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# Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology



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## *Africa Journal Of Evangelical Theology*

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**Cover:** The emblem of Scott Theological College, shown on the cover, features the Mumbu Tree, a historic and cultural landmark on the College grounds. The Mumbu Tree is used by AJET as a symbol of the gospel in Africa. The good news of Christ, like the Mumbu Tree, is ageless, enduring and firmly rooted in African soil.

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# Dancing with the Devil

*An AJET Editorial*

One of the most enduring myths of the past is the tale of Faust—the man who sold his soul to the devil. The story goes something like this. There once lived a man, a learned but poor man, who dreamed of power, wealth and occultic knowledge. One night while curled over his books in study but secretly coveting the world's wealth in his heart, Faust was visited by an uninvited guest. The devil in the person of a sorcerer named Mephistopheles interrupted Faust's repose by offering to give the discontented scholar all that his heart could desire on earth—on one condition—that he would sign away his soul to the devil so that at death he would forfeit eternal life. Faust grabbed at the offer. The devil was as good as his word. Faust became knowledgeable in all the dark arts. In their sinister wake came wealth, fame and power beyond his imaginings. No pleasure was denied and no dream unfulfilled. Yet the years of plenty swept by with cruel speed. Soon Faust faced his own mortality. As he lay on his death bed the final and greatest wish of Faust—to be swept up into the eternal pleasures of heaven—was denied by the one who owned his soul and had come to collect his rightful possession. The old legends of Faust end with the screams of terror that accompanied his long descent into the eternal horrors of hell. Too late did Faust realize that the lust for earthly power was a devil's bargain. He paid with his soul and he kept paying for eternity.

The story of Faust is in many ways the story of Africa. Just as poor and struggling Faust dreamed of earthly power and pleasure so too does our wounded continent long for strength and wholeness. Yet into our dreams of earthly salvation a figure cloaked in the shadows of traditional religion, new age narcissism or humanistic ideology arrives uninvited. The offer of power, often through magic or the occult is tempting. All we want is the child to get well, the job to come through, the school fees to be paid, the curse to be lifted. The simple visit to the distant hut in the middle of the night, the dark dabbling with fortune telling or "good" witches, these are the short strokes of our signature on the Faustian bill of sale.

One of the great tasks of the Gospel in Africa is to liberate this continent from the Faustian bondage into which it has fallen. We bow before the spirits because

we lust for the power that we believe only demons can give. Yet the One who died and rose again as lord over the powers beckons us to break off this dance with the devil and find freedom to live in glad submission to him now and eternal delight with him forever.

That message of the gospel still needs to be heard by the distracted Faust's of Africa. We read of the revival of African traditional religion with its spiritism and fear in Liberia, Sierra Leone and elsewhere. One hears constant rumors of powerful politicians offering sacrifices to whatever powers might help them gain or keep their high positions. The newspapers carry stories of devil worship on the rise in the secondary schools of Kenya. Even allowing for a healthy dose of journalistic sensationalism aside, there is a growing body of evidence that the spirit of Faust is on the loose in Africa.

What does the African Church have to say to the Fausts of our day? We must find ways to convince this restless and day dreaming continent that Christ has "shown us the path of life", that only "in his presence is fullness of joy" and only "at his right hand" are there "pleasures forevermore" (Psalm 16:11).

\* \* \*

This issue of AJET seeks to explore both the causes and cures of this Faustian fascination with witchcraft and divination. In our lead article, Julius Muthengi gives us an historical and global tour of the roots of divination and offers a serious biblical evaluation of this worldwide art of darkness. Festus Kavale in a later article focuses particularly on the issue of witchcraft and looks at it both as a theologian and as a pastor. Our remaining two articles explore different but significant subjects. Mark Olander shares the fruits of a major research project he completed on what motivates students to learn. In our final article, Mary McCallum addresses the issue of Kenya's population explosion by looking at traditional methods of conception management among the Kalenjin tribe of Kenya and some of the promising approaches available today. A number of fine book reviews should further stimulate your thinking. May the fruit of your reading be a faith strengthened to face the spiritual warfare around us and within us.

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# The Art of Divination

*Julius K. Muthengi*

*The art of divination has its roots in the Ancient Near East. Because this area of the world was also the world in which the Bible was written, much is said in the Scriptures about divination witchcraft. Prohibitions against such practices are found throughout the Old Testament. The author asserts that "The Church cannot ignore the issue because it is as alive today as it was in ancient times."*

**T**he art of divination is as old as civilization itself. Throughout the history of humanity, various societies have practiced the phenomenon in question. For the most part, divination is more complex than it appears on the surface. Thus, "the divination procedures do not typically give solutions to problems on a random or chance basis (like merely flipping a coin)...Commonly the situation really allows only one answer, and the role of divination is to declare that answer and, in the process, provide both reassurance to the client and public (divine) legitimation of the plan of action proposed" (Huffman, 1983, 335).

Given the centrality of the issue in human societies, a more detailed analysis is in order. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the topic of divination from three angles. First, we will examine the issue from the Ancient Near Eastern point of view (particularly the different forms of divination). Second, key biblical references on divination will be dealt with. Third, the issue will be analysed from the African context.

## **Ancient Near Eastern divination**

Our knowledge of the practice of divination in the Ancient Near East is based on astrological omen texts. Scholars have unearthed a vast divination literature which does back to the old Babylonian period. According to Greenfield and Sokoloff (1989), the omens in question are known from two types of texts,

namely, the so called canonical texts and reports gathered from letters sent to the Neo-Assyrian court by professional astrologers.

In this section, we will deal with the various forms or types of divination in the Ancient Near Eastern context. Before delving into the issue, however, it is important to offer a definition of divination. Leo Oppenheim's definition is especially significant,

Basically, divination represents a technique of communication with the supernatural forces that are supposed to shape the history of the individual as well as that of the group. It presupposes the belief that these powers are able and, at times, willing to communicate their intentions and that they are interested in the well being of the individual or the group - in other words, that if evil is predicted or threatened, it can be averted through appropriate means (Oppenheim 1977, 207).

According to Winick (1968) divination is the process of reaching a judgment of the unknown or future through the study of incomplete evidence as found in various signs.

Smith (1986, 79) pointed out that divination is an important element in magical systems. It has been analysed anthropologically both "for its revelation about social structure and for the way it constructs cosmological and symbol systems" (Smith 1986). Accordingly, divinatory practices offer important insights into ideas of the nature and origin of truth, as well as the intervention or influence of supernatural forces in daily human experience.

Steyne (1989, 137) defined divination as "the art or practice that seeks to discover hidden knowledge by deciphering or interpreting phenomena of nature in whatever form these may occur and/or by consulting spirit-beings." Divination fills man with unknown information and offers him a well organized picture of his environment. According to Hiebert (1991, 139), "divination is a way of discovering what transempirical beings and forces will do or what they want us to do."

Mbiti (1975) defined divination as a method of finding out the unknown, by means of pebbles, numbers, water, animal entrails, reading the palms, and throwing dice. According to Koch (1983, 7), divination or manticism means "clairvoyance or sooth saying, the private or professional inquiry into the future against the background of a religious or magic view of the world."



Having attempted to define the phenomenon in question, we will now deal with the forms or types of divination in the Ancient Near Eastern context. We shall examine five types of divination. The first type of divination is known as extispicy. This phenomenon was the most prevalent in Mesopotamia (Hoffner 1987, 258). It was done by way of examining the entrails of a sacrificial sheep by an expert called barû (Oppenheim 1977, 212; Hoffner 1987, 258).

The specialist in question first addressed the oracle gods, Samas and Adad with prayers and benedictions. He requested them to write their message on the entrails of the sacrificial lamb. Further, he examined the organs of the animal such as the windpipe, the lungs, the liver, the gall bladder, and the coils of the intestines (Oppenheim 1977). The purpose of such investigation by the diviner was to see if there were any deviations of the organs from the normal state, shape, and coloring. If there were abnormal features found on the organs in question, the barû would interpret the phenomenon and communicate the message as coming from the gods.

One example of the value of extispicy is found in an Ancient Sumerian practice of determining who was to be the priestess for the city god. It was always done by way of examining the entrails of the sacrificial animal. The practice in question was especially crucial during the time of Nabonidus, the Babylonian King. He ordered an extispicy in connection with determining who was going to be the priestess for the moon god (Reiner 1985, 591). Accordingly, Nabonidus asked whether he ought to dedicate the Princess of the royal family as priestess of the lunar god, and the omen said no. He further inquired whether his own daughter was fitted for the office and the answer was positive. Consequently, Nabonidus dedicated his daughter in the temple of the moon god at Ur.

The second type of divination practices in Mesopotamia was astrology. According to Oppenheim (1977, 224), "the royal art of astrology is the method of divination for which Mesopotamia is famed." Scholars are agreed on the evidence of diversified astrological tradition in the Old Babylonian period (Oppenheim 1977; Hoffner 1987). Astrological literature from the Old Babylonian Period spread throughout the Ancient Near East. It has been discovered in Hittite Asia Minor, Qatna and Mari in Syria, and Elam in the East (Hoffner 1987).

The astrological texts mentioned above were written in Akkadian. Greenfield and Sokoloff (1989) examined some of these texts in detail. Their findings have confirmed that a major concern of these omens was decision making on the basis of solar and lunar phenomena (Hoffner 1987; Oppenheim 1977). For instance, a

solar eclipse took place during the reign of King Mursili II of Hatti land (cc 1339-1306 BC.). At this time, the King was away on military expedition. Since his stepmother disliked the queen, she interpreted the eclipse to point to her death (the queen). This was a serious issue because the eclipse was interpreted to be caused by the gods. In order to avoid the predicted disaster, the King would appoint a prisoner of war in his place (Hoffner 1987). The intent was that the newly appointed person would be struck dead by the gods.

In the case of Mursili II, the queen died following the stepmother's prediction. The King accused his stepmother of sorcery and removed her from all her offices, and forced her into seclusion (Hoffner 1983, 187-190). Thus, the centrality of solar and lunar phenomena was evident in the Ancient world. For the most part, events occurring on these phenomena affected the total world view of the ancients. The following text from Greenfield and Sokoloff illustrates the issue in question:

1. (If) when it rises, its horns are equal, the world is in danger.
2. If you saw the moon upright towards the south and its other horn towards the north, let it be a sign for you: be careful of evil; trouble will go out from the north.
3. If you saw the moon pointing towards the north and its other horn inclined toward the south (there will be) great joy for the entire royal court; cheap prices and plenty will be in the world.
4. (If the moon) is inclined toward the south, the sign is good. The year will be fat, and there will be plenty in the world.
5. (If) its face was yellow/green on the north, high prices and famine will be in the world.
6. When the moon is eclipsed in the middle of Nisan, a great man will go out of the Sanhedrin. This will always be a trustworthy sign, for in it, a clean animal is eaten.
7. If (the moon) was red like blood in Iyyar, a king from the north will defeat his counterpart, a strong fire will fall upon the people, and all human beings will be struck because of (?) sin.
8. If (the moon) was red and eclipsed in Sivan, there will be confusion in he...of the sea a command to be killed was issued against the donkeys and the non-domestic animals.
9. If (the moon's) face was yellow/green in Tammuz, there will be a storm on the high sea, a great outcry among all pregnant women, for death will be theirs from the destroyer.
10. If (the moon) is upright and eclipsed in the month of Ab there will be murder in Egypt and famine in the south. The Nile will be low and will not rise, and all the ravens will want for food.

11. If (the moon) is ... like snow in the month of Elul, you should know that it (the land) will be smitten with snow. There will be a great dissension in the world between Israel and the government.
12. The moon is never eclipsed in Tishri. But if it is eclipsed, it is a bad sign for the "enemies of the Jews." Religious persecution will issue from the kingdom and woeful destruction will be upon the Jews.
13. If the wind struck the moon and caused it to be eclipsed in Marheshwan, do not be distressed. A voice from heaven suddenly goes out that the enemy ... from the kingdom.
14. (If you) observe it in Kislev red like fire, there will be death among the children. Trembling will be among the young ones, and pregnant women will fear death.
15. If it is hazy like smoke in Tevet, the king will go into exile from his place. The locust will come down upon the grain crops. High prices and famine will be in the world.
16. If its light is like spilled blood in the month of Shevat, there will be a plague, and the mice will multiply. A king from the east will be killed in the north, and the locust will go out, and there will be nothing left.
17. If (the moon) is eclipsed in the month of Adar, there will be famine, and mice will multiply.

### **Analysis of the Omens**

All of the omens in this text are lunar and deal with types of phenomena well known in the Akkadian series *En ma Anu Enlil*. From a structural point of view, the omens may be divided in the following ways.

A. *Type of Occurrence*. (1) General occurrences: the first five omens may occur on any day of the year. (2) Specific occurrences: the remaining twelve omens are each noted as being specific for a particular month of the year, beginning with Nisan and ending with Adar. This order is to be expected, since the text was composed to be recited at the sanctification of the month of Nisan.

B. *Type of Phenomena*. This division is according to the types of lunar phenomena mentioned in the text, all of which may be paralleled in other sources. (1) Position of the cusps at first sighting (omens 1-4); the cusps may either be of equal length (no. 1) or point either north or south (nos. 2-4). (2) Color: the colors given are those which we would expect, viz, red (nos. 7, 8, and 16), yellow/green (no. 9), or white (no. 11). In one instance, the color is stated to be hazy like smoke (no. 15). (3) Eclipse: this lunar phenomenon is a well-known sign and is mentioned here in four omens (no. 6, 8, 12, and 13). In most of the cases, the portent is negative. Only in one case does the text state

specifically that the eclipse takes place in the middle of the month (no. 6), although this is obviously the case for all eclipses.

A third form of divination is known as augury. It was mainly practiced by the Hittites. The main feature of this type of divination was the observation of the movement and behavior of birds. According to Oppenheim (1977), the bird observer (dugil iss ri) as a divination specialist is indisputably attested in Assyria. Most of these experts were native Assyrians as well as Egyptian prisoners of war (Oppenheim 1977, 209).

The phenomenon in question involved both the direction and manner of the flight of birds. Hoffner (1987) pointed out that while the observation of birds' flight among the Hittites was significant, the details of the praxis is rudimentary. Moreover, the available texts do not make clear whether the observed birds were in a controlled environment or not. What is clear about the issue in question, however, is the fact that the Hittites were serious about the phenomenon. They would consult bird omens before embarking on an important journey. In the vassal/suzerain treaties, the King (Hittite) would warn: "If you hear about a threat against me, act immediately! Don't even pause to take a bird oracle" (Hoffner 1987, 260).

The fourth form of divination practiced in the Ancient Near East was kleromancy. This type of divination was done by way of casting lots. It involved "marked sticks of wood or stones and was to establish a sequence among persons of equal status that would be acceptable, as divinely ordained to all participants" (Oppenheim 1977, 208). Accordingly, casting of lots the Hittites had practiced divination by lots denoted by the Sumerogram KIN. Each lot observed during inquiry had a symbolic name. According to Hoffner (1987, 261), each of the symbolic objects had a significance which contributed to the outcome of the oracle. Normally, the answer was binary (i.e. yes or no answer).

The fifth type of divination in the Ancient Near East was oneiromancy or the art of interpreting dreams. Hoffner (1987) pointed out that sometimes a dream consisted of a straightforward verbal message from a god. Such type of divination required no specially trained interpreter. At the same time, most dreams were nonverbal and they called for skillfully trained interpreters. The interpreters in question were familiar with the rules to be used in interpreting of symbolic elements in dreams (Hoffner 1987; Oppenheim 1956).

Certain colors, animals, or activities were often connected with the predicted misfortune, while others indicated happiness and success (Hoffner 1987). Thus dreams were used in addition to many other forms of divination in order to

determine what messages the gods were communicating. Having looked at divination from the Ancient Near East background, it is important to deal with the issue from the Old Testament standpoint.

### **Old Testament References to Divination**

The Scriptures have numerous references to divination. Most of these references are found in the Old Testament. In this section we will concentrate on key Old Testament texts with respect to what they say on divination in Israel and the relationship between prophecy and divination.

*Priestly Divination in Israel.* The phenomenon in question was different from Mesopotamian technical divination (Huffmon 1983). Accordingly, this type of divination involved the simple method of designated lots. It should be emphasized that although the lots were cast down, as far as the evidence goes, by priests or comparable persons, the biblical texts provide no information about the conditions of purity or place that presumably were prerequisite for successful divination (Huffmon 1983, 355).

The commonest method used in priestly divination was Urim and Thummim. It was intended to obtain oracles which declared the divine 'yes' or 'no' response to the inquiry. Several examples will illustrate the point in question. First, in Joshua 7, Achan violated the ban on the devoted things. The method followed to diagnose the case was parallel to witchcraft accusations in which a diviner is the medium for the expression of the community sense with respect to the suspected violator. The diviner uses the method of careful interrogation, the identity of the chief suspect and lets that judgment express itself through the divination results. The discovery is attributed to divine guidance (Park 1963; Wilson 1980; Huffmon 1983).

Second, Judges 20 provides another illustration of the way divination was used in Israel. All the Israelite tribes united against Benjamin. They inquired of the Lord as they said, "Who shall go up first to fight with Benjamin?" God gave the answer that Judah was to go first and all the tribes were satisfied with the answer. Due to the resistance the Israelites encountered from the Benjaminites, they inquired further whether or not they should continue the battle. God gave an affirmative response several times and the Israelites acted accordingly.

Third, the process of selecting Saul as King in Israel (I Samuel 10:17-24) is yet another example of priestly divination. All the Israelites were assembled in the presence of the Lord at Mizpah. Though the text does not clearly say it,

priestly divination by Urim and Thummim or lot was probably used. The selection process was carried out through the tribes to Benjamin, to the clan of Matrites, to the house of Qish and then to Saul.

Fourth, the method of Urim and Thummim was employed in one of the bloodiest battles in Ancient Israel (I Sam 14:23-46). In the course of the prolonged battle with the Philistines, Saul put the entire people of Israel under oath not to eat anything that day. Being ignorant of the situation, Saul's son Jonathan violated the ban. In such context, Saul and Jonathan were chosen by lot but the second lot specified Jonathan. Unlike its Mesopotamian counterpart, this type of divination was divinely directed, although the outcome was controlled by the priest (Huffmon 1983, 356).

Finally, King David used priestly divination as a means of ascertaining the will of God (I Sam 23). He sought God's guidance with respect to going to battle with the Philistines. Abiathar the priest was the medium through which David sought God's will and the answer was in the affirmative.

*Relationship between Divination and Prophecy.* Biblical scholars have noted a general relationship between divination and prophecy in the Old Testament. For example, VanderKam (1986, 170) argued that although the two may be generally distinguished, their practitioners appear to have operated in much the same sphere, to have used similar media at times, and to have performed analogous functions. Accordingly, two kinds of biblical texts underscore the issue in question (texts which juxtapose prophecy and divination, and those which say that prophets divine and diviners prophesy).

Two passages have been used with regard to the first category, namely, Deuteronomy 18 and Isaiah 44:25-26. In Deut. 18:15-22, a prophet like Moses is mentioned side by side with the diviner. On the one hand, the prophet was chosen by Yahweh while on the other hand, the diviner practiced abominable mantic arts. Israel was strongly warned not to imitate the divination practiced by the Canaanites who were only devising messages from omens.

With respect to the Isaiah passage, the functions of diviners and prophets are contrasted. Emphasis was placed on the hollowness of the diviners who were not chosen by the Lord nor did they speak on His behalf. Yahweh "nullified the omens to which they attached so much importance, made their authors appear as fools, refuted the wise and made all their knowledge appear to be folly" (Leupold 1971, 155). For the most part, the pseudo-science of the diviners were merely futile in contradistinction to Yahweh's effective work. The Lord made it clear through Isaiah that He had His "servant the Prophet himself, through whom He

had repeatedly made His purposes and the future outcome of things known” (Leupold 1971).

Concerning the second category of texts, a number of passages have been isolated. The first passage in which prophets are said to divine and diviners as prophesying is Micah 3:5-7. The text reads as follows: “Therefore night will come over you, without visions, and darkness, without divination. The sun will set for the prophets, and the day will go dark for them. The seers will be ashamed and the diviners disgraced. They will cover their faces because there is no answer from God.” In verse 11 of the same chapter, prophets are said to be engaged in divination (fortune telling).

The second passage is Jeremiah 14:14 where the Lord responded to Jeremiah’s report about the prophets who had told their people that they would enjoy peace...“The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. I have not sent them or appointed them or spoken to them. They are prophesying to you false visions, divinations, idolatries and the delusions of their own minds.” The same sentiment is echoed in Jer. 26:9-10 “So do not listen to your prophets, your diviners. Your interpreters of dreams, your mediums or your sorcerers...They prophesy lies to you that will only serve to remove you from your lands...”

A third passage in which prophecy and divination are mentioned together in Ezekiel 13:1-9. Accordingly, Ezekiel opposed Israel’s prophets and, in the name of Yahweh, condemned their falsehood. Verse 9 reads, “my hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and utter lying divinations.”

In addition to the two issues dealt with above (the priestly divination and relationship between divination and prophecy), other forms of divination may be mentioned. For instance, Necromancy is mentioned in Isa 8:19-20. According to these verses, Judah had forsaken the Lord and resorted to consulting mediums for divine guidance. The testimony or word of the Lord was no longer their sure guide. Leupold (1968, 177) summarized the Lord’s challenge to Judah in the following words, “let the nation turn back to the basic instruction which has come to it from God in the past; to do so is their only hope.”

Second, the art of astrology (as defined in section one of this paper) is mentioned in Isa 47:13. This was a method of interpreting the future “by gazing on the stars.” Concerning the biblical view on astrology, Leupold (1968, 157) summed it well as he wrote “astrology is in fact the epitome of futility.” Third, dreams as a form of divination are recorded in Genesis 37:5:11; 40:5-19 and in Daniel 2-4. Both Joseph and Daniel were the masters of a biblical view of

dreams. The phenomena in question were a means of ascertaining divine guidance.

### **Divination in African Context**

In Africa divination is an important means of explaining space-time events, particularly with respect to their cause and how they affect human beings. The phenomenon in question carries the same innuendo, whether one looks at it from the Ancient Near Eastern perspective or from the perspective of contemporary societies (Adelowo 1987). As has already been pointed out, divination tries to get behind the reasons for certain events. It “is a way of discovering hidden treasures. It is roughly the attempt to discern events that are distant time or space, and that consequently cannot be perceived by normal means for the purpose of guidance, planning and execution” (Adelowo 1987, 73).

In African perspective, diviners are as important as medical doctors and lawyers are for Western societies. They are like psychologists who are thought to be “capable (through mental agility) of gaining an exceptional insight into the private lives of the people who seek their aid” (Ekechukwu 1982, 159). According to Mbiti (1975, 156) African diviners deal with the issue of finding out why something has gone wrong. They in turn try to prescribe the remedy or course of action.

Ekechukwu (1982) pointed out that diviners may prescribe that their clients use amulets in addition to the assistance provided by the gods. Accordingly, the physical features of the diviner are significant to his/her effectiveness. Normally, a serious look, unkempt hair, and a dusty bag containing a whole collection of assorted objects - greatly enhance his credibility. For the most part, diviners are reluctant to admit that their art has failed. As a result, they resort to laying the blame on their clients by charging that he/she failed to observe the recommended taboos (Horton 1967, 167; Ekechukwu 1982, 159).

A question has always been asked namely, why do many Africans resort to divination? Various reasons have been given by scholars (Mbiti 1975; Ekechukwu 1982; Adelowo 1987; Whyte 1990). A few of these reasons may be mentioned. First, people may engage in divination in the event of recurrent sickness in a family in which people have died. Second, successive deaths (especially where children are victims) may be another cause. Third, epidemics such as smallpox which may take a toll of lives, may yet be another cause of divination. Fourth, crises of life - birth, marriage, and death are also reasons for



engaging in divinatory practices. Fifth, barrenness of women which Africans in general take seriously, may be another cause of divination. The above list of causes indicates that suffering and misfortune are believed by Africans to go deeper than they may appear on the surface. Divination attempts to provide answers to the issues listed above, at a deeper level of looking at reality (at world view level).

Susan R. Whyte (1990) did a study on divination among the Bunyole county of eastern Uganda. The author's findings indicated that Nyole divination was governed by a number of principles. The first principle is what the author labeled "relative privacy." Accordingly, the client normally came alone or sometimes he/she came with one or two relatives or friends. All the divinatory activities took place in a closed hut, while other people waited outside. According to Whyte, this kind of behavior raises issues of uncertainty, suspicion and conflicts.

The second principle of Nyole divination is that the client did not know the cause of the misfortune being diagnosed. In other words, the client was so ignorant of the situation that he was totally at the mercy of the diviner. The author pointed out, however, that sometimes the consultor refused to accept the initial diagnosis, with respect to the cause of the problem. As a result, the diviner would try to seek the consultor's perspective. However, in spite of the consultor's preconceptions, "they declared their uncertainty and their desire that the divination should help them resolve it" (Whyte 1990, 43).

The third principle of Nyole divination is that the diviner himself did not know the details of the case in advance. The divination was believed to be able to uncover the issue at stake. The writer concurs with the author that in many cases, those who are seeking help through divination will not go the nearby diviner. If they consulted a diviner who is their neighbor, it is believed that he/she would influence the results. Consequently, diviners were usually confronted with people about whose background and current circumstances they were totally ignorant. Thus, the information needed in order to formulate a relevant diagnosis had to be completely supplied by the client.

With respect to the drama of divination (involving a diviner and client), the author narrated a case entitled "the matter of the dry tree." The situation involved the mother and brother of a barren bride (a dry tree) who went to consult a diviner in Bunyole district of Uganda. The case went forth as follows:

Diviner: This one has begun by giving us lies. He is the one to start taking sides here saying, 'I want to argue with them—If I am defeated soon I shall leave, but if I defeat

them, then it is I who have won ... I am the one called the senior relative, I am the one arguing with these people because maybe they gave what is mine to eat ... This relative is called the mother's brother [of the barren woman].

Client: Does he say that they gave nothing to the mother's brother?

Diviner: It is what he says. Perhaps they gave him and he is [still] coming here ...there are those with quick heads who rush into a divination for nothing [without grounds].

(Interval of rattling gourds)

Diviner: These little spirits that are quarreling, perhaps they go on quarreling although you dealt with them and finished with them..

(After more discussion of this possibility, the line of questioning moves back toward a suspected curse and other potential cursers appear.)

Diviner: Do you have a father's sister, she is here quarreling...

Client: Yes, let her also come and we hear her reasons.

(Each agent in turn is rejected by the clients with explanations as to why they do not think that person is cursing: for example, 'I was the one who killed the goat and they divided it among themselves right there.' On several occasions the diviner tried to insist that a particular person must have cursed, because the clients admitted that they had not given that one the rightful share of the bride wealth. But the clients would not accept the interpretation.)

Client: ...it is true we did not give to them, but we also want to look at another place where there are other reasons.

Diviner: So you wanted to ask in every corner to make it clear ... But there is nothing with the father's wives, the grandmothers are refusing, her fathers are refusing.

Client: ... No, no, her grandmothers are the ones upon the heart [whom we suspect] ... There, go there in that very place...

Diviner: They are refusing.

Client: They refuse, but no. For us, we are still with them. Just try to find out, I think if you go along those lines, you will bring them back.

(First the maternal grandmother appears and the clients admit that she did not receive her rightful share of the bride wealth. But 'because of her softness' and because she died saying that her son-in-law, the bride's father, had always loved her, they did not believe that she had cursed. At last, a decision is reached; it is established that the father's mother of the barren bride cursed her before she died. The mother of the bride remarks that she suspects this woman, her mother-in-law, because they used to quarrel a lot. The clients want to offer a goat at her grace and have the curse removed by the dead woman's eldest daughter, the bride's father's sister. But before doing so, they want to be sure that this is the real reason for the barrenness. The diviner gives them detailed instructions from the dead woman about how the ceremony is to be carried out and the clients ask her questions which are conveyed by the diviner during intervals of rhythmic beating of the rattles. As the session ends, the clients, having been confronted by so many difference

causes, most of which they refused to accept, say that they do not know the truth—perhaps the ceremony of curse removal will be for naught.)

Client: Ah, there are many matters—again there are her mother's brothers, there is her grandmother, there is her father's sister ... There is the one grandmother and the other grandmother.

Diviner: The fertility is going to be difficult.

Client: Among all those cases, ah, we do not know where the truth is and where there is no truth.

Diviner: You go and do those things [the curse removal ceremony]. There is where God can give you luck. You, when you divine through so many spirits [use different diviners], don't you go on touching this [case], touching that, touching another [i.e. trying different explanations and treatments]?

Earlier in the session, the diviner had made the same point, saying "Let them do the ceremony. And if she does not get any benefit, let them go and divine elsewhere. A single divination does not heal a person."

As the above case indicates, Nyole divination is for the most part conducted by way of dialogue. On the one hand, the client asks questions to the spirit agent through the diviner. In turn, the diviner plays a double role of being human interpreter and agent of misfortune. As a result, Nyole divination appears to be open-ended, rather than the binary type of divination which calls for yes or no type of answers.

## **Conclusions**

The foregoing pages have been an attempt to deal with the issue of divination from three perspectives. First, the topic has been analysed from the Ancient Near Eastern perspective. Second, the biblical perspective of divination has been presented. Third, the issue has been dealt with from the contemporary African perspective.

A number of implications need to be made with respect to the Christian ministry. First, divination is a universal phenomenon. It was practiced in the Ancient Near East. It was practiced in Bible times and it is found in many societies today. The Church cannot ignore the issue because it is as alive today as it was in ancient times. Throughout human history, human beings have been faced with issues for which they would seek guidance. The Church should affirm this human need to find explanation to life's deepest questions (cause and affect). Having affirmed the need in question, the Church should declare the sovereignty

of God. He is the sovereign Lord of the universe who is actively involved in the affairs of humanity.

Second, as has already been pointed out, the Scriptures condemn divination and the practices associated with it. Consequently, a clear and firm theology of divination should be devised in which God is presented as one who should give guidance to His people. Rather than relying on dreams, astrology and other forms of divination, the Bible should be the textbook for all matters of life. The writer is, however, aware that the Bible is not a magic book. For instance, the Bible talks about marriage and the family but does not necessarily tell a person who will be their life partner. In this case, one should rely on prayer, ministry of the Holy Spirit, opening and closing doors, inner conviction and counsel from wise and or mature Christians.

Third, a theology of power encounter should be emphasized. Jesus overcame Satan, sin and death. God is able to demonstrate His power over the forces of evil. We should, however, make sure that we do not try to manipulate God. He is the Creator and has the prerogative to act as He wills. Finally, the art of divination should be viewed not only as a religious phenomenon, but also as a world view issue. It deals with temporal issues as well as those of ultimate reality!

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# The Teacher's Role in Student Motivation

*Mark A. Olander*

*Motivating students is a central concern of conscientious teachers. The author argues that students respond best to material that has practical value for their future calling. Students also respond to teachers who shows a genuine love for them and who expresses that love and concern by carefully and creatively designed class sessions as well as by significant contact outside the classroom. Some combination of lecture and discussion seems to be the best teaching method in the opinion of students questioned. The conclusion is that "students tend to be more motivated to learn from teachers whose lives are consistent with their teachings."*

**I**n educational circles it is commonly recognized that student motivation is a key factor in the learning process. Student motivation is a major concern of educators at all levels of education because it has such a direct bearing upon how well students will learn. Even though students may have tremendous ability, if they are not motivated to learn they will probably do very poorly in their studies at school. Joseph Lockavitch underscores this point when he writes, "Motivating the unmotivated student is a topic high on most teachers 'wish they could do' list".<sup>2</sup> Dee Fink's study of first year college teachers revealed that one of the most difficult tasks of these first year teachers was to effectively motivate their students in the classroom.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, students with average ability who are highly motivated may do very well in any given course at school.

The motivation of students in institutions of Christian higher education in Africa is influenced by numerous factors. My own interest in this topic of student motivation was strongly influenced by reading about the findings of two educational research studies in the African setting. Laurent Mbanda did a study of the impact of the teacher-student relationship in the African Bible college

setting.<sup>4</sup> Norman Dixon's study focused specifically upon the factors influencing students to decide to attend Bible schools in Kenya.<sup>5</sup>

The purpose of my own research was to explore the factors which affect student motivation in Bible colleges in Africa. Furthermore, the research was designed to investigate the relationship between teacher leadership and student motivation in African Bible colleges. The ultimate goal of the study was to determine what teachers in these Bible colleges can do to enhance the motivation of their students.

The research involved interviewing a representative sample of forty students and twelve faculty members from two African Bible colleges (Moffat College of Bible at Kijabe, Kenya and Scott Theological College at Machakos, Kenya). The responses to the interview questions were tabulated and analyzed with particular attention given to patterns of central tendency.

### Summary of the Findings

The following four figures summarize the overall findings of the study relative to the students' perspective. In each figure, the responses are listed in the order of decreasing frequency as they were cited by the students which were interviewed.

Figure 1. General Factors Affecting Student Motivation within Courses as Identified by Students.

1. *Perceived Future Utility of the Course*
2. *Practical Nature of the Material*

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3. *Prior Experience*
4. *Personal Growth and Development*
5. *Teaching Methodology*
6. *The Teacher*

Legend:

- (1) Items above the broken line were cited by over one-half of the subjects; items below the broken line were cited by less than one-half of the subjects
- (2) All items listed in figure were cited at least four times by the subjects

Figure 2. Teaching Methods Preferred by Students as Identified by Students

1. *Lecture and Discussion*
2. *Class Discussion*

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3. *Lecture*
4. *Small Group Work*
5. *Visuals*
6. *Drama*
7. *Variety*

Legend:

- (1) Items above the broken line were cited by over one-half of the subjects; items below the broken line were cited by less than one-half of the subjects
- (2) All items listed in figure were cited at least four times by the subjects

Figure 3. The Role of the Teacher in Student Motivation as Identified by Students

1. *Being well-prepared*
2. *Allowing Opportunities for Student Interaction*
3. *Communicating Clearly*
4. *Being Enthusiastic*
5. *Giving Encouraging Comments*
6. *Using Helpful Illustrations and Explanations*
7. *Giving Meaningful Assignments*
8. *Designing Fair Course Requirements*
9. *Showing Sensitivity to Students*
10. *Showing the Life-relatedness of the Material*

Legend:

- (1) All items listed in figure were cited by less than one-half of the subjects.
- (2) All items listed in figure were cited at least four times by the subjects



Figure 4. Characteristics of Effective Teachers as Identified by Students

1. *Love for Students*
2. *Presentation*

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3. *Preparation*
4. *Sensitivity to Students' Understanding*
5. *Academic Competence*
6. *Spiritual Competence*

**Legend:**

- (1) Items above the broken line were cited by over one-half of the subjects; items below the broken line were cited by less than one-half of the subjects
- (2) All items listed in figure were cited at least four times by the subjects

Furthermore, the analysis of the findings from this study on the factors influencing student motivation in Bible colleges in Kenya has shown that there are five major values represented: (1) the value of spiritual growth and development, (2) the value of success in ministry, (3) the value of relationships, (4) the value of cooperative learning, and (5) the value of self-advancement. These values generally have to do with concern for others rather than purely selfish concerns for self-advancement.

### **Implications for Theological Educators in Africa**

The findings of this study have some important implications for people involved in theological education in Africa today. Theological educators in institutions of Christian higher education in Africa need to evaluate and improve their effectiveness as motivating teachers. Jim Wilhoit challenges Christian teachers to be asking themselves continually, "Why do I teach the way I do?"<sup>6</sup> Seriously considering the findings of this study and making applications from the implications can help teachers in African Bible colleges to enhance their teaching effectiveness.

There appears to be a strong relationship between teacher leadership and student motivation. It has been clearly observed that the teacher plays a major role in influencing the motivation of his or her students in the courses he or she teaches. If faculty members in these institutions of Christian higher education

want to improve their effectiveness as motivating teachers, then there are a number of practical things which they can do. These practical things can be grouped into three categories: those related to course design and preparation, those related to instructional strategies, and those related to interaction with students.

### **Course Design and Preparation**

In the area of course design and preparation, there are several things teachers can do to enhance the motivation of Bible college students in Africa.

- 1. Teachers need not only to be academically competent in their subjects but also be well-prepared before coming to class.** Students are concerned that teachers come to their classes ready to teach. Students are very perceptive when it comes to observing whether or not their teachers are fully prepared for the classes they are teaching. Lack of adequate preparation by the teacher can adversely affect the students' desire to learn from him or her.
- 2. Teachers need to make sure their course requirements are realistic for the students so as not to load them down unfairly with "impossible" requirements.** Students sometimes will have a tendency to give up in courses if they sense that the course requirements are unattainable.
- 3. Teachers need to design course assignments for students that are genuinely helpful learning exercises and not simply "busy work".** If students sense that assignments are meaningless, they will have a tendency to either neglect the assignment altogether or perhaps pursue it half-heartedly.
- 4. Teachers should design opportunities for small group work when appropriate in their courses.** African students value cooperative learning experiences and therefore enjoy working together in the group context. In some cases, group term papers or projects can be more enjoyable and beneficial to students than individual term papers or projects.
- 5. Teachers should periodically get feedback from their students to know how they might be able to teach their course more effectively.** This feedback can be obtained through course evaluation forms which the teacher can give out

to all the students in a course which has just been completed. Using this method, a teacher can read the students' comments looking for general patterns of central tendency in the responses to the questions on the evaluation form. Alternatively, another method (which is perhaps even more appropriate in the African setting) of obtaining helpful feedback is through informal discussions a teacher can have with a few students at the conclusion of a course. A good example of this second method of acquiring feedback is Howard Hendricks who gathers a small group of his seminary students at the end of a course and asks them questions such as: "What needs to be changed in this course? What did you like? What didn't you like? What didn't make sense? Don't tell me what I want to hear; tell me what I need to hear."<sup>7</sup> Teachers need to be willing to accept constructive criticism (either written or oral) from their students and adjust their course design and teaching methodology accordingly.

### **Instructional Strategies**

In the area of instructional strategies, teachers can do a number of things to enhance their effectiveness as motivating leaders in the classroom.

**1. Teachers need to make an effort to use a variety of teaching methods rather than one method exclusively so as to help foster student motivation.**

Although African students are very accustomed to being taught through the lecture method, they also find other methods to be stimulating. When the same teaching method is used repeatedly, classes become too predictable and even boring.

**2. When teachers use the lecture method they need to make sure to allow student the opportunity to ask questions and interact with the teacher.**

Students in the African setting like the opportunity to discuss issues of concern to them. Giving students the opportunity to ask questions allows them the chance to pursue such concerns. Questions often greatly facilitate the learning process.

**3. Teachers need to make a conscientious effort to involve students in their courses so that they are in an active role rather than a passive one.** African students indicate that they are more motivated in courses in which they are given the chance to become actively involved in experiential learning activities such as class discussions, student presentations, field trips, debates, role plays, drama.

**4. Teachers need to make an effort to explain to students how the course which they are studying can have future value to them as pastors, teachers, administrators, and church workers.** Students in African Bible colleges are

strongly motivated by the perceived value of their courses. Therefore, teachers in these Bible colleges need to creatively seek various ways of demonstrating to their students that what they are studying can be of great help to them in the future.

**5. Teachers need to be sensitive to students' comprehension of the material being studied by periodically using such questions as "Does this make sense to you?"** It cannot be assumed that students are comprehending the material being studied.

**6. Teachers need frequently to relate the material being studied to life situations and ministry experiences.** This will help demonstrate the practical nature of the course. Students in African Bible colleges tend to be more motivated in courses that they see are of practical value to them in the present.

**7. Teachers should make creative use of visuals in their teaching whenever appropriate and feasible.** For example, students have expressed their view that it is very helpful to them when teachers write diagrams, outlines, key words or names, and illustrations on the black board. Other possibilities include the use of slide projectors, film projectors, and overhead projectors.

### **Interaction with Students**

Finally, in the area of interaction with students, there are four important things teachers can do that will help contribute to increased student motivation.

**1. Teachers in institutions of Christian higher education in African need to recognize the importance of the student-teacher relationship and consciously seek to develop healthy relationships with their students.** In the African context, relationships are highly valued. Developing good relationships with students will require an effort on the part of teachers to spend time with students outside the classroom. Teachers need to show personal interest in the lives of students both inside and outside the college classroom.

**2. Teachers need to look for appropriate opportunities to encourage students through positive verbal statements and through comments on written assignments and examinations when they are returned to students.** A paper which is returned to a student with only a letter grade written on it is not nearly as motivating to a student as a paper which is returned with some words of encouragement and constructive criticism. Written comments on papers communicate to students that the teacher is genuinely interested in helping the student learn and improve.

**3. Teachers need to know their students well so they can provide the appropriate leadership style at any given time when teaching a class.**

Effective leaders are those who know their followers well. Good teachers are effective leaders. One of the students interviewed offered a great challenge to all Bible college teachers when he said, "Be a student of your students."

**4. Teachers need to communicate actively both verbally and nonverbally that they have a servant's heart.** They need to let their students know that they want to help students succeed. An effective Christian teacher is one who sees himself or herself as a servant. The attitude of servanthood is not only Christlike but it is essential to effective leadership in the classroom. Being a teacher gives a person the opportunity to serve his or her students as a guide and facilitator in the learning process. It is vital that students sense this Christlike attitude of servanthood in the lives of their teachers. Jesus expressed the importance of the attitude of servanthood in this way, "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."<sup>8</sup> Serving students as a facilitator and guide is one way of washing their feet.

**5. Teachers need to model what they teach.** Students tend to be more motivated to learn from teachers whose lives (outside the classroom) are consistent with their teachings (inside the classroom). Students indicated that they believe that effective teachers are those who are not only academically but also spiritually competent. Theological educators in Africa must evaluate whether or not they are teaching by example. The following poem cited by Waylon Moore offers a great challenge to teachers in institutions of Christian higher education in Africa today:

I'd rather see a sermon [lesson] than hear one any day.  
I'd rather one would walk with me than merely show the way.  
The eye's a better pupil and much more willing than the ear.  
Fine counsel is confusing, but example's always clear.  
The best of all the teachers are those who live their creeds.  
For to see the good put into action is what everybody needs.  
I'll soon learn how to do it if you'll let me see it done.  
I can watch your hand in action, but your tongue too fast may run.  
And the lectures you deliver may be very wise and true,  
But I'd rather get my lesson by observing what you do.  
For I may misunderstand you in the high advice you give,  
But there's no misunderstanding how you act and how you live.<sup>9</sup>

### NOTES

1 Adapted from Mark A. Olander's A Study of the Relationship between Teacher Leadership and Student Motivation in Bible Colleges in Kenya. Ed.D. Dissertation, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1992.

2 Joseph F. Lockavitch, Jr., "Motivating the Unmotivated Student" Techniques 2 (October 1986) p. 317.

3 L. Dee Fink, "First Year of Teaching on the Faculty: The Quality of Their Teaching" Journal of Geography in Higher Education 9 (1985) pp. 317-21.

4 Laurent Mbanda, Teacher-Student Relationships in Mweya Bible School before and after Africanization. Ed.D. Dissertation, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1990.

5 Norman W. Dixon, Factors Leading to the Decision of Kenyan Men to Enter Bible School. Ed.D. Dissertation, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1990.

6 Jim Wilhoit, Christian Education and the Search for Meaning (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986) p. 61.

7 Howard G. Hendricks, Teaching to Change Lives (Portland: Multnomah Press, 1987) p. 114.

8 John 13:14-15.

9 Waylon B. Moore, Multiplying Disciples; the New Testament Pattern for Church Growth (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, 1981) pp. 97-98.

# A Biblical Study of Witchcraft: With Applications for Second and Third Generation Christians in Kenya

*Festus K. Kavale*

*Witchcraft remains an issue for the Church in Africa yet many second and third generation Christians are confused about what to think of witchcraft and how to handle those who are caught up in its power. When people seek to use the power of witchcraft there is always a high price to be paid in terms of spiritual decline and physical damage. The biblical position on witchcraft is outlined showing that God condemns the practice not only for violating the first commandment but also for damaging the person. The author concludes that instead of condemning those caught up in witchcraft the modern pastor should show concern, "affirm the biblical teaching of the reality of witchcraft and give God's reasons for prohibiting it."*

**D**uring my years of ministry with the Africa Inland Church in Nairobi, I have come across many second and third generation Christians who are coming into contact with witchcraft and yet they are ignorant of the biblical teaching on it or they have a distorted view of it. This renewed boom in interest and return to witchcraft and its practice seems to be happening due to several reasons.

There are those who are coming into contact with witchcraft out of mere innocent curiosity. After interviewing many such individuals, one Christian writer realized that many simply committed themselves to a series of simple experiments to "see if it would work." To their amazement results were produced, at least sufficiently so as to satisfy their initial curiosity. With the mysteries before them, they continued to pursue further possibilities. "[Then] their involvement became deeper and their commitment moved on relentlessly." (Davis, 1973, 38).

A second reason seems to be the current call in our Kenya Secondary schools and secular university colleges for a return to traditional practices as a way of

showing patriotism. This includes either returning to or integrating African Traditional Religions with Christianity. Obviously, one major characteristic of African Traditional Religions is its assertion of the African personality with its advocates "straining every nerve to 'purify' Christianity from its western association" (Kato, 1975, 51). Hence, the consequent return to witchcraft because "in African traditional religions, the worshipper believes that through divination the prescribed sacrifices, he can be delivered from his enemies, real and potential, secure the help of his ancestors and the gods and be prosperous in life." (Adeyemo, 1983, 4).

Another reason is that many are returning to witchcraft as they seek to find answers as to why certain things are befalling them or as they seek to obtain release from social strains. As Moreau notes, one of the reasons why witchcraft and supernatural beliefs have not "died off" with the advent of education, urbanization, and westernisation is that "witchcraft continues to be utilized in explaining events (failure on exams, why my brother got malaria, why someone died, and so on)" (Moreau, 1990, 124-5). Why today's nominal Christianity fails to offer the solution to these mysteries, most people tend to seek solutions in witchcraft which offers to provide mysterious and adventurous experiences through communion with the supernatural (Boa, 1977, 118).

The key reason, however, is the ignorance on the biblical teaching of witchcraft. This is due to the tragic fact that the subject is neither well taught in our Bible schools and colleges nor well expounded in our churches. Instead, both the early white missionaries and the present indigenous church leaders seem to have chosen to remain silent on it, probably hoping that this would dissuade people from witchcraft. Witchcraft may be defined as "the human exercise of alleged supernatural powers for antisocial evil purposes" (Kluckholm, 604). Other synonymous terms are "magic" and "sorcery" which may also be defined generally as "attempts to influence people and events by supernatural or occult means."

Some anthropologists like Evans-Pritchard have attempted to distinguish between sorcery and witchcraft. According to him, sorcery is the evil practice which harms people by performing magic rites and using bad medicines. Witchcraft is an innate mystical power which performs no rites, utters no spells and possesses no medicines and yet is real and can be used to harm people (Middleton, 1963, 3). Interestingly, however, further study reveals that most African societies do not distinguish between witchcraft, sorcery, evil magic, evil eye, and other ways of employing mystical powers to harm. Instead, the same



word (witchcraft) is used in a broad sense for all these terms and the same person may be accused or suspected of employing one or more of these to hurt community members (Mbiti, 1969, 202). Thus, regardless of the means, the end is the same in that people and property are injured by use of the supernatural.

### **Current Beliefs and Practices of Witchcraft in Kenya**

*Beliefs Regarding the Existence of Witchcraft.* Beliefs and practices always have an important influence on a person. They determine the action one takes in a crisis situation. We therefore need to examine briefly some contemporary beliefs and practices of witchcraft in Kenya. In the first place, there are those who deny its reality. Those who hold this view believe that the only way someone can kill is through the use of poison. Elizabeth, an old Christian Mkamba, expressed this attitude when she said:

There is no such thing as Uoi [witchcraft] but I believe there is poison or dangerous chemicals which can kill once eaten in food. This is the only way one can bewitch me. I don't believe that someone can use powder, as Nzevu [potent magic powder], to utter words that can kill or harm me (Gehman, 1985, 198).

Boa is therefore right in observing that "some writers claim that witchcraft is nothing more than legend and ritual" (Boa, 1977, 111). A yet more vivid case illustrates this attitude very well. Recently a young Maasai forced his way into the Narok County Council Chairman's office and dumped a heap of assorted charms wrapped in a polythene bag. Later, while addressing the press who had witnessed the event, the Chairman (Yiaile) said he did not believe in witchcraft since he was a Christian ("Man Takes Charms," 4). This attitude is therefore found among many rationalistic Christians, especially those educated under the pioneer white missionaries. As noted earlier these missionaries considered witchcraft as superstition and they dismissed it as unreal. Consequently, those Africans who learned from them followed suit.

A second attitude is one whereby every case of misfortune is explained as being the result of witchcraft. In a 1988 newspaper article on witchcraft, Mutahi noted a common belief that "very few Kenyans die of natural causes or accidents. Most of them die because somebody somewhere has 'fixed' them with some mysterious 'dawa' [medicine]" (Mutahi, 1988, 13).

This view is particularly prominent among the traditional Akamba. These have a common saying that “Mukamba ndakusaa ate muoe” (A Mkamba cannot die of natural cause, unless he is bewitched). Gehman confirms this view, adding that “the belief in witchcraft permeates the worldview of the Akamba” (Gehman, 1985, 80).

Many nominal Christians who have not firmly grasped the reality and power of Christ in their lives turn to witchcraft for solutions whenever in crisis situations. An example is where Njoroge’s Christian mother could not understand why Njoroge was not gaining weight after he had started working: “She was advised by a relative that somebody must have organized some witchcraft against [Njoroge] and that is why [Njoroge] was not gaining weight. It was suggested that [Njoroge] should see a witchcraft to counter what was working against [him]” (Mutahi, 1988, 13).

A third attitude also found among contemporary Kenyan Christians is a mediating one. This view holds that while there are genuine cases of witchcraft, there are at the same time cases of misfortune that are not the result of witchcraft. This, “we [must] readily admit and fully affirm that a large portion of what is claimed to be mystical power is none other than deception by the specialists themselves” (Gehman, 1989, 12). This is a reasonably objective attitude towards witchcraft.

A fourth attitude towards witchcraft is that of indifferent disposition. Most of those who hold to this view seem to say that the subject is too complicated for them to understand. This attitude is especially common among many second and third generation Christians who are totally ignorant concerning either the traditional or biblical view of witchcraft.

However, some renowned anthropologists like Parrinder attributed witchcraft to lack of medical and scientific knowledge (Parrinder, 1958, 163). Yet modern education and scientific knowledge have not cured witchcraft beliefs and fears. Published reports abound that attest to the reality of witchcraft. The case of Mrs. Ekow is instructive. Mrs. Ekow (not her real name), though a Christian, was a victim of a witch’s target. The witch was a lady who was a family enemy and who had sworn that no child would ever be born to the Ekows. The result was that for no apparent medical problems, all of Mrs. Ekow’s pregnancies ended up in miscarriage before they were four months old. But the most interesting factor was that each miscarriage would be preceded by a terrifying nightmare in which Mrs. Ekow would wake up screaming and sweating and with severe abdominal

pains. This made the couple to think that these were not simply normal events. Much prayer and study of God's Word confirmed to the couple that the devil and his agents were involved. Finally, after claiming Jesus' authority over Satan through fasting and prayer, these terrible experiences disappeared and God blessed them with several children (Kisuke, 1987, 7-8).

Therefore, regardless of the many different views and opinions people have today regarding the reality and existence of witchcraft, it "is alive and well in Kenya and there is no denying that whatever efforts are being made to eradicate it, its effect(s) are being felt" (Arunda, 1987, 9).

### **Beliefs Regarding the Source of Power, Practice, and Control of Witchcraft**

There is a general agreement that in witchcraft man "seeks to control that which is greater than he is" (Arunda, 1987, 9) but debate continues regarding the source of power in witchcraft. People like Mbiti suggest that the real source of power in witchcraft is God. This is because all "power is ultimately from God, but in practice [of witchcraft] it is inherent in or comes from or through physical objects and spiritual beings" (Mbiti, 1969, 203). He further explains that human beings can tap this power (which is neutral) from the "spirit beings" and then use it to either benefit or harm society (Mbiti, 1969, 203). After having examined various beliefs on the use of mystical powers in Africa, Gehman also agrees that most Africans believe that these powers are impersonal. Hence, these may be tapped, either for good or ill (Gehman, 1989, 78).

However, in spite of such a belief, there is "evidence among traditionalists which indicates a connection between aimu (evil spirits) and Uoi [witchcraft]" (Gehman, 1985, 199). Several authors including Boa, Koch, and Somba, believe that witches obtain their power through demonic agency (Boa, 1977, 112); Koch, 1974, 60-61; Somba, 21). Thus although some witches may not be certain about the source of the power they are tapping, evidence shows that Satan and his agents are the real source.

Emmanuel Eni is a former wizard from Nigeria who was later saved. His relations with the spirit world came innocently via association with his wife, Alice, who was a witch. After Emmanuel's discovery that she was a witch and his subsequent interest in witchcraft, Alice offered to take him to a witches' meeting where he was initiated. He explains that he had to enter into a covenant

with Satan and his agents. As a result, he was not only given a demonic angel to guard him, but he also had certain gadgets inserted into his body to enable him to have prior knowledge of his enemies' thoughts as well as ability to change into various forms (Obonyo,1989, 7). Thus, there is evidence from a Christian perspective for the belief that the real source of power in witchcraft is Satan and his agents.

Regarding the practice of witchcraft, several methods seem to be evident. One is "sympathetic magic." This is the type which depends on an apparent association between things. Here, "the Muoi [witch] utilizes all manner of items which had once been in contact with the victim" (Gehman,1985, 78). Such items would include things like finger nails, toe nails, hair, pieces of cloth, footprints, faeces, or even the private parts of a close dead relative. Thus, among those who strongly believe in witchcraft, great care is taken to ensure that such things are hidden lest they be secured by a witch and used to harm either the owner or his close relatives. The other is the type that uses poison made from certain herbs or parts of animals (such as the liver of a crocodile). Such poison, if concealed in the fingernails of the witch and then surreptitiously placed in the food of the victim, would be sufficient to do the deadly work (Gehman,1985, 79). Regardless of the type, however, many people in Kenya today, Christians included, still believe in the power of witchcraft.

### **Some Effects of Witchcraft Among Second and Third Generation Christians**

Often, those people who engage in witchcraft attain the desired result that originally motivated them to resort to witchcraft for help. However, there is always a catch because Satan and the demons behind the power in witchcraft will never give anything for free. Hence, "most of those who are serious about witchcraft know that some kind of contractual arrangement is involved. Just as they are served by the dark powers (demons), so they must also serve these beings" (Boa,1977, 112). Most of those who venture into witchcraft are prone to becoming demonized. Basham says that

occult enquiry results in demonic affliction for the enquirer. [This is] because the whole psychic realm is dominated by evil spirits anxious to

attach themselves to a human personality [and] those who dabble in occultism invite spiritual oppression (Basham, 1975, 81).

Merrill Unger also supports this when he observes that "healing through occult involvement leads to psychic disturbances" (Unger, 1971, 94). It simply shifts the trouble from the organic to the psychic. Thus, Satan drives a hard bargain and he grossly cheats his victims (Unger, 1971, 95).

Two living examples that I came across during my ministry show that involvement in witchcraft often results in demonization. The first case involved Mwendya (not his real name) who happened to be the first-born son in what was originally a well-to-do family of four children. But Mwendya's parents died and left the four orphans at a very early age. Those deaths affected them greatly. One of Mwendya's brother's died and the other brother and sister became mentally disturbed. But somehow Mwendya managed to scrape through his education. Eventually, he was able to obtain a scholarship to India for university education. But he later became convinced that his parents' death and the subsequent suffering were the result of witchcraft by a jealous paternal uncle. Mwendya then sought help through witchcraft in Tanzania. As a result he got a well-paying job as a bank executive with a house and a car as fringe benefits. But he has also had to pay a price. He became demonized and was ordered by the demons never to keep a wife beyond her sixth month of pregnancy or else he could die. Consequently, he married and sent away six different girls in the five years that followed.

The second example involved a church elder whose wife had suffered incurable migraine headaches for more than five years. After trying all possible medical help in vain, he decided to try witchcraft secretly. His wife was healed of her headaches, but not for free. She immediately became demonized, mentally ill, and often violent. Early this year, the elder confessed the truth to a team of Christian brothers. His wife was then healed after much prayer and removal of the demons. But this happened after ten years of oppression. The key thing to remember here is that this oppression was invited when help was sought through witchcraft.

Another notable effect of witchcraft is death. This often happens, not only for the bewitched victim, but also for the enquirer who becomes demonized. Unger observes that many occultists and magic workers especially those who have cultivated the black arts and signed themselves over to the devil in their own blood, die horrible deaths. This is especially true when a ready successor is not provided to carry on the nefarious practice (Unger, 1971, 95).

Other generally negative effects of witchcraft are divorce and lack of development. One Kenyan government official in Siaya made the comment that “accusations of witchcraft in homes have caused many divorce cases” (Arunda, 1987, 9). This happens when a woman is accused or suspected of being a witch by her husband. It has also been noticed that general lack of development happens in areas where people strongly believe in witchcraft. This takes place when students in such areas choose not to excel in examinations lest they arouse jealousy and witchcraft from their competitors. Many people also believe that witchcraft has eliminated many intellectuals with great potential for national development (Arunda, 1987, 9). Thus, although there are those who would admire witchcraft and see it as a way of curbing unnecessary ills such as theft and tensions, it must be noted that witchcraft produces extremely devastating effects.

### **Biblical Study of Witchcraft**

In this section, we shall examine some key selected passages of scripture which deal with witchcraft and associated practices. The passages will be drawn from both the Old Testament and the New Testament. The purpose will be to determine what the Bible teaches on witchcraft and related practices. Later, we will be able to draw some conclusions based on the biblical teaching. All scriptures, unless otherwise noted, are quoted from the New American Standard Bible.

*Leviticus 19:26.* The general purpose of the book of Leviticus is to reveal how sinful man must approach a holy God in worship through sacrifice and obedience to God’s commandments. Chapter nineteen contains a series of precepts and prohibitions which are to be observed by God’s people (Israel). It is worth noting from the outset that the aim of these precepts and prohibitions is not to present a complete enumeration of all the moral and ceremonial duties. Rather, these are aimed at illustrating the application of the injunction found in the second verse of this chapter, which calls upon the people to be holy in their daily living because God is holy. This is the object of the whole ceremonial and moral law, as well as the supreme object of the Gospel (Kellogg, 1978, 408).

The Hebrew word translated “divination” in this passage is *tenachash*. Its lexical form is *nachash* from the root “serpent.” In the form in which it is used here, *nichesh* means “divination by serpent,” “to use enchantment,” “divination”, “to perceive,” “to observe” (Davidson, 1950, 545). According to Gesenius’ Hebrew Lexicon, the root of this word originally means “to hiss” or

“to whisper.” Specially used, it refers to “the whispering of soothsayers.” In the form in which it is used here, it may mean “to practice enchantment” or “to use sorcery” or “divination by serpent” (if derived from *nachash*). This is how it is used in Leviticus 19:26 and Deuteronomy 18:10. It is also used in a similar manner in II Kings 17:17 and 21:6. The word may also mean “to auger”; “to forebode” or “to divine” as used in Genesis 30:27 and 44:15 (Gesenius, 1979, 544). Thus as study of this term, which is derived from the root *nachash* shows that it could mean several things. It could refer to superstitious observance of omens. It could also refer to prophecy from observing snakes. It may also refer to the use of charms, incantations, and such objects as goblets. But precisely how these were accomplished is unknown (Bush, 209; Harrison, 201; Keil, 423).

The other practice which is forbidden in this passage is what is translated “soothsaying” and which the New International Version translates as “sorcery.” It is the Hebrew word *twnew*. Its lexical form is *anan* which is the root word meaning “a cloud.” In the form in which it is used here, it may mean “to divine by the clouds or the sky” (Davidson, 1950, 769). According to Gesenius’ Lexicon *anan* means “to cover,” hence “a cloud.” It may mean “to act covertly”; “to use hidden arts such as magic” or “to practice sorcery.” This is the manner in which it is used in our present text (Lev. 19:26), and also in Deut. 18:10; 18:14; II Kings 21:6; Isaiah 2:6; 57:3; and Micah 5:11. Many ancients understood the word to mean a particular kind of divination (Gesenius, 1979, 644).

It therefore seems that “witchcraft” or “soothsaying” are terms which are used interchangeably and therefore seemingly synonymous. The terms may refer to the instance of the prognostication of favorable times for specific forms of action. They may also refer to the practice of using herbs or material objects to bring about supernatural effects (Harrison, 1980, 201). However, beyond the technicality, there is a clear biblical command. Those who have a covenant relationship with God are forbidden from using drugs, herbs, or any other means to bring about supernatural effects either for the harm of others or the protection of their clients (Gehman, 1989, 116).

*Deuteronomy 18:10.* The events in Deuteronomy occur right at the end of the Mosaic period, just before entry into the promised land. Moses is about to die and Joshua is going to take over and lead the people to the promised land. Following the Exodus, they have renewed and amplified the covenant made previously with the patriarchs. God is the liberator King and since the Israelites owe everything to him, they are to submit to him out of love (Craigie, 1976, 18-19). Moses, who has been the mediator of the covenant and the human leader,

will no longer be with the Israelites. This is what makes a repeated call for obedience necessary. The covenant at Sinai has been sealed following God's victory over Egypt. This victory has emphasized to the Israelites that:

God participated in the events of human history to bring about the fulfillment of his promises to his people. Hence, the outcome of the future battles lay not in their military powers but in the power of God and their whole hearted commitment to him (Craigie, 1976, 31).

This commitment to the covenant is to be shown through obedience. In our passage, the Israelites are to demonstrate their love for God and commitment as God's covenant people by not participating in any type of "divination," "magic," or "consultation with the spirit world." Such practices were typical of the Canaanite religion.

In the list of prohibitions found in our passage, Moses groups together all the words which the language contained for the different modes of exploring the future and discovering the will of God. The purpose is to forbid every description of soothsaying or witchcraft (Keil, 1980, 393).

There are three terms used here which refer to the various types of divination. Two of these are used in Leviticus 19:26. These are *tenachash*, which is translated as "interpreting omens" and *twenew*, which is translated as "witchcraft" or as "sorcery" in the New International Version. Since these words were studied in Leviticus 19:26, we now need to examine the other new term.

The Hebrew word *tenasheph* is translated in this passage as "sorcery" while the NIV translates it as "witchcraft." Its lexical form is *nashaph*. In the form in which it is used here, *nashaph* means "to practice magic" or "to use witchcraft." It is used in this sense in Joshua 12:20, and 19:15 (Davidson, 1950, 396). According to Gesenius, the root word *nashap* means "to pray" or "to offer prayers" or "to worship." In the form in which it is found here, it means "to use enchantment" or "to use magical songs" or "to mutter." This is the way it is used in II Chron. 33:6; Ex. 7:11; Deut. 18:10; Dan. 2:2; Mal. 3:5 and Ex. 22:17. The LXX translates it as *pharmakos* (Gesenius, 1979, 418-419).

Thus, the different terms used in this passage all refer to various types of divination. According to Mayes, all these terms were originally distinct but by the time Deuteronomy was written, they may have had synonymous meaning. They are simply brought together in this passage to emphasize the absolute exclusion of all forms of divination (Mayes, 1979, 280).



It may therefore be difficult to draw a sharp distinction between each of these practices because the techniques and purposes that lay behind each individual practice enumerated are not clear. What is clear is that anyone who knowingly meddles with any of these practices will be breaking faith with Yahweh, the God of Israel. Here, Yahweh is not demanding a moral and religious perfection, but an undivided commitment which is to be shown by not consulting any strange gods or spirits (Von Rad, 1966, 123). Furthermore, we need to note that all these abominable practices were forbidden because "Yahweh would make His will known to Israel through His prophets, whose words would be clearly understandable unlike the ambiguous and mysterious revelations of the magicians and diviners" (Thompson, 1974, 210).

*Galatians 5:20*. The purpose of the passage in question goes back to Paul's exhortation in verse 13b. Here, he is calling upon the Galatian not to use their liberty to gratify the flesh, but to rule their lives by love through living by the Holy Spirit (Burton, 1920, 303-304). Further down in verse 16, Paul personally appeals to the Galatian Christians to keep on walking by the Spirit of God. In this endeavor, they are to bear in mind that those who walk by the Spirit of God do not fulfil the desires of the flesh. This means that they do not long for forbidden things or passions. In verse 19, he says that such "desires" or "works" or "deeds" of the flesh are well known to everyone (Guthrie, 1973, 283). To authenticate this, Paul goes on to give a list whose purpose is to emphasize some of the common sins within Christian brotherhood during the time, rather than to distinguish those who are highly moral in an immoral world. The list shows the church how much of the world is still living in its midst (Guthrie, 1973, 247). Among this list is *pharmakeia* which is translated as "sorcery."

According to Bauer's Greek-English Lexicon, the term *pharmakeia* simply means "the use or administering of drugs." However, it may also mean "poisoning" as used in Rev. 9:21 or "sorcery, magical arts" when used in connection with idolatry as in Gal. 5:20. Several commentators agree with this meaning. Hendriksen says that the Greek term *pharmakeia*, though a neutral term, is here used in the sense of sorcery whereby mysterious powers were ascribed to certain article formulas or incantations as in Acts 8:9; and 19:13, 19. The sorcerer had access to some superhuman power by means of which he plied his trade. It is an idolatrous sin because it seeks to replace faith in God with trusting in magic. The term is again used in this same sense in Rev. 21:8 and 22:15 (Hendriksen, 1939, 247-248). Bruce agrees with Hendriksen but adds that at the time Paul wrote to the Galatians, the term had acquired two senses: that of

using drugs to poison people or its use in witchcraft. This is the same sense in which it is used in Ex. 7:10 where it refers to the sorcerers in Pharaoh's courts. It is again similarly used in Rev. 9:21; 18:23; 21:8 and 22:15 (Bruce, 1982, 247-248). According to Guthrie, "idolatry" and "sorcery" were closely related sins in that the former provided an inadequate substitute for God, while the latter counterfeited the works of the Holy Spirit (Guthrie, 1973, 137).

A careful examination of this term in its context therefore reveals that denotes incantation or superstitious dealings with the spirit world which were commonly practiced in Asia minor (Acts 19:18). One is therefore right in translating the term to mean "witchcraft" as the NIV does. It is also clear that by implication, the practice is forbidden. This is because it is depicted as one of the desires of the flesh which should not be found among those who are saved and walk by the Spirit of God.

*Revelation 22:15.* According to Hendriksen, the book of Revelation aims at showing that the devil is not as powerful and victorious as he may seem to be. Christ is the ultimate victor (Hendriksen, 1939, 12-13). This is a very good summary of the book that needs to be borne in mind as one studies it.

Our passage is found in the climax of the epilogue of the book of Revelation. After a vision of the blessedness of life in the city of God has been given, then comes a grim picture of life for those who are excluded from this city. The aim of this grim picture is to make an implied appeal to the readers not to allow themselves to be numbered with the reprobate who will not enter the city (Beasley-Murray, 1974, 340).

After having shown in v. 14 that Christ is coming to judge men according to their works, John goes on to contrast the destiny of the saints (who have washed their robes in the blood of the lamb) with the fate of the wicked. This he does in a very picturesque manner. Like dogs, the wicked will be cowering outside the gates of God's city, while the redeemed inhabit the city (Ladd, 1972, 293). However, Mounce says that this passage is not to be taken to mean that all the wicked men will eternally live outside the gates of the heavenly city. It is simply contrasting the blessedness of the faithful with the fate of the wicked (Mounce, 1977, 394). Included together with "dogs" in the description of the types of evil doers who are excluded from the heavenly city are "sorcerers."

The Greek word for "sorcerers" is *pharmakoi*. It is the plural form for *pharmakos* which means a person who practices *pharmakeia*. As noted earlier, this same word is used in Galatians 5:20. It denotes the superstitious use of drugs in magic. Hence it is used here to refer to "sorcerers" or "witches," those who

practice “sorcery” or “witchcraft” because (as seen earlier) these terms are used synonymously (cf. Deut. 18:10). Thus, by implication, witchcraft is again forbidden by God in this passage. This is because those who practice it cannot have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb. Therefore, they have no place in God’s consummated eschatological kingdom.

## **Biblical Conclusions**

**1. *The Bible Affirms the Existence of Witchcraft.*** Our study reveals that there is ample biblical and existential evidence for the Christian to believe in the reality and existence of witchcraft.

In Leviticus 19:26 and Deuteronomy 18:10, God clearly forbids engagement in witchcraft and other related practices such as divination, sorcery and magic. The New Testament also speaks strongly against witchcraft, divination, and sorcery. In Galatians 5:20, Paul lists sorcery or witchcraft among the works of the flesh while in Revelation 22:15, sorcerers or witches are included among those who will be judged and who will not enter the heavenly Jerusalem. Thus, the Bible, by implication acknowledges the existence of witchcraft. It is therefore wrong to dismiss as mere superstition the reality and existence of witchcraft while still continuing to hold on to the authority of the Bible in matters of faith and doctrine.

**2. *The Bible Prohibits Involvement by God’s People.*** In all the biblical passages examined above, it is evident that the Bible forbids, either directly or by implication, any engagement in witchcraft and other related occultic practices such as divination, sorcery and magic. Moreover, an examination of the terms used reveals that they are used interchangeably and therefore most of them are synonymous. John McDowell summarizes this very well when he says:

both the Old and New Testament make repeated references to the practice of witchcraft and sorcery, and whenever these practices are referred to they are always condemned by God. The Bible condemns all forms of witchcraft, including sorcery, astrology, and reading human animal entrails (McDowell, 1986, 80-81).

**3. *The Major biblical reason for Prohibiting Witchcraft is that it is a denial of the supremacy and all sufficiency of God.*** According to both Harrison and Wenham, God’s main reason for forbidding witchcraft and related practices in

Israel was not because it was unreal and superstitious. Rather, it was due to the fact that God had “made His will known directly to His people through revelation to Moses and others, and indirectly by means of Urim and Thumim (Exodus 28:30; Lev. 8:8). No other means by which God’s will might be ascertained was provided, but in any event the righteous man lived by his faith (Hab. 2:4)” (Harrison, p. 20; Wenham, 272, ).

By implication therefore, it seems evident that seeking power through witchcraft is a violation of the first commandment. “The practice of consulting unseen powers by those devices was tantamount to acknowledging a power other than Yahweh, and this was rebellion” (Thompson, 1974, 210). Engaging in such practices shows lack of trust in God. That is why the punishment for a sorcerer, a medium, or witch was death (Ex. 22:18; Lev. 20:27). Such practices are an abomination to God. Abominable means hateful, repulsive, morally, or physically detestable, offensive. These practices were part of God’s reason for judgment of the Canaanites which would be seen in their ejection from the land (Craigie, 1976, 261). Moreover, there is a more practical reason for God’s prohibition of witchcraft and associated practices. The key thing to note here is that God does not forbid these practices out of harshness but out of fatherly love for his children. In His omniscience, God knows that His children may be ignorant of the destructive consequences that may result. As seen earlier in this paper, many are not aware that engaging in occultic practices involves participation in Satan’s realm. Satan’s purposes, in relation to man, are to “steal, kill, and destroy” (John 10:10). As seen earlier, Satan may begin by giving good things because he has a great deal of power. But eventually, he harms those who turn to him instead of turning to God for help. We saw that, most of those who get involved in these practices end up being demonized. Many end up either in death or becoming deeply involved in immorality and pornography. This is because it has already been observed that at the heart of the satanic movement [and occultic practices] is the concept of free love and unrestrained sexual behavior. [So that] this in itself, should be a red signal flag to the believer to remain completely apart from any who practice these things (Davis, 1973, 39).

## **Suggestions on How Second and Third Generation Kenyan Christians Can Deal with Witchcraft**

In a recent article entitled “When Members Get Caught in the Occult,” Gordon Dalbey enumerates several practical guidelines to be followed by spiritual Christians seeking to help those who become involved in witchcraft and other occultic practices. The writer considers these suggestions to be biblically based, valid, and practical. These will therefore form the basis of the discussion in this final section. They are stipulated below.

**1. *The Spiritual Helper Should Communicate Concern Rather than Condemnation.*** In Galatians 6:1, spiritual Christians are called upon to help those who fall in sin. However, Dalbey feels that to “Simply tell someone [that] ‘the Bible says occult practices are sin’ may cause the person [who is involved] to feel judged and [he may] turn away” (Dalbey, 1989, 62).

Right from the start of this paper, we observed that many people get involved in the occult either because they do not recognize the full authority of scripture or because of ignorance on the biblical teaching regarding these practices. This is what makes it even more necessary to approach the person who is involved in witchcraft with concern.

The spiritual Christian who is helping must explain to the one involved in witchcraft that he has a primary concern for his safety. The victim must know that “what he [is] doing bears danger to his spiritual welfare” (Dalbey, 1989, 63). He must be told that dabbling in the occult is like experimenting with eating wild varieties of poisonous vegetables which are deadly. Hence, the need for a caring friend to warn such a person.

**2. *The Helper Should Look for the Spiritual Need Leading to Occult Involvement.*** There is need to find out why a person turned to witchcraft in the first place. In other words, what need did he hope witchcraft would meet. The reason for this is that quite often “the sin of occult involvement can be traced to a genuine desire for something good [that God can offer]” (Dalbey, 1989). But due to ignorance or disillusionment with the lack of a quick solution in nominal Christianity, the person turns to witchcraft. Only after ascertaining his need will the helper be able to find out whether the victim has tried Jesus who has all power. He will be able to determine why the person thinks that Jesus is unable to provide a solution to his problem. The helper needs to accept and affirm the person’s spiritual hunger that is buried beneath his occultic involvement. The

desire may be good since it simply reveals that all men have a spiritual need. Such an affirmation is bound to make the person more open.

**3. *The Helper Should Not Deny the Reality of Witchcraft.*** As implied earlier in this paper, one of the biggest hindrances to helping people who are involved in the occult is that “Many churches have pooh-poohed occult activities as mere superstitions, power of suggestion, fantasy, or plain baloney” (Dalbey, 1989, 63). Yet the Bible makes it very clear that there is real power in witchcraft although it is not for free. Evidence adduced shows that many who have tried witchcraft have obtained results. Therefore, if the person who is seeking to help a victim who is involved in witchcraft scoffs negatively at its power, the most likely response would be for the victim to defend his experiences or to withdraw.

Our Christian witness should therefore not be asking whether witchcraft really works because it often does. Instead, we should be asking what its source of power is. The sin of adultery would illustrate this. While it is true that the experience may be adventurous and exciting, it is a sin against God and against one’s wife. Hence, just as a faithful Christian husband would not try adultery because of love for God and his wife, similarly, a Christian who loves Jesus should not attempt witchcraft. Jesus gave his life to wed the Christian to God. And God has far more saving power than any witch could ever provide.

**4. *Christians Should Understand God’s Rationale in Prohibiting Involvement.*** Second and third generation Christians should be made to understand not only God’s prohibition of engagement in witchcraft, but also His reason for it. Although these were given in detail earlier in our study, we need to summarize them again. It is because:

(1) God is the only true God who is the only source of all spiritual power and therefore trying to seek power through witchcraft or any other means or source is to reject and rebel against Him. It is therefore a violation of the first commandment (Ex. 20:3).

(2) God has a fatherly love and concern for His children. He knows that they are naive and that out of ignorance they may not be aware of the dangers such as demon possession, spiritual deterioration into deeper sin and death that often results from occult involvement. These must be made clear to all Christians.

## **Conclusion**

Today, many second and third generation Christians are not sure whether witchcraft exists or not, and if it does, whether it has real power. But both existential and biblical evidence shows that witchcraft is real and that the power behind it is demonic. Modern witchcraft may not take the form of traditional 'sorcery' and 'magic' practiced in the 'bush.' It continues to be practiced in our cities in forms and fashions that are not easily recognizable. These include charms, astrology, and palmistry (Wachira, 1989, 12). It is also clear that wherever the Bible refers to witchcraft, it either directly, or indirectly prohibits the people of God from engaging in it. God does not prohibit witchcraft because it does not produce results. Rather, it is because it is a violation of the first commandment and a failure to recognize God as the ultimate source of all power. The other reason for prohibition is that God loves His children and he would not wish them to suffer the destructive consequences that come with the power that Satan offers. As seen earlier, these include demonization, spiritual deterioration into sin, and death. Although the whole area of demonization and its relation to the Christian would be very interesting for further study, we will not deal with it here because it is beyond the scope of our study. However, we strongly recommend such a study for victims of witchcraft or those seeking to help such victims. The following books would be helpful for further study: Moreau, The World of The Spirits; Unger, What Demons Can do; Bufford, Counseling and the Demonic; Koch, Occult ABC; and Carson, Demon Possession.

Every effort must be made to help those Christians who have become involved in witchcraft. In so doing, we must show concern rather than condemnation; seek to understand the deeper spiritual hunger that has driven the victim to witchcraft; affirm the biblical teaching of the reality of witchcraft; and give God's reasons for prohibiting it.

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# The Family Planning Method of the Kalenjin

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*Family planning is an important issue in Kenya. Surprisingly traditional Kalenjin culture had effective family planning that was eventually displaced by Christian teaching. The artificial methods that replaced the older methods have some serious drawbacks. The ovulation method practiced by advocates of natural family planning may be the best available method to fill the void and to restore once again some of the strengths of traditional fertility management. There is a need for the Christian community today, particularly Christian men, to teach the importance of natural family planning to the younger generation of Christian couples.*

**I**n this paper I intend to look at the traditional family planning methodology of the Kalenjin people among whom my husband, Peter, and I worked over a period of 22 years. This is a typical example of the fertility management systems that have been used by many other tribes here in Kenya, in Zaire and in Tanzania. We will look at why these traditional methods are no longer being used and the consequences. We will also look at how the ovulation method of natural fertility management would have been more culturally relevant than the artificial methods if it had been offered when the traditional methods began to be abandoned. I will conclude with a word on the role of the Christian community in training its young people to manage their fertility responsibly.

In our early years in Kenya, in Kericho, I realized that the young Kalenjin women of my age were bearing their children close together. If I mentioned to one of my missionary friends that so and so had just had a baby and her older child was less than 2 years old, maybe even less than 1 year old, the response was usually, "Oh, Africans love children. They want to have large families." I also became aware that the older women that I knew had large families of eight, ten, or even 11 children. I thought that my friends had children close together because it's their culture to do so.

But as I got to know the younger women better, they told me that this was definitely not what they would have desired and that it was a big problem to them. They shared their concern about the number of children they already had, close together, and how they were having a hard time coping. They wondered how they could possibly manage with more children, but they knew that it was inevitable that they would have more. I encouraged these women to use the methods of family planning that I was familiar with, some of which I had also used; and which were readily available in both the government and the mission hospitals and dispensaries.

When I suggested using condoms, the response was usually, "My husband won't use it." When I suggested the birth control pill, a typical kind of response was, "Do you see that house across the valley? The woman who lives there used to take that pill and she bled very heavily and now she's a very sickly person. I won't take a chance that that will happen to me." When I suggested the coil (the IUD) to one woman, she said, "My brother's wife had a coil and it cut right through the wall of the uterus and ended up in the abdominal cavity." Now this sounded bizarre at the time but I have since learned that that does happen, and that it's not that uncommon. So the coil was not very acceptable either.

There was a lot of distrust about these methods. Some things they said seemed to be unreal and exaggerated, but I have since realized that they do all happen.

Meanwhile, the husbands of these young women, who were also my very good friends, started accusing me of "westernizing" their wives by encouraging them to use family planning. I thought, "Well, I guess it is western to have few children and to space these children farther apart but this seems to be such a felt need that maybe it's all right to westernize in this one situation." All these conversations were taking place in the Kalenjin language and I was learning some very useful vocabulary.

When we went to Kalenjin in 1965, missionaries had already been there for about 40 years. Hospitals and schools had been established. Churches were there. A lot of changes had taken place during that time so sometimes I was confused as to what was traditional Kalenjin culture, what was new Kalenjin culture and what was westernized Kalenjin culture.

As I got to know the older women they taught me about the culture that they had grown up in and I learned some very interesting things about their traditional family, and family size. I was amazed to learn that responsible fertility management had been a very critical part of Kalenjin culture, and that it was strictly enforced by the whole community. It was definitely not western to space

children. It was definitely Kalenjin culture to space children. What was very definitely western (or at least new, if not western) was to have children born closer than about four years apart. And this is exactly what those young husbands were doing. They were not spacing their children as Kalenjin culture required. They were following western culture which did not require them to space their children.

### **Traditional Family Planning Methodology of the Kalenjin**

Traditionally, the Kalenjin had a very strict method of family planning that was regulated by the community, which required them to space their children about 4 years apart. This was accomplished by sexual abstinence. The couple did not have intercourse from the time a woman knew she had conceived until the community determined that a proper period of time had passed after that child had been born.

After a child was born his mother wore a leather girdle around her hips<sup>1</sup> and she also let her hair grow. When the community decided that the child was developed enough that they, the community, could manage the nurturing of another child by that couple, the couple was permitted to have intercourse again. We could call the leather girdle a chastity belt<sup>2</sup>. The long hair was another sign that the couple was not allowed to have intercourse. The Kalenjin were very aware of their interdependence, especially in the area of child nurturing and it was the community that regulated the conception of children.

The Kalenjin were very aware of their interdependence, particularly in the area of child nurturing. Thus it was the community that regulated the conception of children so that, first of all, there was some equality in the distribution of children and especially so that each child had access to all the care that he needed to develop fully.

### **Social Conditions for Subsequent Conceptions**

Traditionally there were a number of conditions that had to be met by a child before his parents would be allowed to conceive again. First, the child had to be able to take care of himself in the face of danger. If a wild animal or raiders threatened, a pregnant woman would not have to pick up her child and run with him, thereby putting three people in danger: the child, the woman and the unborn baby. Second, the child also had to be able to contribute to the ongoing welfare of the community. The way this was decided was that he had to be able to follow

instructions to catch a goat and then to take it to wherever it was required; and among some of the Kalenjin sub-tribes he even had to be skilled enough to tie that goat to a tree. Third, the child had to be approximately as tall as the chastity belt his mother was wearing was long. Fourth, the child had to be responsible enough to be sent, by himself, to bring his father something when he was in the field or somewhere some distance away. When these conditions were met there was a feast at which the woman's head was ceremoniously shaved and the chastity belt was removed. After this the couple could once more have intercourse.

### **Social Penalties for Disobedience**

It needs to be pointed out that in this traditional system it was the husbands who were held responsible for conception control. If a couple was found to be pregnant before the community gave them permission to be, the husband had to pay some very heavy fines.

First of all, his peers, the men he had been initiated into adulthood with, would take his prize bull, or his prize cow - slaughter it and eat it without inviting him to the feast. Besides being a very expensive fine, he was being punished and humiliated by his friends, not by some remote police body.

The second fine was worse. If a couple was pregnant before the community gave them permission to be so, it was usually one of the younger men who had behaved so irresponsibly (according to Kalenjin mores). Young men were warriors. Warriors were self-controlled. They were disciplined. If a man could not be self-controlled in the sexual relationship he had shown that he also could not be depended upon to behave responsibly in battle. Who would put his life into the hands of someone who could not even control himself sexually? He had disqualified himself as a warrior and he lost his job. His manhood was directly measured by his ability to manage his libido for the good of the whole community.

The third fine was even more severe. If a couple was pregnant without the permission of the community, it was as though the husband had stolen that child from the community. He was a thief. He had stolen a child that did not belong to him. It was someone else's turn to have a baby, not his. Because the resources of the community now had to go into his child, some other couple would have to postpone their right to conceive, or everyone in the community would have to have less. That man had stolen the child from that couple. He had also stolen that child from the community by putting a heavier burden on the community.

Among the Kalenjin, a thief was killed. While they didn't kill this man, he might as well have been dead. He had lost his credibility. He was no longer respected. He no longer had a voice in the community and because of this he would never again be allowed to address a baraza (any public meeting, let alone a men's meeting). This was the ultimate humiliation. This was like death to a Kalenjin man.<sup>3</sup> My Swahili teacher, a Teriki, said, "That man had become like a woman."

### **Kalenjin Practices and Missionary Response**

The traditional Kalenjin method of family planning was facilitated by three cultural practices which were seen by the early missionaries to be physically, emotionally, socially and biblically objectionable.

1. Clitorectomy. The first practice that facilitated this method was the cutting out of the clitoris gland: clitorectomy. When a girl was initiated into adulthood her clitoris gland was surgically removed. This cut down her libido and made it easier for her to abstain from having intercourse for that long period of time. Early medical missionaries were aware of the problems these women experienced in childbirth because of the scarring that resulted from that operation. For this, and other, reasons they encouraged the Christians to not allow their daughters to be clitorectomized. Some also provided "safe houses" where girls, whose families would not protect them, could hide during the "initiation" time so that they would not be clitorectomized.

2. Separation of husband from wife and child. Secondly, the husband-father was kept totally outside of the child-nurturing structure. He was very much a peripheral member of the child-nurturing community. A father could not hold his newborn child. He could not even hand food to his crawling child. The closest he could come to that crawling child was to put some food on his foot and stick it out to him. Putting distance between children and father also put distance between wife and husband. This distance made it easier to abstain from intercourse and so also facilitated conception control.

In the Christian context we think that fathers have an important role to play in the nurturing of children right from birth so we encourage a close relationship between fathers and their children. To facilitate this close relationship between father and child we encouraged a close relationship between husband and wife. This lessened the effectiveness of the traditional method.

3. Polygamy (specifically polygyny). A third practice that facilitated this method of conception control was polygyny (multiple wives). In Kalenjin society

men had a high risk occupation. They were warriors and many of them lost their lives in tribal fighting so there were more women than men. The fact that women outnumbered men is what actually made polygyny possible.

Although polygyny was practiced, few young men could ever have more than one wife because wives were bought and they were expensive. A man's first wife was bought for him by his family but he had to build up his own personal wealth before he could invest in a second wife. In traditional Kalenjin society, it was the young married men who were required to be very self-controlled sexually inside of the couple relationship, as well as outside of it.

When a man got older, when he had accumulated his own wealth, then he could afford to buy other wives. But not even all older men could buy other wives because there were not that many women to go around. The influential men, chiefs and others, would have many wives but other men might have only one.

Another way a man acquired wives was through the death of a brother, a cousin, a nephew (the levirate system). When a man died, one of his male relatives became responsible for the care of his children. The dead man's wife then became the wife of the relative who assumed the responsibility of taking care of her children.

But, even if a man did have three or more wives, those wives could have been at some point in the abstinence phase at the same time since as soon as a woman knew she had conceived she would not have intercourse until that child could take care of himself in the face of danger. One wife might have a two year old child, another one might just have delivered and the third wife might just have realized that she was pregnant. So even though polygyny was practiced a Kalenjin married man was still required to be very self-controlled sexually.

In traditional Kalenjin society a woman did not have many children. She had perhaps five to seven conceptions. Because of the many health hazards maybe only three of those conceptions became adults. But a man could have many children because he could have more than one wife. If a man had three wives and each one had five children who reached adulthood, he had 15 children but each of his wives had only five.

From the woman's position in society, polygyny facilitated family planning because it was one of the factors that allowed her to space her conceptions. It wasn't one of the major factors but it did somewhat facilitate the spacing of children. From the man's position in society, as well, polygyny facilitated



family planning because it allowed him to plan to have many children by having more than one wife.

### **Community Education of the Tribe**

At their initiation into adulthood, during puberty, both girls and boys were thoroughly taught what their roles were in responsible conception, and they also were taught thoroughly what the consequences would be if they behaved irresponsibly.

The only way to protect girls from being clitoridectomized was to keep them out of this initiation program. Other harmful, and unbiblical practices took place during the initiation program so, eventually, the church had its boys circumcised separately from the traditional group and in this way both the girls and the boys bypassed the traditional initiation program where the basic teaching about responsible fertility management, according to Kalenjin mores, took place.

Traditionally there were other communal education programs, which took place after initiation, at which both the unmarried women and the unmarried men received continuing instruction on responsible fertility management. For example, when a young man was preparing to marry, the older respected men in the community would gather together with him all the young men who had already been initiated into adulthood, and would further instruct them about their responsibility in conception control, as well as other things. By the time they actually got married both women and men knew very well what their respective responsibilities were in controlling conception as well as the consequences if they behaved irresponsibly. These other functions were also not attended by the young people of the church.

### **Effects of Christian Teaching on this Traditional System**

The Christian community did not enforce the traditional method of spacing children. It discouraged the practices that facilitated the method. Christian husbands escaped paying the fines a non-Christian husband would have had to pay if he had broken the law regulating conception.

In the Kalenjin world view, a man's wealth was primarily measured by the number of children he had. Since in the Christian context a man was limited to only one wife, maybe a Christian man felt that his one wife should give him at

least as many children as two wives would have given him. This might be the main reason that Christian women had so many children born close together.

The Christian community encouraged a close relationship between husband and wife, even apart from a close relationship between father and child. The physical union of intercourse is considered to be a critical component of a close couple relationship. To abstain from having intercourse from the time a woman knew she had conceived a baby until that child was approximately as tall as his mother's chastity belt was long, was seen to be detrimental to a close husband-wife relationship, so the method itself was also discouraged.

### **Results of Christian Teaching on Rate of Conception**

Christian couples were soon outside the Kalenjin conception control system. Three primary reasons for this can be seen. First, Christians discouraged the three practices that facilitated the method (clitorectomy, keeping fathers outside of the child-nurturing structure, and polygamy). Secondly, a Christian man did not have to pay any fines if he impregnated his wife before he had permission from the Kalenjin community to do so (in the Christian community, it was considered a man's own business when he impregnated his wife and how many times. The Christian community had no say in the matter, nor did the Kalenjin community.). Thirdly, Christians rejected the practice of sexual abstinence (after the birth) for the traditional period of about four years.

What conception control methods did the Christians put in the place of the traditional methods? The Christian couple received no communal teaching or controls regarding responsibility in conception from the Christian community. Christian women began conceiving many children (often eight or more) close together.

In the past, because of the many health hazards, especially mother and child health problems, sometimes up to half, or even more, of their mothers and grandmothers children had died. Some died because of miscarriage, others after birth, from childhood diseases, from malaria, from dysentery, or from any number of diseases.

The Christian women were the ones who had confidence in the medical expertise of the missionaries. If there were complications during pregnancy, or if one of their children got sick, they quickly got help from the medical missionaries, so most, if not all, of their many conceptions lived to adulthood.

Eventually the traditional method of family planning was used less and less in the non-Christian context as well.

The population in Kenya before Independence had remained fairly stable but mushroomed since then due to better health care, especially better mother and child health care (which missionaries had a big part in establishing) and the increased conception rate (again, which missionaries had a part in causing). In addition fewer deaths occurred because of the cessation of tribal fighting. From a nation of about seven million people, Kenya has become a land of about 25 million.

In addition to undermining the practices that facilitated fertility management, the mission/church undermined the community education of the tribe in this critical area of family living without introducing a viable alternative.

By the time I arrived on the scene the young people I was involved with in the church had not had the same teaching about conception control that their parents had had, and they had come to consider family planning as a western innovation that had been introduced by us white people, whereas in actuality family planning was an integral part of the Kalenjin culture. What was foreign were the methods that were currently available: the birth control pill, condoms, the coil, vasectomies, tubal ligations. What could be done?

### **My Discovery of the Ovulation Method**

About ten years into my ministry I came across a book that described the Ovulation Method of natural fertility management. After I read it I thought, "This is really amazing - if it works." I looked for other books on that topic and got as knowledgeable as I could. The more research I did the more convinced I became about the value of this method. As I became more confident in the method I started sharing what I had learned with my friends.

The women I told about the Ovulation Method (OM) liked the idea of it, but it does require a lot of teaching and a woman has to be committed to observing for her sign of fertility. And it also requires knowledge and cooperation on the part of her husband.

Over the years at different women's meetings I would present a rationale for the spacing of children. I would also present the different methods of family planning that were available. I would remind them that their Kalenjin culture required them to space their children; and that there was a traditional method that

they were free to use, or that they could use the artificial methods; or that they could use natural family planning, but that they did have a responsibility to use some method.

The OM (Ovulation Method), which requires sexual abstinence for a short period of time each month seemed to be more acceptable than the artificial methods and also more compatible with the traditional method of abstinence for a long period of time.

In the Christian community I was a woman who was teaching women about family planning. And I was expecting the women to be able to communicate this to their husbands. The only problem was that women did not have a lot of credibility with men in that society and there was no man in the Christian community, that I knew of, who was teaching the men about responsible fertility management. And besides that, there were no consequences in the Christian community for a man who impregnated his wife soon after she had delivered a baby. Eventually I got in contact with a group of couples who were teaching the Ovulation Method to wives and husbands, as units. We were working in Kapropita at the time and I invited two of those couples to come from Nakuru to present this method to our pastors and their wives. The response was much better than when I had worked with only women.

After that I also started instructing wives together with their husbands - with varying results. Maybe it wasn't as well accepted as it could have been because I was still only a woman, instead of one of the older respected men in the community. Nevertheless it was encouraging to see what could be done.

This seemed to be a more acceptable method of family planning than the artificial methods and it seemed as though, if it was available and well taught, it could meet a very critical need. I had not had any formal training in teaching it.

When we went to Canada in 1987 for our home assignment I started looking for somewhere that I could get some training in teaching the OM. The best course I found was at the Creighton University in Omaha Nebraska in the United States. This was a 1 year post graduate course. I took it and when we came back to Kenya in 1991, I came as a Natural Family Planning Practitioner (NFPP) assigned to teach the Ovulation Method within the Africa Inland Church.

### **Comparisons of Modern Birth Control Methods and the Traditional Kalenjin Method**

Natural family planning (NFP) is more compatible with the traditional Kalenjin method than artificial methods in that both NFP and the traditional method

require some form of sexual abstinence. NFP is also more compatible with the traditional method than are artificial methods because men have to take more responsibility in the use of both the traditional method and the natural method than they have to with most artificial methods.

There are, however, some important ways in which the traditional method is more similar to some artificial methods than it is to NFP. Clitorectomy was an external, obvious mutilation of women that facilitated the traditional Kalenjin method of family planning. I'm not sure if the Kalenjin consciously associated clitorectomy with family planning or not. The way I heard them describe clitorectomy was that it was the female counterpart of male circumcision. But, whether they consciously associated the two together or not, clitorectomy was a very important factor in their traditional family planning methodology. It was an external, obvious, mutilation of women. It was a debilitating and harmful operation.

Yet many of the artificial methods seemed also to be harmful. Tampering with a woman's delicate balance of hormones as the BCP (birth control pill) or the negative effects of spermicides on a woman's cervix might be equally as debilitating as a clitorectomy.

Some of the common side effects of the birth control pill include: breakthrough intermenstrual bleeding; weight gain; nausea and vomiting; a diabetic like state; and a decreased menstrual flow. Some of the uncommon side effects are: heart attack; cervical cancer; gall bladder disease; and infertility. The birth control pill affects over 130 metabolic processes within a woman's body. The external mutilation of women by clitorectomy is a significant alteration. It is permanent. But pills and other medications tamper with the basic hormonal structure of a woman daily. There is even evidence that the BCP lessens a wife's sexual desire.<sup>5</sup>

### **Tubal Ligation**

A Kenyan high school student, a woman, who was in one of my seminars asked me if it was all right for a Christian woman to have her tubes tied. I responded that many Christian women had had their tubes tied, myself included, but that with my present knowledge I wouldn't do it and neither do I recommend it but that each couple should make their own educated decision. She said that she and her friends had been taught that if you were clitorectomized you would not go

to heaven and in her eyes tubal ligation and clitorodectomy were equal. Tubal ligation and clitorodectomy are very different from each other, but they are both operations that facilitate family planning.

So we saved women from having to be clitorodectomized to space their children and now we encourage them to take the pill and use other methods, which might be just as harmful and repulsive although unseen. The OM is more compatible with the traditional method and it is not harmful.

### **Intrauterine Device (IUD, Coil)**

If abortion is wrong, and, if life begins at conception, then, for a man to agree that his wife should have a coil is not responsible conception control on his part. It is irresponsible birth control, not conception control, because it does not prevent conception, it does not stop a couple from conceiving a new human being. It stops them from giving birth to that baby by causing a spontaneous abortion as early as 9-17 days after conception has taken place. That is, the above is true if life begins at conception, and if abortion is wrong.

The OM is only one method of conception control, but it is conception control, not birth control. The condom, with or without spermicide, is another method of preventing conception. Most BCPs prevent ovulation about 75% of the time, so most of the time they do prevent conception, but not 100% of the time. When the BCP is used and conception does take place, most of these conceptions are spontaneously aborted because the BCP keeps the lining of the uterus from building up properly.

The OM is a very effective method of conception control and every woman can confidently, and easily, know, every month, when she has the potential to conceive a baby. God has put a sign in every woman's body that tells her when she has this potential. Every woman has seen this sign, has been aware of it but very few know what it means. Every married couple deserves the opportunity to be educated on how to use this method. Then they can make an informed decision as to whether they want to use it or not.

### **Shift of Responsibility from Men to Women**

Another result of using artificial birth control methods is that we shift the responsibility for conception control from the husband to the wife. We thus rob men of their cultural heritage of community involvement.

What are some of the ways a man can take responsibility in the area of conception control: 1) He could use a condom; 2) He could have a vasectomy; 3) He could use the traditional method of abstinence; or 4) He could use natural family planning, which encourages communication and joint decision making by the couple.

From my perspective, because of the many side effects of the birth control pill, the patch, the injection, a man would not be taking his responsibility in conception control by letting, or encouraging, his wife to use these things.

In Kalenjin society, men were held responsible for conception control, not women although both had a role to play in responsible fertility management. Grandfathers trained their grandsons to know their role while grandmothers also trained their granddaughters in this area. All older women and men had this function. They had all been educated to do this job, as they had also been educated to do many other jobs.

Remember, too, that they were very community oriented so these grandfathers and grandmothers would not limit their instruction to their own grandchildren. In today's Kenya we need men who are trained to teach the young men how to be responsible in this area as much as we need women to teach the young women.

### **A New Proposal: Educating in Community**

It was in the Christian context that the traditional method was first thrown out so it seems to me that it would be good for the Christian community to shoulder the responsibility for teaching responsible fertility management. First of all, though, we need to have dialogue to see if we can determine what responsible conception is in the Christian context.

Consider some of the groups who would benefit by learning about the ovulation method. 1) Older couples who are no longer fertile, possibly having gone through menopause, or having had a vasectomy or a tubal ligation. Older men and women have children who need guidance. Traditionally parents did not teach their own children in this area, but today the grandparents may not be equipped, or want, to do this job. So, since there is this vacuum, maybe parents need to fill that vacuum.

2) Couples might benefit from knowledge of the OM who have the number of children they want, who consider their families complete or who don't want to have any more children but who do not want to have a vasectomy or a tubal ligation or use any apparatus or medication.

3). Couples who are just starting out their marriages and would like to know how to space their children. Engaged couples would also benefit from this education.

4). Single men and single women, separately. This might include young people who are not in a relationship but who would like to understand their fertility to prepare themselves well ahead for marriage.

### **Conclusion: Taking Control Again**

I have spoken to Christian leaders about my views on this issue and their response has been: "It's not my job. My job is ..." In response to them we can say that in Kalenjin society it was the job of every grandfather to counsel his own grandsons, as well as the grandsons of all his peers, on many subjects but especially on responsible conception. These men all had other jobs as well, but this was every man's job.

"No one asks me about family planning." Even ministers who are marrying people say, "No one asks me about family planning." We would raise the question that if a minister cannot initiate the subject of family planning and give Christian guidelines in this critical area of marriage for the people he's marrying, then there's something wrong. In Kalenjin society the elders in the community didn't wait for the couple who were getting married to ask them about family planning. It was their job to teach responsible fertility management to all. They counseled the young men over and over about their responsibility in this area right from puberty until marriage. They didn't wait to be asked. It was their job. In our churches the need is so great that we need men who are not going to wait to be asked. We need men who are prepared to meet that need.

Today's job is big enough that maybe it should be every mature man's job to teach the younger men what their responsibility as Christian men is in the area of family planning.

### **Sources**



1. I absorbed all of the material in this paper about the family planning methodology of the Kalenjin people from the Kalenjin people among whom I lived and worked for 18 years. During those years my intention was not to write a research paper. My friends would tell me various things and gradually I started to record them in my presentations about family planning. I do appreciate the Kalenjin people and the wisdom they showed in their management of fertility although there were very negative aspects to their methodology. And I thank them for enriching my life through letting me into their lives.

2. At a couples fellowship in Ossen in Baringo Region between 1980 and 1987, when I was talking about family planning, an old man stood up and said, (in Kalenjin) "In the old days we didn't abuse our women like they do these days. We didn't impregnate our wife until the child that she had delivered was as tall as the chastity belt his mother is wearing is long."

3. Some time after we had returned to Kenya in 1991, four pastors from Baringo Region came to welcome us back. As I was serving them tea I was asking how their families were. The youngest pastor said, "My wife is in the hospital. She has just delivered our last child." I perked up my ears and said, "How do you know it is your last child?" He said, "You know, nowadays we can't have many children like they used to have in the old days." I asked, "When you say, 'The old days ...', do you mean the old days like 10, 15 years ago, or like 50 years ago?" The oldest pastor said, "Oh, in the old, old days the Kalenjin spaced their children about 4 years apart ...". Then he went on to tell me what I have recorded on page 3 and 4.

5. During the one year practicum of the course on teaching the OM, which I did in my home town of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, I had to teach 27 couples how to use the OM. I actually taught 32 couples during that year. Four of those 32 women, all 4 of whom had started their marriages using the (BCP), told me that they were amazed at how much they enjoyed having intercourse after they had stopped using the BCP and started using natural family planning. They had all thought that there was something wrong with them because they had not really enjoyed having intercourse. And there was something wrong, but not with them. It was what the BCP had done to them. These 4 women out of the 32 that I had taught had felt free to tell me this. I did not ask them. So I wonder if there were others who had had the same experience but who had not felt free to discuss it.

I was teaching one couple who lived in a city 200 miles away from where I was living so I had to do some follow-ups with them by phone. One time the wife was not there when I phoned so I talked to only the husband. One of the

things we discuss at our follow-ups is how satisfied the couple is with the OM. This man said they were very satisfied with the method, particularly because his wife was now enjoying having intercourse.

Not all women are affected by the BCP in this way. One of our doctors told me that some women don't enjoy having intercourse until they do use the BCP because they're always worried about becoming pregnant. He said that after they start taking the BCP, when the fear of pregnancy is gone, then they begin to enjoy intercourse. But 4 out of 32 women that I taught during that year told me that they had had a suppressed libido when taking the birth control pill. This is about 12%, quite a high percentage. The fear of pregnancy can be better removed by learning the ovulation method.

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***Black Christians and White Missionaries***

by Richard Gray

(New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1990) £18.50, viii + 134pp, with endnotes and index.

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Richard Gray is Emeritus Professor of African History at the School of Oriental and African Studies (London University). His rigorous skills as a historian, therefore, are evident in this volume. The author is also a committed Catholic layman, and his sympathetic interest in the unfolding story of Christianity in Africa is also apparent.

The book seeks to explore African appropriations of Christianity spanning three centuries. The chapters came into being first as separate essays, and not all the chapters fit easily within the one book.

Part One is the fruit of historical research in the Vatican archives in Rome and concerns mainly 17th Century papal responses to slavery in Africa. It makes fascinating reading as Gray ferrets out (largely from Italian and Spanish sources of that era) two early attempts to expose the horrors of the Atlantic slave trade. The first of these was made by Lourenço do Silva, of Afro-Brazilian origin, who sought to influence the papal curia in Rome by an impassioned plea against the massive violation of human rights that the slave trade represented. The second attempt was by the Italian priest Fra Girolamo working in the Soyo region near the mouth of the Zaire River. Rome responded with resolutions and orders against slave trade practices, but it all came to nothing, foundering on powerful vested political and economic interests determined to perpetuate slavery.

These two chapters would be of importance to any student of the slave trade in Africa, but they fit less well in a book whose main concern is to investigate African appropriations of Christianity.

The third and final chapter of Part One, however, still set in the 17th Century, explores the impact of the early penetration of Catholic Capuchin missionaries into the Soyo region of Lower Zaire. Gray contests the widely held view that the enthusiastic response to Catholic missionary endeavour in the Kongo region of Lower Zaire was a temporary and superficial aberration. He warns against generalisations and shows why political, geographic and economic factors interplay locally or regionally to create distinct situations which need to be examined separately. The Soyo rulers found in the Capuchins' Christian rituals the political support and legitimation that they seemed to lack in their own

indigenous traditions. The Capuchins, for their part, created lay confraternities, which brought about a highly disciplined and committed lay training movement, whose leaders were influential in local government and made the alliance between the missionaries and the people spiritual as well as political. Gray's research reveals that in two major areas of confrontation, marriage and indigenous religion (attachment to shrines, charms, public festivals, etc.) the evidence confirms a deep and widespread response to the missionaries' message, even if this response was gradual and cumulative rather than dramatic. If subsequent history records that this "closest encounter" with Christianity was to pass, the fact remains that it did take place and that the encounter was a profound one.

With Part Two, Gray moves from the past to the colonial period and the post-colonial present. Once again, the author takes issue with an opinion widespread both within Africa and elsewhere, that Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa has merely been the ideological superstructure of Western capitalism. He insists that such a view does not take into account the fundamental contributions of African Christians and of African cosmologies. He gives examples of how, even when missionary influence was greatest, "vital spaces" remained for African initiatives and responses. He thus refutes Robin Horton's reductionist thesis that the world religions of Islam and Christianity are little more than catalysts, i.e. stimulators and accelerators of changes which in Africa were 'in the air' anyway. Rather, Gray seeks to show that, for instance, in areas relating to sickness and healing, evil and exorcism, death and eschatology, Christianity's penetration and influence have been deep and radical. Far from merely legitimating imperialism, Christianity, by its major emphasis on education and literacy (particularly the Bible), proved to be the "Achilles' heel of colonialism."

The final chapter discusses Christianity and concepts of evil in Sub-Saharan Africa. Traditional African perception would see evil as all that detracts from and seeks to destroy life. The missionaries' denunciation of sin struck a strong resonant chord, even if Africans did not immediately understand the missionaries' sense of sin as evil interiorized, involving individual responsibility and personal guilt. The Christian proclamation of the victory of Christ over sin seemed deeply meaningful to African hearers, especially when the Gospel narrative demonstrated Christ's power over sickness and evil - a theme of immense relevance to Africa, and particularly addressed by various prophetic leaders such as Kimbangu and Shembe.

Gray marshals evidence from the Watch Tower Movement in Zambia, Emmanuel Milango (Zambia), William Wade Harris (West Africa), Tukwadzano

Women's Movement (Zimbabwe), and the Kairos Theologians (South Africa), to reject the claim that the new religion (Christianity) has left untouched and unchanged traditional African cosmologies. At times there has been a "theocratic reorganisation of the cosmos" in which the African response to Christianity derives its force and vitality from indigenous models and experiences.

This in turn leads the author to discuss syncretism. Gray argues that a distinction should be made between syncretism and pluralism. In his view, syncretism is only syncretism when it is a deliberate attempt to create a new religion made up of elements from other religions. Theological pluralism on the other hand is the arena of a process of continuous dialogue by those who perceive themselves as Christians as they search to make sense of the new from within their world. Gray would maintain that such theological pluralism, if and when it is resolved, may lead to theological enrichment.

The debate throws up questions which would provide fruitful discussion among theological students. Evangelicals, with their deep concern for right doctrine, may well feel uneasy about possible implications for orthodoxy. They might protest that Scripture, which should be the supreme authority in all matters of belief and behaviour, is being shunted to one side by religious and theological speculation. They might feel that syncretism is getting off too lightly. Certainly the definition that Gray borrows of what constitutes a Christian as "one who gives attention to Jesus whose achievement is contextualised by God" would seem to be woefully vague. Surely we can be more definite as to what constitutes a Christian. Having said that, an orthodoxy which is passively inherited from others can create a lethargic, wooden and static Christianity -- the very opposite of what Jesus said when He declared "You will know the Truth and the Truth will set you free." Not unthinking orthodoxy, but radical biblical Christianity should be the African Church's goal. "The task consists not primarily in thinking through the theological deposit of the West, -- it consists in thinking through faith in Christ" (Kwesi Dickson).

A College library of BTh-level and beyond would do well to acquire this book. It will inform, challenge, and stimulate thinking.

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***Transforming Mission:  
Paradigm shifts in theology of Mission***

by David J. Bosch

(Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991) XIX + 587 pp., \$24.95

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Another missiological classic has burst on the scene. This book will remain a top shelf publication for years to come. Besides revealing brilliant research the data is assiduously documented, portraying the author as immersed in his subject. His skillful use of German, Dutch and South African authors is outstanding, as well as his knowledge of the more commonly cited American selections.

This book gives an overview of paradigm shifts in mission over the last two millennia. It is interwoven with the theology of mission-history, aspects of culture and glimpses into the future.

At first it is hard to determine the theological stance of the author because he presents his data so objectively. However, he does not hesitate in referring to evangelical fundamentalism which he portrays as an anachronism.

In Part 1 of the book he deals with the various New Testament Paradigms. Matthew's paradigm was that of 'Missionary Discipleship.' He declares that the 'road' of missionary discipleship to the Gentiles is now open requiring all disciples to practise God's justice for the poor.

The Lukan paradigm contains a pneumatological emphasis as well as the notion of suffering as a part of missionary service.

When arriving at Paul's missionary model, the author acknowledges the elusive nature of this missionary giant and then outlines the six main characteristics of his missionary life.

Part 2 of the book deals with the six historical paradigms of mission and here the author follows the historico-theological sub-divisions suggested by Hans Kung (1984:25; 1987:157). These are:

1. The apocalyptic paradigm of primitive Christianity.
2. The Hellenistic paradigm of the patristic period.
3. The medieval Roman Catholic paradigm.
4. The Protestant (Reformation) paradigm.
5. The modern Enlightenment paradigm.
6. The emerging Ecumenical paradigm.

The first of these is covered in Part 1 where an intensive examination is made of the New Testament documents. The second paradigm is enunciated most clearly and will surprise some evangelicals who may not realize the vital contribution made to the concept of mission by the Eastern Orthodox Church.

The third paradigm, viz. the contribution of the Roman Catholic Church to mission is perhaps better known. The primary place in conserving missionary theology during the period of this paradigm is attributed to the monastic movement. The essential scripture utilized by members operating within this paradigm is according to Bosch, Luke 14:23, "...compel them to come in."

The great importance of Vatican II (1962-1965) in promoting a major change in Roman Catholic theology of mission is underlined by the author.

The fourth paradigm cited is that of the Protestant Reformation. Here Bosch (pp. 241-143) outlines five main features of this movement which are:

1. Justification by faith.
2. Humanity seen from the perspective of the Fall.
3. The subjective dimension of salvation.
4. The priesthood of all believers.
5. The centrality of the Scriptures.

He then points out the ambivalence operating during this period. This was the fluctuation between the sovereignty of God and the sovereignty of human accountability.

A sizable section is given to mission in the wake of the Enlightenment and nine motifs are elucidated by the author in a masterly fashion. He unveils some of the misconceptions of missionary work carried out in the framework of the Enlightenment and concludes this section by saying:

The only ultimately effective solution to the wide-spread missionary malaise of today, which is sometimes hidden from our eyes because of our apparent missionary "successes," is a "radical transformation of the whole life of the church." (p. 345).

Part 3 is entitled "Towards Relevant Missiology." For 158 pages the author discusses current issues of the emerging paradigm. Here he displays his breadth of reading and a balance between faith and praxis. This whole volume as a historical overview is invaluable, but Part 3 in particular will be a resource for

students and professors battling with the contours of the new paradigm, as it emerges. These are the issues right at the cutting edge of missiology and will, I believe, guide our thinking towards the end of the current century and beyond.

The author excels in sketching the contours of the ecumenical paradigm. He avoids dogmatic conclusions and gives space for developing patterns, utilizing his immense ability to weave his knowledge of both the ecumenical stream and the evangelical stream of church and mission conferences. This section is forward looking and would be an advantage for all mission leaders to study. The tragic death of the author since publication of this book is a great loss to the missiological world. May there be other great thinkers raised up like this most astute scholar.

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***Passionate Believing: The Fundamentalist Face of Islam***

by Bill Musk

(Eastbourne, E. Sussex, UK: Monarch 1992) 256 pp. £9.00/\$13.50

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Musk's previous book, *The Unseen Face of Islam* (MARC, 1989), helped the reader to understand folk Islam and to appreciate cultural patterns and power encounter possibilities as part of sharing one's faith with ordinary Muslims. Musk's latest book, turning in a new direction, seeks to help the reader understand the rising phenomenon of Islamic Fundamentalism.

The book is helpful not only for those who seek to minister to the household of Islam, but also for the lay person who is often perplexed by the seemingly 'irrational' and passionate behavior of Muslim reformists. Musk constructs his treatise by first introducing the reader to the worldview which is foundational to Muslim Fundamentalism. It is an integrated worldview which does not compartmentalize life, which requires not only passionate belief but passionate behavior, and which has increasingly been on a collision course with both the humanistic West as well as the secular Muslim states of the post-colonial period.

As Musk illustrates the worldview of the Muslim reformists through models and vignettes of fundamentalism from Pakistan, Iran and Egypt, he comes to at least three sobering conclusions: (1) "Westerners and western culture have actually helped inflame and energize 'Islamic Fundamentalist'"; (2) "modern Islamic 'fundamentalists' adhere to a worldview far closer to the biblical norm than our Western aberration"; and, (3) until Western Christians come to terms with the issues underlying fundamentalism, "effective witnessing to Islamists remains a future dream."

Of disappointment to this reader is the fact that Musk, with his long-term experience in Africa, does not give us illustrations or insights into fundamentalist movements in their sub-Saharan expressions. Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria and an increasing number of countries across the continent have experienced a resurgence of Islam either against nominally Muslim national leadership or in opposition to secular governments. Yet, while the players and specific issues may vary by geographic region, the underlying passionate belief in a God-ordained unsegregated worldview are the same, whether in Africa, Iran, Pakistan or Indonesia.

Perhaps most significantly Musk, instead of pointing out bridges to fundamentalist Islam, challenges the corruption of western culture which has often been more the barrier to the gospel than has the person and work of Jesus Christ. He calls the reader to lay aside personal pride and prejudice, to empathize with the people concerned, and not to overlook the fundamentalist attitudes hidden in our own Christian sub-cultures, as we allow Christ's Spirit to indwell us and identify creative ways to share the gospel with a people who need--in addition to passionate belief--Christ's love.

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***Grace Abounding: The Message of Judges***

by Michael Wilcock

(Nottingham, UK: IVP, *The Bible Speaks Today* series, 1992) 176 pp., £7.99

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Judges is one of the most intriguing books in the Bible, in both senses of the word 'intrigue.' It is a fascinating book, filled with memorable stories of unusual people; people who are involved in the plotting and overthrow of the foreign rulers under whose oppression they were suffering. The events take place in dramatic circumstances as the judges are raised up by God to deliver the Children of Israel from their oppressors.

These narratives provide marvelous material for Sunday School teachers, but seem to be less popular with preachers. Some of these stories lend themselves well to preaching, with their rich store of lessons to learn and examples to follow. But other chapters are rarely read, let alone do they form the subject of sermons. Perhaps we wonder why they are included in the Bible. They hardly seem to be 'useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.' So what is their purpose? Why did God ensure that they are in the Bible? Where can we turn to for help in understanding them?

It only needs a glance at the bookshelves of College libraries, or even of bookshops, to realize that Judges is not well served by commentaries, whether evangelical or otherwise. For many years we have relied mainly on Arthur Cundall's fine commentary in the Tyndale Old Testament Commentary series. More recently the book by D. Davis has increased our resources. We are therefore grateful to Michael Wilcock for adding to the list with his new volume in IVP's Bible Speaks Today series. Wilcock has already written three fine 'Expositions' for this B.S.T. series each of which reflects his depth of study, clarity of communication, and a perspective which sees Scripture from God's point of view and the message which He wants us to receive. I, therefore, began reading this book with a sense of anticipation which was amply rewarded.

The book opens with an introduction which highlights several of the themes found within Judges; the recurring pattern of rebellion, retribution, repentance and rescue; an emphasis on troubles more than on narratives of the individual judges; the consequences of making wrong decisions; the question of where authority lies when 'there is no king in Israel' and finally, the fact that it is God

the Judge (ch. 11:27) who stands behind the judges and is ultimately in control even when he seems to be absent.

It is this last point which provides the emphasis of Wilcock's book. He sees the opening section (ch. 1:1-3:6) in terms of three judgments made by God and their consequences. The first details God's military orders, the second brings God's legal accusation, the last he likens to a royal decree which reveals how God uses what is wrong and evil to 'discipline and train' His people.

The narratives of the judges follow a recurring pattern which is seen in its most complete form in the account of Othniel. Wilcock suggests that the Othniel pattern with its eleven (11) points sets the standard for the stories that follow, even though many of them are often highly abbreviated. This very variety is seen as significant in showing that God is not tied to any single fixed method of saving Israel, but is ever free to surprise them, and us, with the unexpected.

Unexpectedness certainly characterizes Ehud's narrative which is so different to that of Othniel, and is followed by the tiny account of Shamgar. This serves to underline God's freedom to use many very different men and women, and a variety of oppressors in accomplishing His purposes. Despite the differences certain things remain unchanged. These include the sin of Israel, the temptation of Satan, and the purposes of God for Israel and the land. The point being made it that God is sovereign, and it is He who is in control of all that happens.

Two threads run through Judges to further strengthen its unity. There is no one like Moses or David in whom authority is invested; secondly, the original people of the land and their evil influence are always present. These two threads lay the foundation for the disintegration which is seen as the book progresses. However, this disintegration is that we notice that the emphasis is on what God is doing through the judges with His people, not on what He is doing with the judges. This explains why an approach which treats the judges as examples to follow overlooks an important thrust of the book.

The account of Abimelech shows that when relationships with God are broken (He is not mentioned by name in ch.9), then the result is that relationships between people disintegrate. Truth and integrity in the third chapter of Gideon's story, and develops still more at the end of the Jephthah narrative, reaches its climax in the final five chapters of Judges.

But before that comes the rather puzzling account of Samson. Is he really a judge? He is hardly an example to follow! What are we to make of his exploits? Was God's Spirit really on him? The answer is clearly yes. But what then does it all mean? Here Wilcock's emphasis is invaluable. God is the Judge. If we see the

judges as those who delivered Israel we will be in danger of missing a vital aspect of the Samson chapters. Samson did not deliver the Israelites from the hand of the Philistines. The picture is one of 'fraternizing readily with them, [so] that even intermarrying was acceptable' as Israel drifted away from the Lord. The incident at Lehi does not look like the oppression suffered previously, rather what we are shown is 'accommodation to the world.' God is in control. He 'harnesses the young man's self-indulgence for his own purposes.' God's purpose is to judge the Philistines. Dagon is defeated, God's purpose continues. God's grace shines most clearly in these chapters where it is least deserved.

How can we say that God's purpose continues in the final chapters when He is absent apart from one very brief mention. Again Wilcock is helpful here. The first story depicts everything as all right on the surface. The right procedures are followed, but in the wrong way and for the wrong reasons. We are shown religion without God. Although it is wrong it does not appear to be too terribly bad. The second story corrects that false impression. We are shown morality without God. The disintegration seen earlier has escalated to the point where Israel is trying to destroy herself. All her attitudes are wrong. The result is near chaos. However, God is still in control. Despite the attempted self-destruction God's purpose for the nation continues. The people cannot successfully destroy themselves.

There are two useful insights. The first concerns the 300 who lapped. God's purpose was not to choose the best soldiers, rather to reduce the numbers to an impossible level. The 300 were not an 'elite' but were hopelessly 'inadequate.' God was the victor, not Israel. He secondly reminds us that the most striking aspect of Jephthah was his ability to use words effectively. It is a story 'full of the spoken word,' even though that lands him in his greatest trouble.

We have one criticism to make. In the story of Ehud Wilcock makes much of Ehud's left-handedness. He says that the word means 'a man who cannot use his right hand' because it is 'bound.' He then goes on to say that it was *perhaps* deformed (my italics). His surmise is then assumed to be a fact, so that he builds much on the withered hand of Ehud. Now there is no question that Ehud was left-handed, the story makes that quite plain. The word does refer to someone who is restricted as to his right hand. However, the inference that his right hand was withered is not valid. The word only occurs once more in the Bible, also in Judges. No one, not even Wilcock, would hold that the 700 elite Benjamite men had withered right hands (20:16). The word is used to refer to someone who is left-handed. Such a person's right hand is no more withered than the left hand of a right-handed person.

However, this minor criticism in no way detracts from the value of this fine book. A book that should certainly be in every College library, and is highly recommended to every pastor who can afford its moderate price.

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## Recent Books on African Theology: a Bibliography

*The list of new publications listed below is given as a service to our readers. Many thanks to Edward Murphy, SJ of Hekima College, Nairobi for compiling this list and sending it along to us.*

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