain practices effects contrary to

⁵ Martin Riesebrodt, *The Promise of Salvation – A Theory of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), xii.

⁶ Riesebrodt, *The Promise of Salvation – A Theory of Religion*, 74-75.

⁷ Aloysius Lugira M., *African Traditional Religion* (NY: Chelsea House Publishers, 2009), 36-47.

⁸ Scott A. Moreau, *The World of the Spirits. A Biblical Study in the African Context* (Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 1990), 111.

natural law. For example, it could be the manipulations of the spirit/magic realm to apply magical laws to bring evil to other people. According to the USA professor of missions Moreau, witchcraft/sorcery is an intentional act of harming other people by the purposeful use of magical rites.⁹ Witchcraft stands for anti-social employment of mystical power. Given these definitions, one can affirm the fact that witchcraft/sorcery is one of the distinctive beliefs in ATR, is the consultation or invocation of the supernatural powers, mainly for the destruction of man and his immediate environment (natural elements). This makes that a sorcerer is regarded as a conscious and deliberate evildoer. The possessed person deliberately tries to harm his enemies, or those of his/her clients who have paid him to harm others on their behalf, by evil magical means.

What this means is that the witches perpetrate evil sometimes following individual or corporate demands. They see themselves, as having a trade. However, other people also view them as a source of help so to say for their clients who know little or nothing of their practices.¹⁰ It also means that the witch/sorcerer seeks to consciously eradicate his foe by unseen and/or unknown means. Witches are the most feared and hated fellows or members of every given community.¹¹ This fear might have sprung up the tension and quest to launch an attack against people alleged to practice witchcraft (witch-hunting). Way before witch-hunting was documented in African Continent (Ghana), the western countries also had their own share of the phenomenon. For example, during the post-reformation Geneva La Sorciere captures almost 50 witches executed in the pace of three month by the Bishop of Geneva in 1513. It even became much brutal when Calvin lunched a new reign of witch-hunting where

⁹ Moreau, *The World of the Spirits*, 111.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 111.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 111.

approximately hundred and fifty alleged witches were burned.¹² It is quiet unfortunate this history seems to repeat itself in Ghana and has become major concern both the government, Traditional leaders and the Church as a whole. However, it must be observed that during the 17th century in the West, the process of secularization and ‘disenchantment’ of the globe played an essential role aiding the eradication of witchcraft phenomenon.¹³

This research project offers a theological and ethical reflection on witchcraft and witch-hunting in the context of Ghanaian Christianity. The introductory part deals with the Ghanaian religious context to enable the reader to appreciate relevant aspects of Ghanaian primal religious beliefs that inform Ghanaians' beliefs about witchcraft.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Ghana, everything bad is attributed to the handwork of evil spirits most especially witches. The belief is that, we are certainly not alone in this world but with other spirit beings who may be unseen yet felt by presence and atrocities. It is generally believed that people suspected of witchcraft also take the blame for misfortunes and are made to face the consequences of their evil deeds. Witchcraft to the average Ghanaian goes beyond just the idea of illusion to reality. Witchcraft is a religious reality in Ghana, especially among my tribe the Ewe, the Northerners, and the Akan tribes regardless of any scientific evidence of its validity. The Ghanaian ATR and even Christians will attribute to the power and reality of witchcraft. Probably the church lacks adequate spiritual gifts/power to provide solutions in matters of healing, bareness, breakthroughs. This makes some church members look elsewhere like acquiring dark powers such as witchcraft.

¹² William Monter E., “Witchcraft in Geneva,” *The Journal of Modern History* 43, no.1 (June 1971), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1876542> (accessed April 27, 2024).

¹³ Charles Taylor, “Buffered and Porous Selves,” *The Immanent Frame*, 2 September 2008, <https://tif.ssrc.org/2008/09/02/buffered-and-porous-selves/> (accessed April 27, 2024).

Therefore, these speculations that all misfortune, social instability, the cancer in society, mishaps, sicknesses and all negatives in life are caused by witches, have become a major concern both the Ghanaian Christian community and the society as a whole. This accusation of so-called witches in the Ghanaian society thereby informs the problem statement of the research question of this thesis (the practice of witch-hunt and the position or response of Ghanaian believers/ church).

1.3. Research Questions

How do Ghanaian Christians relate to witchcraft and witch-hunting in the context of ATR and what would be a biblical-theological response?

Sub-Questions

1. What is the concept of witchcraft in the African Traditional Religion (*Ghanaian Cultural and social Perspectives*)?
2. What is the present situation regarding witch-hunt among Ghanaian Christians?
3. What is the concept of witchcraft from a Biblical perspective?
4. What is the reaction of the Pentecostal and Presbyterian denomination to witch-hunt?
5. What would be a theological- pastoral answer to the beliefs and practices of witch-hunting among Ghanaian Christians?

My Personal Stance

As a researcher, I am a citizen of the Republic of Ghana born and raised in the Ewe community (in the Pentecostal denomination). Therefore, I am not completely ignorant of the African Traditional Belief system (the realities of witchcraft practices and the hostility that comes along with the practitioners). I was first born into the traditional Religion and later introduced to the Christian faith, there I grew in faith according to the guidelines and the teachings of the Bible. This became my backbone and also gave me the strength to pay much attention to the issues of witchcraft practice and witch-hunting which are both captured in the African Traditional Religion belief system and the Bible (Christian faith). Therefore, as an insider researcher, my knowledge and experience of both ATR and Christianity will enable a proper analysis of both sides and bring out a more reliable perspective to the Challenges of

witchcraft Accusations in the Ghanaian community. As I had difficulties in what was really at stake in matters of witchcraft practices and the witch-hunting of alleged persons, I realized this was a challenging task. Putatively this research will enable me to come out with a better approach to the matters of witchcraft Accusations within the Ghanaian community. This would be beneficial to tackle those pressing situations of witchcraft practices and witch-hunting in the Ghanaian Ewe and Akan communities in a meaningful way.

1.4. Limitation

Primarily, this research would cover the whole regions in Ghana but due to some logistic challenges, such as: lack of finance (especially in printing and administering questionnaire to the whole region, lack of sufficient time to cover the areas of study within the time frame and the inability of respondents to return their questionnaires) this research is limited to two main regions; the Ewes and the Akan tribe of Ghana.

There have been many misconceptions about witchcraft practice leading to hunting and destroying anything linked to them such as their properties and family members. On the other hand, some are of the view that witchcraft is good and could be very helpful by providing people with solutions to spiritual predicaments. Some Ghanaians (Christians and non-Christians) will normally consult white witches or witch doctors for their problems that are viewed as unnatural or spiritual. Others are also of the view that it is the result of politics in the country thus the quest for power makes people look for external power to overcome their opponent be it in the church, workplaces, and the government sector. By this, they mean to say the church is failing on the part of training young Christian politicians to rule the nation with the fear of God. Having had all these misconceptions in mind, this research paper seeks to limit itself strictly only to how Ghanaian Christians (thus some pastors, church members and church leaders) relate to witchcraft and witch-hunting given their biblical-theological response.

1.5. Purpose of the Study

This study is designed to find out how Ghanaian Christians should relate to Witchcraft and Witch hunting and what would be a biblical-theological response. Therefore, it is important to investigate what is really at stake when someone is said to be a witch, could it be a reaction from a demonic possession or attack, could it be a medical condition in the case of mental illness, or is it just an attitude problem?

1.6. Motivation

My interest in this research project arose from the fact that way before the colonial era in Africa, people considered to be witches had been excommunicated from their communities or even killed in many parts of Africa including Ghana. Presently in Ghana, witchcraft continues among many Ghanaian citizens irrespective of their religion (Christianity, Islam, and Traditional Religion), occasionally resulting in the massacre of the suspected witch. Most people involved in these atrocities (the murderers), view witchcraft as an attack comparable in nature to the use of physical power and consequently exterminate the witch in a struggle to end the supposed attack.

1.7. Significance of the Study

In as much as witchcraft may not be scientifically proven, it does not wipe away its reality in the hearts of many Ghanaians. The subject matter of witchcraft and attacks on suspected victims has drawn intellectual attention because it affects society in diverse ways. The significance of this study is to contribute to the ongoing theological discussion by reflecting on witchcraft from a Ghanaian Christian perspective, by offering a theological reflection on the subject from a Ghanaian Christian perspective.

1.8. Ethical Issues

The researcher put into practice the conventional ethics of the conduct of qualitative research. Participants were informed that the study was a research work, and would not have any

influence on their perception before and after the interview. This is because a few numbers of people within the Pentecostal and the Presbyterian denomination will be interviewed via an online virtual conversation(zoom) to sample their personal experience and reaction to the given Research question.

1.9. Research Methodology

The research is partly based literature study and also uses input from some qualitative interviews. This type of qualitative phenomenological study is a type of research methodology, that enable the researcher to describe the meaning of life experiences of individuals, allowing for the quality of their experiences to be expressed, and discovered. It gives the researcher a time to given in-depth reflection on the answers provided by the interviewees.

Also, the respondents were informed that any information given would be treated confidentially. In analysing the concepts and formation (perceptions), the researcher was as objective as possible and presented the interpreted facts without any prejudice. Permission was duly sought from participants before they were interviewed, and other data were collected. The identities of interviewees were kept confidential (anonymous).

Pseudonymous names were given to each interviewee. Addresses and contact details of the churches contacted were duly verified and collected for records keeping with the permission of the interviewees for easy follow-up but were not captured as part of the field notes.

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

2.0. Introduction

As it is very crucial to know your type of research, how you want to collect and decode your data, the right efficient tools and materials to use for your project, how you mitigated and tried to avoid some research prejudice, and finally why you chose the methodology you used. The ultimate aim of this research to investigate the matters of witch-hunting the possible Christian responds to witch-hunting in Ghana. This research will employ a qualitative phenomenological research approach and a bit of purposive sampling approach. This is because a small number of people within the Pentecostal and the Presbyterian denomination as well as ATR adherent Ghanaians will be interviewed via an online virtual conversation(zoom) to sample their personal experience and reaction to the given research question. A total number of eight (8) participants (4 pastors and 4 ordinary Christians) are interviewed.

2.1. Research Design

The main goal of this research is to investigate the church's response to the witch-hunt phenomenon in Ghana using the Ewes and the Akans Christian community as the main case study. For this reason, this research will employ a descriptive design plan. This strategy for conducting research is a plan/structure and strategy operated by the investigation to provide answers to the research questions and to control variance. It looks into present goings on in the practices of witchcraft and witch-hunting, to answer "what is" it describes and interprets what is. Therefore, for sub-questions 1 and 3, I have mainly engaged in literature, both primary and secondary simply employing a historical and analytical method of research.

For question 2,4 and 5 I employed a qualitative research by conducting semi-structured interviews to enable me comprehend the nature of the present witch-hunt phenomenon in

Ghana and how the Church/Ghanaian Christian's and the ATR adherent Ghanaian response to the situation. In these interviews, I sought to answer the following questions:

In the aspect of Believing (Knowing, affirming and trusting):

1. When you hear the term 'Witch' what are the first few words that come to mind?
2. Do you believe in Witches? If Yes why? If No why?
3. As a Christian or Non-Christian do you believe witches have power over you and can harm you?
4. What is the spiritual source of witchcraft?
5. Do you believe a Christian is allowed to practice witchcraft – why (not)?

In the aspect of Belonging (membership and identification):

6. Do you belong to any school of thoughts concerning the current witch-hunt cases in Ghana? No_____ Yes_____ If yes can you share your thoughts below:
7. Do you feel or think witch-hinting is morally acceptable and should be encourage among the Ghanaian Christians?
8. Where would you place those who practice witchcraft Magic? Do they belong to God, Satan or ...?
9. Do you Identify yourself with witchcraft Practice as a believer?
10. As a Pastor, what will be your best Pastoral approach to witch-hunt cases in your church?

In the aspect of Behaving (rites, practices, traditions and morality in personal communal life):

11. How do you behave towards persons suspected or reported to be a witch?
12. Do you feel witchcraft deserve to live the free will to practice their activities in Ghana?

In the aspect of Experience (differences between worldviews and context, Testimonies tied to one's faith):

13. Are you afraid of witchcraft? Why(not)?
14. How can Christian faith ease the fear of witchcraft?
15. Do you support Witch-hunting as the best solution to eradicating the practice of witchcraft in the Ghanaian community? Yes_____ No_____
16. Do you know anyone who has been a victim to witch-hunting? Yes_____ No_____

2.2. Research Population

Although the subject matter 'the practice of witchcraft and witch-hunting' is a more general problem of the entire country or the 12 regions of Ghana. This study will be limited to only two regions (the Volta Region which consist of the Ewe tribe and Ashanti region which also consist of the Akan tribe). This is be because of some constraints such as time, finance and proper coverage. The scope of the study was limited to the Christians and non-

Christians/Pastors from Ewe and Akan community of the Republic of Ghana from both Pentecostal and Presbyterian denominations. The population of the study consists of male and female adults who are married and those yet to marry. Ages randomly selected ranged from 15 to 45 years.

2.3. Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample population for this study is taken from the Volta (Ewes) and the Ashanti (Akan) region of Ghana. Two towns each out of many towns in the two regions/areas were selected by stratified random sampling.¹⁴ Random sampling is the method of picking a sample in such a way that all persons in the defined population have an equal and independent chance of being selected for the sample. The focus of simple random sampling is to select persons who are representative of the population.¹⁵ This was done for convenience and easy assessment. These towns include *Mamfi Adidome and Agbozume* (Ewe-Volta Region of Ghana), *Agogo and Oseikrom* town (Akan-Ashanti Region of Ghana) two respondents in *Mamfi Adidome* town, two respondents in *Agbozume*, two respondents in *Agogo*, finally two respondents in *Oseikrom*. The total number of the respondents used will be eight (8). The stratified sampling was used because the area council is made up of different villages and different cultural and social differences. An open-ended question of total 10 was formulated into a questionnaire and was served orally via zoom for the respondent's responses.

2.4. Instrumentation

The research work is based mainly on primary methods of data collection. The primary data method employed includes:

- i. Interview
- ii. Literature.

¹⁴ L. R. Gay, et al., *Educational Research Competencies for Analysis and Application*, 10th Edition (NJ: Pearson, 2012), 131.

¹⁵ Gay, *Educational Research Competencies for Analysis and Application*, 131

Interview:

This method of data collection involves drafting of questions by the researcher to obtain information from both the Pastors/Christians and Non-Christians. This looks like the form of an opened question whereby the respondents are free to express his views on the question being asked. Another form of question was also the dichotomous question that is the “yes or no answers. The use of interview gives a wider coverage and for minimum effort and safe time, energy and money (traveling expenses). However, it is very important to note that for an effective result, questions were directly being asked the respondents in a form of interview via zoom video call and their response were recorded for observations and data analysis.¹⁶

This conducted where direct information needs to be solicited from the people. The few chosen normally represent the majority in term of view on the issue.

Observation:

In an experimental task whereby the researcher observed, and take down response. The researcher makes used of data transcribing. All the recorded response from the participant were transcribed and used for data analysis. This should be very effective because the researcher will be able encode exactly what was being said without bias mind.

2.5. Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The use of literature and interview were deployed as instrument for data collection. The entire question in both instruments will be tested by researcher to see that they address the subject matter of the study.

Reliability of the instrument which means that the instrument measured what to measure consistently is also checked. The researcher adopted both unstructured and semi-structured method of interview in testing the question used in this research. This is because the

¹⁶ “Choosing an Inter Type for Qualitative Research: Qualitative Research Methodology,” *Complete Dissertation*, <https://www.statisticssolutions.com/choosing-an-interview-type-for-qualitative-research/#:~:text=There%20are%20three%20types%20o> (accessed: 12th July, 2024)

unstructured method focuses on just few interview questions, but often progress in the manner a normal conversation. However, it concerns the research topic under review. Semi-structured method of interview on the other hand “maintain some structure, but it also provides the researcher with the ability to probe the participant for additional details”.¹⁷ By doing so some questions were split to see how reliable their response will be. It also enables the researcher to ensure the reliability of the instrument.

2.6. Data Collection Procedure

The researcher gave the interview questions to the respondent beforehand and they later fixed for an oral interview where their responses were collected via zoom video recordings. Contact was made with almost of the respondents by the researcher the interview questionnaires were self-administered via Zoom.

2.7. Method of Data Analysis

The interviews will be used for simple statistical analysis. The data which the researcher collected via zoom video call interviews was analyzed using the intercultural theological with the acronym as BBBE model (Believing, Behaving, Belonging, and Experiencing). This model was employed to analyze the perception of the people who prescribed to a particular opinion. This method was adopted owing to its relative simplicity and capacity to accommodate adequate data in a theological intercultural setting.¹⁸

¹⁷ “Choosing an Inter Type for Qualitative Research: Qualitative Research Methodology,” *Complete Dissertation*, <https://www.statisticssolutions.com/choosing-an-interview-type-for-qualitative-research/#:~:text=There%20are%20three%20types%20o> (accessed: 12th July, 2024)

¹⁸ Jos Colijn, “Testing the waters: Infant Baptism as a case Study for Doing Reformed Theology Interculturally” (PhD dissertation Protestant Theological University of Amsterdam-Groningen, 2023).

CHAPTER THREE

WITCHCRAFT AND WITCH-HUNTING IN GHANA

3.0. Introduction

The fear of harmful activities by the alleged witches leads to their hunting and brutality in most countries especially the African continent. It is generally believed, that they had a demonic aide (familiar spirit), often in animal form. They are also often believed to be able to physically transformed into animals themselves, particularly cats and owls.¹⁹ The term witch-hunt could be explained as the deliberate search for people who have been tagged as witches or wizard. It could also be search for the evidence that someone is certified witch. This aim of this action is to bring all this suspected people justice and to make them pay for their crimes or evil deeds. This act or search is encompassing people involved in manifesting or practicing evil/ dark magic or spell, incantations, selling of love, fortune potions etc.

All these acts were punishable in the early human civilizations in the Middle East. Also, in some part of Europe during the medieval era, witch-hunts sprung up in connection to charges of heresy from Christianity.²⁰

For instance, in the Western world witchcraft is an intricate historic and cultural portent that outspread over centuries, leaving it memories on the landmass's social, religious, and legal sceneries. The genesis of western witchcraft hint back to classical ancient times when thoughts of magic and religion were closely connected, and society closely assimilated magic and mystical beliefs. During this era, the a pagan society (Ancient Rome) had legal measures put in place against dangerous and hurtful magic.²¹ Witchcraft became very intense during the Early Modern Europe and partially to the colonial America which took place about 1450 to

¹⁹ Ronald Hutton, *The Witch: A History of Fear, from Ancient Times to the Present* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), 22-26.

²⁰ Richard M. Golden, "Satan in Europe: The Geography of Witch Hunts," in *Changing Identities in Early Modern France*, ed. Michael Wolfe (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 234.

²¹ Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English. *Witches, Midwives, & Nurses: A History of Women Healers*, 2nd ed. (New York: Feminist Press, 2010), 29, 54.

1750. This generated the upheavals of the counter Reformation and the thirty years' war. The consequences of these era of witch-hunt led to the executions of almost 35,000 to 50,000.²²

However, when it gets to the Middle Ages, accusations of heresy and devil worship will be on an increase and more established. At this point witches were often perceived as dangerous sorceresses or sorcerers in an agreement with the Devil, proficient of causing harm through black magic.²³ Women were mostly victims of witchcraft accusation and execution. For this a feminist interpretation of the witch trials is that misogynist views of women led to the association of women and malevolent witchcraft.²⁴

People believed that bewitchment could be broken by physically punishing the alleged witch, such as by banishing, wounding, torturing or killing them. 'In most societies, however, a formal and legal remedy was preferred to this sort of private action', whereby the alleged witch would be prosecuted and then formally punished if found guilty.²⁵

Not until recent civilization that seeks to accommodate a lot sect and beliefs, many suspected of witchcraft has always been a hiding and others relocating much safer places.

Consequently, when it comes to other parts of the continent such Asia and Africa, contemporary witch-hunts are recorded in areas such as Saharan African and Papua New Guinea.²⁶ Presently a legal backing legislation against witchcraft is still found in Saudi Arabia and Cameroon. In recent times the current definition for witch-hunt metaphorically denotes an investigation that is mainly conducted with much publicity, with the main aim of exposing and uncover subversive activity, disloyalty, etc. It is very important to observe that witch-hunt is

²² Golden, "Satan in Europe: The Geography of Witch Hunts," 234.

²³ Ehrenreich, *Witches, Midwives, & Nurses*, 29, 54.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 54.

²⁵ Hutton, *The Witch: A History of Fear from Ancient Times to the Present*, 24-25.

²⁶ Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda. *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance*, 2nd ed. (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009),195; Simon and Schuster, *New World Dictionary of the American Language*, s.v. "witch hunt," (New York: The World Publishing Company), 1633.

anti-friendly mechanism aimed at harming them and also cause a form of moral panic as well as mass hysteria.²⁷

As stated in Chapter One, the main purpose of this thesis is to investigate the Ghanaian Christians/church response to witchcraft and witch-hunting in the context of ATR and the biblical-theological response to this phenomenon. A lot of studies have been conducted on witchcraft beliefs and activities in Ghana. In this section, I will review pieces of literature that relate to the phenomenon and unveils the existing gaps that compel the need for this thesis. For this reason, we will be reviewing the concept of witchcraft and hunting both holistically and in the context as well. This discussion will be done with help of both primary and secondary literatures and data collections from interviews. It is very to state both literatures and interview data will be presented and analyzed through the lens of the BBBE model (Believing, Behaving, Belonging and Experiencing).²⁸

3.1. The concept of Witchcraft from the African Traditional Religion in the *Ghanaian socio-cultural Perspectives.*

For understanding witchcraft in the Ghanaian context, it is important to understand that the Ghanaian context of ATR has a strong belief in the existence of ancestral spirits. These spirits are the spirit of departed souls of the family members who lived at least seventy years, married and lived a good exemplary life, and most importantly died a natural death. This is because, in the Ewes and Akan tribes, they hold that the domain of the ancestors (Tsiefe or Nananom) has two sections, one for those who lived a life well emulating and the other for the deceased who lived a life of evil such as witches, sorcerers, magicians, and murderers. Ancestral spirits are actively involved in the affairs of their living relatives. Sometimes, they

²⁷ Erich, *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance*, 195. "Witch hunt", *New Dictionary of the American Language*. Simon & Schuster. p. 1633 & Martin, Lois (2010). *A Brief History of Witchcraft*. Running Press. p. 5. Archived from the original on 21 June 2013.

²⁸ Colijn, *Testing the waters*, 20-23.

arbitrate in the affairs of the living, either for good or bad, depending on how the living relate to them.²⁹

Furthermore, Ghanaians believe in the reality of diabolic medicine/charm, magic, sorcery, and witchcraft. This is mainly because ATR is expected to address the religious, economic, and health needs of its followers. For example, when a person falls sick, he/she consults a traditional medicine man for a cure or solution. It is therefore commonly believed that healing is customarily attained through the use of herbs obtained from the forest with the help of spirit beings such as dwarfs or through the divination of magic, sorcery, or witchcraft techniques.³⁰

The Ghanaian African Traditional Religions (ATR) hold that there is one creator God, the maker of a dynamic universe. After setting the world in motion, this *Supreme* Being could only be approached through the deities and divinities, as a result, people do not ordinarily offer sacrifices or organize a cult around this high god. Instead, they turn to secondary *divinities* that serve the Supreme Being as messengers or go-betweens and one typical example is witchcraft practice or divination.³¹

Witchcraft in the Ghanaian Community is deeply rooted in the Ghanaian belief system of African Traditional Religion. The history and the concept of this practice will be discussed through the lenses of the BBBE model (thus; Believing, Behaving, Belonging and Experience).³²

3.1.1. Concept of Witchcraft among Ghanaians – literature review.

²⁹ Victor K. Ametewee and James B. Christensen, "Homtodzoe": Expiation by Cremation among some Tongu-Ewe in Ghana," *Journal of the International African Institute* 47, no. 4 (1977): 361

³⁰ John Kwaku Opoku, *Spirituality and Healing Impacts on The Akan Of Ghana* (Maastricht: Shaker Publishing, 2016). <https://Repository.Ubn.Ru.Nl/Bitstream/Handle/2066/156841/156841> (accessed July 12, 2024).

³¹ Aloysius, *African Traditional Religion*, 36-47.

³² To understand this model comprehensively see Colijn, *Testing the waters*, 20-23

- **Believing**

In the aspect of Believing, most “People define witchcraft as the state of being possessed by extra human forces that can do evil or harm”.³³ The fear of witches in the African society is so dominant that it has almost changed the life style of the traditional African, the people are so afraid that some has sought protection from other means outside African Traditional Religion, this scenario has led to the growth of other religions in Africa such Christianity and Islam among the others. To understand the belief of witchcraft, it will very expedient to comprehend the African Traditional religion concept of the spirit world.

The spirit world is made up of superhuman beings, beings that occupy the spiritual universe between gods and humanity, the space between heaven and Earth. They invisibly tread the Earth so that they are continually present. It is to these lesser gods that people turn in times of joy and sorrow. It is to them that they make requests concerning their needs and desires, and to them that they make offerings and sacrifices for health and happiness, successful crops, the birth of healthy children, and protection from evil. Superhuman beings exist in a hierarchy-that is, they are ranked according to their nearness and importance to the Supreme Being. Intermediaries are spirit agents that act as go-betweens between divinities and humans. Spiritual guardians and ancestors are protectors and advocates for humans, spiritually positioned between superhuman beings and human beings.³⁴

Witchcraft can also be term for the principal means by which humans have been thought to work magic, that is, to bring about practical changes by their own will and employing supernatural means.³⁵ Interestingly “in parts of West Africa, witchcraft is popularly referred to as ‘*African electronics*,’ an indication of its ubiquity. The implications for Africans’ sense of community have been profound”.³⁶ Most societies believe in the reality and activities

³³ Aloysius, *African Traditional Religion*, 98.

³⁴ Aloysius, *African Traditional Religion*, 49.

³⁵ K. Adagala, “Mother Nature, Patriarchal Cosmology & Gender” in *God, Humanity & Mother Nature*, ed. Gilbert E.M. (Nairobi: Masaki Publishers.1992), 47-65.

³⁶ J. K. Asamoah-Gyadu, “Witchcraft Accusations and Christianity in Africa,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 39, no.1 (2015): 23–27.

of witchcraft, this includes mainly the African continent and some Western societies (passively practiced by few). Traditionally, people have treated witchcraft in very different ways. On one hand they believe in the potency of witchcraft and therefore consult witch specialists for their benefits: such as to be freed from suffering, to injure enemies, or to obtain what they desire.³⁷ On the other hand, they believe that witches are to be blamed for every misfortune, and they set out to identify and punish persons suspected to be witches responsible for using diabolic powers against them.

A sizable population of Africans at all levels of society believe in witchcraft. They hold witchcraft responsible for such misfortunes as failure to bear children, diseases, failure in life, illness, and death... Witchcraft causes evil and unrest in a community. The community fights its influence by calling on healers who specialize in curing the effects of witchcraft.³⁸

Most cultures, also, have had a well-developed idea of what a witch should be like; a person living within a community but set apart from it by a reserved temperament and odd habits.³⁹

- **Belonging**

In addressing questions which encompasses the role, place and function of witches and witch hunt in relation to the Ghanaian community and families - as well as the dilemma of it (witchcraft) belonging to God or the demonic sphere. There are two types of witches; these are the *black witch* and the *white witch*. The “black witch” is the one that does evils in the society, they use their powers for evil purpose and every negative thing, on the other hand the “white witch” is considered to be good, they are the witch doctors, and they use their powers

³⁷ Mathias G. Guenther, “‘Not a Bushman Thing.’ Witchcraft among the Bushmen and Hunter-Gatherers.” *Anthropos* 87, no. 1, (1992): 83–107. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40462576> (accessed April 29, 2024; Währisch-Oblau, Claudia, and Henning Wrogemann, eds. *Witchcraft, Demons and Deliverance : A Global Conversation on an Intercultural Challenge* (Deutsche: Deutsche national Bibliothek, 2015), 168-170.

³⁸ Aloysius, *African Traditional Religion*, 100.

³⁹ Guenther, “‘Not a Bushman Thing.’ Witchcraft among the Bushmen and Hunter-Gatherers,” 168-170.

for positive things.⁴⁰ It is a common knowledge in Ghana that the western and the European countries are a typical examples of white witches because they channel their power into inventing things and improving technology, while the black witches are the reflections of African witches whose only aim is to kill and destroy everything good.

Most people are attracted to the white witches and see them as less harmful because they use positive energy to perform their magic. This is because this type witches are believed to be associated to good spirit which control their bodies to perform good magic. Some these persons become witch-doctors, diviners, and good sorcerers who fight against the black witches. For this reason, while some individuals will free want to belong in the cohort of the witches, others will want to stay far away from any form witchcraft activities be it white or black. The issue of belonging therefore becomes a bit complicated in this case.

- **Behaving**

In the aspect of rites, practices, traditions and morality in personal communal life, individuals hold to unique views about how somebody/a person becomes a witch or member of the fraternity/cohort. The most commonly known knowledge is that the trait is inherited from a parent. In that sense certain individuals are born witches. In the case of hereditary witchcraft, it is possible for somebody to be a witch and not know it, although eventually the witch notices his or her powers.⁴¹

Witches and *wizards* operate mostly at night, their meeting place is called the coven, and they decide what to do and which kind of havoc to commit to their victims. Many have believed in addition that witches cooperate with each other in secret organizations, and that

⁴⁰ Daniel A. Offiong, "Witchcraft among the Ibibio of Nigeria," *African Studies Review* 26, no. 1, (1983): 107–24. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/524613> (accessed April 29, 2024); S. Adebajo, "Kori - The Yoruba deity of children," *Orita* 21 (1989): 65-77.

⁴¹ Aloysius, *African Traditional Religion*, 98.

they work with, or control, supernatural beings. They are commonly known to operate mostly under huge trees, and also believed to have the power of flight.⁴² These concepts were as common in tribal Africa, Asia, and America as in pre-modern Europe.⁴³ This cult is so powerful that they could do anything, ranging from causing physical disasters to killing, causing poverty, changing people's luck.

Traditionally African people believe that witchcraft is one of the causes of misfortunes in a community. Witchcraft is a dreaded element in African society. People define witchcraft as the state of being possessed by extra-human forces that can do evil or harm. A sizable population of Africans at all levels of society believe in witchcraft. They hold witchcraft responsible for such misfortunes as failure to bear children, diseases, failure in life, illness, and death⁴⁴

Most people wrongly understand witchcraft practices as part of ATR worship and therefore might want to accommodate it or rely on this cult because most ATR priests in Africa are tagged as witch doctors. It is important to state that the African traditional Religion or worship does not tolerate or accommodate witchcraft practices. Therefore, the priest or the witch doctor main purpose is to nullify, fight and reverse the spells witches cast on their victims (they are also known to deliver witches and also heal people inflicted with sickness from witches).⁴⁵ This disorientation is from the fact that in ATR, people worship the almighty God through local divinities like Ogun, Igbe, Olokun, Songo, Kwakufri, Obosomyoyo, etc and the ancestors, there are also ritual sacrifices, and this is where the witch cult is associated with ATR. However, Witchcraft and its activities needs to be distinguished from ATR. This because ATR is mainly aimed at providing to human's (the average Ghanaian) total dependency on

⁴² Aloysius, *African Traditional Religion*, 98.

⁴³ E. E. Evans-Pritchard, "Witchcraft (Mangu) Amongst The A-Zande," *Sudan Notes and Records* 12, no. 2, (1929): 163–249. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41715974> (accessed April 29, 2024); Währisch-Oblau, *Witchcraft, Demons and Deliverance*, 168-170.

⁴⁴ Aloysius, *African Traditional Religion*, 98.

⁴⁵ Adebajo S., "Kori - The Yoruba deity of children," 65-77; E. A. Ade Adegbola ed., *Traditional Religion in West Africa* (Ibadan, Daystar Press, 1983) and Aloysius *African Traditional Religion*, 97.

divine beings to grant their wishes, while witchcraft, which is aimed at acquiring supernatural skills by process of study or dark magic chanting, usually involving books and apprenticeship to a master. Witchcraft was regarded partly as an innate power, and partly as something that was handed on, by a wholly or largely unwritten tradition.⁴⁶

The Twi peoples of Ghana understand *bayie*, which Westerners have translated as witchcraft, as the ability to cause harm to others by use of supernatural powers either alone or in league with other persons of similar orientation. Witches, it is believed, fly in the night and engage in mystical cannibalism. They besiege homes and spiritually suck the blood of victims, which results in the onset of diseases. Witches make people poor by spiritually “eating” their wealth, which means that certain types of poverty are believed to be inflicted supernaturally.⁴⁷

In Ghana the average citizen is conscious of this distinction between witchcraft and ATR. For this reason, many Ghanaians will want to avoid any associating with witchcraft activities or suspected witches. As matter of fact the above clarifications between ATR and witchcraft activities could be viewed of one of the reasons the witch-hunting phenomena presently in the country.

- **Experiencing**

When it comes to the *differences between worldviews and context, testimonies tied to one's faith* concerning matters of witchcraft practices. It is very crucial to re-emphasize that the worldview of the Ghanaian ATR as a religion, is practiced with the sole aim of worshipping a supreme being by the help his servants(priests) through the mediation of lesser gods and spirits. It does not include witches and wizards, witchcraft as a part of its religion or medium of worship. Hence, it frowns against any form of witchcraft or sorcery (dark magic). Hence the

⁴⁶ Adebajo, “Kori - The Yoruba deity of children,” 65-77; Aloysius, *African Traditional Religion*, 97.

⁴⁷ J. K. Asamoah-Gyadu, *Witchcraft Accusations and Christianity in Africa. International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 39, no. 1(2015): 23–27.

reason for its radical actions against people caught or suspected to be witches(witch-hunting).⁴⁸ This is because at one point the members of this cult are physical beings and at some other times they are spiritual being, the source of their power is identified by ATR as from negative force, while ATR worship and their source of power is from the supreme Deity (a positive force). Most average Ghanaians attribute disabilities, diseases, infertility, etc. to machinations of witches and wizards, thus, members of the cult are the most hated individual in the society, it is a common perceived that once a member will remain a member for life no matter what, but a confessed witch might not be able to inflict harm any more.

The Ghanaian society worldview and testimonies of the topic witchcraft activities is mostly on the negative note. Also, there is there some confronting issues such as the Ghanaian shame culture worldview, fear and Jealousy. When someone accused of witchcraft there is this intense fear that falls on both the victim and their relatives. At this point most victims and their relatives are already feeling that sense of danger of being executed or being mobbed. This fears also comes with shame in the form stigma that will remain on the victim and their entire household for life, making them to lose lots opportunities such as good jobs, good education, the right to marriage etc. One reasons for witch-hunting phenomena in Ghana could link to Jealousy (low self-esteem). The perception is that average Ghanaian could attack his/her fellow colleague just because greed, envy and hatred. For this reason, innocent people can accuse of witchcraft simply because they are doing better in life than their peers.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Amos Adey, "Rituals in African Traditional Religion," *Medium*, April 11, 2023. <https://medium.com/@amosadey4/phenomenological-study-of-african-traditional-religion-4b52600fbcca> (accessed April 29, 2024).

⁴⁹ Baba, Iddrisu Musah, *Life in a witch camp. Experiences of residents I the Gnani Witch Camp in Ghana*, Master of Philosophy in Gender and Development, <file:///Users/nicholasd.chidie/Downloads/108934115.pdf>.(Accessed 22nd June, 2024).

3.1.2 Concept of Witch-hunting among Ghanaians – literature review.

Believing

In aspect Believing: the term “witch-doctor” is one of the most abused in European writing about African beliefs. Frequently regarded even by legislators as a witch, an evil man seeking to poison his neighbors, or a perverted priest, the witch-doctor in many researches is really none of these. He is fully recognized and highly respected member of the society. His function is not to harm but to heal, and to release from their pains those who believe themselves to have been bewitched. It is against the evil activities of nocturnal witches that the doctor operates in the public interest.⁵⁰

Witch-doctors can be term as doctors of those who have been bewitched. Hence the witch - doctors are the chief agents in a curative campaign, and are benefactors of the society, in infection at least. It is believed that the witch-doctors have certain affinities with witches, for he has something of the same spirit, by which he can perceive the evil activities of others. As Bible says only by “Beelzebub can one cast out Beelzebub”. If he gets a taste for blood then the power will turn against him. Hence the witch-doctors must be an up-right man, else he would destroy himself.⁵¹

Belonging

In the section Belonging: presently in Ghana, witch-hunting and its brutality has led to many victims seeking refuge in what is known as camps or ghettos. A witch camp is a settlement where alleged witches can escape to for safety to elude being lynched/mobbed,

⁵⁰ Susan Drucker-Brown, “Mamprusi Witchcraft, Subversion and Changing Gender Relations,” *Journal of the International African Institute* 63, no. 4 (1993): 531–549, doi:10.2307/1161005; and Karen Palmer, *Spellbound: Inside West Africa's Witch Camps* (New York: Free Press, 2010)

⁵¹ ActionAidsUK, “Women and Witchcraft in Ghana,” <https://www.google.com/search?q=witchcraft+a+current+topic+of+discussion+in+ghana+today&oq=witchcraft> (accessed June 2, 2024).

tormented or assassinated. Most witch camps in Ghana are situated in the northern region of Ghana and can be found at Bonyasi, Gambaga, Kpatinga, Kuku, Naabuli, Gushegu and Gnani. In the sections below the author presents brief descriptions of the various witch camps mentioned above.

A Study on witch-hunting in Ghana can be traced back to the early 20th century. It is revealed that Arthur W. Cardinall (an anthropologist) could be pioneer to have first mention the ghetto for victims of witch-hunts at an earth-shrine in *Gnani (Tindang, Gnaani)*.⁵² Susan Drucker-Brown saw and deliberated the renowned ghetto in Gambaga. In a documentary ‘*Witches in Exile*’, in the year 2004 by Allison Berg, shadowed the configuration of accusations in Kuku, the biggest ghetto near Bimbilla. This was followed by another documentary tagged ‘*The Witches of Gambaga*’. The documentary covered inmates who were already 10 years in the Gambaga ghetto. As a matter of fact, the Bradt Travel Guides captured the Gambaga ghetto as a tourist attraction where foreigners who go see the place and also interact with some of the inmates. Statistically, a total of eight sanctuaries for witch-hunt victims were captured and documented by Felix Riedel (an Ethnologist). These lists of shelters incorporate so far (locations with inmates).⁵³ See the table below:

	Tribes/Region	Sanctuaries/Shelters	No: of Inmates
1	Bimbilla, Nanumba South	Kuku	450
2	Gnani and Gnaani	Tindang	350
3	Gushiegu	Gushiegu	120
4	Gambaga	Gambaga	80

⁵² Riedel, Felix (2014). *Hexenjagd und Aufklärung in Ghana. Eine vergleichende Forschung über Hexereiaklagen im Film und in der Realität der Ghettos für Hexenjagdflüchtlinge* (PhD). Marburg, 2014, unpublished, 262.

⁵³ Drucker-Brown, “Mamprusi witchcraft, subversion and changing gender relations,” 531–549.

5	Nabule	Chereponi	55
6	Kpatinga	Kpatinga	40
7	Duabone	Duabone	10
8	Banyasi	Bonyanse	8

While all are shelters that renders protection for outcasts (suspected witches), at least five of the eight shelters/ghettoes are controlled by a Traditional Priest (The Witch Doctor). In this case this shelters then serve as sites for traditional exorcisms, that involve a chicken-ordeal to determine the guilt or innocence of an accused person and a concoction to cleanse the supposed witchcraft-power. The application a local earth soil is trusted to neutralize the witchcraft powers.⁵⁴

Behaving

In the aspect of Behaving: the witch-doctor can manipulate stone to predict the future or detect witches. He may go into a trance and with an aroused second-sight be able to point out those who are harming their neighbours'. The doctor aims not only at curing the bewitched, but also at purging the witches themselves.⁵⁵

Experiencing

In the aspect of Experiencing: the diligent work of Ethnographic research and journalistic awareness in the comparably safe and well-researched Northern Ghana sometimes lead to the awareness of witch-hunting concerns in other parts of Ghana such the Volta and Ashanti region. This neighboring region also begun to have their own share of witchcraft accusation and brutalities.⁵⁶ In the southern parts of Ghana as in its urban areas witch-hunting as mass-violence occurs, but far less frequent than in the Northern Regions. Deadly mass-

⁵⁴ Riedel, Felix (2014). *Hexenjagd und Aufklärung in Ghana*, 262.

⁵⁵ ActionAidsUK, Women and Witchcraft in Ghana.

⁵⁶ ActionAidsUK, Women and Witchcraft in Ghana.

panics in Accra and Kumasi involved media-induced penis-theft-hysterias common throughout Western and Central Africa.

In sometimes past witchcraft allegations/hunting in Southern Ghana was rather peaceful or at least quiet, leading to social isolation of a person. However today the situation is very different as it has become the hot topic with citizens and on social media platforms.⁵⁷ Van der Geest in his research observed that almost every person in a Southern Ghanaian town has both experienced an accusation and accused another person.⁵⁸ In the interim, several Witch-hunting movements spread from Northern Ghana's shrine Tongnaab into Southern Ghana and into Nigeria. Those movements tended to stay rather peaceful, while harassment, beating and fining of accused persons occurred on a regular basis.⁵⁹

3.1.3 Acquisition of Witchcraft (*Becoming a witch*).

The medium through which people are said to acquire witchcraft powers or magic is of an intricate aspect of this research. There are several opinions from different scholars on this subject matter. However, we shall attempt to discuss this matter from the perspectives of ATR context by the help of some African authors and also from the Western perspectives. In the spheres of ATR, many options have been given concerning witchcraft acquisition.

First, in the aspect of buying and selling of witchcraft either from one person to the other or from a family member to another family. In this case it is perceived that persons with witchcraft can freely give it out in exchange of money or any other mode of currency and the other party willing pays for it. For instance, in Ghana there are some places such as market, schools, the streamside where people could buy and sell witch just like normal daily business

⁵⁷ Johanneke Kroesbergen-Kamp, "Witchcraft after modernity: Old and new directions in the study of witchcraft in Africa," *Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 10, no. 3 (2020): 860-873. <https://doi.org/10.1086/711757> (accessed June 26, 2024) and ActionAidsUK, *Women and Witchcraft in Ghana*.

⁵⁸ Bleek, Wolf (Sjaak van der Geest). *Witchcraft, Gossip and Death: A social Drama*. (In: *Man* 11/4. Hg. von Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1976), 526–541.

⁵⁹ Jean Allman, and John Parker *Tongnaab: The History of a West African God* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

transaction, but it done discretely. Secondly, it may be acquired through heredity. It is very intriguing to observe that some are of the view that, witchcraft that is acquired through this medium is said to have been received from God. For this reason, it is considered the most powerful witchcraft.⁶⁰

Furthermore, persons can be initiated into witchcraft before they are born. Congenital witches and wizards (Ewes call it *adzetowo*) are usually children of witches or wizards whose allegiance to a witchcraft cult makes them dedicate their children to the cult.⁶¹ For example, a pregnant woman with the power of witchcraft can pass it on unto her unborn child against the child's wish. Not only can a mother do this to her own child but can as well transfer spiritually to another person's unborn child. In same way, friends, aunties, uncles, fathers, grandparents with this dark magic can equally transfer it to an unborn child even before the child is born. In this case all babies who falls victims for these spiritual attacks are already born witches and wizards (some even starts manifesting their powers even at their tender age, while others get know about themselves and what they carry within at older age). Likewise, witchcraft can be inherited from a departed(deceased) family member witch. It is assumed or believed that the witch can hand over the power to a close relative when the death of the witch becomes impending. In this circumstance, the witchcraft will only manifest after the transferor's has departed. However, it is very essential to note that an inherited witchcraft cannot be conveyed to a member of another clan. In this circumstance witchcraft is perceived to be a family "property" that must always remain in the family.⁶²

⁶⁰ Opoku Onyinah, *Akan Witchcraft and the Concept of Exorcism in the Church of Pentecost* (PhD Thesis: University of Birmingham, 2002), 74.

⁶¹ Ametewee and Christensen, "'Homtodzoe': Expiation by Cremation among Some Tongu-Ewe in Ghana," 361.

⁶² Eunice Ohene Dapaa, Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 14th June, 2024.

Thirdly, some people go through some specific and special rituals to in order to be initiated into the coven or cohort of witches. In this case there days set aside mostly midnight where they invited to the coven and ceremonies are being performed to induct and initiate them.

Fourthly, it can be shared or transferred through any form of food or candies. People who eat this infected food or candies automatically acquire these mystical or demonic powers and becomes a member of the coven.

Onyinah's research on witchcraft in Ghana postulates that witchcraft can be acquired through various means: as an inheritance from a dying witch within a family, receiving demonic-infested gifts from witches, eating certain foods like mash plantain with red oil prepared by a witch, and purchasing the witchcraft.⁶³

The fear of witchcraft has eventually blocked the logical reasoning of many in Ghana to a point that everything that happens that is not good is blamed on the activities of witches.

LeClaire (2013:1), who wrote much about witchcraft, is correct when he argues that because of people's fear of witchcraft, they cannot brace up their minds and be sober as demanded in 1 Pet.1:13. The fact that people are always preoccupied with witchcraft takes away their freedom to serve God peacefully. This is why the people who run to churches nowadays are not doing it because they want to be Christians, but because they want to be protected against the powers of witchcraft. The other problem is that every bad thing that happens in our lives is alluded to witchcraft.⁶⁴

In summary the whole idea of witchcraft, practices and realities are more complicated than one could easily comprehend. To some it is a good practice because it is seen as a supernatural gift that is bestowed on people to possibly help themselves and the society, but on the other hand some few it as a dark evil magic spell that is harmful to both the custodian and the society at large. For this reason, this second school of thought employs various ways in ATR to fish out people suspected to witches and wizards or sorcerers. Among these anti-witchcraft mechanisms is what is known as *Witch-Hunt*.

⁶³ Opoku Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism: Witchcraft and Demonology in Ghana* (Blandford Forum: Deo Publishing, 2012), 55.

⁶⁴ Elijah Baloyi, "The evangelical role of witchcraft in some Pentecostal: An African Pastoral Concern," *Missionalia* 46, no. 3 (2018): 61, <http://dx.doi.org/10.7832/46-1-221> (accessed June 26, 2024). 61.

3.1.4 Witchcraft Accusations and its effect on its victims

Fierceness stemming from witchcraft belief pervades Ghanaian life and that cannot be without effects on the nation.⁶⁵ The belief and doings of witchcraft in Ghana advocate that the metaphysical gearshifts the material world and has blown out of proportion, beyond the reach of people of the land, as they seem helpless unless another stronger supernatural being arbitrates to remedy the situation.

The belief unambiguously has a demeanor on the Ghanaian community, as it has the tendency of levitating people who are irresponsible never to become responsible, but rather blame their incompetence or faults directly to peripheral agents who control what they do. Again, misfortunes (such as: barrenness, sicknesses, Poverty, unemployment, poor governance, the culture of nepotism and corrupt political life, accidents, deaths, etc.) are commonly understood to be caused by witches who are peripheral agents. This reduces the average Ghanaian citizen destitute as it seems, as they are victims of supernatural powers who enforce their will on them.

For instance, in the Akan setting, witchcraft allegations and probes are dependent on several factors comprising the behaviour of an individual. For example, when the person curses or declares doom on person or a community and it comes to pass, he/she becomes suspect to witchcraft phenomenon. Furthermore, when the priest of a deity/witch doctor exposes events and actions by their oracles or gods, it can confirm witchcraft possession in the context. To crown it all when evil happens(misfortunes) around a person inexplicably, like at *fo wuo* (unnatural death) and when the *abosom* (gods) strikes or catches those possessed with witchcraft of which Akan term as *bosom abor no* (he/she has been stuck by the gods). These

⁶⁵ Jon P. Kirby, "Toward a Christian Response to Witchcraft in Northern Ghana," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 39, no. 1 (2015): 19-20.

can be attributed to witchcraft activities.⁶⁶ Consequently, the following listed and discussed below are the potential effects of Witchcraft Accusation and Hunting Effects on the victims, Ghanaians and the socio-economy at large.

First, Gender and age bias /discrimination:

It is visible from the study I conducted that women are often tagged as possessing witchcraft paralleled to their male colleagues. The hypothetical assertion can be supported by the number of witch camps in Ghana and their acceptance of men in the camp. For example, out of the six surviving witch Ghettos/camps in Ghana, it is only the Gnani witch camp that accepts wizards (*bema bonsam*). Any nation that victimizes based on gender and age flourishes little because most of the nation's prospective and human resources are relegated to the background.⁶⁷ A research of the Gnani witch camp presents data that uncovers that the witch dwellers in the camp are mostly female and children.⁶⁸ It is a common knowledge that the female gender group is most likely to possess witchcraft than the male gender. Therefore, are mostly the accused and witch-hunted which makes of them flee to the various witch camps for safety. This denotes that only 14.55% men possesses the power of witchcraft and while 85.45% of women takes the greater share.

Mr. Accra New Town (a human activist) working with UNESCO- Ghana, when interviewed by the researcher re-affirmed the above stated discrimination, that it is believed that females possess witchcraft more than males. When asked the lead question why females are mostly accused of witchcraft than their male counterparts: He stated that: It is because

⁶⁶ Kwasi Atta Agyapong, "An Evaluation Of Akan And Konkomba Witchcraft Trials & Beliefs In Ghana: In Dialogue With The Biblical, Anthropological And Psychiatrists Perspectives" *PECANEP Journal* 1, no. 7 (2020): 92–102; Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism: Witchcraft and Demonology in Ghana*, 60.

⁶⁷ M.O. Afful, *The Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms*. (Accra: LIEC, 2011), 4.

⁶⁸ Afful, *The Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms*, 4.

people assume women do not show mercy as compared to men and are more dangerous as compared to men.⁶⁹”

Second, Lack of Access to Education and extreme Poverty:

The Constitution of Ghana in article 25 of the 1992 firmly states that all citizens should have right to equal educational opportunities and facilities and with a view to achieving the full realization of that right: (a) basic education shall be free, compulsory and available to all.⁷⁰

Unfortunately, this is not the case of the people allegedly accused of witchcraft.

Presently in Ghana due to the stigma that comes with people being allegedly tagged as witches they are either restricted from getting access to education. While some are forced to stay in various Camps (social camps-NGOs, prayer camps, traditional shrines and other designated places for exorcism) in the different location in the country. Some family will prefer restrict themselves and their children in the confinement of their house only. In this situation most kids especially are denied quality education or access to educational functions or gatherings.

It is very crucial at this point to state that, a nation (Ghana) that thrives on the belief that has the potential to shorten the education of her children might live in disappointment, shame and poverty in some few years to come. I am of the strong opinion that Ghana has held on to these beliefs about witchcraft and its practices for a very long time. This has the potential of effecting the nation’s socio-economic development of the nation. To be precise, it is almost impossible for Ghana to grow beyond its socio-economical thinking, if its thinking or belief is faulty. it will unconsciously affect the entire development of the nation. These setbacks will eventually lead abject poverty in the country. This is because since people attribute their

⁶⁹ Mr. Accra New Town (a human activist) working with UNESCO- Ghana. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 05th June,2024.

⁷⁰ The 1992 Ghana Constitution. Right to Education to all Citizens. Accessed 27th June, 2024. Retrieved From: https://lawsghana.com/constitution/Republic/constitution_content/30

incompetence in the enactment of their duties to witches and wizards influence, they therefore do nothing about improving themselves because they are not responsible for their actions and soon poverty will be knocking at their doors.

Third, Medical Challenges:

From the information collated from various literatures and data collected from some of the interviews conducted, assumes that witches can cause sicknesses in human beings. Therefore, dealing with people with normal sickness becomes a challenge because one cannot tell what precise diseases are witchcraft induced and which ones are not. Most Ghanaian instead of seeking medical attention resort to a spiritual solution (visiting churches, prayer camps or shrines) as a better option when they are sick. For example, one the interviewee of this research shared an experience of how she lost her first child of 21 years due to ignorance.

It is very unfortunate to observe that People with various critical medical challenges are confined at prayer centers, which the researcher does not oppose. However, I will argue that refutation of medical attention and care on the reason for supposed witchcraft induced illnesses must be checked and strictly regulated by authorities. Prayer is not opposed to medical care.

Lastly, Disruption of homes, families, relationships and lawlessness:

As a researcher, I have had a personal experience of relationship estrangement when my sister accused our Mother of being responsible for her delay in marriage. It took six years for this relationship be repaired. In some years back a very famous telecast prophet known as Rev. Obofour made an alter call for people with witchcraft power. approximately 15 people came up to the alter and confessed that they were witches. Out this people, about 50% were children, while females constituted about 88%. Among the fifteen people who said they were witches, only one was a male. The man sated that he was not sure if he had witchcraft but he came because he was accused by a family and wanted verification of his uncle's claim. Another

person emphasized that her mother had declared her a witch so she also came up to be delivered.⁷¹ Unpleasant circumstances such as this has left many homes destroyed beyond repairs. This is because in a country where witchcraft beliefs and practices are rampant, the citizens will obviously want to ascribe their inefficiencies and lawlessness to witchcraft enchantments.

3.2. The Concept and Practice of Witch Hunting in Ghanaian ATR Perspective (BBBE Analysis).

Introduction

Through various research studies carried out by the author and reviews of various materials on the subject, it appears most Ghanaians regard issues affecting their lives and society as witchcraft induced. This perception if not reshaped could have its negative rippling effect on Ghana as far as her socioeconomic, religious-culture, psychological and human resource developments are concerned. This brings about aggression that is aimed at fishing out any potential suspected or accused persons (Witch-Hunting).

Moving forward in this section the researcher will be adopting the appropriation model BBBE- Believing -Belonging-Behaving and Experience to analysis the data presentation. It is aimed at bringing out the true reflection of people cultural norms and beliefs through the lens of the Gospel. This model helps us on how to adequately present the gospel to people in their respective cultures without not making the Bible strange to them or making them not feel at home with the gospel.⁷² In the section of data presentation, I will be depending on various interviews conducted via zoom video meeting to explore and present significant information

⁷¹ Excerpts of a programme aired on Sweet TV on November, 25 2018 at 8:17am.

⁷² Colijn. *Testing the Waters*, 18-25. It is very important to note that model developed by Dr. Jos Colijn (Lecturer and Coordinator of the Master of Intercultural Reformed Theology Programme– International Officer)

on witch-hunting in Ghana. These data will be presented with the help of the BBBE model appropriation. There will be direct verbatim quotes from respondents as well as paraphrasing.

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Data presentation from the Interviews:

For the sake of confidentiality Pseudonymous names were given to each interviewee. Also, the BBBE model will be deployed to discuss and analyse the various data received from the researcher's interviewee. In view of this aspect of specific questions were asked the interviewees via zoom video call as stated earlier in the research methodology.

▪ **Believing** (*Knowing, affirming and trusting*):

Out of the three respondents (Non-Christians) that were interviewed, none of them refuted the realities of the activities of witches. They all affirmed that witches exist and they operate to destroy destinies and inflict pains on their victims. Madam Kanashie stated: "I believe witches exist and nothing good comes out of them. I am always protected from them with amulet given to me by my late father who was a herbalist. With this amulet I am able to feel them when they around me and they always run away from me because they know I am protected. I don't go to church because it is a waste of time because our forefathers knew God before the white people brought their foreign God. As for me I go the traditional way to fight powers unknown to me."⁷⁴

Some respondents also explained that witch-hunting started since the days of the forefathers will be difficult to eradicate anytime soon. They believe the existence and practice of witchcraft should be dealt with hostile approach because it is against the very purpose of the Ghanaian Traditional ethics. One of the respondents who claimed to be a Malam/witch-doctor made his submissions as follows: "Esha- Allah they are around us every day but we can see

⁷³ Note that this also applies to 3.3 sub-title, especially in the section of data analysis.

⁷⁴ Madam Kanashie. A supermarket Vendor at the Kanashie Market. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 05th June, 2024

them with our eye except you have spiritual eyes. Witches are very bad people and they don't like things in a person's life or community... so I also go after them with my powers. I also heal or save the people they attack with their power".⁷⁵ In summary there was never a positive comment about witchcraft practice in all of the researcher's interactions with the interviewees.

- **Belonging** (*membership and identification*):

From the data, nobody wants to associate his/herself with a known witch or any form of activities that involves witchcraft practices. Anyone identified to be a member of the cohort is dealt with a fatal punishment. People who identify themselves with witchcraft activities are classified as people who have committed a taboo and could be banish from the community with his /her entire family. For membership of this group will not be a very wise decision. It also belief that some people become members of this cohort unknown to them. It may be means inheritance pass on to them or transferred to them against their wish. In any case the witch doctors are mostly there to examine the situation and also heal people affected by virtue of witchcraft inducement. Malam Madina at this point stated: "Anybody who willingly want to become a witch is a wicked person and such if caught must be punish severely because he/she has a bad heart and can pollute the community. However, to become a member of witches is just a small thing... they can transfer to their best friends or family members through food and clothes anything they want. A community deserves development and identifying yourself with witches will not bring good but bad."⁷⁶ For this reason, they destroy nations and dismantles profitable foundations of a country.

- **Behaving** (*rites, practices, traditions and morality in personal communal life*):

⁷⁵Malam Madina. A Traditional Witch Doctor. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 18th June,2024

⁷⁶ Malam Madina. A Traditional Witch Doctor. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 18th June,2024

This unknown enemies drink human blood and eats the flesh of victims. The respondent went further explain that many nations are having problems because they are reviving witchcraft powers that were once buried by our forefathers. The Ghanaian traditional customs prohibit any form witchcraft ritual or incantations. For this reason, there many rites that are performed to purify the community should a person be found guilty as charged before the Traditional Council. For examples a woman or man suspected to have killed his or her spouse to drink a concoction special made with the water collected from the dead body after bathing it. This is to prove the innocence of the accused, and if after weeks nothing happens to him/her then he or she is said to be vindicated by the gods. Some others are made strip naked and commanded to swear before the oracle to vindicated themselves from any accusation levelled against them. This is because witchcraft defies morality standards of the Ghana traditional community and must not be entertained.⁷⁷ A respondent lament on how his wife and two kids were forcefully taken away from him for almost four years to a witch camp because of witchcraft allegations.⁷⁸

In his interview, Mr. Legon Presec stated: “I don’t really like to talk about this issue because it brings me back bad memories but I will say it to aid your research. I am from the Volta region in a small village called Klikor. I worked as a teacher in the city of Accra and my wife and four kids lived in my village. On one unfaithful I just received a call that my wife and two of my younger kids were convicted of witchcraft simply because my wife suffered high fever. For two years I never saw them even though the matter was reported to the law enforcement. They were kept in the so-called witch camp for two unlawfully and even the government could not interfere because it was a traditional mandate. So, you see this witch-hunt of a thing is beyond

⁷⁷ Data collected from various respondents on the matter of the morality and rites of witchcraft practices in the Ghanaian community. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 18th June,2024

⁷⁸ Mr. Accra New Town (a human activist) working with UNESCO- Ghana. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 05th June,2024.

what one may think. I hope your research come out well to educate and resolve this problem of witch-hunting in our country”.⁷⁹

- **Experiencing** (*differences between worldviews and context, Testimonies tied to one’s faith, and experiences of shame, fear, jealousy etc*).

The worldview of most ordinary Ghanaians is that witchcraft has infiltrated schools, drama, entertainment, governments, laws, businesses, etc. Many ordinary Ghanaian are of the opinion that the activities of witchcraft suggests that witches are capable of wrecking nations such as Ghana of which this research and this is people are agitated to hunt them or fish them out anyway they can. Miss Adenta a respondent stated: I hate anything witch and I personally don’t want anything to with them because one of them confessed to have been responsible my child’s epilepsy and the death of her own mother. What more evil can we expect or endure from such wicked souls living among us. Even though I will not join those who harm them or hunt for them, I personal think they don’t deserve to live among humans.⁸⁰” In this case Miss Adenta does not think her child illness could be as result of medical condition but rather witchcraft induced because there was open confession to her suspicions. At this point the researcher can conclude that in the world of the Ghanaian ATR, witch-hunt is normal and most non-Christian are of the view that it should be encouraged and if possible enforced by law to serve as deterrent to anyone who wishes to get involves its activities.

In the next section data analysis, I will be looking on how should these answers be understood and interpreted on the various interviews conducted via zoom video meeting to give a significant information on witch-hunting in Ghana.

⁷⁹ Mr. Legon Presec (Social Science Teacher). Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 16th June,2024

⁸⁰ Miss. Adenta an ordinary Class Teacher. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 20th June,2024

Data analysis of the Interview Data:

From the presentation of data as stipulated above, many possible opinions or answers could be deduced from the various ATR respondents. I will analyze the ATR data presented through the lens of the BBBE model. This will enable us to get a vivid and clear picture of how the respondent expressed their emotion and opinions as per the questions being asked them.

▪ Believing

In the aspect of Believing, all the respondents' answers showed no doubt in their minds when it comes to the realities of witchcraft activities within their communities and afar. It was clear that the activities of this cult were real and targeted at destroying both lives and properties. They strongly believe and affirm the realities of witches out of their encounters and testimonies from friends and relatives who have been victims of witchcraft inducement. From the respondent's responses, it was deduced that the belief in the presence and work of evil powers, especially witches, is pervasive; ATR conceives of the universe as alive with spirit powers, a place in which evil is hyperactive. What can be also understood from the reaction of the ATR respondents is the strong belief that evil itself can be of natural or supernatural origin. As a result, a causal distinction is made between physical disease and spiritual disease. This is to point out that a connection exists between the two causalities stated above. However, the respondent believed that the matters of misfortunes/calamities that stem from natural causes could be made worse by hostile spiritual powers such as witches.

▪ Belonging

In the aspect of Belonging, the result shows that witches belong to the realm of the supernatural, witchcraft works in the same manner as sorcery or occult powers, which are themselves forces of destruction. It is a practice strongly condemned by ATR and is punishable by tradition should anyone be found guilty. Most of them clearly showed their detachment from the involvement of witchcraft but rather supported the idea of fishing out anyone

suspected or caught in the act. Even though most of the respondent's responses showed they discouraged any form of brutality associated with witch-hunting, they never condemned the concept itself (fishing out witches and bringing them to justice by traditional punishment). Membership in witchcraft is strongly discouraged and warned against the punishment and consequences that come along with its perpetrators.

- **Behaving**

In the area of Behaving, the result showed that witchcraft accusations in Ghana entail some cultural, social, political, and legal implications. Some cases of witchcraft accusations were highly gendered and manifested as cultural-political witch-hunts bent on humiliating and eliminating rivals through hate speech, framing, and claims-making. Others are based on the fear of the unknown (surrounded by an unseen enemy). This is gendered and manifested as a result of people's habit of blaming everyone for their setback spiritual warfare. In this case, everyone becomes a suspect and could be blamed for things he or she knows nothing about. This brings to a halt the progress of individuals and the nation as a whole. Some respondents admit that in the attempt to fight these unknown forces, they also resulted in protecting themselves with traditional amulets, and talismans prepared by the ATR witch- doctors.

- **Experiencing**

In the area of Experiencing, the Ghanaian ATR respondent's worldview and personal testimonies about the concept of witchcraft were negative and there was no room for negotiation. It is a practice condemned due to it being tagged as inflicting pain and destruction on society. Despite ATR support for fishing out and punishing members found guilty by the traditional council, it frowns against form extreme case of witch-hunting. Most of the result shows that the respondents saw witch-hunting as the proper mechanism to deter people from involving themselves in such practices and punishing them will serve as a warning to the others. However, it was also clear that the respondents strongly advocated against any form of

brutality, hostility, and human violence that is transferred to suspected witches in the name of witch-hunting, such as should be dealt with by the human rights law.

3.3. The Concept *and Practice of Witch Hunting in the Ghanaian Christian Perspective.*

Introduction

The idea of Witchcraft practices in Ghana had always been among the discussion of African Traditional Religion perspectives. However, as the country (Ghana) develops, new religions also set in and take over some equal part people's beliefs in ATR. Christianity is second among the three main religions in Ghana followed by Islam. The main denominations of the Christian Assemblies in Ghana are most the Catholics, Pentecostals/Charismatics and the orthodox (Presbyterians, Methodist and the Baptist).

In the section of data Presentation, I will be depending on various interviews conducted via zoom video meeting to explore and present significant information on the Ghanaian Christian perspectives on witch-hunting in Ghana (The Pentecostal and Presbyterians). There will be direct verbatim quotes from respondents as well as paraphrasing.

Data Presentation

For the sake of confidentiality Pseudonymous names were given to each interviewee. Also, the BBBE model will be deployed to discuss and analyse the various data received from the researcher's interviewee. In the aspect of Believing, these specific questions were asked to the interviewees.

- **Believing** (*Knowing, affirming and trusting*):

Prophet Nsawam (a famous Pentecostal Pastor) responded that: *"I strongly believe in the reality of witchcraft and their dangerous manifestations. A witch is someone possessed by evil spirit to kill and destroy things. In Africa the moment you hear witch you run for your life because that person can kill you faster than any other sickness. Witches don't care about your feelings they can destroy an entire generation, so me I don't joke with them at all as a prophet*

of God."⁸¹ Madam Makorla was more optimistic when it comes to believing in the power and the activities of witches. She believes that witches can be nice when one approach them with a friendly heart and they could even use their power positively to help people draw close to them. She stated *"Oh me I believe witches exist as a Christian but am not afraid of them. Not all of them are wicked or do bad things. I think the approach matters a lot because you treat them well and good they will not harm but rather they will protect you from other witches who might want to harm you"*.⁸² She narrated how classmate who was a witch saved her from being attacked by others and since even though she is a Christian she thinks and react positive towards people alleged to be witches. In this case even though the interviewee is aware of the negative circumstance that surrounded people known as witches, she is hopeful that not all of them are bad and could only bad depending on the way they are treated.

Mr. Madina Zongo in his submission was more on the side of witches and their activities should not be entertained in any God fearing civilize community. They are classified under the fallen angels who came to this world to create chaos and destruction. He states: *"As strong devoted Christian I believe in the power of dark powers. Anyone who operates with these powers are the enemies of God and their end will be destruction. In Ghana they are everywhere in your workplace, schools, market place, the street and even in the house of God which the Church. As the bible said the devil came to steal, kill and to destroy. These are also the mission or agenda of witches but I am not afraid of them at all because he that lives in me is greater the one outside."*⁸³

⁸¹ Prophet Nsawam. General oversea of Adonai Prophetic International Ministries. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 05th June,2024

⁸² Madam Makorla. A Church member of the Church of Presbyterian church of God. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 19th June,2024.

⁸³ Mr. Madina Zongo. A presiding Elder in the Fire Mega Ministries. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 27th June,2024.

Mr. Snit Flat Adenta a deacon at the Faithway Christian Church- Adenta Fafraha made the following submission on his beliefs: “Well when I hear about the name witch, I believe they are set to destroy things and stop people’s progress in life. Mostly the is the Old age people that are likely to called witches because they are for this witchcraft practice very well. However, as a Pentecostal Christian I believe witchcraft is a spirit and must be tackle spiritually and not physical. We don’t fight spiritual things or happenings with physical strength, this is why Jesus at a point said to the disciples this can only be done through fasting and prayers”.⁸⁴

At this point it can be observed all every Ghanaian Christian believes in the reality of the supernatural and their impact on the human. It is observed that both denominations (Presbyterians and the Pentecostals) share and believe the realities of witchcraft activities in Ghana. In the days of Jesus there were the manifestations of demons subjecting people to doing their biddings. A typical example is the Jesus’ encounter with a man posse with demons in Capernaum of Galilee. He had to cast spirits out (Mark 5:1-20, Luke 4:31-44). Therefore, believing in the existence and the activities of witchcraft was not out place but biblical according the Ghanaian Christians. However, most of the Ghanaian Christian made it clear that being aware of the existence and the practices of witchcraft does not in anything supress their faith but rather brings them closer in believing in the absolute of God over all powers (Matt. 28:18, 1John 1:12, Phil 2:9-11). However, “a true believed must not be seen identifying or giving his support to the practice of witchcraft because it is demonic.”⁸⁵

Belonging (membership and identification):

Despite some few differences in their doctrinal thinking, I observe from the interview that both the Pentecostals and the Presbyterians had a common ground on their stand on witch-

⁸⁴ Mr. Snit Flat Adenta. Faithway Christian Church- Adenta Fafraha. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 20th June,2024.

⁸⁵ Mr. Adenta. Faithway Christian Church- Adenta Fafraha. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 20th June,2024.

hunting. They will both argue from the point of view that Paul captures the term ‘witchcraft’ among the works of the flesh in Galatian 5:19, consequently no depiction or authorization was recommended (witches/sorcerers) for them as in the Old Testament where they could be stoned to death. Therefore, since the Bible is holistic in its teaching and should be interpreted as such. However, the question how should the supposed Ghanaian witches be handled in the light of scripture? Answering the above question.

The Ghanaian Christians argue that the stigmatization of suspected witches and their hosting at various witch camps/prayer sanctuaries, when assessed holistically, negates the victims the love God requests that is conveyed concerning one another. Christ stated that the greatest of all his commandment is ‘love’. This love surpasses all the other laws in the Scriptures (Mark 12:28-31). Therefore, both denominations (Pentecostal and Presbyterians) stated in the interview that the scriptures frowns on all beliefs and practices that hurt or inflicts pains on fellow human beings and deprives them of the love of God which is the fundamental theme of the Gospel (John 3:16).⁸⁶

Despite this unity in thinking there were some few exceptions during the interview of some of the Christians. Pastor Kokomlemle of the Divine healing ministry explained he would not classify the power of witches as bad rather the person with power determines if the power is deployed positively or negatively. He argues that the power of a witch was also created by God and the Bible said everything God created in the beginning was good until the fall of man. This fall has affected a lot of things such as the power of nature. The power of a witch is an example of powers gotten from nature and provided the persons gifted with this power treat with a clean and pure heart there is nothing absolutely wrong with. He stated: *“Look am a Pastor but I also have gift handed to me by my grandmother for she passed on. This gift some may call it to be witchcraft but the truth through this power many people members in my church*

⁸⁶ Interview Data analyses from both the Pentecostal and the Presbyterian denominations in Ghana.

have been healed from different illness. I combine the two – the Bible and the power of nature because I believe they are both from God”⁸⁷ In the case witchcraft is good except one manipulates for evil purposes. Nature has a way of giving birth to gifted people and this people are endowed with special power to help the inhabitant of the earth. He belongs the school of thought that everything (both the good and the bad) was created by God and for him this includes witchcraft power (1Col. 1:16-17).

Mr. Snit Flat Adenta will state contrary to the above opinion by stating that “there is nothing like good or bad witch, white or black because the scriptures frowns against all of it. Anything not approved scriptures must not be entertained in the church.”⁸⁸

- **Behaving** (*rites, practices, traditions and morality in personal communal life*):

In the area of how they are to approach or behave towards people accused of witchcraft. They also explained in their conversation with the researcher that Holy Spirit also is the giver of love to mankind (Romans 5:5). If a custom in Ghana demands that accused witches should be beaten and driven to a witch camp, it should be assessed in the light of love. Therefore, they will examine this situation from the following constituents: how much love is embedded in beating a fellow human being because others accuse him/her of being a witch? As a Christian who is born again by the Holy Spirit, how much love is found in accusing someone and dispossessing them of their rights, families and properties?

Mr. Legon during his interview was grieved and almost felling guilty about how he lost his immediate brother to high fever and appendicitis. He asserted that the disease was alleged to be an attack from the witches in their family and by the time they realized medical attention

⁸⁷ Pastor Kokomlemlle. Divine healing ministry. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 27th June,2024.

⁸⁸ Mr. Adenta. Faithway Christian Church- Adenta Fafraha. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 20th June,2024.

was the antidote, it was too late. The above scenario project how many potential Ghanaians that might have lost they're for that matter due to ignorance.

- **Experiencing** (*differences between worldviews and context, Testimonies tied to one's faith*):

Mrs. James town one of the interviewees, from the Presbyterian denomination stated that “the average Ghanaian Christian has not totally lost their identity in ATR even though they now report to a new Master (Christ). For this reason, we believe every human have the negative and positive power around them. They simple have work on their mindset and which power or forces they want to attract to themselves. Therefor the church is much aware of this reality but the only problem is how active is the church spiritually to fight this dark powers(witchcraft)”.⁸⁹

In the next section data analysis, I will be looking on how should these answers be understood and interpreted on the various interviews conducted via zoom video meeting to give a significant information on witch-hunting in Ghana.

Data Analysis:

- **Believing**

When it comes to the aspect of Believing, the understanding from the data presented is that Christians are not unaware of the activities of the devil which includes witchcraft. Witchcraft is a reality that even the Bible acknowledges both in the Old and New Testament (1Sam. 15:23, Rev.18:23). The Bible on several occasions narrates the activities of this demonic forces and warns Christians to abstain from its enticement. None of the data presented showed that the Christian respondents were ignorant of the activities of witchcraft activities in Ghana. They acknowledge that these forces are agents of darkness and only seek to destroy and inflict people with pain. The two denominations gave their common affirmation of the

⁸⁹ Mrs. James Town Faithway Christian Church- Adenta Fafraha. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 22th June,2024.

reality of witchcraft and witch-hunting in Ghana. Christians are allowed to participate in witchcraft activities because their source of power is not from God.

- **Belonging**

In the aspect of Belonging, the shows that the Presbyterians were more liberal in their position on witchcraft. They will rather approach this matter with caution because they are of the view they might not be as harmful as perceived by the Pentecostals. To the Presbyterian, the witch is first God's creation (he is human) before it becomes contaminated or posed with dark magic. Besides that God in his wisdom blesses people with other gifts they came with naturally and it is not harmful to humanity it should not be termed as witchcraft simply because we lack a better explanation for it.

The Pentecostal respondents were stricter on matters about witchcraft membership or practices. It is a demonic power from the pitch of hell and must not be attained anywhere among the saints of God. About 80% of the Pentecostal services in Ghana are mostly deliverance sections to either spiritually fish out members of this cult or deliver people believed to be afflicted by this cult members. The appears that the Pentecostals lay much more emphasis on the authority to protect and cast out demons than the Presbyterian denomination respondents interviewed. However, both were very clear in their reactions that witchcraft is not from God but the devil.

- **Behaving**

In the matters of Behaving, much emphasis was laid on the love of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit to guide and protect the saints from all the schemes of the enemy which includes witchcraft. While there is a radical action in the matter of witch-hunting by Pentecostals, the Presbyterians will condemn and seek the abolishment of witch-hunting people but rather show them love to give the room to repent and be saved back to the Lord. The Pentecostal from the data presented appears to witch-hunt witches spiritually rather than

physically abusing them. This is the reason why there are more prayer camps in most Pentecostal churches and none in the Presbyterian churches of Ghana. It is understood (by the Pentecostals) that witches are stubborn evil forces that must not be entertained in the church and members of the church should stay detached from people suspected until they are delivered. The data collected, also showed that some Pentecostal churches will even resort to praying over items such as oil, water, the Pastor's flyers or stickers, etc., and sell it to their member to be used as protection against witchcraft attacks.

- **Experiencing**

In relation to the experiencing aspect, the Presbyterians and the Pentecostals may agree on the reality and the potency of the witchcraft activities in Ghana but approaches to handle the issue differ. They both are of the worldview that the authority of Christ overshadows any other authority but how they both see and operate the power or authority of Christ is different. Witchcraft is evil and the source does not come from an affirmation of both denomination's worldview.

3.4 Summary:

While the Ghanaians Pentecostals believes in the notion that witchcraft can influence Christians if they don't discern their nature and operational strategies to be more spiritual than physical, the Presbyterians believes a Christian does not primarily need to discern the nature and operations of witches to be able to resist their impacts. Therefore, the most important thing that should be an area of interest to the Ghanaian Christian, is to know Jesus Christ better (Philip. 3:10) and not witchcraft and its nature.

CHAPTER FOUR

INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION / THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

4.0. Introduction

Having analysed the various data presented in the previous Chapter, this Chapter will be dedicated to discussion/interpretation of the African theological reflections and the Biblical theological perspectives on witchcraft and witch-hunting. It is essential to note that all of this discussion and reflection will be done based on the information presented in the earlier chapters of the thesis. One major question can deduct from the data presented in the earlier chapter. How do Ghanaian Christians base on their denominations understand and perceive the concept of witchcraft and react to witchcraft-hunting or accusations? In as much as the answer to the above question may vary from one denomination to the other, there could also be common ground for them as well. To answer the above question, we will need to understand the Christian ethics.

Christian Ethics

“Ethics refers to the theoretical overview of morality, a theory or system or code.”⁹⁰ Whiles morality is the actual human conduct assessed from the backdrop of its right or wrong and good or evil, ethics are either personal or societal. Different environments determine whether personal ethics will be given priority over society’s ethics or the other way around. The African society concept of “I am because we are”⁹¹ enlightens citizenries of the priority given to the society over the individual ethical standards. Ghana practically derives its ethical codes from customs, oral traditions, stories or tales, taboos, myths, legends, songs or riddles, liturgies, proverbs, riddles, wise sayings and the society as a component. The

⁹⁰ Samuel Waje Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics* (MI: Hippo Books, 2008), 5.

⁹¹ John S. Mbiti, *African Philosophy and Religion* (New York: Doubleday, 1970)

society/community is essential in African ethics, hence the idea of “we” and “us” is imbedded in the citizens’ right from childhood.⁹²

Christian ethics on the other hand derive its ethical codes from Christian theology which admits that Christian ethics must come from God through special and general revelation. Special revelation can be both verbal (written word) and personal (word personified),⁹³ which implies that it emanates from scriptures and the person of Christ. According to Grenz, “If we would develop a Christian ethic today, we must engage with scripture.”⁹⁴ The model of Christian ethics in the Ghanaian Christian diaspora is Christ Jesus and the rule is from God while the power to rejuvenate the Christian to persistently apply the ethical codes is the Holy Spirit. General revelation is God’s revelation of himself through nature (This is generally accepted by all denominations in Ghana).⁹⁵ It is also very essential to observe that most Christian ethics applied in the Ghanaian churches are a combination of Christian ethics with African ethics.

Therefore, based on the above stated knowledge, most Ghanaian Christians will react to the beliefs in witchcraft and hunting differently from ATR perspectives. They will look at the whole idea through the lens of what the Bible says about relating to each other. There are two schools of thought in this aspect (the Presbyterians and the Pentecostals). The first group (Pentecostals) advocates that witchcraft and its activities should not be entertained anywhere close to the church or the Christian faith as it is an act of abomination before God (Lev. 19:26, 20:27). People who practice this dark magic are evil and agents of darkness and must not be taken lightly. Their major argument is based on scriptural support “Thou shalt not suffer

⁹² Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, 21.

⁹³ *Ibid*, 47.

⁹⁴ Stanley J. Grenz, *Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics*, (IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1997), 96.

⁹⁵ Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, 46.

a witch to live” (Exodus 22:18) and other supporting scriptures such as lev. 19:26, 20:27). The concept or notion is based on the narrative of the Old Testament; King Saul embarking on a campaign to execute all persons who practiced witchcraft/sorcery and those who had familiar spirits in the land of Israel. Saul might have taken a cue from the scriptures below as far as destroying witches are concerned. Also, in the book of Leviticus 20:27 the scripture states, “A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them.”⁹⁶

The above passages imply a kind of eradication schema regarding those possessing witchcraft and familiar spirits. However, can we say this be equated to the current challenge of Africa (Ghana) and brutalities propelled on alleged witches? What is happening in Africa is like history repeating itself (The above scriptures will be later addressed hermeneutically in the Chapter 4).⁹⁷

Presently in Ghana among the Pentecostal denominations, prayer camps/ mountians are in existence to house accused or suspected witches who are often beaten and chastised, dumped there despite the difficult situation prevalent due to the lack of access to the basic needs of humankind.⁹⁸ This sect of Christian will go length to distance or totally avoid family and friends suspected to be a witch or affiliated to anyone known to practice witchcraft.

The second school of thought (Presbyterians) are those who even though they have the consciousness of the reality of witchcraft and its activities extends love to them. They view the belief and activities of witches in Ghana to be grounded on two basic truths: Love and the Holy

⁹⁶ Philip Gibbs, Beyond the Fence: ‘Confronting Witchcraft Accusations in the Papua New Guinea Highlands’ *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 39(1), (1973): 19-22; C. Tsekpoe, *Response to witchcraft and Demonology in Ghana*, L. and C. R. C. Elorm-donkor, Ed.. (Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2018), 144.

⁹⁷ Gibbs, Beyond the Fence: ‘Confronting Witchcraft Accusations in the Papua New Guinea Highlands’,144.

⁹⁸ Priest, R. J. et al, *Witchcraft and Mission Studies* 2.

Spirit. Their confidence is built on the quality of love embedded in the entire scripture which is Love (1 Corinthians 13:13).⁹⁹ These group of Christians will argue that, unlike what we see in the Old Testament, the New Testament does not approve the annihilation or torturing of witches. Onyinah suggests that the term “Witch” is not found in the synoptic gospels.¹⁰⁰ Christ made no mention to the term witchcraft in the scriptures and consequently did not recommend any form of endorsement for believed or accused witches. People who were found to be demon posed were delivered by Christ and his Apostles without any form of victimization or physical attack. The persons and the demons were treated separately because the persons are more of a good container containing a toxic liquid or content. This two can be separated without destroying the container. Christ demonstrated this throughout his encounter with the demon afflicted fellows (Luke 4:31-44).¹⁰¹

Akrong in his worldview asserts that the belief in witchcraft and its related practices, which in modern times has expanded so much prominence, especially in Neo-Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Ghana. He makes emphasis that this attitude or mindset is sustained by what he calls the ‘dualistic worldview’ in which one attributes all misfortunes to the work of evil forces and witches. For this reason, Christianity is perceived as the religion with the power to deal with the intimidations/ attacks of witches. Moving forward, he will then define the neo-witchcraft attitude or mindset as an informational structure/scheme for tackling matters of misfortune and disasters.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Quayesi-Amakye, J. *Coping with evil in Ghanaian Pentecostalism*. Exchange, 43, (2014):254–272. & Grenz, *Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics*,277.

¹⁰⁰ Onyinah, O. *Akan Witchcraft and The Concept of Exorcism in The Church of Pentecost*. (The University of Birmingham, 2002), 239.

¹⁰¹ Onyinah, *Akan Witchcraft and The Concept of Exorcism in The Church of Pentecost*,239.

¹⁰² Abraham Akrong (2000), Neo-Witchcraft Mentality in Popular Christianity, *Research Review New Series*, 16, 1–12.

He also attempts further to hypothesize that witchcraft mindset in modern Ghanaian society is labeled as the philosophy of evil because it allows its devotees to concretize evil by making it specific and identifiable with an external agent (witch). He traces this neo-witchcraft mindset as firing up from the traditional African metaphysical formation of the world.¹⁰³

Finally, he traces the neo-witchcraft mindset to the following structures rooted in the African worldview: African ontology and metaphysics of being and the Principle of identity. In agreement with John Mbiti, he affirms that the African mind sees reality as interwoven with spiritual categories. By this he meant matter is active because it is permeated with an internal power or spiritual energy. Furthermore, he authenticates the mentality from the principle of identity which spells out that “I am because we are and since we are therefore I am.”¹⁰⁴ He explains the principle of identity by the old Ghanaian adage which states ‘once you are born, both your enemy and your destiny helpers are born with you’.

4.1. The Ghanaian /African theological reactions to Witchcraft and Witch-Hunting

Ghanaian African theology

Based on our previous chapters, it is now clear to observe that the Ghanaian-African theological response to the concept or the ideology of witchcraft is somewhat imbedded in the belief in a supernatural power that persons become possessed of, and which can act through the possessed.¹⁰⁵ For a fact, the average Ghanaian generally believes that witchcraft forces are obtained from what is known as 'juju' or black magic. In an African theological concept, Africans probing about the reality and actual existence of witches and witchcraft is not of much relevance because Africans will certainly not ask such questions, because to them witches and witchcraft are part of their everyday reality. Therefore, questions are typical the westerner's

¹⁰³ Akrong, *Neo-Witchcraft Mentality in Popular Christianity*, 1–12.

¹⁰⁴ John S. Mbiti, *African Philosophy and Religion*, (New York: Doubleday, 1970), 36.

¹⁰⁵ Kwasi Atta Agyapong, *Witchcraft in Ghana: Belief, Practices and Consequences* (Accra: Noyam publications, 2021), 19.

questions. African intellectuals persistently complain about the ignorance, prejudice and falsification that still emanate from modern books, newspapers and conversations on this subject by Europeans. Mibiti will argue that many distorted ideas that prevail still prevail among missionaries and European popular writers are annoying.¹⁰⁶

Africans know that “witchcraft” is not restricted to some strange old woman somewhere in the night. It is ubiquitous. It can be witnessed in all areas of life and in all aspects of social life. No situation can claim to be free of “witchcraft” All people can, for some reason or another, engage in “witchcraft”. “Witchcraft” is therefore not a craft or an art. It bears witness to the mystery that people harm others and destroy human relationships and the harmony of society for reasons not always known to us. Africans explain evil as an anthropological reality. The source of evil never lies with God or the “devil”, but can always be traced to humans themselves.¹⁰⁷

However, in African theology the question still remains: Why do people harm other people? An African theological reaction/ answer to the above question is *jealousy* as it is jealousy that drives people to harm others. Jealousy causes people to hate others and to destroy lives. It forms the basis of fear and the obstacle for co-operation.

By indicating “jealousy” as the most profound cause of “witchcraft”, Africans concentrate on one very important aspect of evil. By attributing it to jealousy, they stress the fact that most of the time witchcraft (as well as other acts of evil) is not the result of legitimate anger, but arises from the urge to harm.¹⁰⁸

The issue is that other people are more successful than you are and who have better looks than you have. Hence, “witchcraft” is a yearning, a longing, and a passion to harm others who have more than you and who achieve more than you do. “Witchcraft” therefore is a metaphor for one aspect of human “sinfulness” that we as Christians would term the “Cain-factor” (God warning him of feeding that evil lurks, thus evil is manifesting into the jealousy in the heart of Cain).¹⁰⁹ Paul refers to this yearning to do evil (jealousy) the counterparts of fruit

¹⁰⁶ IWC Van Wyk, *African witchcraft in theological perspective*, (Hervormde Teologiese Kollege: University of Pretoria, January 2009), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/45681366_African_witchcraft_in_theological_perspective (accessed June 17, 2024), 16-28.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 15.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 16.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 16.

of the Spirit, namely products of the flesh (1 Cor.3:1-4). The African theological reactions of “witchcraft” does not only have similarities with certain facets of the Christian concept of “sin”, but also with certain facets of the concept of “original sin”. There is the awareness in both Africans and Christians that the potential to do evil vests with all. Africans know that anyone could be a witch or could become one. Therefore, the theological reaction is that every person is a potential witch.¹¹⁰ Therefore, the certainty of witchcraft in both the Ghanaian ATR and Christian perspective has been established in this research.¹¹¹

Ghanaian Christian theological Reflections

For this reason, one would have thought that since the Ghanaian churches/ Christians have accepted witchcraft and witch-hunting as a reality, they will therefore seek ways of tackling it effectively. However, a careful analysis of the data collected and presented in this research also shows this phenomenon has overwhelmed the churches in Ghana. Hence, most churches/ leaders have flopped in providing adequate theological explanations for the predominance of evil as well as the ultimate cause of death, sickness, and other misfortunes. It has been well established in the previous chapters that also the churches are not able to subdue the witch-hunt phenomenon in Ghana.¹¹²

Even though most of the respondents in the interview acknowledged the fact that the concept of God, in the African (Ghana inclusive) traditional viewpoint is a God of mercy and loves his children, and by implication, He cannot be the cause of misfortune, sickness, untimely death, or calamity in the lives the people He loves. This means even though what a man goes

¹¹⁰ Van Wyk - ‘African witchcraft in theological perspective,16-28.

¹¹¹ Kwasi Atta Agyapong, *Witchcraft in Ghana: Belief, Practices and Consequences* (Accra: Noyam publications, 2021), 19.

¹¹² Agyapong, *Witchcraft in Ghana: Belief, Practices and Consequences*, 19-20. & Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, 383.

through could as a result of God's permissible will (like the case of Job), He himself cannot or be the cause of the evil that befall his people. This is because he is the God of love and in Him is life (John 1:4). Therefore, Kunhiyop will argue that this love from God by extension, should be felt by others by Christians.¹¹³

The Lapses of the Church

However, it was observed from the data collected that the Ghanaian Church has in some way failed in this aspect of demonstrating God's love to victims of witch-hunting. This is because the church has not given an adequate or well-balanced explanation for the root(s) of evil in the Ghanaian community.¹¹⁴ Having given an adequate reflection on the various interviewees and various literature reviews, I will argue that the reason why the Ghanaian churches have not given an adequate explanation or solution for the root of evil in the Ghanaian community concerning witchcraft practices and witch-hunting phenomenon can be traced to the missionary events in Ghana some years back.

The oversight was that the missionaries in many ways failed to understand or appreciate the African worldview, rather they imposed most of their Western worldviews. Therefore, was not an effective contextualization of the Gospel to the Ghanaian Traditional Belief system already in place. For example, the missionaries attributed sicknesses and death to be natural occurrences and paid not much attention to spiritual realities that could be the cause as was believed by the local Christians and non-Christians. Therefore, the missionaries put up hospitals in most parts of Ghana to deal with the health. They also failed address the jealousy factor that was common with the unbeliever who have not encounter Christ (these people filled with envy, hatred, and greed for one another) and leads him/her to accuse or attack his fellow Ghanaian with diabolic powers. They failed to understand that jealousy in itself is a spiritual

¹¹³ Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, 383

¹¹⁴ Samuel Waje Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics* (Nairobi: WordAlive Publishers, 2008), 383

mental illness that could spread like cancer in the heart of its victims. People who are exposed or afflicted with this spiritual mental illness could become an instrument of destruction to themselves. To connote jealousy, pride, envy and hatred are the deadly sins that as matter of fact leads to spiritual unhealthiness and illness (James 3:14-16,4:11,1Cor.3:3, Prov.14:30). It is this cancer of jealousy that will lead a person to go seek for spiritual charm or juju to attack another innocent(bewitchment).

Now to keep a good balance, it is very essential to state that the building of hospitals by missionary in a way impact the health conditions of the Ghanaians positively in some sense. As of that time some epidemic sicknesses such malaria, diarrhea, cholera, etc. were cured by this missionary hospital. The problem however was their total rejection of any assertion that sicknesses can be caused by evil spirits (witches) as mere superstition. Negating the Ghanaian culture and tradition, the missionaries failed to address the spiritual needs of Ghanaians to combat the two main issues, thus: the dark powers of witchcraft (fear of the unknown) and the fallen nature of man (Jealousy factor).¹¹⁵

Apparently, the dogmatic(theology), liturgical, and pastoral customs deployed by the missionaries had no dwelling (they appeared very strange) for the belief in the reality of witchcraft activities leading to the witch-hunting phenomenon. Later, when the missionaries had left (Ghana then still known as the Gold Coast), the churches established by them were handed over to the natives of the country. Nevertheless, the hermeneutical, theological, and pastoral structure this mission churches inherited from these European missionaries continued to outshine the reality of witchcraft activities. For example, the Roman Catholic Church, the

¹¹⁵ Daniel Jsutice Eshun. *Speaking for Ourselves: The Ghanaian Encounter with European Missionaries – Sixteenth–Twenty-first Centuries*,1-26, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/357312712_Speaking_for_Ourselves_The_Ghanaian_Encounter_with_European_Missionaries_-_Sixteenth-Twenty-first_Centuries (Accessed 27th July,2024).

Methodist Church of Ghana, and the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, were originally unwilling to adjust their ministries to consider the Ghanaian traditional worldview.¹¹⁶

At a point, the ministry of healing and deliverance practices were not a focus of their pastoral care. Subsequently, the African Initiated Churches (AIC) surfaced and tackled the spiritual needs of their members. Consequently, as members of the mission churches began to join the AIC, the mission churches were moved to now consider making amendments to their hermeneutical, pastoral, and liturgical traditions to give room for the Ghanaian worldview, especially as related to the impact of the spiritual realm on the physical world. The reality is that the conversion from African primitive religion to Christianity has not reformed the belief that the spiritual world decrees whatever transpires in the physical world. For this reason, the average Ghanaian believer still holds that things do not just happen. By implication whatever happens in the physical world is a manifestation of what has already taken place in the spiritual realm.¹¹⁷

The Present state of the Ghanaian Churches/Christians

As a result, the Ghanaian (African) Christians are likely to pretend for the sake of their denomination that they do not believe nor fear the activities of witchcraft, “while in his own private life, he resorts to practices which are the results of such beliefs.”¹¹⁸ Due to this deep-rooted worldview, Ghanaian Christians continue to accommodate the fear that these invisible forces can affect them negatively even in their state of being disciples of Christ. This could push most of them to passively support that alleged witches should be hunted out of society.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Godwin Kofi Ahlijah. Challenges and Setbacks of Missions in Ghana(pdf). 1-6, Retrieved from: <https://ghanamissionshandbook.gemagh.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Challenges-and-Setbacks.pdf>

¹¹⁷ J. K. Asamoah-Gyadu, “Pentecostalism and the Missiological Significance of Religious Experience: The case of Ghana’s Church of Pentecost,” *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology*. vol. XII, no.1 and 2, (2002): 29-34.

¹¹⁸ Asamoah-Gyadu, “Pentecostalism and the Missiological Significance of Religious Experience: The case of Ghana’s Church of Pentecost,” 29-34.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 29-34.

The Ghanaian Christian cannot discharge the existence and operations of witches and wizards as a result of the failure of the church to accept the reality of witchcraft and provide adequate teachings about it, many Christians seek explanations for the problem of evil from non-Christians and then accept worldly standards and demonic enlightenments regarding the source of evil. It is necessary to state that the Ghanaian Christian acknowledging the existence of witchcraft does not contradict the teaching of the Bible. From the Ghana Christian perspectives of witchcraft examined in earlier chapters attest to the reality of witchcraft and other related practices like mediums, spirits, and omens. Therefore, having acknowledged this fact, the next task is to provide biblical-theological teachings about witchcraft and witch-hunting, starting with the hermetical analysis of vital scriptures such as Exodus 22:18(the history of Saul and Endor) and Deuteronomy 18:10-12 which distinguishes legislation and rituals, the authority of believers over Satan and all his cohorts (witch-craft incantations). The above descriptions will be the focus of the next section.

4. 2. Witchcraft and Witch-hunting / Biblical-theological- perspectives.

In Pentecostal Ghanaian churches, it is very important to pray almost 70% of your prayer sections dedicated to praying earnestly to fight and destroy (prayer is given to the death and destruction of these persons who are seen as the most wicked in the society) all the works witchcraft operations and any form of occultism. One of the main passages from Scriptures that is used to support these prayers is Exodus 22:18(Thou shall not suffer the witch to live). It is significant to remark quite a number of average Ghanaian Christians consider the KJV is the oldest among English Bible versions. For this reason, their beliefs and practices are on the renderings of the KJV.

This setback stems from the KJV rendering of the meaning of the קַדְשָׁה as “witch” which many ordinary Ghanaian Christians interpret as *obayifo*. So, in this second paragraph, I

tackle the meaning of *מְכַשְׁפָּה* against the general traditional interpretation of the term by many ordinary Ghanaian Christians to mean “social destruction to life and property of people through mysterious powers inherent in the subject.”¹²⁰

The term *מְכַשְׁפָּה* is a figurative term used by the author of Exod 22:18 to expose the semantic range of idolatrous practices condemned by Yahweh among the Israelites. This understanding is made clear when the term is implied as synonymous with other OT-related terms used within their context.¹²¹

The focus substance of Ex. 22:18 within its own genre and context nonetheless gives it a deliberation broader than the Pentateuch but into other OT books which incorporate the Historical Books as well as the Prophetic Books. By this statement, I mean that the subject of divination, sorcery, magic, fortune-telling, soothsaying, spiritism, and the like are well-defined persistent issues that the prophets reprimanded and are found in the sections of the Hebrew Scriptures.¹²² In connotation, it is possible that the term *מְכַשְׁפָּה* at the time of redaction, had a broader semantic meaning than its denotative meaning.

¹²⁰ Johannes Christaller, *Dictionary of the Asante and Fante Language* (Basel: The Basel Evangelical Missionary Society, 1933), 11.

¹²¹ Silva Moises calls these “*contiguous relations*” or “*improper synonyms*.” See Silva Moises, *Biblical Words and Their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983); see also Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 85.

¹²² See Osborn and Hatton, *Exodus*, 531; Osborn and Hatton note that there are several places where the different literary traditions have been joined together unevenly so that a literary “seam” has been formed. Osborn and Hatton, *Exodus*, 2.

Again, it is important to note that the same word came from the root **כָּשַׁף** which denotes “to mutter magical words or incantations,” “to practice sorcery,”¹²³ “to practice magic.”¹²⁴ Unger clarifies that the word implies “one who practices magic by using occult formulas, incantations, and mystic mutterings.”¹²⁵ Furthermore, some lexicons emphasize that the word is “probably herbs shredded into a magic brew.”¹²⁶ Kitchen will argue that this root verb “probably means ‘to cut,’ and could refer to herbs cut for charms and spells.”¹²⁷ Therefore, the root verbal term could indicate “to mutter,” and consequently “to mutter charms” whereas cutting up herbs or drugs to manufacture a magic potion,¹²⁸ a process that may as well refer to healing potions as well as to harmful mixtures.¹²⁹ It is very crucial to state that the work of King James translators had its basic weakness: “There was no standard edition of the Hebrew Masoretic text of the Old Testament.”¹³⁰

For this reason, without any straight evidence, we might assume the KJV followed the Vulgate and so translated **מְכַשֶּׁפֶה** as “witch.”¹³¹ This shows that the **מְכַשֶּׁפֶה** in Exod 22:18 does

¹²³ Terry A. Armstrong, Douglas L. Busby, and Cyril F. Carr, RHELOT: 41. The fact that this form and the entire context in which the verse appears is a matter of serious textual difficulty can be deduced from the comments of biblical scholars on this verse. See Martin Noth, *The Laws of the Pentateuch and Other Essays* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1966), 39; Ronald E. Clements, *Exodus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 145; Alan McNeill, *The Book of Exodus* (WC; London: Methuen, 1917), 135; Alan Cole, *Exodus* (TOTC; London: Tyndale Press, 1973), 173.

¹²⁴ Todd S. Beall, William A. Banks and Colin Smith, *Old Testament Parsing Guide* (rev. and updated ed.; Nashville, Tenn.: B&H Academic, 2000), 68.

¹²⁵ Merrill F. Unger, *Biblical Demonology* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1952), 153.

¹²⁶ See BDB:506; cf. Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 431- 649.

¹²⁷ Kenneth A. Kitchen, “Magic and Sorcery,” NBD2:723.

¹²⁸ BDB:506.

¹²⁹ Donald J. Bretherton, “An Invitation to Murder? A Re-Interpretation of Exodus 22:18 ‘You Shall Not Suffer a Witch to Live,’” *ExpTim* 116/5 (2005): 147.

¹³⁰ Bruce M. Metzger, *The Bible in Translation: Ancient and English Versions* (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2001), 77.

¹³¹ Bretherton, “An Invitation to Murder? A Re-Interpretation of Exodus 22:18 ‘You Shall Not Suffer a Witch to Live,’ 147.

not in any way imply what many ordinary Ghanaian Akan Christians mean by *obayifo*. For this reason, the text cannot be used to justify praying for the death of *obayifo (witches)*. Also, the phrase $\text{הַיְהוֹדֵהוּ אֱלֹהִים}$ does not necessarily mean to kill the offender. Having stated all of the explanations above does not rule out the activities of sorceresses and forms of divination against believers.¹³² It very important to state that the text in this context is not discussed with the probability that it is about a woman seducing men, adulterers, as in Malachi 3:5. She was attributed a hidden power because she exercised irresistible attracting power, she may also be the strange woman, the fornicator in Proverbs 6, 7 and 7.

In the context of Exodus 22:18, witchcraft not only does it glorifies the devil giving him the glory/honor which is due to God alone, but offers insubordination to His authority and providence over mankind. It declares war against God's government, putting His work into Satan's hand, anticipating him to do good and evil. By our law, consulting, bonding with, invoking, or depending on the help of any evil spirit to any intent whatever, and exercising any enchantment, charm, or sorcery, whereby hurt shall be done to any person, is a criminal offense, also pretending to reveal where a lost or stolen item may be found, is an iniquity punishable by the judge, and the second offence with death.¹³³

Now the law is one which, as the reader need hardly be reminded, has often been distressingly misappropriated, and led to the interment of great brutalities: witches were often burnt (Lev.19:31) and witches were, therefore, under the Jewish theocracy, like idolaters and blasphemers, to be put to death (Exodus 22:18). While Exodus 22:18 is more connected to the Legislation laws of Yahweh against any form of divinations, Deuteronomy 18 is focus on the

¹³² Bretherton, "An Invitation to Murder? A Re-Interpretation of Exodus 22:18 'You Shall Not Suffer a Witch to Live,' 147.

¹³³ Comelis Houtman, *Exodus-Historical commentary on the Old Testament* (Kok Publishing House, Kampen:1993), 1-171.

rituals forbidden by Yahweh to His people (especially the Levites and the Prophets of God). Yahweh recognizes the Israelites have a natural curiosity concerning occult/divination, and that curiosity often leads them to seek spiritually dangerous experiences. Yahweh therefore, commanded His priests to avoid dark spiritual powers and experiences altogether, to not to consult them.¹³⁴

The ongoing Spiritual Battle in the World

In Gen. 3:14-19, the pivot of the passage was to point out the good news of God's love for man and His hatred for evil (war against sin). Therefore, God declares war against sin in verse 15: It was very interesting to note that the Serpent was the only character cursed in this narrative, while Adam and Eve had to be punished for their disobedience. This clearly points God's interest to protect and safe mankind by declaring war against the devil and all his counterparts(witches). In this same verse we see the victory in the battle that God himself won for mankind through the seed that was promised. This hope of victory in verse 15 of the promised seed by implication will *crush* the Serpent by the head. This seed seems to suggest a messianic figure even though not explicit. This is also very evident in Adam when he calls Eve- 'the mother of all living/ promises (Gen. 3:20). Later Paul and the others will make references to this revelation of the 'Seed of the Woman' (Rom 3:13, Mark. 16:18, Luke 10:19, John 8:44, Acts 13:10, Gal. 4:4, Heb. 2:14, etc.).¹³⁵

The expectation of the messianic figure (the seed) who will come as the restorer to restore the relationship that has been long broken between man and God. Genesis 3:14-19, therefore announces God's reaction to sin and the drastic action he takes by declaring war against it, but at the same time, it also declares the divine love God has for man to have him always by His side by drawing him closer to Himself. This passage becomes a narrative of

¹³⁴ Blue Letter Bible, *Matthew Henry Commentary on Deuteronomy 18*, Retrieved from: https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Deu/Deu_018.cfm

¹³⁵ See Dr. Brink Egbert MIRT 3 PowerPoint slides on the Exegetical analysis of Genesis 3(Theological University of Kampen/Utrecht)

good news to the believer and bad news to the World because War has been declared against its moral standards. For this reason, we must join hands with the declaration of God to declare jihad-holy war against anything evil. Therefore, the battle against Satan his cohorts which includes witchcraft, diviners, sorcerers etc. is not by physical battle or physical attack as seen among the Ghanaian communities. Notwithstanding this ongoing spiritual ongoing battle, we are also called out in Rom. 16:17 to physically watch out and stay away from any persons causing division or becoming a stumbling to the true doctrine of Christ. These ongoing battles demands spiritual confrontation that is only dependent on the authority of Christ as the promised seed explicitly reflected in Gen. 3.

The Bible clearly emphasizes the believer's authority over the scheme of the devil through the power of Christ Jesus' death on the cross. Christ death on the cross signified His victory in the battle against Satan and his hosts. As seen in the Old Testament earlier, we see him projected as the warrior-King who was to crush the head of the serpent in this case Satan (Gen. 3:15 cf. Rev. 12:9).¹³⁶The scripture states “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel” (Gen.3:15). This prophecy was said after Satan took over dominion humanity through the fall of Adam. As far as the authority of Christ is concern, the head- crushing prophecy (*the protoeuangelion*, “first gospel” or “mother promise”) implies that the establishment of the messianic kingdom will be preceded by a warfare between the Messiah and Satan in which the Messiah will win a final victory over Satan and free humanity from his captivity.¹³⁷ The fact that the Messiah was to be the seed of the woman emphasizes the virgin birth which was

¹³⁶ James M. Hamilton, “The Glory of God in Salvation through Judgment: The Centre of Biblical Theology?” Tyndale Bulletin vol. 56 no.1 (2006): 57-84, 64.

¹³⁷ Phillip Ross Bethancourt, *Christ the Warrior King: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Analysis of the Divine Warrior Theme in Christology* (PhD Thesis: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011), 70

fulfilled in the conception and birth of Christ (Matt. 1:18-25). Christ's birth, life, ministry, sufferings, death and resurrection fulfilled his head-crushing ministry by which he defeated all evil forces including that of witchcraft. Afua Kuma stresses Christ's power over evil forces when she argued that, "Should the devil himself become a lion and chase us as his prey, we shall have no fear; Lamb of God! Satan says he is a wolf-Jesus stretches forth his hand, and, look: Satan is a mouse."¹³⁸ This is what the early missionaries failed to emphasize or teach their followers, rather than just brushing matters of spiritual welfare under the carpet. Also, the sinful nature of man in the context of the Ghanaian culture was not properly addressed. Matters of much concern such low self-esteem that leads many to begin to feel jealous, envy or develop hatred for other people's progress instead rejoicing with them was overlooked by the missionaries. Those who inherited this dogma also continued in the same mistakes of the missionary leading many of their members into fear and panic.

The act of jealousy and the fear of the unknown has led many to unleash attacks on many innocent souls all in the name of suspected witches. The fear is so much that, the mere seeing of cockroaches or wall geckos (*Tarentola*), rats, and cats could imply the transformation of witches from the victim's village into other objects. The tendency of Ghanaian Churches to deal adequately with the issue of witchcraft depends on their ability to know and practicalize their authority in Christ (Matt. 18:18, Phi.2:10-11, Joh.16:33, Rev.12:11). More often than not, Christians fail in spiritual battles because they fail to realize the authority that Christ has given them on earth. Sometimes, those who realize this authority do not know how to receive or implement the power that is required to enforce their authority. The next chapter which is also the last chapter of this research will be dedicated to providing some useful recommendations

¹³⁸ Afua Kuma, *Jesus of the Deep Forest: Prayers and Praises* translated by Jon Kirby (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 2011), 19.

and some pastoral-theological response to the phenomenon of witchcraft and witch-hunting in Ghana.

4.3. Summary of Findings

It is doubtful that the writer of Exd 22:18 deployed the word *מְכַשְׁפָּה* in the same sense in which the translators of the KJV (including the Vulgate and all the versions that follow them) assumed and translated the word *מְכַשְׁפָּה*, whether they founded their translations on the Masoretic text or the Septuagint or any other primeval texts. The exposition reveals that wherever the various forms of *מְכַשְׁפָּה*; appear in the scriptures, the concept is that of magic involving divination and incantation. The aim is to influence or manipulate nature to impact life generally for personal benefits and never social damage against one's neighbors or relatives. Therefore, the scriptures condemn the practices because such practice falls outside of the will of God and commandment. The phrase does not in any way imply a literal meaning to commit murder as most people in Ghana assume.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESPONSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Pastoral and Theological Response to Witchcraft Belief and Activities in Ghana.

Introduction

From the data presentation and analysis, it is evident that the reality of witchcraft and its activities in Ghana have obstructed every facet of Ghanaian life especially in the Ewe and the Akan communities. These communities' spiritual and physical development presently and the future ahead is directly contingent on the mindset of the people and their worldview of reality and spirits particularly witchcraft, which has been a major challenge in their communities. This chapter seeks to provide a pastoral and theological response to the witchcraft Phenomenon in Ghana.

Pastoral Response:

The issue of witchcraft activities and witch-hunts in Ghana is a phenomenon that has impacted every facet of Ghanaian life. As I stated earlier the historic mission churches infiltrated Ghana but could not provide the people with the antidote to their fear, but only taught them that the primitive and animistic belief was demonic, and that further strengthened their stance on witchcraft issues. Therefore, it is obvious that the spiritual and physical development of the country in the future is honestly dependent on the mindset of the people and their worldview of reality and spirits, especially witchcraft.

There could be a serious consequence in the future if the church does not rise to its calling in pastoral duties and services to the Ghanaian community. A Pastoral response should aim at assimilating the culture of the Ghanaian people which allowed them to oscillate between being Christians and addressing the fears of the Ghanaians. By this act, the people's mindset will be prepared to live a Christlike life not involving themselves in all manner of evil. For example, a pastoral response in this case will be to encourage the Church to start training its members and the public on the virtues of integrity and faithfulness to avert corruption,

nepotism, clientelism, and tribal politics which often leaves the nation with a chunk of unemployed people which increases the rate of poverty in the country. Also creating the awareness that the government cannot provide jobs for all the unemployed in the nation. For this reason, people must be taught how to take initiative in their various endeavors to remain financially independent rather than blaming their setbacks on witches.

Theological Response:

In Ghana, the percentage of Christianity is 74.9% while Islam is 15.8% and the others 4.9%.¹³⁹ Therefore, an effective theology that can develop or sustain the nation should be from the Christian perspective because they are the majority and therefore a major stakeholder in the country. A comprehensive theology should be formulated that can adequately aid Ghanaians in conquering their fears and thereby stimulate development in the country. For this reason, as the researcher, I have formulated the following theologies to respond to the Phenomenon of witchcraft belief and practice in Ghana:

Man, the image of God:

First, is the fact that man was created in the *image of God* (Gen.1:26). God in his wisdom chose the pattern in the creation of man.¹⁴⁰ Therefore, humanity is not a product of evolution as some may assume. God, who is the ultimate creator of all that exists, chooses to give mankind this earth to occupy till he comes and nurtures the land (Luke 19:13). This shows how God is always concerned about the development and growth of whatever He has entrusted to humanity. He, therefore, expects man to be a replica of him in creativity, talent, and industrious not being given to laziness (Gen. 1:27-28, Luke 19:13-20).

¹³⁹ See the prevailing Beliefs map. <https://contrib.pbslearningmedia.org/WGBH/sj14/sj14-int-religmap/index.html>

¹⁴⁰ Miller, D. L. & Scott A. *Against All Hope: Hope for Africa*, (Nairobi: Samaritan Strategy Africa Working Group, 2005),110.

God never compromises when it comes to the development and growth of individuals, communities, and nations which includes Ghana. The research revealed that the Ghanaian's belief and practice of witchcraft have affected the progress of individuals and the nation as a whole and Ghanaians ought to resort to harnessing the potential or resources implanted in them as the image of God and his representatives on earth. It is very crucial to note that in recent times the world seems to support those who are persistently developing and that explains what God said in the parable of the talent in Luke 19:24.

Ghanaians are not among the third-world countries by accident or by the design of God, but because of the worldview or paradigm that provides information on priorities. If the image of God in man is appropriately harnessed, bringing to a halt gender inequality and child bullying, the nation of Ghana will enjoy growth at both individual and national levels. For this reason, it must be clearly stated that the witchcraft phenomenon in Ghana and the way it handles human beings flout the essence of the image of God in man, and Ghana's development hinges on the need to treat fellow human beings with dignity and respect.

The authority of the Believer:

I will state emphatically that all who believed and received Christ were given the power to become the children of God (John 1:12). The number of Christians in Ghana who fear witches is alarming and they most often express their fears through their focus on worship (everything is about cast and bind). It is overwhelming to observe the keen tension in most churches when witches are being prayed against. This makes it appear as if, it's the most important thing amongst the prayer themes raised. The power given to Christians must be the focus and not witchcraft power (Rom. 8:17). As Christians we are endowed by the Holy Spirit through Christ Jesus to overcome all evil if it's not ordained by God. Ordained by God here implies, God often under his permissible will allows, believers, to go through trouble to purge themselves of all unrighteousness and also to transform their character (Jam.1:2-4,1Pet. 1:7)

The Ghanaian believer must understand and accept their authority over all powers is premised on the fact that Jesus overcame the devil on the cross at Calvary and that victory was won for all believers (Colossian 2:14). This authority can only be effectively applied by putting the full amour of God.

Confronting the ongoing Battle with full Amour of God:

In Eph. 6:10-18, Paul calls on us believers to find their strength in the Lord by putting on the complete spiritual amour of God. This is because we wrestle against not flesh and blood but against principalities and dark powers in the high places. Emphatically, the highlighting is on God's great power for this fight, and hence Paul calls our attention to the understanding of this central point made in his earlier prayer for all believers (1:19-2:10). In addition to divine strength, he states that we will need the full armor (defensive and offensive) which is made available by God to every believer. This armour will turn out to be *of God* in the further sense that it is the armor he wears when he sets out in judgment and salvation (Is. 59:17). Therefore, this sort of armour will be of use given the nature of the opposition: the devil and his powers (v.11).¹⁴¹ It is a spiritual armour not a physical armor. This simply means the battle against witchcraft in Ghana does not require any form of physically attacking people with stones, swords, or any form of brutality(witch-hunt), but rather is a spiritual ongoing battle that require the spiritual(armour) belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, fitted feet of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and finally the sword of the spirit which is the word of God.

This therefore implies that, witches have no strong hold on the lives of believers because they are secured in Christ Jesus. Finally, believers must know that the battle between man and the evil powers of this world is not for Christians to fight, Christians only need to

¹⁴¹ Lynn H. Cohick, *The Letters to Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: William.B.Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2020), 480-521.

appropriate the victory won by Christ to their advantage (Ps.91, Isa.49:26). The right to Christ's victory is the "Sonship" to God (Romans 8:17). If believers will understand the work of Calvary and accept it, with all its rights and privileges, witchcraft belief and activities will not be their nightmare. I believe this stated pastoral and theological response to the belief and activities of witchcraft in Ghana will effectively help Ghanaians overcome the fear of life-threatening forces and thereby promote growth and development in the nation if observed. **5.2.**

Recommendations

After investigating and analysing the data gathered and presented, the following recommendations are suggested to tackle the witchcraft belief and witch-hunt phenomenon in Ghana, especially among the Ewes and the Akan tribes. In this case, it has been observed that females have become the body of witchcraft accusation/hunting. I recommend that law enforcement help bring it to a halt as that may suggest hatred or prejudice against women, typically exhibited by men (misogyny). I will propose that gender-inclusive programs should be enhanced and possibly added to the school curriculum (both government and private schools) and taught from the Playschool level to the university level to subdue the issue of male dominance over females in the Ghanaian community. These implementations could serve as the mouthpiece for the marginalized (females, children, and the poor) in the Ewe and the Akan societies who are most often victims of witchcraft accusations and end up being attacked.

Secondly, the Ghanaian churches should come up with strategies to take out all the children housed in witch camps and relocate them. I believe this enables these kids to also have access to education in the interest of Ghanaian society and the individuals involved. This is because children who are often neglected or denied their right to equal education and basic human needs usually turn out to be liabilities to the nation instead of assets hence the need to dispossess the witch camps of the hostage children.

Thirdly, both the government and the Ghanaian church should work together to make sure all individuals who pervert or misrepresent the orders of the civilization and blame them on witches should not be considered as an excuse at all but made to face the law without any religious sentiments. This is most average Ghanaians would beg to be forgiven when they violate the laws of the land on the premise, that the committed act was as a result of witches or evil spirits that possessed them. I am not by this in any way implying that evil spirits cannot take hold of an individual to commit a blunder, but the question is if all Ghanaians are to be possessed and act otherwise, what would be the story of Ghana? Therefore, it is the responsibility of every Ghanaian citizen to work hard to succeed. This will prevent somebody's negligence be covered to blame them on witches as the case has always been in Ghana.

Fourthly, the churches must wake from their slumber to correct the mistakes of their predecessors (the early Missionaries). They must recognize the reality of witchcraft activities in the country and first acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the healer and he is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). That notwithstanding, medical attention is not something the Bible speaks against. Paul the Apostle admonished Timothy to take some medications because of his sickness (1 Timothy 5:23). There should be a well-balanced theology to tackle the phenomenon of witchcraft and witch-hunting in Ghana. They should be prepared to educate their members to also wake up from their ignorance. This is because it is possible that most of the sicknesses they claim to be witchcraft-induced can be scientifically diagnosed and treated. The churches, government, institutions, and other social firms should strive to educate the Ghanaian community on the need to seek medical attention when they are sick and stop the chaining of mentally deranged people at traditional shrines, prayer camps, Mallams, etc.

For example, in most cases, some of the people accused of witchcraft or attacked are victims of mental disorders such as autism, dementia, depression, panic attacks, hallucinations, high fever, etc. Therefore, the church must seek to put love and the Holy Spirit ahead of all

ethical decisions. This is because, in the presence of love, violent acts will not be perpetrated against persons accused of witchcraft to the extent of driving them out of their communities and denying them their basic human rights. Love should be forefront of all ethical decisions. Finally, Ghanaian Christian leaders should be prepared to accept and accommodate people who fear witchcraft as having genuine problems that need to be worked on.¹⁴² I recommend that leaders diligently offer solutions for people by using the word of God to address the issues of poverty, sickness, barrenness, servitude, and all forms of human affliction. In the next section, I will be providing a pastoral and theological response to the witchcraft/ witch-hunting phenomenon. It will discuss the authority of the believer in Christ Jesus over any form of demonic enchantment and the love of God that needs to be extended to everyone by the way we treat each other.

5.3. Conclusions

The research after investigating the research question, found out that although the scriptures confirm the reality of witchcraft practices, the Christian faith deems witchcraft as absolutely wicked, malicious, and evil. The Ghanaian ATR reveals that witchcraft goes beyond people practicing dark magic. Jealousy is termed as an of witchcraft, people who begin to feel jealous of other wellbeing or progress are likely to develop strong hatred. This jealousy then leads them to conceive all manners evil plans to hurt their friends, families etc. just because their relatives or friends are doing better than them. ATR sees this act of jealousy one the root of witchcraft. It is very important emphasis that, Christians faith firmly condemns and prohibits believers from practicing any form of witchcraft dark magic or even be given to jealousy, envy, stubbornness, hatred, etc. (Prov.27:4, Exd. 20:17, Gal.5:20-21). Secondly, it was also revealed

¹⁴² Anderson, A. *Witchdemonology, witchcraft and deliverance in African Pentecostalism*. (L. & C. R. C. Elorm-donkor, Ed.). Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2018.

that both witchcraft-hunting and accusations and their successive penalties on the respondents and their families may comprise human rights violations, interruption to social life, disorder of interpersonal relationships, and backward commercial growth in a given economy of Ghanaian society.

Finally, it was revealed that belief in witchcraft disturbs and may impact negatively on the spiritual growth of some Ghanaian Christians. Therefore, the most suitable solution to this situation is to recommend that the church, while accommodating the certainty of witchcraft practice, should improve or develop effective mechanisms and encourage teachings that will emphasize how believers can employ their authority in Christ to overcome their fears of the unknown dark powers (effect of witchcraft on their lives). The research of this project strongly holds that such teachings will help believers in the Ghanaian community to demonstrate genuine love and compassion to victims accused of being involved in witchcraft and then live conscientiously under God's guidance through the influence of the Holy Spirit to improve their lives. Again, the church is encouraged to reunite with those accused as witches and wizards, defend and arbitrate on their behalf against being treated unlawfully (Witch-hunted), and provide them with necessary spiritual and physical backing.

5.4. Suggestions for Further Research

Having analyzed the entire process of this research, the researcher therefore gives the following suggestions for further research should this research be simulated, or a follow-up study be undertaken. First, I will suggest that the number of participants from each interview should be increased to verify if there would be variety in the results because participants from each church gave similar answers. This research was placed mainly on the church's response to the witchcraft activities and witch-hunting in the Ghanaian Ewe and Akan Communities. However, the scope of this region can be extended for more elaborate results. Also, a further study can investigate the area of the Government's response to the issue of witch-hunting in Ghana. Finally, the future researcher should devote more time to field research as well as

finding more relevant books that could give him/her an in-depth understanding of the above recommended area for future studies.

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INTERVIEWS:

Mr. Accra New Town (a human activist) working with UNESCO- Ghana. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 05th June 2024

Dapaa Eunice Ohene. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 14th June 2024.

Mr. Accra New Town (a human activist) working with UNESCO- Ghana. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 05th June 2024.

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Johannes J.A Colijn. Testing the Waters: Infant Baptism as a Case Study for Doing Reformed Theology Interculturally. PhD Thesis (24th October 2023),18-25.

Madam Kanashie. A supermarket Vendor at the Kanashie Market. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 05th June 2024

Malam Madina. A Traditional Witch Doctor. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 18th June,2024

Data was collected from various respondents on the matter of the morality and rites of witchcraft practices in the Ghanaian community. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 18th June,2024

Miss. Adenta is an ordinary Class Teacher. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 20th June, 2024

Prophet Nsawam. General oversea of Adonai Prophetic International Ministries. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 05th June 2024

Madam Makorla. A Church member of the Church of the Presbyterian church of God. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 19th June 2024.

Mr. Madina Zongo. A presiding Elder in the Fire Mega Ministries. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 27th June 2024.

Mr. Snit Flat Adenta. Faithway Christian Church- Adenta Fafraha. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 20th June 2024.

Pastor Kokomleml. Divine healing ministry. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 27th June 2024.

Mrs. James Town Faithway Christian Church- Adenta Fafraha. Telephonic Interview via Zoom by Researcher, 22nd June 2024.

Appendices

Interview Questionnaire

By participating in this survey, you consent to your answers being collected anonymously by the Researcher of this Research for reference/quotation in his research project: A Theological Reflection on attitudes towards Witchcraft from Ghana Christians Perspectives (A Case Study of the Ewe and the Akan Tribe of Ghana). You may choose not to answer any of the questions or opt-out of the survey at any time.

For any queries or feedback, please contact Nicholas D. Chidie on: Email: niclord37@yahoo.com or Tel: +31685768289

Thank for your time!

Name: _____ Church Denomination: Pentecostal _____

Presbyterian _____ Occupation _____

In the aspect of Believing (Knowing, affirming and trusting):

17. When you hear the term 'Witch' what are the first few words that come to mind?
18. Do you believe in witches? If Yes why? If No why?
19. As a Christian or Non-Christian do you believe witches have power over you and can harm you?
20. What is the spiritual source of witchcraft?
21. Do you believe a Christian is allowed to practice witchcraft – why (not)?

In the aspect of Belonging (membership and identification):

22. Do you belong to any school of thoughts concerning the current witch-hunt cases in Ghana? No _____ Yes _____ If yes can you share your thoughts below:
23. Do you feel or think witch-hinting is morally acceptable and should be encourage among the Ghanaian Christians?
24. Where would you place those who practice witchcraft Magic? Do they belong to God, Satan or ...?
25. Do you Identify yourself with witchcraft Practice as a believer?
26. As a Pastor, what will be your best Pastoral approach to witch-hunt cases in your church?

In the aspect of Behaving (rites, practices, traditions and morality in personal communal life):

27. How do you behave towards persons suspected or reported to be a witch?
28. Do you feel witchcraft deserve to live the free will to practice their activities in Ghana?

In the aspect of Experience (differences between worldviews and context, Testimonies tied to one's faith):

29. Are you afraid of witchcraft? Why(not)?
30. How can Christian faith ease the fear of witchcraft?
31. Do you support Witch-hunting as the best solution to eradicating the practice of witchcraft in the Ghanaian community? Yes _____ No _____
32. Do you know anyone who has been a victim to witch-hunting? Yes _____ No _____