

Understanding witchcraft and its implication to community development

The Gospel tune “OmunduOmulosi” which means a ‘man who practices witchcraft’ hit the charts in Kenya about six years ago and still is popular in many radio stations today. It laments the fact that witchcraft has destroyed a home. An educated man who had just come from United States died unexpectedly and the only cow of the family also died leaving the family poor. But is witchcraft real? And is it an impediment to the advancement of the community socially and economically? The paper is going to use the theory of community development as advanced by Robert Chambers in 1983 and which posits that ‘people can only support that which they help build.’ The theory also continues to assert that the outsiders view of the communities is always ‘distorted and explained using our own language and experience.’(Chamber, 1983). This paper is going to examine witchcraft from the African perspective and its impact in community development. If the Bible is to be taken as the word of God – and if the Bible is true then as Christian we are cognizance of Paul’s exhortation in Ephesians 6:12 “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” The questions this paper will attempt to address are: One, is witchcraft real or is it a creation of the wild imagination of the human mind? Two, how does witchcraft impact on community development? And finally three, what can we do as Christians to counter “forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” The paper is going to explore literature available on witchcraft to define witchcraft. It will argue that witchcraft has its origin in Satanism. It will also examine the phenomena of witchcraft accusations and why it is taking root in modern day community life. It will also rely on personal testimonies of people who have had encounters with these phenomena. The paper will conclude that indeed “powers of this dark world” is still in force and that it is causing stagnation in community development in areas where this is practiced affecting both individuals and communities. It will also offer practical ways of ensuring that these powers are conquered.

Key Words: Christian, Community Development, Satanism, witchcraft, witch accusations, demons, possession