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Implication of Belief in Witchcraft among Christians: A Case of Bukulula Parish, Masaka Diocese, Uganda

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Abstract:

This study investigated implication of belief in witchcraft among Christian: A case of Bukulula Parish, Masaka Diocese, Uganda. The study targeted all Christians of Bukulula parish, and the sample size were 151. The respondents were sampled through purposive sampling and stratified sampling. The study used a mixed paradigm for data collection and analysis. The main instruments in the study included questionnaires and interviews. Field data was analyzed using both statistical and thematic analysis. The study established that the Church does not accept any other belief or worship of anything else apart from belief in the one true God as the Ten Commandments specifies. The study revealed that the major factors that contribute to belief in witchcraft include unclear prolonged illnesses, desire for prosperity, fear of death and extreme poverty. It was also discovered that among the impacts of belief in witchcraft among Christians include, a reduction in numbers of churchgoers, low levels of development due to poor working relationships, unhappiness among people and poor participation towards church-related activities as well as illnesses and poverty. Some strategies to overcome belief in witchcraft include, frequent Gospel sharing, fellowship, deeper Christian instruction, community and personal prayers, committed pastoral work and genuine love among members.

Keywords: Belief in witchcraft, Christian faith

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Religion is understood, the world over, as a social and a cultural universal practice found and practiced variably in all societal groups. These universals and the differences in the way societies and people experience religion, provide an effective understanding of the subject of religious belief. Historically, it is known that every community, society or religion has a set of principles and rules that are respected by its members. These rules are designed to encourage good behavior, love, and unity in the society, though people often deviate from such rules. Like any society or religion, the Christian religion, too, has its regulations that have been altered and misinterpreted so that goodness has not always been the outcome. The way many people behave today is contrary to Christian religious beliefs and African cultural morals, values, and beliefs (Nzita & Niwampa, 1993).

In Africa, Majawa (2018) argues that Africans believe that there are people who possess powers to manipulate the universe. Sometimes they do it for the good of the community, but some people practice it to hurt, harm, or destroy others. The people who misuse this power to harm others are known to be witches and they practice witchcraft, which is against the communities' practices in Africa. If a person is known to be a witch, he or she is excommunicated, punished severely or even killed.

Similarly, Manala (2004) states that witchcraft is connected with many other forms of ungodly beliefs like sorcery, voodoo practice, use of hexes and spell, freemasonry, illuminati, secret societies, satanic rituals, witchdoctors, and divination. Moreover, Igwe (2011) states that traditionally, many Africans attribute many things they do not understand or cannot explain to witchcraft, for example, an occurrence that is not clear to them like madness. The perception of witchcraft is dominant and continues to inform popular thought, understanding, and interpretation of reality in Africa amidst Christian evangelization. However, the Church often ignores witchcraft and its impacts on Christian life and advises them not to practice it without teaching them how to overcome it in case they face it. This lacuna informed the structure and purpose of this present study.

According to Waswa and Miirima (2007), before Christianity surfaced, the traditional religious styles of many tribes in Uganda, especially the Baganda and Banyoro, involved belief and veneration of their ancestral spirits, popularly known as "bajajja", who acted as intermediaries between God and the living community. They also believed in a supreme God who lived in heaven and could only be accessed through ancestral spirits during their veneration, locally known as "Okusamira".

Christianity was introduced in Buganda in 1879 and many people gave up ancestral veneration to practice Christianity. Some Christians, being embedded in ancestral veneration, could not leave it completely and ended up being

involved in syncretism. This continues today, among some Christians yet it contradicts the Church, because Christianity does not allow the worship of other deities apart from the Supreme God (Waswa & Miiirima, 2007). The Bukulula Christians are among the Baganda people who attribute certain things to evil spirits, such as, failure to get married, lack of prosperity, being denied or chased from work, prolonged poverty, as well as certain illnesses that were looked at as results of witchcraft like madness.

According to Waliggo (2011), the people in Buddu province where Bukulula parish is situated highly held their traditional religion prior to the arrival of the Christian faith. They were staunch traditionalists who worshipped their spiritual deities (balubaale), revered and venerated them. They dedicated their different economic activities to these spiritual deities. For example, Mukasa (a divinity) was for fishermen, Kibuuka for Hunters, Musoke for Harvests and rain. However, with the advent of Christianity in Buganda, it was taught and believed that those deities were satanic and all people were to worship one Christian God. Therefore, people began considering traditionalists as evil worshippers who practiced witchcraft by invoking evil deities. Consequently, many people embraced Christianity wholeheartedly as they used to do to their ancestors. But, research shows that some Christians continued to believe and practice traditional religion as well as Christianity (Waliggo, 2011). Belief in witchcraft and the worship of ancestral spirits in the traditional shrines was the cultural practice of many Africans.

According to Manala (2004), witchcraft remains an issue for the Church in Uganda and elsewhere. Today, many church leaders are confused about how to handle those who are caught in witchcraft. Considering the teachings of the Church, witchcraft violates the Ten Commandments and the social life of believers. Good Christians are expected to follow the church dogma, pray and practice the Biblical teachings (Agorastos, et.al. 2014).

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of the study was to discover the implication of belief in witchcraft among Christians and how it affects the Christian religion.

1.3. Research Question

The study answered the following central question
What is the implication of belief in witchcraft among Christians and its resolution?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Review of the Sacred Scriptures about Christian Beliefs

The Holy Scriptures acknowledge that there are two worlds that are at war with each other, that is, the world of goodness and light and that of evil and darkness (Rev. 12). The world of God comprises of faith, light, love, peace, and belief in the one who was sent to redeem humanity, and the opposite world of Satan comprises of belief in evil, darkness, and is full of miseries. The Old Testament depicts Satan as a cunning being who presents all that is good for human beings. In the book of Genesis (chapter 3), we notice the war between Eve and the serpent that tricks her with a beautiful fruit that she was commanded by her Creator not to eat. Eve could not stand the temptation and she and her family lost paradise. This can happen to Christians who give in to temptations by believing in witchcraft and they miss the blessings and prosperity from God. In the second book, Chronicles (chapter 33), Manasseh did abominable practices that were against the Lord's commands. He built altars to the Baals and worshipped them, consulted the ghosts and spirits of the dead, and killed his children by fire. Such evils provoked God's anger and he was captured by his enemies. Some Christians may do the same by harboring the belief in witchcraft and forgetting God, the end result may turn against such people and lead them into suffering.

The New Testament clearly demonstrates several clashes between good and evil. Jesus Himself was sent to redeem humanity who had been engulfed by Satan through Adam and Eve. He came to fight three enemies: Satan, sin, and death. In Mathew (12:25), for example, Jesus was accused by the Pharisees that He was using Beelzebul, the prince of demons, to heal demoniacs, and He told them that the kingdom that has the same belief cannot fight it. This implies that Christians cannot believe both in God and witchcraft, one will give way to the other.

2.2. Factors Contributing to Belief in Witchcraft among Christians

The concept of witchcraft and the belief in its existence have persisted throughout history. As a result, the following section reviews literature related to some of the factors that predispose Christians to either practice or believe in witchcraft. Peel (1968) noted that there is a superficial view of believers who forsake their former religion for the new one and some old religious views mix up with the new ones. He added that it is not new to hear that some folk Christianity is mixed with pagan survival. This is because they do not completely abandon what they believed before. In other words, they are called not real Christians.

According to a study in Nigeria by Igwe (2011), belief in witchcraft is a reality among Africans. According to him, belief in witchcraft is widespread in Africa and human beings, in their attempt to understand nature, came up with the idea of magic and mystical forces to explain the phenomena and fill the void created by fear and ignorance. They invented witches, wizards, spirits, gods, angels, demons and other mystical entities that they imagined were responsible for their problems and predicaments they encountered in life (Zinkurature & Colacrai, 1999).

Majawa (2018), in his research into the reality of witchcraft, noted that many Christians practice syncretism because sometimes they are caught in the dilemma of looking for a good life amidst Christian religious demands.

Moreover, others do it due to the knowledge gap about witchcraft. According to him, the presence of evil is real and many Christians are ignorant about the way to overcome it eventually leading them to believe in witchcraft.

The Church has faced a challenge of African traditional religion and Culture, Africans are rooted in their religion and culture which is against Christian teachings. These are evident in areas like African rituals, initiation rites, marriage customs, and methods of dealing with diseases, misfortunes, sufferings, and the place of sorcery, evil, magic, and witchcraft in an African's life. Many people, even Christians, have not fully embraced the teachings and observances of Christianity. They are still attached to their traditions which is a challenge because Christianity loses meaning and cannot spread as it would have been if its members had left everything else and be grounded in the religion (Ogolla, 2014). This means, in most cases, that some people do certain rituals or consultations with diviners at night yet during the day they are actively involved in Christian activities. They could even be the church leaders informing others never to 'look back', that is, revisiting African belief systems.

According to Manala (2004), in his qualitative research about African cultures, where he used content analysis and questionnaires, discovered that there are misfortunes that are ascribed to witchcraft. These include natural calamities such as sudden death, some chronic illnesses, drought, or natural disasters. However, the context of misfortune is always apparent. Some people believe that witches are always within the family circles, they do not harm strangers, but people of the same blood. Therefore, when people observe such misfortunes in their society, they conclude that someone is practicing witchcraft.

The study about *unveiling witchcraft*, done by Waswa and Miirima (2007), investigated the lies and tricks by witchdoctors. By means of interviews, they discovered that people (Christians) believe in witchcraft and sometimes approach witchdoctors for consultations about the future of their lives because of fear. They will then be provided with fetishes for protection which may be carried around their waists, arms, or necks. The authors argue that many people, elites and uneducated believe fetishes protect people from unknown evil spirits and diseases. On the same note, Majawa (2018), in his study concerning *the borderline between Christianity and witchcraft*, says that some Christians feel insecure and imprisoned in their problems and as a way of looking for freedom, they turn to witchcraft. He reviewed the literature and invited preachers to become more informed about witchcraft and helping believers to cope and overcome such beliefs, fears, and challenges.

In Christianity, furthermore, Majawa (2018) argues that Africans believe in God as a Supreme Being, and other small deities as well as spirits and ancestors. There is the physical and spiritual world, the physical world is the counteraction of powerful forces and spirits acting upon spirits. They believe there are good spirits and evil spirits, the good ones protect and lead people to do good, the bad spirits harm people. He goes ahead to say that the evil spirits if used negatively, may affect the whole family, clan, or state. It is therefore advisable not to practice it.

Today, with the changing lifestyle which involves competition and struggle for prosperity, education, jobs, good marriage, heroism, big positions in government, and offices, people have to find a way to survive. Therefore, there is a need for new spiritual and proper pastoral care from church leaders (Waswa & Miirima, 2007. xv). According to Waswa and Miirima (2007), who carried out an empirical study about witchcraft in Uganda, many Christians hold a belief in witchcraft because they are ignorant about their Christian faith.

In Uganda, as Nzwili (2016) wrote, many Christians and other citizens visit witchdoctors and shrines in their ancestral homes. Majawa (2011) noted that Pope Benedict when he visited Angola, said that many baptized Christians are still divided between Christianity and their traditional African beliefs. He further noted that people need to be helped to heal their wounds and find Jesus' healing. On the other hand, Nzwili pointed out some names of politicians (names withheld) who, after winning the parliamentary elections of 2016 rushed back to their homes to offer sacrifices and report their success to their ancestors. He said these, many times, go along with bewitching opponents and some die in accidents or attacked by serious diseases that disappear immediately after the elections (Nzwili, 2016).

2.3. Ways through Which Belief in Witchcraft Manifests Itself among Christians

According to Gershman (2016), witchcraft belief does exist and it is practiced to harm others, acquire wealth, and impede the socio-economic progress of others. He rightly opines that belief in witchcraft can have a negative impact on interrelations and cooperation among people due to fear of socialization. Similarly, Igwe (2011) says that witchcraft is an urgent superstition in Africa. This means the two do not agree, but acknowledge its existence. Mistaken beliefs in witchcraft are confused with African traditions by some people or both are falsely associated but there are African traditions that are not witchcraft that Christians practice. This study contributes to filling the gap of belief in witchcraft and its implication on Christianity since there is missing evidence about it.

According to Igwe (2011), in his study about belief in witchcraft in Africa, witchcraft is a reality and it is practiced in many countries like Nigeria and South Africa where many people, even Christians, believe in its existence. In the Gambia, for example, people believe that witchcraft takes place through an owl at night. Witchcraft targets not only human beings, but also wildlife, land, insects, forests, and trees. In Senegal, the majority believes witches live in pawpaw fruit and witches use it as their operational base at night. In Malawi, it is believed that witches fly at night in the magical planes and in case of a magic fault, the plane will crash and the witch will fall on the ground. In Burkina Faso, people believe that witches travel to eat human flesh and souls or drink their blood. This indicates that witchcraft exists in many countries and it gives a hard time to others who do not understand the magic behind witchcraft.

For Igwe (2011), "spirits of living human beings can be sent out of the body on errands to do havoc to other persons in body, mind or estate; that witches have guilds or operate singly, and that the spirits sent out of the human body can act either invisibly or through lower creatures like an animal or a bird". Africans believe that witches can turn into any

animal, bird or insects, cars, rats, bats, and others. When people notice a strange animal or insect, they kill it instantly so that they overcome the witch. Such behavior will not leave Christians out because they are all human beings. However, this does not only affect human relationships, but also people's relationship with God.

Another study by Kirwen (2011), in his book *"African cultural knowledge"*, observes that, naturally, Africans believe that nothing evil will happen by accident since there is a cause for something evil to happen. It is a belief that an evil person would have caused it to happen. Evil cannot end unless the witch is approached and or eliminated. It is also believed that evil thoughts have power outside the person thinking them, and there is no evil outside the human heart. Sometimes, belief in witchcraft becomes stronger than belief in Jesus Christ, who is stronger than the evil, but being invisible, people take faith for granted and they feel God takes longer to answer their prayers but by consulting the diviner, quick answers are received (Kirwen, 2011).

Furthermore, Kirwen (2011) says that witchcraft is known to be practiced by people using different objects. It is important to know and understand that there are certain things that are part of life, but taken to be witchcraft, such as unexpected difficulties, sicknesses, activities, noises especially those that appear at night. When such events occur, an individual needs to know that there are popular beliefs attached to them, but not necessarily witchcraft, and no need to be taken up by feelings and thoughts that can lead one into practicing witchcraft.

In his book, *Borderline between Christianity and witchcraft*, where he adopted a qualitative type of research and socio-anthropological analysis, Majawa (2018) quotes Leistner saying that "witchcraft is believed and practiced in societies that experience cycle poverty, ignorance, diseases, where there is a lot of immorality, crime, and anti-religious attitudes." It is believed that such things perpetuate underdevelopment and poor relationships among these people, and many others, contribute to belief in witchcraft as people seek to overcome them.

Meanwhile, Nzwili (2016), in his descriptive study, asserts that many people believe and consult witch doctors to help them get jobs, pass exams, promotion, wealth, good luck, ways to bear children in case of barrenness and others. Belief in witchcraft can lead people to take action thinking it is the only way to protect themselves from harm.

A research project carried out by Marwick (1975) remarks that some tribes like the Abagusii and Kamba of Kenya maintain their belief in witchcraft because such beliefs help them maintain their picture of the moral universe. They do not blame the spirits because they consider them good, but they blame the witches because they are bad and evil. According to Marwick, belief in witchcraft can also protect other beliefs from being deluged with the blame which might deservedly fall upon them (Mbondo & Benedict, 2000).

In his book, *"Witchcraft, Witches, and Violence in Ghana"*, Adinkrah (2017) emphasizes that belief in witchcraft guide and influence the behavior of Ghanaians. He indicates that belief in witchcraft is rooted and persistent in society. He quotes Assimeng (1977) who also did research in Ghana about belief in witchcraft and concluded that belief in witchcraft is embraced by people from all departments of Ghana's social and economic systems. There are some people also who mock and denounce it and call it mere superstition and irrational beliefs. He carried out qualitative research and used document analysis to collect data.

According to Kwabena (2015), in his study *Witchcraft Accusation and Christianity in Africa*, using a qualitative study, many Africans believe in the presence and works of evil powers. African traditions regard the universe as alive with spiritual powers and a place in which evil is hyperactive. Evil can be of natural or supernatural origin, and usually, a fundamental distinction is made between physical diseases and spiritual diseases. Moreover, a misfortune that springs from natural causes can be made worse by hostile spiritual powers such as witches.

According to Radford (2010), a new Gallop poll found that belief in magic is widespread throughout sub-Saharan Africa and many people believe in the power of witchcraft. Radford further affirmed that those who believe in witchcraft have less control over their own lives. Such people often feel oppressed by supernatural forces and most of the time they attribute any problem that comes their way to sorcery instead of naturalistic causes.

According to Knut et al., (2017), many Christians share the human-centric belief that misfortune is caused by the malevolent intentions of others and its remedy to do good to others takes place through the prayers, renunciation, redemption, and sacrifice. In certain instances, people also associate some traits like misbehavior, stubbornness, talking in a dream, sleepwalking, aging, albinism, hallucination and uttering meaningless syllables even when it is a result of some psychiatric problems or self-deceit, with magic powers (Knut et al., 2017).

According to Manala (2004), who used content analysis and ethnographic research design, witchcraft is feared because people practicing it uses invisible powers that cause harm to human beings or property. Witchcraft, therefore, is irregular to peoples' lives and it needs a sound Christian response with respect to Catholic beliefs and practices. Many times Christians think that such invisible powers are dangerous to them and they end up going to some other people too, like a witch, to get medicine for protection against such spells (Manala, 2004).

Kirwen (2011), in his anthropological study about *Different Cultures in East Africa*, noted that some people practice witchcraft to willfully harm others, some may have ill intention towards another person, others may also be jealous seeing another person progressing more than they are, some due to malice, envy, and or need to take revenge on those who have bewitched them. Witchcraft begins in thought and then practiced. That is why Christians need to avoid such beliefs in witchcraft that may lead to bad thoughts which can easily trigger its practice.

2.4. Belief in Witch Craft and Its Implication among Christians

According to Manala (2004), Christians fear witchcraft and believe that there are strong and fierce powers of the evil one that threatens the wellbeing of people in Africa. Such powers are feared by all the religious leaders, elites, rich and poor alike. Christians believe that these powers are very strong and can kill, make one sick, or suffer in life. Beliefs in

witchcraft, together with its negative effects on the Christian life, are horrifying. It is crucial that the Church needs to pay attention to help Christians overcome this fear and learn how to pray to overcome the evil one. For long, the Church has ignored the issue of witchcraft which has led to Christians practicing it, even those who embraced Catholicism.

A study carried out by Nzwili (2016) on belief in witchcraft indicated that belief in witchcraft can result in poor relationships among people due to suspicions. Suspicions trigger hateful feelings in the community, resulting in disharmony among people.

According to Marwick (1975), belief in witchcraft and superstitions have led to the persecution of witches whom people believe are responsible for the social and psychological strains in the community. Marwick further argues that witchcraft is evil and is considered to be the cause of events that seem to be unnatural. This was taken from the study of Azande people done by Evans-Pritchard. The Azande believe that a person should not die before old age.

Adinkrah (2017) indicated that Ghanaians fear witchcraft and everyday reports of accusations of witches and violence towards the suspects, especially in local dailies, are always witnessed. Belief in witchcraft is manifested in music, drama plays, poems, and movies of the popular Ghanaians showing the role played by witches in undermining the progress and prosperity of others.

African belief in witchcraft has led to horrific murders in recent years. A research carried out by Radford (2010) where he applied questionnaires in quantitative research, revealed that in the year 2008 a mob of young men killed eight women and three men in two villages in Western Kenya suspecting them of being witches. They were accused of casting spells on village children leading to lower intelligence among school-going children. Some of them were hacked to death with machetes and others had their throats slit before their bodies were burned. Moreover, due to witchcraft, albino arms, fingers, genitals, ears, and blood are highly prized on the black market because they are believed to contain magical powers.

2.5. Strategies to the Reduction of Belief in Witchcraft among Christians

According to Majawa (2018), belief in witchcraft and superstitions in Africa is a challenge that may be due to a lack of profound knowledge of Christianity, catechesis, and deep spirituality in evangelization. He argues that Mother Church should re-evangelize her members to rediscover the fullness and power of the Gospel values. Christians need to cultivate strong faith in Christ to overcome certain beliefs.

Witchcraft is a scourge and the Church in Africa needs to seriously watch the signs of the times. Majawa (2018) argues that evangelizes should not close their eyes to such evils. Instead, all Christians and stakeholders like governments need to come together to combat it (Majawa, 2018).

The evil of supernatural origin requires powerful prayers of intervention and faith like spiritual warfare prayers. Churches should deal with witchcraft through spiritual warfare. A tremendous work done by the indigenous churches towards the renewal of Christianity in Africa is integrated with Charismatic experiences, particularly prophecy, healing and deliverance is a window that can easily eliminate witchcraft in Africa (Majawa, 2018). Christians need to be taught these spiritual warfare prayers to empower them with prayer tactics to overcome the challenge of witchcraft. These prayers are commonly known to some priests, religious, and a few Christians.

According to Ssemakula (2012), in his book *'The Healing of Families'*, where he used document analysis and people's testimonies, the word of God in the Bible can set people free. If a Christian believes in God and believes in the salvation that Jesus brings to humanity, a person would certainly overcome all problems brought by evil. Luke 4:18 asserts "He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and set the prisoners free". On the other hand, Kirwen (2011) argues that staunch Christians instead need to condemn witchcraft and such evil practices and have strong beliefs in the protection of God, exorcism of evil spirits, usage of Christian prayers, and avoiding relations with the witches.

According to John et al. (2009), Pope Benedict XVI recognized the practice of witchcraft in Africa and its dangers to the Church. He noted that witchcraft is an obstacle to evangelization as it immerses people in fear of spirits and threatening evil powers. He then invited Christians to believe in Christ, who overcame death and all powers of evil. He said all Christians should reach out to those practicing witchcraft to evangelize them to leave such evils. There is a need for church leaders to strongly carry out proper pastoral work among people to help them overcome some of the issues that lead them to believe in witchcraft. The Pope emphasized that Catholics, baptized in the Church, should not combine Christian beliefs with African traditional magic nor be seduced to believe in paganism. According to Majawa (2018), Pope Benedict XVI advised African Christians to battle against hazardous beliefs, superstitions and evil practices that are not in conformity with the faith they embraced and the religion of Jesus Christ.

According to Knut et al. (2017), in their book *"Pentecostal and Witchcraft"*, many people in Angola, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, and the whole of Africa believe in witchcraft and sorcery. It becomes very hard to separate such people from witchcraft and sorcery. They designed a form of evangelization termed as confrontationist, which is anchored on a direct attack on the power of the evil one through spiritual warfare, healing, spiritual mapping, and discernment. On the other hand, Semenya & Letsosa (2013) talk about reforming churches that transform the members to worship in the spirit.

3. Methodology

The study adopted a mixed-method research design that involved both quantitative and qualitative research approaches in order to benefit from the strengths of both approaches. Further, the study employed a cross-sectional survey design under quantitative and phenomenological design under a qualitative approach to investigate the implications of belief in witchcraft among Christians: A case of Bukulula parish, Masaka Diocese, Uganda. Cross-sectional survey design was used in this study, because there were different groups of people with different age groups from which

data was gathered, like the priests, adult Christians, and the youth. In this study, the phenomenology approach was applied in a way that the researcher went to the field to discover how people experience and understand the belief in witchcraft and their Christian religion. All Christians in Bukulula parish were the target population of this study.

The constituent subjects in the sample were drawn from the community parish of Bukulula. According to Preece (2013), a sample size of 10% to 20% is regarded as sufficient for the study. The study involved 151 individual respondents from Bukulula Parish. The research used a random purposive sampling approach in the selection of the research respondents. This study used both primary and secondary research instruments, the primary data collection involved self-developed and administered questionnaires as well as direct interviews for parish priests and catechists since they may not get time to fill in the questionnaires. The observation method was employed in some cases, especially during interviews with catechists and priests. The researcher also visited nine (9) homes, though they were to be more due to COVID19, visitations were cut off. Secondary information was obtained through document analysis from the libraries, internet, and other printed and unprinted materials.

3.1. Data Collection Procedure

Before going out for data collection, the researcher obtained a letter from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa for permission to go and collect data from the area of study. This letter was then used to obtain an authorization letter from the Diocesan office to collect data in the Diocese. The researcher also sought permission from the parish priest of Bukulula Parish to carry out research in the parish. The questionnaires were taken by the researcher to the selected parish to let the respondents fill them. With the consent of the parish priest, the questionnaires were distributed to the respondents by the researcher with the help of the catechists, some parish council leaders, and the youth leader. This was done after Mass at the parish and some catechists helped at the sub-parish level that was visited by the researcher and others were found in their homes and places of work. Some of the sub-parishes involved were, Bukulula, Lukuli, Kasasa, Kyambala, Bugonzi, Kasebuti and Mukoko.

The researcher also sought the consent of all the respondents who were involved in the research before the distribution of the questionnaires. The researcher explained to the respondents the purpose of the study and gave clarification on any ambiguous questions. The collection of the questionnaires depended on the time the respondents availed themselves, though the time limit was set. The arrangements for oral interviews were made. All the preliminary arrangements were made together with the parish priest, catechist and the leader of the laity before the commencement of data collection.

3.2. Data Analysis and Presentation

In this work, raw data from the field was systematically arranged in order to carry out the data analysis process. The items from the field were first coded and put into different categories, removing the incomplete questionnaires, data cleaning, and picking only correctly done questionnaires, then feeding the data into the SPSS software for actual analysis. The data extracted from the questionnaires were analyzed based on the questions for the study. The closed-ended data were analyzed, tallied and interpreted through the summary of the main points so as to obtain descriptive statistics, which included frequencies as well as percentages and tables. In addition, the researcher made summaries and conclusions based on the research questions.

3.3. Major Findings

The study investigated the Church's teaching on beliefs and established that Christians are very aware of the Church teaching about ungodly beliefs. They are taught from their Christian instructions about the commandments of God. Different popes for example in the Catholic Church have also taught against evil beliefs and worship in the social teaching of the Church. For example, Pope Benedict XVI noted that witchcraft is an obstacle to evangelization as it immerses people in fear of spirits and threatening evil powers. He then invited believers in Christ to leave such beliefs and believe only in Christ, who overcame death and all powers of evil (John et.al. 2009). The commandments are also well elaborated in the Bible for all to understand what the worship of one God and not believing in other things means (Lea Hill & Wallace, 1999: 176-183). This indicates a clear agreement that the Church teachings against belief in witchcraft is available and known by all Christian believers. Concerning Church teaching on belief in witchcraft, the majority of the respondents (70%) said that Christian believers should not serve two masters at ago, all the trust should be placed in Almighty God. Others who made up to 45% said that the Church always teaches Christians to be stable in their beliefs and practice what they are taught by the Church. They are called to be staunch Christians and learn what they were instructed because belief in witchcraft withdraws them from the love of God and humanity. They should listen and practice the word of God preached to them daily in the Church and the media and what they read from the Bible.

It was discovered that belief and practice of witchcraft lead to misunderstandings between believers, it causes suspicion, affects the sacramental life, and it is immoral and should be avoided. The Church instructs individuals practicing or believing in witchcraft to convert and become staunch Christians rooted in the practice of God's Commandments. In addition, the Church teaches that practicing witchcraft is disobeying God's Commandments and Church teaching. The majority of the respondents, 75%, commented that the cause of belief in witchcraft may be due to extreme ambition to become rich, misunderstandings among people, and some people who hate others in the community would do anything to make them fail in life. About 50% of the respondents said that it was due to ways of looking for intelligence, especially among the students and among other unfounded myths from the ancestral history, and for some people, witchcraft is practiced to maintain the jobs and struggle for promotions.

The study also explored the factors that contribute to the existence of belief in witchcraft among Christians and it was revealed that social challenges such as extreme poverty, ignorance of God's Word in the Bible, misfortunes, desire for prosperity, jealousy and envy, lack of Christian knowledge and poor family religious background are great contributors. In addition, many Christians lack deep faith in God, others include, unemployment, marital conflicts, and family inheritance of witchcraft. Some respondents said witchcraft is due to the conviction of some Christians that witchcraft provides quick answers to their problems. The respondents also argued that some people see witchcraft as a traditional practice that is being passed on from one generation to the other.

The study also studied the manifestation of belief in witchcraft among Christians. The study found out that some people have animals and plants in their homes that are associated with witchcraft like dogs. Further still, some Christians take part in African traditional practices that are evil. Some have physical traditional shrines in their homes, and that some put medicines around the waist (yirizi), and wearing unaccepted bangles on their arms. The mistrust, jealousy, and envy that result in poor relationships among Christians, also manifest belief in witchcraft other than God who is love. Regarding the manifestation of belief in witchcraft among Christians, 91 (63%) answered in agreement of the above while 54 (37%) of the respondents disagreed. This means that the majority of the respondents believe that there is a witchcraft belief among some Christians.

The study also investigated the impact of belief in witchcraft on the Christian faith. It was found out that belief in witchcraft greatly affect the Church belief. This is because it leads to poor prayer life and a lack of deep faith in God. Some of the visible impacts among the Christian members include the individuals not attending Church services, and lack of family prayer life. The study also found that some people avoid small Christian communities, not respecting places of worship, and being suspicious of others. It also tarnishes the name of the Church and affects evangelization and the spread of the gospel. Concerning the impact of belief in witchcraft among Christians, all (100%) of the respondents had a common agreement that witchcraft has a greater negative impact on the Christian religion. In addition to the above, others commonly agreed upon the impacts like reduction in numbers of Christians in the Church, it gives a bad name to our church and religious teachings do not reach the roots of people's hearts.

The study discovered from different respondents the appropriate strategies that would help reduce beliefs in witchcraft among Christians and found out that it can be managed through serious Christian Church instructions, serious pastoral activities to reach out to all members of the Church. It can also be managed by the social trust and true love for one another among believers, strong prayers over family bondage of witchcraft. People giving up the evils inherited from their ancestors in case these spreads beliefs and practice of witchcraft. Another strategy is having concern for the old, sick, and suffering members of the church. Children and the youth should be strongly taught their catechism with love and understanding, examinations could be of benefit but more so grasping and practicing of the content. The motivation of instructors should also be put into practice. Devotional prayers, Bible reading and sharing, attending prayer services, daily meditation and prayers of the heart are very crucial in combatting belief in witchcraft. Christians coming up to surrender their witches and burning of shrines will also help. Guiding and counseling should also be promoted among the people. Another respondent said, "Charismatic renewal is also good because it has brought many people back in the church, though it should not be exaggerated". The researcher strongly believes that in case all the about is done, the Church will yield staunch Christians, widespread of Christianity, a healthy religious society, a strong evangelized community, socio-economic development of members will be achieved, enlightened members in the community about God's word and sicknesses that disturb them and draws them away from God, genuine love and unity among members as well as enculturation should be promoted so that people don't feel completely lost during prayer and worship.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1. Conclusions

Based on the study findings, it is evident that the implication of belief in witchcraft among Christians: a case of Bukulula parish, Masaka Diocese, Uganda. The research pointed out, according to the data from the field, that the Church's status and challenges have some relationship with belief in witchcraft. The Church leaders need to get stronger in preaching the Word of God and encouraging its congregants to demonstrate the influence and power of the Gods Spirit in their daily lives. The infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and cancers has contributed to some mixed reactions from the Church's member's faith and spiritual vitality among the Christian faithful. The Church, therefore, needs to provide some principles to her members to utilize in order to demonstrate the theology that is contextually designed to respond to the social challenges of the Church members in the community as a means and a way to deal with witchcraft. This means there is a need to educate our people about different diseases in our parish (s), serious administering of counseling by a trained Counselor.

It can also be concluded that though the Church leaders have tried to carry out pastoral work in the parish, the Church in Bukulula parish needs to revise her catechetical instruction programs to suit the needs of the time, consider pastoral work very important to reach out to individual families and know their members, spiritual care for the aged, and the sick is also important. The promotion of fellowship among Church members will promote love and social trust among them. It is also crucial to teach people how to pray when faced with challenges and teach them the prayers against evils.

4.2. Recommendations

Based on the literature reviewed and the field data, various recommendations for prevention and intervention are suggested to assist in the management of and implication of belief in witchcraft among Christian. The study examined the

Church teaching on belief in witchcraft and the researcher recommends that the Church need to strongly emphasize her teachings and prayers, spiritual warfare prayers should also be exposed to Christians and also encourage their adherents to avoid evil beliefs and practices and believe in God. The researcher also recommends the reading of the scripture in homes, members should have personal Bibles and emphasizing Church teachings in all their daily dealings in the Church and the community at large. This can be done during conferences throughout the life of a growing Christian.

The study investigated the factors that contribute to belief in witchcraft among Christians and proved that many times, extreme poverty and the interest to become rich are the major factors contributing to belief in witchcraft. Other factors include; infectious and prolonged illnesses, the practicing of traditional rituals in the community all contribute to the existence of witchcraft. Inherited witchcraft practices, strong desires for equality, the failure to get a quick answer from God through prayers and fear of the unknown. The researcher therefore, recommends that there is a need for medical workshops to teach people about health, involve people in different projects and emphasize hard work to overcome poverty.

The research further investigated the manifestation of belief in witchcraft among Christians and established some factors that indicate the belief in witchcraft to include, low levels of participation of members in church activities, lack interest in prayer and church leaders, keeping to the old way of doing things such as the belief to ancestral spiritual activities. Shrines in the homes of believers, and failure to receive church Sacraments. Some respondents appreciated charismatic renewal being one of the remedies that have brought many people back in the church. Where Charismatic is practiced the researcher recommends that at certain levels it should be promoted with an emphasis on spiritual renewal. This can be done, especially in parishes where there is a lot of need to bring back Christians to the church. The researcher also recommends the need for the care, love and concern for one another in the Christian community and fellowshiping as the Apostles used to do in Acts 2, 42-47. Furthermore, a dialogue with the suspects is also important at the local community level to abandon belief in witchcraft and activities or rituals which are related to the practice of witchcraft like visits to the shrines.

Belief in witchcraft negatively impacts on the social, economic, psychological, and spiritual life of people, Christians are recommended to abandon such beliefs and practices to gain freedom in worship of one God and working together for the development in the community of believers. Constant teachings on Christian values should be practiced to enable people live a true Christian life. The church leadership team needs to have an integrated framework to include strong small Christian communities, promote Church movements beginning from schools.

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