KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF WITCHCRAFT INTERVENTION AMONG THE AKAMBA CHRISTIANS OF MACHAKOS DISTRICT

BY

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

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ABSTRACT

Witchcraft remains an issue for the Church in Kenya. Many second and third generation Christians are confused about what to think of witchcraft and how to handle those who are caught in its power. The Akamba community has been evangelized and indeed has lived with Christianity for more than a Century. Most Christians adhere to Christian beliefs and rituals. Missionaries preached Christianity to the Akamba and urged them to denounce some of their cultural practices. In particular, they branded witchcraft demonic and strongly condemned those who were practising it. They pointed out the Biblical position on witchcraft which portrays God as condemning the practice. In particular this study sought to investigate the beliefs and practices of witchcraft intervention among the Akamba Christians of Machakos District.

It is to be noted that the Akamba seem to have embraced the ideals of Christianity in total. This is true so long as there are no problems challenging their lives. However, whenever misfortunes come or strike, the same Akamba Christians result to their traditional beliefs and in particular specialists who use mystical powers to give directives on how to address the situations. Generally, the Akamba believe that everything that God created was good for His people. Therefore, any bad thing is not associated with God but evil. For this reason, the Akamba take action to protect themselves by consulting mystical powers.

Respondents from each of the three divisions of Machakos District namely: Mumbuni, Katangi and Mitaboni were selected. There were two hundred and seventy respondents in
total. Out of these, one hundred and fifty six were Christians, thirty officials of the Church, twelve specialists, twelve local leaders, thirty people from the local population and thirty youth. Results were analyzed by use of frequencies, percentages, tables and graphs.

Data was collected using interview schedules, Focused Group Discussions and passive participant observation. Both primary and secondary data was utilized. The study revealed that beliefs and practices of witchcraft are real among the Akamba Christians of Machakos District. At least (80%) of Christians admitted frequent and constant consultation to traditional specialists commonly known as “Awe”. It is found that most Christians irrespective of gender, marital status and age seek and consult these powers when confronted by problems.

In this connection, the Akamba Christians are seen in behaviors that subscribe to witchcraft such as wearing protective charms, keeping broken pieces of pot on top of their houses and complaining of being bewitched by their fellow Christians. The voluntary and repeated confessions and lynching of witches, some of whom are Christians proves that the belief in witchcraft exists among Akamba Christians. This being the case those who do not openly admit witchcraft’s existence do so on the surface. It is against this background that this research attempted to discuss believes and practices of witchcraft intervention among the Akamba Christians of Machakos District.
<table>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>A.B.C</td>
<td>African Brotherhood Church</td>
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<td>A.I.C</td>
<td>Africa Inland Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>A.I.M</td>
<td>Africa Inland Mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>C.M.S</td>
<td>Church Missionary Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>IBEAC</td>
<td>Imperial British East African Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K.I.E</td>
<td>Kenya Institute of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCCK</td>
<td>National Council of Churches of Kenya</td>
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<td>R.C.C</td>
<td>Roman Catholic Church</td>
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<td>UBI</td>
<td>Ukamba Bible Institute</td>
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OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Christian: One who follows Jesus Christ and is a member of Christian community.

Divination: The art of interpreting, discerning supernatural or space-time events particularly with respect to their cause, effects and how they affect human beings for the purpose of guidance, planning and execution. It involves the use of mysterious causation in explaining these events.

Diviner: One who practises the art of interpreting supernatural and mysterious causation and future events.

Divine healer: One who practises the art of divination and administers healing.

Fetish: Various natural or artificial objects believed to be endowed with supernatural and/or magical powers.

Herbalist: One who uses various herbs for treatment of various diseases.

Initiation rites: Events in the life-span of an individual that enables the transition from one state of development to another. They involve rituals.
Living dead: Departed member of the family/society whose names and personalities are still being remembered by their living relatives.

Magic: A ritual performance believed to influence human or natural events beyond the ordinary human sphere.

Medicine Person: One who cures and heals the sick.

Mystical power: Having hidden meaning or spiritual power.

Pagan/infidel: A derogatory term coined by Western missionaries to refer to the African who stuck to his cultural beliefs and practices.

Akamba Specialist: One who has the ability to explain the cause of misfortune, foretell the future, and give protection against the dangers caused by witches/wizards, sorcerers and those with evil tongues.

Saved/Born-again: A term used by Christians to refer to a person who has identified himself/herself with Jesus Christ’s mission of salvation. They acknowledge this through verbal exaltation of confessing their sins. In some sects, they acknowledge the gift of the Holy Spirit.
Sorcerer: One who harms others by performing destructive rituals through casting spells.

Traditionalist: An African who resisted Western Christian missionary influence and education and stuck to his/her cultural beliefs, practices and values which was held prior to the introduction of Christianity.

Witch: A generic term denoting an anti-social female and who is able to harm others by either an innate/acquired spiritual power.

Witchcraft: Human exercise of supernatural powers for anti-social evil purposes.

Witch doctor: A derogatory term used by missionaries to refer to the Akamba traditional medicine people.

Wizard: Denotes an anti-social male of very strong determination to do evil to his fellow human beings using innate or acquired spiritual powers.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Beliefs and practices of witchcraft are not only practised by the Africans but are a world-wide phenomenon (Bahemuka 1982: 104). (Holmes 1974: 38), for example, notes the existence of beliefs and practices of witchcraft and sorcery in Britain, a thousand years after the birth of Christ. British authorities condemned such practices then and the practitioners were excluded from the court and all other social places.

In Africa, beliefs and practices on witchcraft are found among those who claim to have adopted Christianity. Although Christians consider witches and wizards evil, they are found in the Akamba community. The Akamba believe that there is a mystical power governing the universe. This belief is reflected in the practice of traditional medicine, witchcraft and sorcery. This power is mysterious, hidden and available to spirits and certain human beings who can manipulate it to their whims (Mbiti, 1969). The knowledge of this power helps people in finding the cause of: misfortunes, troubles, detect thieves as well as those who harm and curse others. The whole purpose of any Mukamba is to acquire life, strength or vital force to live strongly and make life stronger or to assure that force remains perpetually in ones posterity. For this reason, the Akamba act to be protected from misfortune, from diminution of life or of being, and from those influences which animate or diminish
them (Temples 1953). For this reason the Akamba visit their specialists for advice on making life stronger. Unfortunately the Christian Church complains when her members visit these specialists claiming that such activities disrupt the equilibrium in the universe, order, peace and harmony. The Bible explicitly rejects this dualism as evidenced in (Mathew 6:24) that:

No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

To crown the above scripture those discovered consulting the said specialists are excommunicated. It is in this regard that this researcher set out to investigate what satisfactory interventive services can the Church put in place to replace the roles played by traditional specialists.

A dominant feature of the Akamba worldview is the belief in witchcraft. This inexplicable power is resident in plants and animal life, manifest through spoken words and mediated through specialists. This power is recognized by people in high government offices, rich urban dwellers and highly educated Akamba, some of whom are Christians (Gehman 1993:82). Akamba beat many odds to secure this power from known specialists.

Christianity is against the practice of witchcraft and the Bible depicts the same as the desires of the flesh which should not be found among those who are saved and walk
by the spirit of God (Acts 19: 18-19 – NIV). Similarly, those who harbour such beliefs and practice them cannot wash their robes in the blood of the lamb. In effect they cannot inherit the kingdom of God (Deuteronomy 8:10, Galatians 5:20-21). However, beliefs and practices revolving around witchcraft are a reality among Akamba Christians (Mbiti, 1992: 192).

Christianity came to Machakos District not as the coincidental by-product of new economic opportunity, but rather, as the result of a calculated campaign to win the Akamba to a new religious and cultural loyalty (Munro, 1975: 100). The African Inland Mission (A.I.M) arrived at Machakos in 1895 and established its mission station at Mumbuni in 1902. This was a strategic place from where to reach out and evangelize the whole of Machakos District (Omulokoli, 1995).

In their evangelization process, Missionaries preached against witchcraft and all related practices. These were evils to be done away with. Churches condemned witches and asked them to renounce their evil ways, return to God and seek forgiveness. Those Christians who practised witchcraft were suspended from active involvement in Church affairs, in particular the Eucharist (Bahemuka, 1982:114). However, most of those who remained in the mission Churches tried to fulfil their membership obligations, but some secretly retained their traditional beliefs and practised them as need arose (Imasogie, 1983).
Most Akamba accepted Christian teachings in part. This was because they realized that when the Missionary was giving them a new name at the time of baptism, each person was being renamed with the name of a Christian saint to be their guide and inspiration. The Akamba people understood those names in terms of a reincarnation of Christian ancestors. They saw the ritual reception of a Christian name as a new identity which they now possessed. This was compared with their own naming system which at times was referenced to their ancestors or heroes of the community. Likewise, the Christian priests ordained by the Church to function in the name of Christ when doing the sacred rituals of baptism, evoked in the Akamba minds the charismatic rituals of the diviner-witchdoctors, consulting the ancestors when giving their traditional names. Furthermore, the very Father-in-Heaven prayed to at the time of baptism by the Missionaries was none other than their own creator God, Ngai, whom they worshipped from the beginning of time (Kirwen, 1987).

Ironically, beliefs on witchcraft are widely harboured by Akamba Christians. Most of them keep broken pieces of pot on rooftops of their houses, while others have charms (kithangona) hidden in their pockets or tied to certain parts of the body. Notably, they still attend Church services (Kasomo, 2000). Those who have disputes in court are anxious to try to further their cause by means of witchcraft. Over the doors of some houses of Christians, are ‘planted’ a charm (Lindblom, 1920:181). The same Christians secretly visit medicine persons when faced with existential crises such as
illness or death. In such critical periods of life, the Akamba secretly consult these specialists for explanation and to ward off the evil (Gehman, 1993:81).

**Figure 1:** Sample objects from the Akamba specialists.

Despite the spread of Christianity in Machakos District, many Christians still believe in the power of witchcraft. As a result, some people spend lots of money on consulting traditional healers to obtain, counter attack, or to protect themselves (Kavivya 2000). This is against the teaching of their respective Churches (Acts 13: 8-11). As such (Mbiti 1969: 228) may have a point when he observes that Christianity for many Africans is quite superficial and has no real answers to life’s personal difficulties, or any real influence on the people’s social problems. In this case then will the Church sit down and watch her members doing what displeases their master? How can the Christian Church intervene? Can her ministers play the roles played by
the Akamba specialists? This study therefore investigated beliefs and practices of witchcraft intervention among the Akamba Christians of Machakos District.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Most Akamba people usually associate unusual events, among them poor harvest, accidents and marital conflicts with witches/wizards. This ranges from poor harvests, accidents, to marital conflicts. A great number of the Akamba Christians exhibit a dual personality in their expression of Christian faith. On one hand, they give an impression of being faithful devotees to Christianity. This is evidenced by attending Sunday services regularly, tithing, participating in fellowship and prayer meetings as well as being actively engaged in the mission and evangelism of the Church.

On the other hand, the same Christians hold traditional beliefs and practices such as attributing misfortunes, accidents, illnesses, and death to witchcraft. Thus, the very Christians who are involved in Church activities are engaged in various forms of traditional practices, which Christianity condemns. Those who seek solutions to their problems outside the Church claim that witchcraft offers mysterious and adventurous experiences through communion with the supernatural (Boa 1977:188). The Biblical teachings that calls all who labour and are heavy laden to Jesus (Mathew 11:28) seems to be irrelevant to some Christians. Members of the clergy have been too busy rebuking and excommunicating those suspected to have gone astray.
This raises fundamental questions pertaining to appropriate relationship between the Christian message and the Akamba traditional beliefs and practices. This study therefore seeks to establish why Akamba Christians hold beliefs and practices in witchcraft so many years after the introduction of Christianity. Is witchcraft seen to be the cause of all unnatural events and misfortunes among the Akamba Christians? Can the Church Ministers play the roles played by the traditional specialists? Are the assurances of eternal life promised by Jesus Christ (John 10:10) irrelevant to modern Christians? How can the Church intervene? Have the early Missionaries and the present Church leaders chosen to remain silent on the Biblical teachings of witchcraft? Was the approach used by the Missionaries to evangelize the Akamba erroneous? These are some of the salient questions, which the study sought to address.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To explore beliefs and practices of witchcraft among the Akamba Christians of Machakos District.

2. To investigate why the Akamba Christians of Machakos District hold beliefs and practices of witchcraft.

3. To investigate the methods used to evangelise the Akamba Christians in Machakos District.

4. To find out how the Church can intervene in curbing beliefs and practices of witchcraft among the Akamba Christians of Machakos District.
1.4 Research Premises

1. Akamba Christians of Machakos District believe and practice witchcraft.
2. Akamba Christians of Machakos District associate misfortunes with witchcraft.
3. Poor methods were used to evangelise the Akamba Christians in Machakos District.
4. The Missionaries and present Church leaders remain silent on the Biblical teachings of witchcraft.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The research is significant in bringing a clear picture of the values Akamba Christians attach to witchcraft and highlights their stand on the practice. This research provides a document that is useful to Pastors, Priests, Christians, and Church policy makers not only in Machakos District but in other parts of Kenya as well.

The research highlights the positive aspects of mystical powers that make Akamba Christians participate in the practices at the expense of Christianity. The research clears the confusion that has always existed between the services that promote life offered by Akamba specialists and the malicious operations of the witches/wizards. The Christians seek diviners, consults herbalists, medicine persons and even rainmakers. By so doing they contravene Christian beliefs and are thereby accused of practising witchcraft. This research is an eye opener to both Church
authorities and policy makers. It brings to the surface the reasons that lead Christians to seek these specialists. In effect the Church will understand the basis of the Christians behaviour and thereby diversify or intensify methods of evangelization instead of condemning and excommunicating them. Church ministers will also be provided with methods/information that will stop their members from visiting their traditional specialists.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

In this study we encountered several limitations. First, beliefs and practices of witchcraft among Christians are secretive to them. So, quite a number of people were not sincere while articulating their perspective on the issue. Although we tried to explain to the respondents why we were carrying out the research, quite a number were suspicious and gave answers that never implicated them as Christians. Nevertheless, we explained the purpose of our study. Upon which, they opened up and gave their views freely. Besides, we used assistants familiar to the respondents who were able to get the much desired information. These verified and clarified any questions the respondents sought to know.

Secondly the study isolated Machakos District in addressing the problem; thereby leaving out all other areas Akamba Christians are found. This was due to the limitations of funds and time. However, Machakos being a central area for Akamba
Christians the research is assumed to cater for all. We have however recommended a similar study on other areas outside the District.

1.7 Literature Review

There is substantial literature on African traditional religion, but for the purpose of this study, we shall divide the literature into four categories:

i. Literature on witchcraft in Africa.

ii. Studies of witchcraft among the Akamba.

iii. Works on the relationship between Christianity, African societies and their culture.

iv. Literature on intervention.

1.7.1 Witchcraft in Africa

(Leakey 1953, Mbiti 1969 and Ndeti 1972) note that it is not easy to draw a dividing line between white magic which is beneficial and black magic which is anti-social. They observe that the African method of administering oaths is intimately connected with the belief in witchcraft. Although each has devoted a chapter on the coming of Missionaries and Christianity to Africa, they are silent on why Christianity never changed the practices and beliefs in witchcraft.

They argue that Africans in their desire for education became adherents of Christianity to gain admission to mission schools. Inwardly they neither accepted the
Christian doctrine nor did they want to live up to Christian standards of morality, honesty and codes of behaviour. They fail to account for the strong African affiliation to their religious beliefs and practices even after acquiring Missionary education and Christian teachings. This study will go deeper to find out why beliefs in witchcraft have persisted among the Akamba Christians.

(Temples 1959 and Fortes 1960) note that to the Bantus, the supreme value is life, force to live strongly or vital force. They observe that, the Bantus' central focus for existence is to acquire life, strength to live strongly and make life stronger or to ensure that force shall remain perpetually in one's, posterity. For this reason, the Bantus act to be protected from misfortunes or from a diminution of life or of being. Temples observes that the force, the potent life, vital energy are the objects of prayers and invocations to God, to the spirits and to the dead as well as all that which is usually called magic, sorcery or magical remedies. The Bantus go to a diviner to learn the way of making life stronger. According to Temples, if the Bantus were urged to abandon magical practices as being contrary to the will of God, and therefore evil, they would wonder what was wrong with the person. What we brand as witchcraft is in their eyes nothing, but setting to work natural forces placed at disposal by God.

From the foregoing information, Temples and Fortes insinuate that the practices of witchcraft are normal occurrences within the Bantu people. This is contrary to the
view Missionaries had on Africans as filthy, ignorant, deceitful and wedded to their heathenish ways (Munro 1975: 106). However, based on Temple’s arguments, Bantu people are converted or civilized superficially. To them life and death are the great apostles of fidelity to a magical view of life and of recourse to traditional magical practices. This is so with Akamba Christians.

The work of (Forte 1960) is valuable on any aspect of witchcraft. It provides an elaborate distinction between religions and witchcraft. However, in the distinction Fortes gave, he failed to note that some societies might be conceived of as having unitary magical-religious systems rather than distinctly separable systems of magic and religion. Fortes also failed to show how the beliefs and practices were affected by Christianity.

(Parrinder 1963 and Evans-Pritchard 1976) note that Africans fear and hate witches and therefore take stern measures to curb their activities. Missions and governments often claim that their aim is to deliver the African from the fear of witchcraft. However, they note that their efforts do not seem to bear much fruit in this sphere, that most educated Africans still believe profoundly in witchcraft and that there are statements made from many sides that the fear of witchcraft is increasing. Parrinder on his part gives a list of the activities that both Christianity and educated people think are caused or associated with witchcraft. He fails to tell us whether Christianity is inadequate in dealing with the same in the eyes of the Africans.
Barren 1971 and Wilson 1971 devote a considerable portion of their work to the discussion of African religions and customs. By so doing, they regard witchcraft as a real phenomenon even among Christians. They observe that among Christians there is a reluctance to discuss the subject; apparently for fear that the discussion may make lay people think that they share same beliefs and practices with Christians. However Barrett, and Wilson, do not tell us why witchcraft set problems for the Church. They do not tell us even what sort of persons in the Church become victims and why Christians are involved. They are equally silent on why the fear is among Christians who believe that Christ conquered all powers of darkness; therefore they could not be harmed by witches. To Christians, witchcraft is one of the powers of darkness.

(Middleton 1972) focuses on two kinds of magical practitioners, the mundu mue or medicine man, whose work is beneficial, and the mundu mwoi, a sorcerer. A man or more rarely a woman becomes Mundu mue because the ancestral spirits have chosen him. His/her future may be apparent at birth (such a child is born with some appendage or perhaps a small peg clasped in his/her fist) or a child of normal birth may have a solitary disposition and have dreams of the ancestors. It is false to claim all knowledge of magical materials and techniques are derived from this source. Such knowledge was handed from generation to generation to govern the welfare of the members (Mbiti 1969). Middleton, however, does not tell us whether the duties of the above specialists are complementary or not. As an outsider it comes out clearly that he has no insight into the deeper meaning of witchcraft among the Akamba.
(Mutungi 1977 and Neiers 1979) while demonstrating the misconceptions surrounding witchcraft ills and beliefs and why attempts to harness the problem have to-date made no more than a notional impact; they negate the assumption that education is a panacea to witchcraft ills and beliefs. Mutungi grounds his claim by citing examples of teachers who fled from school in mortal fear claiming they were victims of magic and witchcraft applied to them in different forms. He, however, fails to discuss the spiritual pleadings of the said professionals. We seek to investigate the belief in witchcraft among Akamba Christians. (Neier's 1979) assertion that a "sorcerer" or "wizard" known also as "Juju – person" or 'medicine – person", is in general a healer as well as magician is false. A sorcerer is an anti-social person and employed destructive magic (Evans Pritchard 1963: 126). However, they both fail to tell us why the practice is common in some Christian Churches and what could be done to rid the Church of such beliefs and practices.

(Turner 1977 and Bediako 1995) note that one can tap mysterious power from the spiritual world either to heal, protect or hurt others. They do not tell us whether Christians can tap neither the same power nor whether the power is recognized as such by Christianity. Their work is significant in that they highlight the importance of mysterious powers. However since the major focus of Turner and Bediako's works was not on witchcraft, they only gave few examples of mystical power and were silent on witchcraft.
(Walligo *et al.* 1986 and Kilombe and Ranger 1994) discuss the interrelationship between culture and worldview. To them culture is based on people's worldview. It is the belief in witchcraft, curses, magic and the practice of consulting medicine people. Based on this view, therefore, it is hard for some elements of culture to be changed by external influences such as Christianity. Therefore adherents of such beliefs and practices should be left alone to promote the aspects of their culture that support life and demote those that are undesirable.

1.7.2 Witchcraft among the Akamba

(Cluckhohns 1944 and Mbiti 1969, 1975) admit that, to their knowledge there is no African society which does not hold belief in mystical powers of one type or another. It shows itself or its experience in many ways. He notes that evil magic involves the belief in and practice of tapping and using this power to do harm to human beings or their property. It is here we find sorcery at work, in addition to their related practices. In all his works Mbiti fails to tell us whether this power is tapped by Christians or it is the preserve of specialists only. Consequently he is silent on whether Christians need this power and if so are they practising the same. Here Mbiti behaves as a foreigner and fails to articulate the world view of the Akamba in regard to the vital force and their need for metaphysical explanation once misfortune strikes.

(Gehman 1993 and Moreau 1990) note that Africa was not alone in the experience of beliefs and practices in magic and witchcraft. They observe that pagan religious
beliefs have been hard to eliminate in lands where the Gospel has been preached for centuries. Despite scientific knowledge, there is a revival of witchcraft, separatism and the occult worldwide (Holmes, 1974). They do not tell us why the beliefs and practices are going on in places where Christianity has taken root. However, their work is relevant to this study as they note that among the African people who accepted Christianity, majority did not want to abandon completely many aspects of their traditional life.

(Ndeti 1972), notes that a writer of a discourse on witchcraft and magic among the Akamba is faced with both theoretical and practical considerations, which underline the phenomena in the whole of human experience. He notes that to the Akamba, witchcraft, medicine, religion, science and art form a unity that must be understood before one can interpret witchcraft and magic as social force in human existence. The exponents of these views are: (Temples 1959, Ezeanya 1969 and John 1991). Though chauvinistic to African images, they all agree on the unity of the cosmos and bring to surface the fact that witchcraft serves to protect the people from losing the vital force. Nevertheless, they do not say whether Christians share the same view or not. It is important to note that these writers wrote after Christianity was introduced and taken root. Notably by the time they were writing, Akamba Christians were still practising dualism. (Muthiani 1973 and Shorter 1994: 46) note that African indigenous beliefs and practices are so central in African life and being that they resurface in modern scientific age even after a century of suppression and negation through colonialism,
Western cultural imperialism and Christian presence. So, it is for the Africans to be left alone to decide which practices and beliefs are retrogressive and which bring progress to them. Perhaps this may be the reason why the Akamba have perpetuated their beliefs and practices in witchcraft. Their work proves relevant to this study by stating that Christians have the habit of retreating to the traditional ways once they find that Christianity cannot solve some of the mysteries of life. Such notion is the essence of this study.

(Masolo 1994 and Mbula 1977) note that Christianity disrupted the African social setup and Western culture corrupted the youth leading to the identity crisis facing them. (Mbula 1974) observes that the conversion strategy used by the Missionaries to change the Akamba totally failed to change their beliefs and practices. She notes that while the members of the Missionaries' ethnic groups have to do nothing but change their philosophy on how to get to heaven, an African has to be stripped of all that makes him an African. He is considered human only if he follows the Western culture in order to go to heaven. This is in contrast to the African traditional beliefs and the Akamba in particular.

1.7.3 The relationship between Christianity, African societies and their culture
(Messenger 1954 and Christensen 1959) see Christianity as a factor that disorganizes and divides societies, families and contributes to Western style of living. According to them, Christianity attracts many people who engage in many undesirable practices
due to many conflicting Christian concepts and ideologies of forgiveness. Christianity has continually made tremendous claim that it alone, knows God fully. The other religious faiths have only partial and imperfect knowledge of God. Often its adherents refer to other religions as superstitions. Such statements are dangerous and no matter how they are understood, they create an appalling fog of confusion (Obiego 1984).

(Knoti 1966) looks at Christianity from a different point of view. She states that the advent of Christianity in Kenya led not only to the loss of respect for traditional values but also created a moral vacuum that could hardly be filled. While we concur with her, it is important to note that all religions are full of “unorthodox” trappings and overlapping and curious mental images of the one and same God (Bediako 1995).

(Kraemer 1963) notes that if Christianity stayed in the Mediterranean, it would never have become the great educative power of Europe and which every Westerner is a product and debtor of. This kind of reasoning rather childish and therefore speaking about it excludes all spiritual free trade which is the life blood of true cultural life. At the same time, it betrays the modern fallacy of the west that is treating religion as an isolated sector of human life.

(Nthamburi 1995 and Muga 1975) observe that an important feature of African theologian is critique of Western theology which has presented itself as being universal while in fact it is biased towards the Western culture. It is deliberately tilted
towards the question of African contribution to Christianity in Africa. However, it is important to note that African Christians have suffered from a form of religious schizophrenia. The result of which has been paying lip service to Christianity as understood, expressed and preached by the white man. But . . . one was being redeemed from sins he/she did not believe to have committed.

(Megill 1976 and Shorter 1978) note that Africans have been alienated by the imposition of foreign structures. Colonialism was part of the process of dehumanization in Africa. It is true that unless Africans are ready with viable alternatives the break of the structures will bring social and spiritual havoc. Although their observations may be right, one notes that these writers no doubt were at pains to interpret and appraise people with whose way of thinking, indigenous institutions, habits, customs and habits they were not all familiar with.

Our study though specific in scope was carried out in constant dialogue with the relevant aspects of this wider African Religious Heritage. (Mbiti 1969, Onibere 1987, Nasimiyu 1990 and Gibbs 1990) note that the attitude of the European Missionaries towards African religious heritage was very negative and was dismissed as pagan, barbaric, heathen, diabolic and incompatible with Christianity. So to the Missionaries, the Africans had no religion and had to be civilized through adopting Christianity and Western mannerisms. This researcher does not agree with these views because (Mbiti
1969) notes: the “Africans are notoriously religious”. We shall seek to establish why
witchcraft practices have defied change through Christian influence.

1.7.4 Literature on Witchcraft Intervention

(Davis 1973: 38) observes that some people come into contact with witchcraft out of
mere innocent curiosity. He continues to note that they commit themselves to a series
of simple experiments “to see if it would work”. To their amazement results are
produced to satisfy their initial curiosity. Here Davis presents witchcraft as an
intervention measure, however he fails to acknowledge the Biblical position on
witchcraft which depicts God condemning the practice not only for violating the first
commandment but also for damaging the person (Leviticus 19: 26).

(Kato 1975: 51) on his part notes that there is a consequent return to witchcraft
because in African traditional religions the worshipper believes that through
“divination, prescribed sacrifice, one can be delivered from his/her enemies real and
potential, secure the help of the ancestors and the gods and be prosperous in life”. He
veers off the track when he suggests either returning to or integrating African
traditional religions with Christianity. Kato presents witchcraft as a panacea to many
social ills but fails to understand that the subject is outside Christians’ domain
(Mathew 6: 24).
Moreau (1990:124-5) claims that witchcraft and supernatural beliefs have not "died off" with the advent of education, urbanization and Westernisation because witchcraft continues to be utilized in explaining events (for example, failure of examinations, why someone has fallen sick, why someone died and so on). He seems unaware that the Bible commands: "You shall have no other gods before me." (Deuteronomy 5: 7). This commandment should guide modern day Christians.

In this case Moreau shows that witchcraft intervenes in people's circumstances and gives solutions that satisfy their anxiety. However, he tries to overlook the Biblical assertion that: Christians should demonstrate their love to God by not participating in any type of consultation with the spirit world (Deuteronomy 18: 10). The Bible comes out clearly; a man or woman who is a wizard should be killed by all means (Leviticus 20: 27).

(Mbiti 1969: 203, Arunda 1987: 9 and Gehman 1989: 78) agree that in witchcraft a person "seeks to control that which is greater than the self. By so doing the person is trying to nurture interventive measures to tame a situation that may be getting out of hand. Although temporarily a solution may be achieved, God does not approve such intervention. On his part God advises: "For every one who asks receives and he who seeks finds and to him who knocks it will be opened (Mathew 7: 8). In this case God in his providence nature assures his creation that he is ready to meet their needs through prayer and patience.
Finally several authors including (Koch 1974: 60-61, Boa 1977: 112 and Gehman 1989: 116) believe that witches obtain their power through demonic agency. In this connection we agree with them that 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.

In conclusion, several observations could be made from the foregoing literature. First, it is worth noting that African indigenous beliefs and practices are so central in their life and being so, they resurface in modern scientific age even after a century of suppression and negation through colonialism, Western Cultural Imperialism and Christian presence. Second, it is evident that hardly anything has been written on the beliefs and practices of witchcraft among the Akamba Christians of Machakos District. Our research is hoped to go a long way towards filling this gap.

1.8 Conceptual Framework

A number of theories and approaches have been examined. Examples are evolutionary, psychological, sociological and functional theories. The evolutionary theory of ‘Primitive Religion,’ credited to (Frazer 1967) is devoted to primitive superstitions. It cannot be said that he added much value to (Tylor’s 1871) theory of religion Sociological Theory advanced by (Emile Durkheim 1915) was according to him, “God is society”. Durkheim proposed to show how religion was generated. To him religion was social.
The above theories have been considered but have not been adopted as conceptual framework for this study. This is because they have been discredited in the literature as intellectualist theories not based on empirical research on the African peoples. In research terms, the greatest weakness they share is that none of them is articulated in measurable form. They can therefore neither be proven right nor wrong in the field.

(Kluckhohn’s 1944) Functional theory of witchcraft will serve as the theoretical framework of the study. Kluckhohn, an American anthropologist interprets witchcraft beliefs largely in terms of their significance for the individuals who hold them, in facilitating their adjustment to the society in which they have to live. “A person craves for reasons and explanations”, he notes, and these usually involve the personification of the agencies responsible for the events to be explained. In this case Kluckhohn suggests that interventive measures have to be employed for the victim to get explanations. In such cases of anxiety mystical powers offer the much needed solutions. This is the essence of Kluckhohn’s theory. In support of Kluckhohn, (Moreau 1990: 124-5) notes that one of the reasons why witchcraft and supernatural beliefs have not “died off” is that witchcraft continues to be utilized in explaining events. This is the case among the Akamba and mystical powers are applied to intervene in various existential crisis. This is the starting point for (Evans Pritchard’s 1996) justification of the belief in witchcraft as reasonable on its own terms, which every anthropologist now accepts. It enables people to put a name to their anxieties and feel they can take action to relieve them. As (Beattie 1961) would put it, it
provides a "Stereotyped response" in situations of anxiety. But whereas Beattie and
most social anthropologists are concerned with situations that society regards as
having cause for anxiety, Kluckhohn is discussing anxiety as a condition of
individuals.

It appears the Akamba provide for the displacement of aggression as well as of
anxiety. Based on this argument, the Akamba believe in witchcraft not because they
are consciously worried about specific circumstances but because it canalizes all the
anxieties arising from "generalized tensions produced by peer pressure, as well as the
frustrations that living in society imposes on us all. People who would like to fight
their parents or siblings, but are restrained by rules of social behaviour, discharge
their aggression to an imaginary person whom they find "proper to fear and hate."
Few other means of expressing aggression are available to the Akamba and the
ascription of witchcraft permits hostile feelings against just those persons towards
whom they would otherwise be forbidden.

This theory has been further developed by (Marwick 1965), a psychologist. Starting
from the position that all persons experience tensions which must somehow be
resolved for him, they are not resolved by deflecting hostile feelings from a
dangerous to a harmless direction. Marwick's tensions are matters where conflict is
recognized and the means of resolutions he mentions are judicial proceedings, the
type of licensed rudeness between persons in specified relationships that
anthropologists call “joking” and accusations of witchcraft. The third is available for
hostilities that are not amenable to the first procedure because they do not concern
legal claims or to the second because the enmity is not between parties to a ‘joking
relationship’. It would be generally agreed that accusations of witchcraft arise out of
breaches of moral obligations in which there is no claim that a chief’s court could
deal with. But Marwick would argue that because hostilities between members of
one corporate body are denied an outlet in Litigation, the tensions must be resolved
through accusations of witchcraft.

Kluckhohn further argues that the belief in witchcraft reinforces confidence in magic
for curing sickness. Its failures can be ascribed to the interference of witchcraft rather
than its inherent inadequacy; that the image of the witch is capable of every forbidden
act which allows people to contemplate such acts with a clear conscience; and finally
that it “affirms solidarity by dramatically defining what is bad”.

Among the Akamba, the belief in witchcraft, does offer a guide to action when
disaster strikes albeit a misleading one. It enables people to break off relationships
that have become intolerable, but that could not be accepted unless one party to the
relationship were held guilty of the most heinous of possible offences, namely
witchcraft.
Kluckhorn points out those witchcraft accusations are not random. This is because the victims of misfortune hold their enemies responsible. He mentions categories of persons likely to be witches, but Kluckhorn does not in fact deal with accusations as opposed to suspicion.

Evans-Pritchard makes more of the practical than the emotional value of witchcraft beliefs to those who hold them. This view is shared by (Wilson 1951 and Ndeti 1972), who discuss the stereotyped picture of the witch as the un-neighbourly person, the one whom one would not wish to resemble, the one whom one should avoid offending and showed how by both ways of referring to witches, the accepted code of behaviour was reinforced, particularly in talking to children. (Lienhardt and Middleton 1972) developed the picture of the “night witch”, the being nobody had ever seen, whose actions and associations represent everything that inspires disgust and fear. They saw witchcraft as an element in a complex of beliefs, which interpret the world of people and nature as a moral order.

Kluckhorn gives much attention to the question whether persons in some particular social relationship are especially apt to accuse one another of witchcraft. Thus (Nadel 1954) observes among the Mesakin of Nuba hills that nearly all accusations of witchcraft were made against people who were thought to have caused the death of their sisters’ sons. He associates this with the fact that in this matrilineal society, the senior man is expected to give a cow to his nephew when the latter reaches puberty.
The older men dislike having to make this gift, which they see as the first sign that authority must pass from them and sometimes refuse when asked. This appears to be the case among the Akamba especially when the father or an uncle has to hand over some property to the son. The same sentiments are expressed by (Mbiti 1969) when he notes that among the Akamba, witchcraft accusations are among members of the extended family, in polygamous marriages and even among sons of the same father.

One would observe that in all these relationships there are elements of conflict but the parties cannot avoid one another and so cannot well express open hostility.

The Akamba bring in witchcraft to explain misfortune when anxieties and stresses arise both in social and domestic life when things do not go according to plan. When there is barrenness, sterility, depression or mystery, ghastly accidents or premature deaths, failure in business, in academic or other pursuits, the Akamba pick on witchcraft as the cause.

Conceived this way, Kluckhohn’s functional theory applies to the Akamba whose beliefs in witchcraft offer a guide to action when disaster strikes, albeit a misleading one. It enables people to imagine that they are taking the right steps to remedy the situation. Perhaps belief in witchcraft among the Akamba reinforces confidence in mystical powers for curing sickness. Thus, using Kluckhohn’s functional theory as our conceptual framework, it will be interesting to test whether the assertions mentioned above are true. You see; even in the theory; witchcraft takes its actual definitions.
1.9 Research Methodology

1.9.1 Area and Scope of Study

This study was carried out in Mumbuni, Katangi and Mitaboni divisions of Machakos District. Although we find Akamba in Makueni, Kitui, Kwale and in some parts of Tanzania, they first settled in Machakos from Tanzania (Munro 1975: 19). The Akamba community considered for this study is predominant in the district. Accusations of witchcraft occur among known and often related people (Parrinder 1963, Awolalu 1979). The Akamba who settled in Machakos District were related and known to each other hence the allegations of witchcraft among them.

Mumbuni was chosen because the headquarters of African Inland Mission (A.I.M.) was transferred to this area from Kangundo in 1902 (Munro, 1975: 102). Scott Theological University and Ukamba Bible Institute (UBI) are in this area. One expects Christianity to have a lot of influence in this area due to the presence of these institutions. This is an urban area and is expected to be highly influenced by modern changes as a result of Christianity, technology and medicine. However, one of the reported cases of witchcraft (*Daily Nation*, 21st March 2002) came from this area. Finally, the researcher’s firsthand information on witchcraft through both natural upbringing and deliberate reflective observation prompted him to undertake this work in Machakos District.
Katangi was chosen because, Holy Ghost Fathers established Katangi Parish in 1952 Church records (Katangi Parish 1970). The Catholic Church runs a health centre in the area and sponsors a number of educational institutions. There are a number of Churches in the area, for example, Redeemed Gospel Church, Full Gospel Church of Kenya, Deliverance Church, AIC, Church of Christ, ABC and Ebenezer Church of Christ. While on pilot survey (June 2002), we found a lot of people in Katangi market undergoing a purification ceremony (Ngata) meant to tame those who practise witchcraft. The ceremony is thought to give protection to people against the same. It appeared to us that the residents of the area harbour beliefs in witchcraft. For this reason Katangi was chosen.

Mitaboni division was chosen because the Akamba Christians in Mitaboni were among the first people to react against Missionaries’ teachings and preaching. They alleged that multiplicity of Christian denominations created divisions among Christians who should have one faith and form one Universal Christian Brotherhood (Muga, 1975: 162). According to Muga, ABC was established in this area on April 8th 1945. The founders of the Church who came from this area established the headquarters there. They went further and established a Divinity School in the same place. The bishop of the Church resides within the area. With such establishment in an area, one expects the locals to have embraced Christianity in toto. But in close observation of Mitaboni market, one finds a lot of specialists existing under various names such as: “Daktari mkubwa kutoka... mganga maaalum...” A lot of medicine