

## PROJECT ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Missiology

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGE AND IMPACT OF DEMON POSSESSION AMONG SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH MEMBERS IN BUGANDA DISTRICT, NORTH-WEST BURUNDI MISSION

Researcher: Therence Rwaswa

Primary Adviser: Abner P. Dizon, DMiss

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In Burundi, demon possession has often challenged the Bumbiri Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church members. It divides, causes suffering and even death. This project sought to describe the phenomenon and to identify ways to equip church members to respond to its challenge.

The researcher used the qualitative case study research method. He interviewed fifteen persons at the Bumbiri Seventh-day Adventist Church. Among them are two pastors, four church elders, three persons delivered from demon possession, and six helpers of these demon-possessed persons. He also worked with 150 participants in a series of seminars he conducted.

This study discovered that the conventional responses of church members have been to ask help from pastors of other denominations or from witch-doctors in order to cast out demons from the demon-possessed persons. The study also

highlights the necessity for a stronger biblical foundation for dealing with demon possession as opposed to following traditional beliefs and practices.

The analysis of interview data showed that traditional beliefs and practices are the main causes of demon possession at Bumbiri SDA Church. Participants in this study also realized that the profound transformation of church members by biblical beliefs is an ideal response to demon possession at Bumbiri. This study suggests the following as a way to respond to demon possession: a) theological education, b) proper orientation to small group ministry, c) identification of wrong or unbiblical traditional beliefs and practices, and d) the use and contextualization of appropriate biblical teachings on demon possession.

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POSSESSION AMONG SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH MEMBERS  
IN BUGANDA DISTRICT, NORTH-WEST BURUNDI MISSION

A project

presented in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
Master of Arts in Missiology

by

Therence Rwasu

March 2019

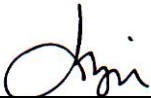



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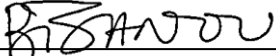
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Therence Rwasa

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Primary Adviser:  
Abner Dizon, DMiss

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Programme Director, MA Missiology  
Kelvin Onongha, PhD, DMin

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Secondary Adviser:  
Boubakar Sanou, PhD, DMin

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean, Theological Seminary  
Sampson Nwaomah, PhD

AUA Main Campus

Date: March 2019

I dedicate this work to my wife and my children.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### **Background of the Problem**

Demon attacks in Burundi are very common so that people live in permanent fear of witches and spirits attacks.<sup>1</sup> According to the Burundi Population Statistics Report in 2004, 64 percent are Christians.<sup>2</sup> These dominant numbers of Christians do not escape spirit attacks in Burundi communities. The pastor of the Buganda District reports that evil spirits attacked more than 120 church members in 2015.<sup>3</sup>

In February 2016, I went to a hill called Zina; 20 kilometers from Buganda District where 17 non-Adventist students were attacked by demons to observe the situation. In 2015, similar events happened at Bukinanyana (30 kilometers from Buganda), and Bubanza (40 kilometers from Buganda).

During demon attacks, people observe abnormal attitudes such as in falling, loss of reasoning, uncontrolled words, shouting, running, violence with extraordinary strength, seeing and hearing strange things that other people typically do not see. It can be dead people who communicate with them, people clothed in white moving from place to place and shining like angels. There are dysfunctions of organs, losing appetite, feeling sleepless for many days, and feeling tiredness. When they meet

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<sup>1</sup> Simon Guillebaud, *Dangerously Alive* (Oxford, UK: Monarch Books, 2011), 11-13, accessed 19 September 2016, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion\\_in\\_Burundi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_Burundi).

<sup>2</sup> Nations Encyclopedia, "Burundi-Religions," accessed 30 September 2016, <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Burundi-RELIGIONS.html>.

<sup>3</sup> *The report of Buganda district pastor*, February, 2015.

doctors at hospitals, tests show that they are normal. Drugs do not affect them. They are very sensitive and hostile to the name of Christ and to prayer.

### **Statement of the Problem**

When demon possession takes place, they divide families and church members as they accuse each other to provoke it. This frequently happens so that every day about twenty victims come to the local church asking for prayers. Some people killed their neighbors, and others leave their churches and their homes for that reason. Other church members use to search help and protection from pastors of other religious confessions, or even from witch doctors. The members do this because they feel there is no one to teach them how to deal with demon possession in the Adventist Church. There is, therefore, a need for church members in Buganda district to become equipped to respond to demon possession.

### **Research Questions**

This study answers the following research questions:

1. How can SDAs church members in Buganda District better respond to demon possession?
2. How prevalent is demon possession among church members in Buganda district?
3. How does demon possession impact the church in Buganda district?
4. What can church members do to respond to demon possession?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to identify ways to equip Seventh-day Adventists (SDAs) in Buganda to respond to demon possession.

## Significance of the Study

This research helps church members to know more about demon possession. It provides a basis for pastors to equip their members for spiritual warfare. It contributes to the unity of church members in Burundi, and it promotes biblical teachings about demon possession. Furthermore, this may be the first research done on demon possession in Burundi communities.

## Definition of Terms

**Contextualization:** A missionary strategy concerned with finding appropriate means and methods of presenting the principles of the never-changing Word of God in the context of an ever-changing world in such a way that these principles are correctly understood by each context. As such, contextualization is not a one-time event but an ongoing process.<sup>4</sup>

**Demon:** The word demon derives from a Greek word “*daimonion*” which means “devil.”<sup>5</sup>

**Demonology:** The study of demons or beliefs of demons.

**Exorcism:** Involving the name of God to expel an evil spirit believed to inhabit or possess a person, a place, or an object. It also means casting out or driving out or getting rid of evil spirits that are living in a person, a place or in an object.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Boubakar Sanou, “New Testament Precedents to the Practices of Contextualization in Contemporary Mission,” *Ministry Magazine*, 2015, 7. Retrieved from [http://www.academia.edu/31844277/New\\_Testament\\_Precedents\\_to\\_the\\_Practice\\_of\\_Contextualization](http://www.academia.edu/31844277/New_Testament_Precedents_to_the_Practice_of_Contextualization).

<sup>5</sup> Alan Richardson and John Bowden, *Dictionary of Christian Theology* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster, 1969), 150.

<sup>6</sup> Dickson Kateeti Makenzi, “A Biblical Strategy for Exorcism in Maii Church District in Central Kenya Conference” (MA project, Adventist University of Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, 2014), 5.

**Foothold:** an act, an element, or a place where demons can base their activities in the life of a person or a community (in Kirundi language is “*intaza*” or “*inkomyi*”).

**Power Encounters:** A situation where God’s power confronts demonic activities. “A power encounter is defined as a visible, practical demonstration that Jesus Christ is more powerful than the spirits, powers or false gods worshiped, or feared by the members of a given people group.”<sup>7</sup> This situation can precede or follow evangelism.

**Spirit of Prophecy:** One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord’s messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested.<sup>8</sup>

**Spiritual warfare:** An aspect of Christian life where the Evil is fighting God’s people.<sup>9</sup> God demonstrates principles in that war (Jude 3:2). The spiritual warfare is invisible. Men experience it: There are victims and victors.<sup>10</sup>

**Syncretism:** The phenomenon whereby one religion becomes mixed with another so that its essential character is fundamentally change or compromised.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> C. Peter Wagner, *How to Have a Healing Ministry in Any Church* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1988), 150, quoted in James K. Beilby and Paul Rhodes Eddy, *Understanding Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academy, 2012), 190.

<sup>8</sup> General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2010), 162.

<sup>9</sup> David Powlison, *Power Encounters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 28.

<sup>10</sup> Eddie Smith, *Making Sense of Spiritual Warfare* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2008), 14.

<sup>11</sup> Craig Ott, Stephen J. Strauss, and Timothy C. Tennet, *Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), xvii.

**Strongholds:** A place where particular cause or belief is strongly defended or upheld (in Kirundi language is “*aho vyarikiye*”).

**Worldview:** is the deep level of culture, the culturally structured assumptions (including values and commitments or allegiances) underlying how a people perceive of and respond to reality.<sup>12</sup>

### **Delimitations of the Study**

Due to the limited amount of time assigned to accomplish this project, it considers only one local church in the Buganda District, namely, the Bumbiri Seventh-day Adventist Church.

### **Methodology**

The following section will describe the methodology this research followed. It discusses the research design, instrumentation, participants in interviews, procedure of collection, processing and analysis of data, and ethical matters.

### **Research Design**

This study employed a qualitative case study research method.<sup>13</sup> It is about a situation related to the ministry in a certain group. It demands an observation of the expressions of convictions, facts, activities, and attitude of victims and those who secure them. It has a detailed analysis of events and reactions of persons concerned. Then comes an interpretation of information gathered in the light of the biblical teachings illustrated by E.G. White’s writings and of other authors. And finally, it suggests biblical solutions in events of demon possession.

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<sup>12</sup> Charles H. Kraft, *Issues in Contextualization* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2016), 14.

<sup>13</sup> Nancy J. Vyhmeister, *Quality Research Papers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 171-177.

## **Instrumentation**

The researcher developed an interview protocol for in-depth interviews with local Adventists leaders and church members in Burundi. The interview protocol described the interview procedure and included a script of what the researcher said before and after the interview, reminders for the researcher to get the informed consent as well as about the information the researcher wanted to collect. The interview questions are developed based on the research questions. The researcher got written documents as the signs of the willingly consent from each member of the interview team.

## **Sample for this Study**

The population for this study was composed of 15 participants. The criteria for the selection of the participants for the interview is the following: (a) an Adventist Church member for not less than three years, (b) not less than two years of membership at Bumbiri, (c) not less than 18 years old, (d) willing to participate in the study.

## **Procedure for Data Collection**

The procedure for data collection is as follows: the researcher sent a letter asking the permission from the Burundi North-West Mission to conduct research at Bumbiri Seventh-day Adventist Church. The interview protocol developed and submitted to the project adviser and to the Ethics Review Committee (ERC) for approval. Then he sent a list of names of selected members for the interview to his project adviser.

Both in-depth and focus group interviews are used. A voice recorder is used during the interviews. There was also an observation of facts, attitudes and atmosphere during seminars and in prayer sessions. As usual, local church members

and members of the interview group organized sessions of prayers for demon possessed. There, they shared more facets of the information about demon possession cases happening in the Buganda communities.

### **Data Treatment and Analysis**

After the personal and focus group interviews the recorded information are transmitted in writing. The whole transcript of the interviews, the data collected during observation is presented to each participant for approval. The researcher analyzed transcription to identify themes and to categorize the data. The findings appear in the third and fourth chapters of this project.

### **Ethical Requirements**

To ensure the study participants safety and protection from harm,<sup>14</sup> the researcher made sure that every participant understood that participation in the interview was voluntary. He or she could stop the process at any time. He or she was not expected to answer questions that make him or her uncomfortable. The place and time of interview were at the convenience of the participant. Data are stored in a protected file.

Each informant signed and verbally agreed to the Informed Consent form that was available and explained to every participant. So, the respondents gave the consent for the disclosure of personal and identifying information, as well as details of their stories. However, the researcher preferred sometimes to use pseudonyms or code names in lieu of actual names to protect the informants.

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<sup>14</sup> Israel Mark, *Research Ethics and Integrity for Social Scientists* (Washington, DC: Sage, 2015), 97.



## CHAPTER 2

### BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

#### **Demons in the Bible**

The expression “*echo daimonion*” means “to be held or possessed by a demon.” For example Luke 8:27 is used to indicate demon possession in the Bible. It is the same case of other terms such as “*daimonizomai*”<sup>1</sup> that signifies “to be demonized” (e.g., Matt. 4:24; 8:28), “*pneum*” that indicates “unclean spirit”<sup>2</sup> (e.g., Mark 1:23, Acts 8:7), and “*pneumaponeron*” evil spirit (e.g., Acts 19:12).<sup>3</sup>

The Old Testament says little about demons, but it does make it clear that demons are alive and well-known in the Old Testament period. The Old Testament records Satan, through the serpent, engaging Eve in a conversation (Gen 3:5). The Israelites were told not to offer sacrifices to demons (Lev 17:7; Deut 32:17). They were warned against practices related to unclean spirits (Deut 18: 9-14). In the book of Job, Satan is reported to be moving around the world (Job 1:7). The Old Testament reveals the existence and the activity of demons (1Sam 16:14-16).

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<sup>1</sup> Karel Van Der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. Van Der Horst, *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), 235.

<sup>2</sup> “Spirit” [Mark 1:23], *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (SDABC)*, ed. Francis D. Nichol (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1980), 5:568.

<sup>3</sup> Brempong Owusu-Antwi, “Demons and Demonic Activities in the Bible,” in *The Church, Culture, and Spirits: Adventism in Africa*, ed. Kwabena Donkor (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2011), 59.

In Jesus' time, demon possession seems to have been particularly prevalent.<sup>4</sup> Matthew wrote that the unclean spirits have their actions (Matt 12:43-45). They can cause mental and physical disease<sup>5</sup> (Mark 5: 4-5; 1Cor 11:30). When Jesus commissioned his disciples, he gave them authority over demons (Mark 3:13-19, Luke 9:1-6).<sup>6</sup> Demons engage God's people in a spiritual battle (Eph 6:12). Paul predicted actions of deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons (1 Tim 4:1). John shows how human being became the target of the war and spoke of the devils' habitations (Rev 12:9; 18:2).

In the book, *The Church, Culture and Spirits: Adventism in Africa*, Brempong Owusu-Antwi affirmed that in the SDA Church, events of demon possession are not uncommon.<sup>7</sup> He added that some people believe that "they have been inflicted with sicknesses by demons." He said that there are stories about "victimization and possible practices of magic and witchcraft among some SDA Church members."<sup>8</sup>

Owusu-Antwi indicated that demon possession is real and that under certain situations, demons can attack people who confess to be followers of God. He proposed as the solution the power of Jesus.<sup>9</sup> He confirmed that in the Bible, supernaturalism starts with God as it is written in Colossians 1:16. God created

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<sup>4</sup> Oskar Skarsaune, and Tormod Engelsen, "Possession and Exorcism in the History of the Church," in *Deliver Us from Evil*, ed. Scott A. Moreau, and Tokunbo Adeyemo (Monrovia, CA: World Vision International, 2002), 85.

<sup>5</sup> Vaughn Allen, *Delivered from Demon Possession* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1981), 92.

<sup>6</sup> "Authority" [Luke 9:1-6], *SDABC*, 5:772-777.

<sup>7</sup> Owusu-Antwi, "Demons and Demonic Activities in the Bible," 53.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

angels. Disobedient angels became demons.<sup>10</sup> In a power encounter with them, they knew that Jesus was the Christ (Matt 8:16-17; Luke 4:40-41), they got afraid as He cast them out from a man and sent them into a herd of pigs (Luke 8:26-39).<sup>11</sup>

Andrews Ewoo said that Jesus healed many oppressed using various methods including words addressed to them. Demons could cry out, and Jesus sometimes did not allow them to speak. It means that demons are the intelligent agents that can express<sup>12</sup> themselves in their personalities.

The same author biblically differentiated temptation from harassment, and demon possession. He said that it is regarded as not a sin and experienced by every Christian. He added that we might define temptation as an act where one do something because of a persuasion<sup>13</sup> (Jas 1:13, Heb 4:15). He said that to harass is to trouble. It is also regarded as not a sin and experienced by every Christian. He showed that to harass is to trouble by repeated attacks<sup>14</sup> (2 Cor 12:7). He explained that for demon possession evil spirits often take full control of the victim. The Gospels have the history of a man who was under demonic power (Mark 5:1-20). A classic encounter of Jesus with a demon-possessed person happened after the transfiguration<sup>15</sup> (Mark 9:14-29). Many texts of the Gospels present the act of casting

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<sup>10</sup> Owusu-Antwi, "Demons and Demonic Activities in the Bible," 65-66.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>12</sup> Andrews Ewoo, "Spiritualistic Manifestations Challenging the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Africa," in *The Church, Culture, and Spirits: Adventism in Africa*, ed. Kwabena Donkor (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2011), 15.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 17.

out demons by faith in the perspective of God's kingdom (e.g., after the Transfiguration in Mark 9; Matt 16:28).<sup>16</sup>

### **A Biblically Balanced Way of Casting Out Demons**

The report of the Adventist Biblical Research Institute (BRI) suggested a balanced way of casting out demons.<sup>17</sup> It says that in the past decade came the deliverance ministry movement that combated supernatural forces. The Adventists of the North American experienced actions of that movement. It affirmed to imitate the disciples of Jesus who had authority over the demons.

That report warns against a polarization of prayer activities as a mystical exorcism. Some church members were in favor of Mark 9:38-40 where Jesus said "Forbid him not," other presented Matthew 7:16-20 where Jesus cautions about false prophets recognized by their fruits, and Romans 16:17 about to mark them which cause divisions and offenses to avoid them.

In the General Conference Committee of SDA on July 10, 1980, a Spiritual Warfare and Deliverance Study Committee is established to investigate the subject. That committee identified (a) a tendency to activities of spirits presupposing cause of every individual tragedy of human experience (the expended middle) and (b) the tendency to find naturalistic explanations and solutions for all mental and emotional and abnormal behavior (here is the ignorance of the excluded middle aspect of the problem of demon possession).

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<sup>16</sup> Gerhard F. Hasel, *Biblical Interpretation Today* (Washington, DC: *Biblical Research Institute*, 1985), 56.

<sup>17</sup> General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, "'Spiritual Warfare' and 'Deliverance Ministry' and Seventh-day Adventists," *A Report of the Biblical Research Institute of Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington, DC: *Biblical Research Institute*, 2012), accessed 22 September 2017, [www.sdanet.org/at/issue/warfare/bri.htm](http://www.sdanet.org/at/issue/warfare/bri.htm).

The committee affirmed that the Scriptures and E. G. White's writings address the reality of demon and the significance of prayer to bring freedom but also warn against the danger attached to the misapplication, misuse, and mishandling of the task of fighting demon possession. They concluded in the same balanced way reminding that even if the *raison d'être* of the SDA Church in Revelation 14 is not casting demon, Paul counseled about spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6:10-13.

### **Demon Possession and Mental Illnesses**

The differentiation between demon possessions from other mental illnesses is important. Many physical sicknesses' symptoms are similar to those of a demon-possessed person. The first step could be the identification or the diagnostic of the kind of illness. That enables people to avoid confusion or administration of prayer as solution in the place of medical or other helps.

Kwabena Donkor and others presented biblical guidelines about casting out demons in the context of Africa: (a) It is the spiritual preparation through prayer and fasting (Mark 9: 29); (b) there must be the willingness and readiness of the victim to be free from demoniac power; (c) the prayer session must evidence that the delivering power comes from Jesus (Acts 19:13) and laying on of hands could accompany it (Luke 13:13); (d) calm and order should characterize that service as Jesus' ministry (Mark. 1:24-25); (e) during the service of casting out demon, it is good to keep in mind that the Bible rejects communicating with the demons and; (f) sometimes, participants in prayer session may persevere in praying, reading Scripture, and singing (1 Sam 16:23).<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Donkor, ed. *The Church, Culture, and Spirits: Adventism in Africa*, 227-230.

The same author confirmed that the phenomenon of demon possession is not easy to differentiate from other diseases.<sup>19</sup> He noted that demon possession is “mostly associated with a deep level of moral and spiritual deterioration or with contact or exposure to evil power or phenomena.”<sup>20</sup>

Lameck Miyayo mentioned from the Bible activities and signs that may accompany demon possession: (a) crying with a loud voice (Luke 9:39); (b) a kind of mental disorder (Matt 17:15); dumbness (Matt 17:17); foaming at the mouth, gnashing of teeth, and becoming rigid (Mark 9:18, Luke 9:39); blindness dumbness (Matt 12:22); nakedness and living among the tombs (Luke 8:27); breaking the bonds and stay away from civilization (Luke 8:29); excess in fierce (Matt 8:28); crying and cutting oneself with stones (Mark 5:5), divination (Acts 16:16); and infirmity (Luke 13:11).<sup>21</sup>

In the article written by Abner and Maila Dizon, with the title “Power Encounters: A Biblical And Missiological Foundation For Understanding Demonization And Exorcism From An Adventist Perspective,” the following are mentioned as symptoms of demon possession: (a) Personality Changes: intelligence, moral character, demeanor, appearance; (b) Physical Changes: preternatural strength, epileptic convulsions, foaming, catatonic symptoms, falling, clouding of consciousness, anesthesia to pain, changed voice; (c) Mental Changes: glossolalia, understanding unknown languages, preternatural knowledge, psychic and occult

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<sup>19</sup> Donkor, ed. *The Church, Culture, and Spirits: Adventism in Africa*, 227-230.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Lameck Miyayo, “Casting out Demons: Lessons from the Bible,” in *The Church, Culture, and Spirits: Adventism in Africa*, ed. Kwabena Donkor (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2011), 168.

powers, clairvoyance, telepathy, and prediction; (d) Spiritual Changes: reaction to and fear of Christ, blasphemy with regret as in depression, affected by prayer.<sup>22</sup>

The same authors confirmed that it is generally difficult to differentiate unclean spirits attacks from mental illnesses. Similarly, the SDA Bible commentators said that “the various manifestations of physical and mental disorder that marked the demon-possessed were, in and of themselves, no different from similar manifestations attributable to natural causes.”<sup>23</sup> They added that “apparently the difference lay, not in the nervous and physical symptoms displayed, but in the agency that caused them.”<sup>24</sup>

### **Advice on Dealing with Demon Possession**

Considering the teachings of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, as well as the experience of missionary leaders, the participants in prayer sessions for casting out demons should know their position in Christ because of “the ability to cast out demons is related to one’s position in Christ, the source of authority of his disciples” (Matt 28:18-20, Jn 15:1-17).<sup>25</sup> People could engage in casting out demon in a team ministry as well as it is possible. Even Christ sent his disciples two by two (Mark 6:7, Luke 10:1). They should search their heart to see if there are any unconfessed sins and they should be spiritually strong (Eph 6:10-19). They should lead the victim to Jesus-Christ (Jas 4:7-10, Luke 11:24-26), praying fervently while focusing on God in Christ instead of on devil (Jas 4:7-10, Mark 9:29), not ritualizing the act of casting out

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<sup>22</sup> Abner Dizon and Maila Dizon, “Power Encounters: A Biblical and Missiological Foundation for Understanding Demonization and Exorcism from an Adventist Perspective,” *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies*, 11, (2015): 2, accessed 22 January 2018, <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent>.

<sup>23</sup> “Unclean Spirits” [Luke 6:18], *SDABC*, 5: 742-750.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Kraft, *Issues in Contextualization*, 151.

demons as it is the case in traditional exorcisms (Lev 19:28, 1Kgs. 18:21-27), and giving glory to God (Acts 14:15, 15:12).

### **Casting Out Demons: An Act of Faith**

The Bible presents casting out demons as an act of faith. It is the case of when Jesus delivered an official's son at Capernaum in Galilee. People welcomed him with joy and faith because they have seen how he transformed water into wine at Cana. For Jesus, it was a pursuit of an evangelic action (Jn 4:43-54). He drew out a demon from a man in the synagogue on the Sabbath day. That act extended his reputation through the whole Galilee (Mark 1:21-27; Luke 4:31-36).<sup>26</sup>

He healed a Gentile woman's demon-possessed daughter. That woman showed determination in her faith and demand (Matt. 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30). A man in the crowd shouted and explained to Jesus symptoms of the mental illness of his boy possessed by an unclean spirit before Jesus delivered him so that some readers can argue that it was an epileptic case (Matt 17:14-20; Mark 9:14-29).<sup>27</sup>

### **Demons in Ellen White Writings**

#### **Affirming the Existence of Demons**

White warns humanity about the existence of demons. She affirmed that there are evil angels at work all around people. They are demons that a natural human vision does not perceive. She points out the importance of the awareness of the reality of their existence according to the Bible.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> K. Lyndons McDowell, "Demons and Deliverance" *Ministry*, April 1987, 5. Retrieved from [www.ministrymagazineArchives/1987/April](http://www.ministrymagazineArchives/1987/April).

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press), 5:533.



White indicates that demons increase “their power of destruction as the end of the world approaches.”<sup>29</sup> She adds that if permitted, they can disturb human minds, disorder and torment the bodies, and abolish possessions and lives.<sup>30</sup> She remarked that satanic agencies increase activity among men “to disturb and corrupt the mind, and defile and destroy the body.”<sup>31</sup>

### **Recognizing the Activities of Demons**

White said that;

The bodies of human beings, made for the dwelling place of God, had become the habitation of demons. The senses, the nerves, the passions, the organs of men, were worked by supernatural agencies in the indulgence of the vilest lust. The very stamp of demons was impressed upon the countenances of men. Human faces (in the Mark 5) reflected the expression of the legions of evil with which they were possessed.<sup>32</sup>

She added that “people should keep off from Satan's enchanted ground. The demons can sway their minds from allegiance to God.”<sup>33</sup>

### **Responses to Demon Possession**

White added that “through Christ, people may and should be happy and should acquire habits of self-control. Then, they must bring their thoughts into subjection to the will of God and their feelings under the control of reason and religion.

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<sup>29</sup> Ellen G. White, *Great Controversy between Christ and Satan* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1939), 516.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 517.

<sup>31</sup> Ellen G. white, *The Ministry of Healing* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1942), 143.

<sup>32</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2006), 36.

<sup>33</sup> White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:310.

Imagination must not be allowed to run riot and have its way without any effort at restraint or discipline.”<sup>34</sup>

According to White, Satan observes the weaknesses of people. She writes:

Satan studies every indication of the frailty of human nature, he marks the sins which each is inclined to commit, and then he takes care of those opportunities of not wanting to gratify the tendency to evil. He tempts men to excess in doing things which are not lawful, causing them, through intemperance, to weaken physical, mental, and moral power. He has destroyed and is destroying thousands through the indulgence of the passions, thus brutalizing the entire nature of man.<sup>35</sup>

White presented the task of casting out demons in the perspective of God’s kingdom,<sup>36</sup> to set people free from demoniac power.<sup>37</sup> She explained that Satan and his angels are fighting God’s universe including human beings. She similarly affirms that “Satan is the originator and leader of every species of rebellion in heaven and earth intensifying his wrath when people remain ignorant about it.” She explains that “they are neither prepared to resist them by the word of God, the only weapon to use successfully.”<sup>38</sup> She indicates that “the two parties represented by Cain and Abel will exist till the close of this earth’s history.”<sup>39</sup>

“Human beings do not have their own method of defense against demons.”<sup>40</sup>

So, White combats the “spirit of fanaticism that is seeking entrance into practice

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<sup>34</sup> White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:310.

<sup>35</sup> White, *Great Controversy between Christ and Satan*, 555.

<sup>36</sup> White, *The Desire of Ages*, 256.

<sup>37</sup> Ellen, G. White, *My Life Today* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2006), 300.

<sup>38</sup> Ellen G. White, *Messages to Young People* (Nashville, TN: Southern, 1930), 61.

<sup>39</sup> Ellen G. White, *Christ Triumphant* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2006), 17.

<sup>40</sup> White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5: 294.

through wrong application of biblical instructions, and by declaring persons possessed of the devil, and then praying with them and pretending to cast out the evil spirits.”<sup>41</sup>

### **Adventist Authors on Demon Possession**

In the book *The Church, Culture, and Spirits: Adventism in Africa*, Ewoo showed that a man can still realize that he is doing wrong but feels more attracted to continue in bad things. He affirmed that demon possession is the last phase when demons take the complete control of a human mind and that at that level; a human being never fights against them.<sup>42</sup>

In the same book, Ekkehardt Mueller presents Satan and demons as real supernatural beings, the angels who rebelled from God. He added that their activity is to oppose the purposes of God and explained that this opposition is the cause of the cosmic conflict, which will increase at the end of the millennium. He affirmed that demon possession is real and explained that they can attack God’s people. It means that there are human weaknesses that eventually make it possible. He also presents the fact that the power of Jesus-Christ over demons is identically real<sup>43</sup> and considered as the response to the problem of demon possession.

Miyayo also in his article “Casting out Demons: Lessons from the Bible” wrote about demon possession. He affirmed that most Africans, even Christians, are somewhat familiar with demons and spirits. He adds that many of them also believe

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<sup>41</sup> Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (WA: Review and Herald, 1940), 2:46.

<sup>42</sup> Andrews Ewoo, “Spiritualistic Manifestations Challenging the Seventh day Adventist Church in Africa,” 17.

<sup>43</sup> Ekkehardt Muller, “Evil Powers and Occult Practices in the Apocalypse,” in *The Church, Culture, and Spirits: Adventism in Africa*, ed. Kwabena Donkor (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2011), 105.

that spirits can influence and dwell in individuals or communities.<sup>44</sup> The same author affirms that the requirement to cast out demons is in perspective and context of God's kingdom. He recommended that Seventh-day Adventists should believe in the biblical manner of casting out of demons.<sup>45</sup>

He also advocated the case of people that do not obey God's commandments but claim to be able to cast out demons.<sup>46</sup> As White wrote, "in the last days, Satan will make people sick and will remove them from his satanic power. Then, healing will take place among victims." She warned saying that those events of deceptive healing could challenge a lot of Seventh-day Adventist Church members.<sup>47</sup>

Finally, Miyayo indicated that "even though there are insights and considerations from biblical encounters with demon possession, it may be inappropriate to set rigid strategies to follow."<sup>48</sup> That seems to be one of the points that provoke disparities in casting out demons. Some church members believe effectively in the biblical activity of casting out demons, but when a party brings strategies, rituals, visions attached to this, then, opinions vary.

Cases of demonic possession are few among Adventists by comparison to other Christian churches. One reason Etienne O. Belinga gave is the emphasis on

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<sup>44</sup> Miyayo, "Casting out Demons: Lessons from the Bible," 167.

<sup>45</sup> Miyayo, "Casting out Demons: Lessons from the Bible," 171.

<sup>46</sup> Ellen G. White, *Maranatha: The Lord is Coming* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1976), 148.

<sup>47</sup> Ellen G. White, *Last Day Events* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1992), 166.

<sup>48</sup> Miyayo, "Casting out Demons: Lessons from the Bible," 175.

prayer.<sup>49</sup> In casting out demons, Jesus did not use an exact procedure. Jesus cast out demons without following an established formula.<sup>50</sup>

In an article titled, “Witchcraft Accusations: Destroying Family, Community, and Church,” Boubakar Sanou wrote on accusation about witchcraft. He affirmed that in many African contexts, the ideas of evil spirits, spell casting, curses, magic, sorcery, is close to the idea of witches or witchcraft.<sup>51</sup> He added that “witchcraft beliefs and accusations negatively impact family relationships as well as other networks of social relations.” They think their neighbors caused demon possession to victims. He said that “belief in supernatural powers and witchcraft are well-known components of the worldview of many Africans across all social lines: in villages, educated people, and urban settings.” He noted that belief in witchcraft is a religious and cultural phenomenon for both Christians and Muslims.

He indicated that trial happens when parents and religious leaders subject children to cruel treatment to try to force them to confess of witchcraft or cast out demons from them. They are also “denied access to their family or community life, as they are rejected or abandoned by theirs.”<sup>52</sup>

He denounced the practices of the African Independent Churches (AIC) and charismatic movements, which maintain the traditional worldview in their manner of

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<sup>49</sup> Etienne O. Belinga, “Tackling the Issue of Demon Possession: The Case of the Adventist High School at Kribi, South Cameroon” (MA project, Adventist University of Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, October 2013), 33.

<sup>50</sup> Dickson Kateeti Makenzi, “A Biblical Strategy for Exorcism in Masii Church District in Central Kenya Conference” (MA project, Adventist University of Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, 2014), 31.

<sup>51</sup> Boubakar Sanou, “Witchcraft Accusations: Destroying Family, Community, and Church,” *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 13 (2017): 33-44, accessed 14 October 2017, <http://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/jams/vol13/iss1/5>.

<sup>52</sup> Sanou, “Witchcraft Accusations: Destroying Family, Community, and Church,” 33-44.

dealing with witchcraft and demon possession. Very often, people establish the credibility of preachers and pastoral by their capacity to detect and cast out demons believed to be sent by sorceresses. Moreover, he affirmed that even witch doctors are occasionally invited to help detect suspected witches in Christian congregations.

Lyndons K. McDowell was pastor at Olney, Maryland, and the Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D.C. SDA Churches. He wrote about deliverance from demons where he affirmed that demons are a reality even in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. They exist and take possession of humans,<sup>53</sup> even if psychiatrists condemned the beliefs in demon possession because of sciences. He indicated the importance of church activities about casting out demons. However, he specified that the church must not train exorcists to solve that problem.

So, he noted how Israelites sacrificed their children to demons as did their neighbor people of Tyre. Indeed, Carthage experienced sacrifices of children (Ps 106:35-36). He said that today, people could say about manic-depressives display impatience and intolerance. He added that they indulge in impulsive and unconsidered actions, and affirmed that the symptoms are similar that there are difficulties to identify and differentiate both demons attacks and mental illnesses.<sup>54</sup> He also affirmed that most cases of demon possession have similar symptoms as psychological complications.

He commented on the problem of accidental demon possession and the situation when persons themselves decide willingly for possession. He said that in all these cases symptoms remain alike. Another tendency he pointed out is on the part of those fascinated by demonology who desired to see demons behind every unfortunate

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<sup>53</sup> McDowell, "Demons and Deliverance," 5.

<sup>54</sup> "To identify" [Mark 1:23], *SDABC*, 5:557.

condition. He said that he did an observation of psychologists who believe in demon possession and concluded by saying that genuine cases are rare.

### **Warning on Demon Possession and Deliverance**

McDowell said that certain Christians developed an excessive demonology interest that can be detrimental. Such interest may also indicate a personal problem. He cited Basil Jackson who remarked that he has noted that there is “an increased tendency for attraction to the occult in Christians who are obsessed by an idea that is often particularly attracted to involvement in the deliverance ministry.”<sup>55</sup> He warned that “dabbling in the occult tends to make the individual more susceptible to an invitation by spirit agencies” and encouraged Christians to stay away from such kind of action.<sup>56</sup>

To facilitate the diagnosis and to distinguish between the supernatural and psychological cases, he advised counseling from individuals like psychologists, pastors caregivers, and medical doctors who have the ability to conduct an independent evaluation.<sup>57</sup> He said that it is because those people consider social, medical, and history of the patient about alcohol, accidents, drugs, traumatic experiences, familial relationship, and most whether there has been, in the past, involvement with the occult.<sup>58</sup>

He added that those involved in deliverance activities should be conscientious that deliverance covers many needs and that there are some discernments observable

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<sup>55</sup> McDowell, “Demons and Deliverance,” 5-6.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 7.

from writing or drawing of the patient.<sup>59</sup> In the case of exaggerations and fanatics, the deliverance ministry converts an object of Satan's disguise, clothed as an angel of light to seduce people (2 Cor 11:14).

In the book *Demonic History and the Rite of Exorcism*, David P. Aguilar said that as demons are fallen angels and intelligent beings, they are aware that they wait for the last God's judgment.<sup>60</sup> These two authors suggest two categories of demonic attacks, namely, influence and dominion. They refer to the impact of control demons have on the mind of people.

He noted that at the level of influence are the temptation, harassment, and oppression. At the level of dominion is obsession, and possession.<sup>61</sup> He also said that before influence and after temptation is a phase of anchorage where a demon tries to remain in mind and grow. Similarly, he suggests the phase between influence and dominance where the victim willingly admits the demonic footholds.<sup>62</sup>

The other aspect of demon activities this author advocated is the witches as well as occults events of cause with its effect. This phenomenon occurs in witchcraft, but it is not predictable in Christianity. He explained that the authority in the name of Christ casts demons but not with rituals, discussions with demons, or making any human commands.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> McDowell, "Demons and Deliverance," 7.

<sup>60</sup> David P. Aguilar, *Demonic History and the Rites of Exorcism*, 60, accessed 6 November 2018, <http://faithofjesus.to/Binary/books/TehomAt/TehomTitle.html>.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 102.



### **Other Christian Authors on Demon Possession**

Richard J. Gehman is a retired pastor. He was born in Norristown, Pennsylvania in the USA, in 1935. He got a doctorate in Missiology from the Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California. He served in Kenya, before retirement. His experience with the Akamba people is one among others that mostly inspired this researcher on demon possession in the African context. Many elements of the beliefs of Akamba about demon possession are common for Burundians and other Africans. Gehman presented the various kinds of spirit possession among the Akamba and what kind of attitude Akamba have toward their living dead.<sup>64</sup>

#### **Demon Possession among the Akamba People**

Gehman wrote about the status in the community, maintaining the tradition of ancestors and social solidarity even if they are Christian, which opens a way to demon possession. He affirmed what said Jonathan Musango in “The Research Paper on Spirit Possession,” Scott Theology College, 1983, that the way by which ancestors communicate with the livings is through possession.<sup>65</sup> Even Charles H. Kraft understood the demon possession in the same context as traditional beliefs and practices. He explained that witches might send demonic spirits to possess people or ancestor vows can bring demons to a community or family. According to him, demons can also enter people who feel in contact with them in crossways, under a tree, in a river, in a farm, through an individual, in a house or haunted objects.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Richard J. Gehman, *African Traditional Religion in Biblical Perspective* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2005), 215.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

<sup>66</sup> Kraft, *Issues in Contextualization*, 127.

## Activities of Demons among Akamba People

Gehman added that the preferred demonic spirits might help the owner in herbal healings and divination. It may appear in a contagious way, beginning with one who is already demon possessed. He affirmed that the demon-possessed person is as a property of evil spirits. Further, he said that when one is fully possessed he may demonstrate power called “*aimu*” which means “having unusual physical strength” or the “ability to eat poison without dying.” Some possessed people tremble.<sup>67</sup>

In addition to these symptoms, Gehman gave four others: extra natural knowledge, not enjoying biblical matters, no effects of medicines, effects on speech. He also indicated that the person may accept and promise to serve a certain spirit without complaining in the form of a vow. He explained that the sacrifices needed or asked by that spirit must be given by the demon-possessed person or by his family. Dances generally, reflect which kind of demons are in action of possession. Moreover people who are present imitate the dance of spirit identified through the dance of the patient. In the dance of ancestors, the sick person may ask certain things to heal him. Once the sick person gives the things, there is the healing eventually, in the presence of the witch.<sup>68</sup>

Then, German author said that offering and sacrifices by the requests of the ancestors are carried out in order to appease the living-dead and the deliverance from demon possession. To be sure that the victim is free from demons, the medicine-man sends those spirits in an animal, a sheep, or as a goat. The ears of the animal are cut off while the animal is alive and hung around the patient person, food is offered normally by de witchdoctor in the hut, with lyrics like these “stop troubling so further

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<sup>67</sup> Gehman, *African Traditional Religion*, 123.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

go into the goat, goat is yours, goat is yours.”<sup>69</sup> He added that among Akamba, medicine man could specialize as a diviner, a prophet, or a cleansing herbalist to heal and cast out demons. There are also some traditional charms used to bring prosperity or protect from evil and misfortune. They do this because they believe that there are spiritual manifestations in traditional practices like the curse attached to the oath, the spirits attacks, the evil tongue, and the evil eyes.<sup>70</sup>

In brief, Gehman indicated that all the interviewed Akamba agreed without hesitation that demon possession was not pleasant. The demon-possessed could roll in the dust, making them dirty. During that time, the demon-possessed may display their nakedness. Violent conduct may lead to personal harm. They can destroy their ornaments, which they usually loved. Because of the extreme use of energy, they become excessively weak and exhausted. He noted that the spirit possession is a momentary experience. However it may be a repeated one, and every activity done is to satisfy the demands of the demons in order to appease them, then be released from the possession.<sup>71</sup>

### **Evangelical Perspective on Casting Out Demons**

In other his book *Doing African Christian Theology: An Evangelical Perspective*, Gehman alerted the evangelicals concerning the faulty foundations of African Christian Theology that often is maintained by charismatic leaders. At the same time, he showed the need for reflecting God’s revelation in the context of Africa. He helped the Christian church in Africa to be both biblical and African. One

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<sup>69</sup> Gehman, *African Traditional Religion*, 247.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 246.

of the elements that encourage African unbiblical practices is the fact that churches are increasing rapidly in this continent. He said that Christianity in Africa could be correctly contextualized so that believers feel at home with their faith and its beauty attracts non-believers.<sup>72</sup>

He recognized that there are elements that are decent in traditional African culture that can be purified and used for God's exaltation should be assimilated into some ways of the expression and the effective communication of the Gospel. However, African Charismatic religious leaders seem to admit whatever traditional beliefs regardless they are biblical or not.<sup>73</sup> He said that it appears that often, missionaries failed to consider spirit possession with a biblical worldview. He explained that they could acknowledge the reality of demon possession and seek biblical remedy.<sup>74</sup>

Todd Johnson and Sandra S. K. Lee wrote on a topic "From Western Christendom to Global Christianity," and they advocated the realities related to the expansion of the Gospel in Africa as the development of a theology for Africa that is rooted in its culture, history, and context. They added that the deliverance from the demonic powers exploded in the activities of African Christian churches mostly in the southern part of Africa.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Richard J. Gehman, *Doing African Christian Theology: An Evangelical Perspective* (Nairobi, Kenya: Evangelical, 1987), 23.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>75</sup> Todd Johnson and Sandra S. K. Lee, "From Western Christendom to Global Christianity," in *Perspectives on the World Movement* ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009), 390.

That has a missiological aspect because Christians from the West moved toward the rest of the world. There is a continuing move South and East that indicates that the theology moves in cultural diversity with languages, and social, cultural and economic problems.<sup>76</sup>

Adrian Hastings wrote about the danger that fell on some Charismatic leaders who critically experienced the task of casting out demons. He further suggests that when patients or people direct the attention to something or someone other than Jesus-Christ, things start going wrong. To explain the necessity of the biblical wisdom needed in the matter, He gave examples of three African exorcists. He mentioned that in 1925, Nyirenda preached in Zambia against sorcery and witchcraft, encouraged hospitality, kindness, redeeming songs, and prayers. Soon after he claimed to be able to detect a witch and those he identified were murdered. The colonial authorities detained and tried him.<sup>77</sup>

Hastings reported the case of a certain Zambian Alice Lenshina who rose in 1955, exposed and banished witches in the communities. Lenshina used songs for Zion and special prayers against witches. Her followers fought against the election of President Kaunda, and accused a priest of sorcery. The court condemned them in prison. The supreme strategies of Lenshina's Church were that it claims to deliver people from the powers of sorcery and then a promise to eradicate witchcraft is in millennia list during the destruction of evil things.<sup>78</sup> Hastings also wrote about Edmund John, an Anglican in Tanzania, and a brother of an Archbishop. He rose and traveled promoting casting out demons. Edmund preached about the war against

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<sup>76</sup> Johnson and Lee, "From Western Christendom to Global Christianity," 392.

<sup>77</sup> Adrian Hastings, *African Christianity* (London: Cassell & Collier Macmillan, 1976), 60.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, 61.

demons using Deuteronomy 20 and died because of rigorous fasting in June 1974. Hastings gave some three or four other examples of demon possession in the community to illustrate the similar situation. He thought that idea of causality – where a cause is behind-is important in the matter of demon possession.<sup>79</sup>

He added that people look for why, and who caused things to happen and affirmed that it might be white medicine or black medicines that produce helpful or harmful events. He stipulated that the most confusing area of all is probably that of demon possession.<sup>80</sup> He said that there was a belief that, sorcerers used charms and invocation of spirits while witches, became animals, fly, dance on graves, eat human meat, then cause death and disasters.<sup>81</sup>

### **European Witch-hunting from 15th to 17th Century**

Hastings mentioned the fact that the European witch-hunting from 15<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, should warn to the African Christian Churches of today. He said that in reality, the recognition of demon possession is one thing as such requiring pastoral care. On the other hand, the problem of witchcraft is another. Once one acknowledges its reality, he cannot remain silent and avoid making accusations even if the cost of that matter may be painful.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Hastings, *African Christianity*, 64.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

## **The Saint Francis Movement in Zimbabwe**

Hastings concluded saying that the eradication of possession could be through the name of Jesus not by human power.<sup>83</sup> He separated the identification of demon possession caused by witchcraft and its eradication. The author showed the temptation of creation of movements like the one in Rhodesia, that a charismatic Francis Nyabadza founded with the name of the St Francis movement. His neighbors asked him to pray at the sites of new homes to drive away demons.<sup>84</sup>

### **The Problem of Divergence of Worldviews**

Kraft highlighted the problem of divergence of worldviews. The Western society that is characterized by secularist enlightenment somehow denied demons activities, and associated demon possession to psychological disorders.<sup>85</sup> Then, he encourages the use of the authority Jesus gave over evil spirits, and warns Christians saying that unrighteousness gave Satan control in the world. He also urges Western missionaries to process the change of their worldview.

Some other authors like Paul Hebert wrote about how different worldviews condition the understanding of the notion of spiritual warfare.<sup>86</sup> He explained how the Cartesian dualism influenced the western worldview since the sixteenth century. It divides the cosmos into two entities and realities. On the one hand, there is the

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<sup>83</sup> Hastings, *African Christianity*, 75.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>85</sup> Charles H. Kraft, *The Evangelical's Guide to Spiritual Warfare: Scriptural Insights and Practical Instructions on Facing the Enemy* (Minneapolis, MN: Chosen, 2015), 118.

<sup>86</sup> Paul G Hiebert, "Spiritual Warfare and Worldviews," *The Occasional Bulletin of the Evangelical Missiological Society* 13 (Fall 2000):1, accessed September 2017, <http://www.missiology.org/EMS/bulletins/hiebert.htm>, 1.

supernatural world of God, gods, spirits, and ancestors. On the other hand, there is the natural material world of human beings, animals, plants and matter.

He said that this has led to two conceptions of spiritual warfare. First, secular materialists, who deny the reality of the supernatural world, consequently they reduce the reality to the natural world that is studied by human reason and science. For the materialists there is no spiritual warfare because there are no gods or other spirits.<sup>87</sup>

He also shows how the second view of spiritual warfare developing out of the Cartesian dualism is that God, angels, and demons may be involved in an extra-terrestrial battle in the heavens, but the everyday events on the earth are best studied, explained and controlled by science and technology.<sup>88</sup>

In the book *Understanding Spiritual Warfare*, Paul Rhodes and James K. Beilby provide perspectives and reported representative voices on the debate concerning spiritual warfare. The discussions include the use of the language “spiritual warfare,” Christian perspectives on the theology, the existence of spirit beings, and the practice of warfare.<sup>89</sup>

These above two authors explained some interpretations that people gave to the use of the expression “spiritual warfare.” People associated it with self-righteousness, violence, intolerance, holy war, judgments, and arrogance.<sup>90</sup> Regarding the nature, activities, and existence of demons, the authors gave biblical sources and

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<sup>87</sup> Paul G. Hiebert, “Spiritual Warfare and Worldviews,” *The Direction: A Memorite Brethren Forum*, accessed 23 April 2018, <http://www.directionjournal.org/29/2/spiritual-warfare-and-worldviews.html>.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> James K. Beilby and Paul Rhodes Eddy, *Understanding Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academy, 2012), 2.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 3.



added that some theological scholars have highlighted in the Old Testament subjects that point to the cosmic conflict.<sup>91</sup> They affirmed that most evangelical scholars today regard and consider the spiritual beings in the perspective and context of their authority, role, and power compared to one of Christ, the sovereignty of God, their influence on the Gospel, and the degree of theological care to give to them.<sup>92</sup>

The points of view of those evangelical scholars orient how they handle the problem of spirits and possession. Those who ignore demons taking them as myths like Karl Barth also ignore demonic attacks.<sup>93</sup> Those who understand the problem of demons as principalities and powers like Walter Wink approach the problem in cosmic or world context. Those who focus on the sinful nature of human beings like Amos Yong, take what he calls the classic model of warfare.<sup>94</sup>

What is evident is that none among all those models of spiritual warfare is what Jesus recommended. They are all conceived by men and then, are subject to questions. So, the Adventist cautious approach regarding casting out demon remains valid and necessary at that point.

### **Witchcraft as Mind Possession**

Esther J. Kibor wrote that the witches are predominantly women helped by evil spirits. She affirmed that sorcery uses black magic and medicines against others. She wrote that witchcraft is an act of mind or possession. That means that in witchcraft are teachings and beliefs to admit or to reject, to possess the mystic power

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<sup>91</sup> Beilby and Eddy, *Understanding Spiritual Warfare*, 14.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

or not. Moreover she considered that as it is a relevant problem of sorcery and witchcraft in the traditional worship, whose practices and beliefs in many areas of Africa and the world have carried over into the Christian churches<sup>95</sup> (e.g., in African Christian Churches).

Kibor said that witchcraft is an evil and occult thing, which is frequently hereditary. She believes it to be an activity of the ancestors' spirits, habitually nocturnal and who deal depending on coming dreams and manifestations. She said that they are sitting alone, eating alone. These meetings are held in secrecy, if possible in a forest, or distant from a village. Sorcerers and witches might experience activities near midnight and visible, audible and tangible communication with spirits.<sup>96</sup> She added that they acquire witchcraft through various ways: a) Inheritance from mother or father, b) picked up, bought, or swallowed, c) women who sell it at cheap for poor people, d) can be willingly acquired from demons.<sup>97</sup> Moreover Kibor remarked that syncretism is a sign of failure to preach repentance and conversion.<sup>98</sup>

Clinton E. Arnold is a professor of New Testament language and literature. As he showed in his book *Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*, the Bible (manly in the New Testament) contains evidence that demons are real.<sup>99</sup> This author reminded that the kingdom of God was the central theme of Jesus' teachings, and casting out

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<sup>95</sup> Esther J. Kibor, "Witchcraft and Sorcery: A Biblical Perspective with Implications for Church Ministry," *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* 25.2, (2006):151-161, accessed 25 September 2018, [https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/ajet/25-2\\_151.pdf](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/ajet/25-2_151.pdf).

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>99</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, *Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academy, 1997), 23.

demons the sign of its presence.<sup>100</sup> He presents prayer activities as the heart of spiritual warfare and the expression of faith. It is in this way that he advises the promotion of small groups of prayer in evangelical work. He showed that demonic possession cases had been observed in the time of Christ and his apostles, in earlier Christian, until today. Satan used oppositions, persecutions,<sup>101</sup> and presented himself in angels of light to deceive people.<sup>102</sup>

Arnold indicated the confusion around the word “possession.” According to him, to be possessed as to be totally controlled by spirits cannot be the case for the Christian.<sup>103</sup> However, the Christian needs vigilance not to give chance or footholds to the demons to attack him. What Arnold is saying here is similar to what Kwabena Donkor denies responding to the question asking if a Seventh-day Adventist can be demon possessed.<sup>104</sup> The answer is strongly negative: As long as a believer does not commit sin, it means that the Holy Spirit dwells in him or her. Satan cannot share habitation with God. Then, that person cannot be at the same time completely controlled by demons.

Arnold illustrated the difference between to pray and to command against demons that afflict individuals with limitation for spirits hierarchies that rule in cities, territories, or countries. He believes that those are territorial spirits that require praying in the unity of many Christians to bind and expel them. The researcher

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<sup>100</sup> Arnold, *Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*, 20.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>104</sup> Andrews Ewoo, “Spiritualistic Manifestations Challenging the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Africa” in *The Church, Culture and Spirits: Adventism in Africa*, ed. Kwabena Donkor, Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2011, 18.

observed with sorrow some members of prayer group in the researcher area “binding” demons. That is not biblical.

Arnold added and explained that territorial spirit manifestation demands the identification of principalities if possible by names, mapping for the cultural and historical documentation of what God and demons did in the area in the course of time, and the identification repentance for corporate sin.<sup>105</sup> The researcher found some realities at this point, and he agreed with Arnold at the ideas of mapping and the existence of a corporate sin what is usual in African culture but considered caution and humility before the assumption to destroy religious convictions of a group of people in short time of prayers.

Kraft is a retired professor at Fuller Theological Seminary. In his book *The Evangelical's Guide to Spiritual Warfare*, Kraft presents God's love to humanity as the reason of spiritual warfare that opposes Satan with his demons to Christ with his angels and the universe. He suggested the personal preparation before deliverance and to show love, dignity, and encouragement before, during and after the deliverance of the victim. Those involved in deliverance should ask the presence of the Holy Spirit, and it is better to be in groups, as teams. He indicated that healing and deliverance is an act of faith imitating Christ balanced, calmed, scriptural ways, not fanatic or Pentecostal.<sup>106</sup> He advised counseling the newly freed person regarding their habits.

### **Symptoms of Demon Possession**

Derek Prince, Henry, and others showed the importance of recognizing the activities of demons. People might differentiate ordinary illnesses from demonic

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<sup>105</sup> Arnold, *Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*, 159.

<sup>106</sup> Kraft, *The Evangelical's Guide to Spiritual Warfare*, 218.

attacks. So, they will avoid errors like providing a kind of assistance to a patient that is not appropriate. For example, sick people can suffer in rooms of prayers instead of going to the hospital.<sup>107</sup> Among symptoms of demon possession, the researcher often observed extraordinary strength and knowledge, non-effect of medical drugs, and rejection of God's businesses.

### Summary

This previous part is a review of the literature on the subject of demon possession. The above-cited authors like more others affirmed the existence of demon possession and indicated some of its origins, footholds, and signs. They also presented the complexity of how to eradicate it. They referred to faith in God and his Scriptures to get the solution. Dealing with demon possession is conceived in different ways according to many factors that include cultures and religions. Westerners sometimes deny or misunderstand African worldview about spirits.<sup>108</sup>

Above different biblical texts, explanations, and writings of various authors let observe that the work of casting out demons need to be biblically balanced. This approach will protect people from errors that are in traditional practices and beliefs, human pride and self-exaltation by doing miracles in place of God and his will. Casting out demon is presented as one of practical elements of evangelism. However it cannot necessarily save souls for the eternity. People can be healed but not maintain faith. So, the most important for salvation is the faithful and personal relationship with God in Jesus.

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<sup>107</sup> Derek Prince, *They Expel Demons: What You Need to Know About Demons- Your Invisible Enemies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 1998), 165.

<sup>108</sup> Beilby and Eddy, ed., *Understanding Spiritual Warfare*, 43.

The Adventist authors who wrote about the service to the demon-possessed showed that the work of casting out demons demands biblical wisdom and moderation. The emphasis on the power which is in the name of Jesus, the objective of the glory of God, the blessing, and the freedom that are in the heavenly kingdom, are some elements that are necessary for spiritual warfare.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL MILIEU

#### **The Burundi Population**

Burundi is an Eastern African country. It shares frontiers with Tanzania in the East and South, Rwanda in the North, and the Democratic Republic of Congo in the West. It has three ethnic groups: the Hutu who are farmers and represent 85 percent of the population, the Tutsi who are breeders represent 14 percent, and the Twa (Pygmies) who are potters represent 1 percent of the population. Even though the Twa are the marginalized by both the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups, the Burundi community knows them as expert custodians of the traditional practices and the secrets of nature.<sup>1</sup> The World Population Review wrote that Burundi has the second highest density in Sub-Saharan countries.<sup>2</sup>

The Tutsi minority ruled as a monarchy over Hutu for centuries before colonialism. When the colonists came, in 1890 years,<sup>3</sup> they sympathized mainly in education with Tutsi who were in power. Even after the independence period, in 1960 the Hutu majority was excluded from important civil activities like, justice, and administration as well as in army. But at the same time, Hutu responded to

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<sup>1</sup> Donald Hohensee, *Church Growth in Burundi* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1977), 19.

<sup>2</sup> *World Population Review*. Accessed 23 August, 2017, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/burundi-population/>.

<sup>3</sup> John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Malaysia: Heinemann, 1997), 60.

Christianity more than Tutsi and their children attended mission schools.<sup>4</sup> Christianity expanded in Burundi, and it became the more popular religion of the country. Then, Hutu emerged at the political scene.<sup>5</sup>

A Burundian researcher Mvuyekure Augustin said that in the colonial and Western missionary periods, many religious changes in Burundi were not the fruit of faith but purely political facts.<sup>6</sup> The baptized people became respected and had a privilege of going to Christian schools. The same author added that traditional leaders regarded schools as an element of emancipation.<sup>7</sup> The permanent social conflicts increase poverty and are considered by some believers as demonic.<sup>8</sup>

### **Introduction of the Adventist Message in Buganda**

In 1925, the Belgian missionary David Delhove (1882-1949) established in Buganda the first local church of the Seventh-day Adventists in Burundi. The Adventist message reached the rest of the country from that region nearly a century ago. According to the official report of 2016,<sup>9</sup> the Burundi SDA Church had 123,733 members distributed in 460 churches. The Burundi population was 11,099,000. They are taught by sixty-two pastors. Among these pastors, two received a doctoral degree

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<sup>4</sup> Hohensee, *Church Grow in Burundi*, 16.

<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa* (Grand Rapid, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Company, 1995), 247.

<sup>6</sup> Mvuyekure Augustin, *Le Cathoricisme au Burundi* (Paris: Editions Karthala, 2003), 163.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

<sup>8</sup> John D. Robb, "Strategic Prayer" in *Perspectives: On the World Christian Movement*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009), 164-168.

<sup>9</sup> General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, *Seventh-day Adventist Year Book*, accessed 9<sup>th</sup> September 2017, <http://www.adventistyearbook.org/ViewAdmField.aspx?AdmFieldID=BURM>,



in theology, another two are doctoral candidates, eight have MA degree, and nineteen will recently get Bachelor's degree.<sup>10</sup>

The participants in the interviews considered those pastors to be very few and have limited time to work in a certain place. Bumbiri SDA Church belongs to Buganda SDA District, at the North-West of Burundi. It was inaugurated on January 6, 2003 with 246 church members. The statistical report showed that Bumbiri Church had 1,075 members in October 2017. Mashakiye Ruth (1917-2011), a fervent laywoman donated the plot of land on which to put the Bumbiri Church building. They have one pastor who ministers to ten churches.

This chapter attempts to give information for the following questions: How prevalent is demon possession among church members in Buganda district? How does demon possession impact the Bumbiri Church? So, it says how often the cases of demon possession are observed among church members in Buganda District and the effects on church members when someone in church becomes demon possessed. It try to indicate what kinds of people are more prone to demon possession, and practices that open people up or make them more prone to demon possession and why. Finally, this chapter presents what church members do when one of them gets demon possessed and the comments on procedures they follow to deal with demon possession.

### **List of Interviewees**

The researcher did interviews with a group of 15 people. All have been in the SDA Church for more than ten years. Among them were 2 church pastors and 4

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<sup>10</sup> General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2017), 42.

church elders. He also sent the list of their identification to the advisor of this study.

Some of the participant names are changed for the purpose of security. The following is the table of demographic information of the interviewees.

*Table 1. List of Interviewees*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Years in SDA Church</b>	<b>Experience</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1. Barakamfitye Lameck	64	Married	46	Prayed for demon-possessed.	Pastor
2. Nziguheba Jerome	52	Married	SDA since childhood	Leader of prayer groups	Pastor
3. Nzobonimpa Martin	70	Married	40	Prayed for demon-possessed.	Church Elder
4. Shirambere Martin	57	Married	SDA since childhood	Prayed for demon-possessed.	Church Elder
5. Ntigurirwa Onesime	36	Married	SDA since childhood	Prayed for demon-possessed.	Church Elder
6. Nzoyihaya Charles	35	Married	15	Prayed for demon-possessed.	Church Elder
7. Ruzocimana Edine	38	Married	12	Prayed for demon-possessed.	Prayer Group Member
8. Ndikumana Zelda	42	Married	16	Prayed for demon-possessed.	Prayer Group Member
9. Barikunahasi Berthe	63	Married	10	Prayed for demon-possessed.	Prayer Group Member
10. Ntihabose Adele	52	Married	14	Prayed for demon-possessed.	Prayer Group Member
11. Ntiyankana Ellen	58	Married	16	Prayed for demon-possessed.	Prayer Group Member
12. Nkurikiye (Pseudonym)	54	Married	10	Attacked by demons and delivered through prayers.	Member
13. Nyandwi (Pseudonym)	51	Married	8	Affirmed to reveal the future and to warn people.	Member
14. Butoyi (Pseudonym)	55	Married	SDA since childhood	Harassed by demons and saved.	Church elder
15. Bukuru (Pseudonym)	48	Single	SDA since childhood	She was possessed by demons and was delivered.	None

## Demon Possession in Buganda District

Demon attacks and demon possession are very common in Burundi and people live in permanent fear of witches and spirit attacks.<sup>11</sup> In addition to this, the Buganda community is still strongly characterized by insecurity due to social conflicts and syncretism as it is the case in other many African countries.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, Adventists, like the other members of the community, are tempted to search their solutions from any of those three sources: biblical, secular, or traditional.

In discussions during seminars and interviews held from 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> January 2016 and 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> November 2017 at Bumbiri, participants mentioned the five main challenges against the advancement of the Gospel at Bumbiri. Then, the interviewees considered these challenges as the particular beliefs and causes on which demons fond their activities—the strongholds (*aho vyarikiye*) of demon possession—and affirmed that in, most of cases, demon-possessed people are female. The five important elements are conceived as against the three encounters (the power encounter, the truth encounter, and the allegiance encounter) in Buganda District.

The above challenges that also illustrate the prevalence and impact of demon possession in Buganda District are the following: (1) the traditional beliefs and practices, (2) the cultural principle of negative solidarity, (3) the tribalism and social insecurity, (4) the need of theological formation, and (5) the misunderstanding of the role and importance of small groups of prayer.

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<sup>11</sup> Guillebaud, *Dangerously Alive*, 11-13.

<sup>12</sup> Ikechukwu Michael Oluikpe, “A Pauline Perspective of Victory over Evil Spiritual Powers: Its Implications for Seventh-day Adventist Mission and Ministry in Africa,” in *Culture, Adventist Theology, and Mission in Africa*, ed. Sampson M. Nwaomah, Eriks Galeniks, and Davidson Razafiarivony (Nairobi, Kenya: Theological Seminary Adventist University of Africa, 2016), 115.

## **Traditional Beliefs and Practices**

The interviewees confessed that there is not real and solid relation of some church members and God (the allegiance encounter), the good knowledge of the Gospel (truth encounter), and the fervent prayer (power encounter).<sup>13</sup> Those church members indicated that there are many contextual challenges that block the transformation of the Burundian culture and the contextualization of the Gospel in Bumbiri Church. When the researcher asked if what church members do when one of them get possessed, Nkurikiye said, “Some Church members continue to keep cultural beliefs and practices as they pray for demon-possessed and that compromise their relationship with Christ and develop the attitude of syncretism and stagnation of Christian growth.”

In his article “African Traditional Religions as a Basis for Understanding Spiritual Conflict in Africa” Yusufu Turaki said that in the context of African Christianity, the demonic is a part of the African traditional religions.<sup>14</sup> He added that demonic and traditional powers and beliefs stand in opposition to the presentation and the proclamation of the Gospel as well as obstacles to the genuine Christian spiritual transformation of lives.<sup>15</sup>

The dominant numbers of Christians do not escape spirits’ attacks in Burundi communities as it is at Buganda. More than 30 percent’s of the Burundi population

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<sup>13</sup> Charles Kraft, *Issues in Contextualization*, 55.

<sup>14</sup> Yusufu Turaki, “African traditional religions as a basis for understanding spiritual conflict in Africa” in *Deliver Us from Evil*, ed. Scott A. Moreau, Tokonboh Adeyemo, David G. Burnett, Bryant L. Myers, and Hwa Yung (Monrovia: World Mission International, 2002), 171.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

still has traditional beliefs.<sup>16</sup> There is a cultural principle of hiding common sins that came into the Bumbiri Church. There is ignorance of the existence and actions of demons so that some people sympathize with them without fear. That happens in some traditional practices even during church services in the moment of prayer or singing.

As it is in other African contexts,<sup>17</sup> the beliefs of the cultural tradition seem to affect all the activities of Burundians. Certain teachers of the Bible of the first generation taught to Burundians that Kiranga (medium between God and Burundians) was Christ and that belief is still in the spirit of people.<sup>18</sup>

The interviewee Nzoyihaya Charles is among the helpers of the demon-possessed. He affirmed that there are many categories of patients at Bumbiri. Those who are demon possessed and harassed are apart from the pregnant women and the cases of other illnesses. As they are members of the Bumbiri Church, they come every day in the morning and in the evening. He added that when they meet in groups of prayer for the demon-possessed, they sing a song, and pray after a meditation on a biblical text about hope. He said that the body of the demon-possessed starts to tremble when someone pronounces loudly the name of Jesus.

He affirmed that their prayer sessions help church members to remain in the church instead of going in other congregations to search help there. He said that people are delivered and that some patients come for long period of time. What the

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<sup>16</sup> Travel guide, “*Burundi Culture*,” accessed on 30<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2018, [www.uganda-rwanda-travelguide.com/burundi-culture.html](http://www.uganda-rwanda-travelguide.com/burundi-culture.html).

<sup>17</sup> Efe M. Ehioghae, “Syncretism and Contours of Contextualization of Adventist in Africa” in *Culture, Adventist Theology, and Mission*, ed. Sampson M. Nwaomah, Eriks Galenieks, and Davidson Razafiarivony (Nairobi, Kenya: Theological Seminary Adventist University of Africa, 2016), 348.

<sup>18</sup> Mvuyekure, 270.

interviewees asked to learn in seminars about casting out demons, is to understand what they do, what is right or wrong in their activities, and what to do to be more and better engaged in prayer service for the demon-possessed.

The testimony of Bukuru, who was demon possessed and delivered, illustrates the prevalence and the impact of demon possession at Bumbiri Church. According to respondents, there are so many cases similar to the one of Bukuru. Some of the victims died because of it. Majority of them are female.

At the beginning, her father who was a church elder, lost faith after consulting mediums to require power for healing. He got as the condition to have sexual relation with her daughter Bukuru so that it could work. He might sleep with a child that was the most beloved and that one was Bukuru.

Bukuru said that her father got witchcrafts in Buha, Tanzania and that he went there to search for power to heal as he saw people of Buha doing. Her uncle, who was implicated also in that aspiration for mystic power, explained to Bukuru how he accompanied her father to search for those occult powers. Her father's friend brought her father and uncle at Buha. His name is John. Her father got a mystic power called "*igifaru*" which can be used both for good or bad purpose. It is believed that the "*igifaru*" can heal diseases, announce the future, harm, and even kill.

Bukuru affirmed that her demon possession happened since her father decided to commit adultery with her. Bukuru had decided to refuse the wrong demand of her father and to keep her virginity. One night, her father came in her room and aggressed her physically. He planned for that crime but the victim was not aware about it. When she slept, she listened to her father calling her.

Bukuru's father used to send hens and the spirit of dead humans came during the night and slept with her. When those demons touched her, they were so cold. She

fought against them but in vain until she felt too weak to resist against them. Finally, she became pregnant with a snake. Upon giving birth, she saw a snake, and fell down without forces, and absent of mind. After birth, wherever she goes, unseen hens whose voices were audible by all people followed her. When she changed places, the same demons came and people listened to their voices everywhere she went. After those voices, she found that they were the father's demons that were touching her legs saying that she was their wife.

Bad consequences of those demons attacks affected Bukuru physically, financially, socially, and spiritually. After the act, her father beat her and she decided to flee him. In addition, she became a victim of repetitive demons attacks. She said that all different parts of her body became sick one by one. The heart, stomach, lungs, kidneys, vagina, she fell down many times and lost her mind. She got an accident that damaged her spinal column. She could not sleep as usual. That "*igifaru*" came many times for stealing the money that Bukuru kept at home and it was brought to her father. All the times, she found in her sitting room materials that contained that money. She was amazed at how the "*igifaru*" identified where she kept her money.

In the family and the community, social relations were broken by the situation of that "*igifaru*". The first person she decided to abandon is her father. During the interviews, she said that she cannot hide any secret about her father's witchcraft because she was a victim of his abuse. She left the church for two years without serious reasons. She says that she could not support divine and biblical affairs. The "*igifaru*" which attacked Bukuru, also attacked another man and brought him in the house of the Bukuru's father many times. That man was a friend of her father and an SDA Church member. Their neighbors were afraid to stay near Bukuru because they thought her demons could attack them.

Since the 10<sup>th</sup> October 1984, the church members began to pray for her, her father was irritated, and began to persecute her by beating her and casting her aside in the family. She spent three years in prayer services at Bumbiri local church. She came back at home safely accompanied by church members to pray for the house. After some days, she decided to leave her home dedicated to demons and stayed with her mother in a place she bought in the village.

She affirmed that her uncle paid a big amount of money to witches and wizards to take away uncle's spirits so that the allegiance with the "*igifaru*" could be finished and release him and let him remain at his home. It was in the time of civil war in Burundi. Political rebels were against her because she could not serve them as other people for the reason of her health condition. They beat her almost to kill her. Her eyes were very damaged by them. For the same reasons, she left school at early age, and she did not get marriage.

Bukuru testified to have seen the importance of prayer sessions for the demon-possessed. She appreciated the assistance and care she got from the Church. She spent three years in groups of prayer before she became free from demons and recovered her mind. She came back to church and she is a church member until now. When the researcher asked Bukuru why she has the habitude of holding the Bible everywhere she goes, she said that it is because she remembers that her salvation and consolation came from the faith in Jesus and through the Bible.

She used to be anointed with olive oil, the medicine herbs "*ruheha*" and "*umusita*", and charcoal. She affirms that it is difficult to bring a witch and wizard to repentance because her father died under church discipline. Bukuru also observed very well and found that the brain and sex are the important parts of the human body that are the target of demonic attacks.



## **A Culture of Negative Solidarity**

The church elders told the researcher that some church members enter in vision during the moments of healing prayers for the demon-possessed, and as do diviners, reveal the future, identify witches among the community, and recognize hidden sins of church members. In Burundi culture, the word is for elders in case of issues of values. No one can give any confident information about weakness or success without consultations or authorization. If not, when you ask a question to know the matter of things, they respond you by the following other question “*ndabizi?*” which means “Am I supposed to know it?” or “Is it my duty to respond to that?”<sup>19</sup>

So, the majority of members of Bumbiri local church have in common families, ethnicity, jobs, and advantages that unite them so that it is hard for them to reveal certain aspects of their real spiritual life to a foreigner. The traditional elders “*abashingantahe*” are socially respected so that it becomes an issue to know and to denounce their unbiblical practices. The elected church elders find themselves in confrontation with traditional elders that are at the same time church members and leaders of groups of prayer for the demon-possessed.

Butoyi was the church elder among traditional elders. He said that what is happening in demon possession is a part of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. Many years before he became an Adventist, his parents and other members of his family practiced traditional worship in parallel with being Christians and Adventists. His father denied it in public and in the church where he accomplished different services in his local church. Finally, people accused his father of witchcraft

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<sup>19</sup> Hohensee, 24.

and killed him. Butoyi thought that he became possessed so that after suffering, all those secrets of Satan might be revealed. His grandparents and parents worshiped idols and did alliance with them for generations. He thought that formal prayers are the main sources of demon attacks at Bumbiri.

He affirmed that he was not supposed to be attacked by demons. He explained that he got sick because of sins and his father's traditions. He secretly kept the father's bad habits for a longtime while he was an SDA member. He believed that God left him in Satan's hands so that he may understand the consequences of his wrongdoings.

He said that demons had entered in him in large number and dominated him completely. He obeyed to them in everything. When demons tried to kill him, he escaped by prayers from the church. People advised his family to bring him to church elders for prayers. Church elders took him into groups of prayer they were conducting. They prayed for him for three days. The demons said how they dominated his life and he was amazed. But, that does not mean that we can believe in what demons say or discuss with them.<sup>20</sup>

Delivered from them, he decided to continue to work for God in prayer ministry. Today, he prays for the demon-possessed at Bumbiri. Sometimes, when he put his hand on sick people, before the prayers, demons can cry as a foolish person. He asks God to help him because of his physical weakness he does not have enough energy to hold sick people attacked by demons. This point can explain that physical forces are not an obligation in the work of praying for the demon-possessed.

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<sup>20</sup> White, *Selected Messages*, 3: 368.

So, in general, church members at Bumbiri affirmed that demon possession has an aspect of hidden cultural<sup>21</sup> and demonic activities that caused to them several problems. Some of them lost members of their families; they became sick, lost strength and their goods. They are divided in the church and their families because of rumors and fear of spirits. As the response, they created groups of prayer for sick people. And as the task of taking care of the demon-possessed looks new in the area, they asked more light and guidance that can come from seminars and church leadership.

### **Tribalism and Social Insecurity**

Tribalism is presented as one of spiritual nature of a social problems and a demonic stronghold that exposes people physically, socially, and spiritually in danger.<sup>22</sup> Because Burundi faced social conflicts and civil wars for many years, several citizens know how to operate military weapons and have a spirit of fighting. When someone is anger, he loses personal control for the profit of war. Tribalism that is evident in civil society has a certain influence on the church. And those conflicts often had religious dimensions.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, there are many refugees, poor and unhealthy people, widows, orphans, and unemployed in Burundi, a country whose economy is based on traditional agriculture and sheep folding.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Emile Mworoha, *Histoire du Burundi: Des Origines à la fin du XIXème Siècle* (Paris: Hatier International, 1987), 197.

<sup>22</sup> John D. Robb, "Strategic Prayer," in *Perspectives: On the world Christian Movement*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009), 165.

<sup>23</sup> Isichei, 324.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 346.

Mineral reserves are not yet more benefit to the population. That is the case for the resources such as nickel, gold, petrol, uranium, tin, cobalt, copper, platinum-group metals, columbium, tantalum, tungsten, chromium, and vanadium. The 6% of the world nickel reserve is in Burundi, at Musongati. Oil sips have been sighted on the Rusizi basin along the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo and several petroleum companies have already expressed their interest in the Burundian oil zones.<sup>25</sup>

Then, in time of peace, those who are accused to be sorcerers or witches doctors find themselves in danger. Very often, the demon-possessed reveals the witch who cursed him during the prayer sessions. It is socially known that people that frequently denounce these witches are members of groups of prayers and traditional diviners.

In brief, for the matter of tribalism and social insecurity, it seems that Christianity is not yet rooted in Burundian culture. The participants in seminars thought that missionaries did not succeed to integrate the Gospel in these people. Their evidence is based on the fact that the population is struggling against the consequences of Western colonialism and not ending period of the civil wars.<sup>26</sup> And for Burundians, it is difficult to separate traditional religious activities from political ones.<sup>27</sup> It is usually believed that religion goes bad when politics goes wrong. So, this social and religious context illustrates that there is a need of appropriate teaching for

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<sup>25</sup> Steven De Backer and Olivier Binyingo Mkono, *Mining and Upstream Petroleum Activities in Burundi: Sectors that are Attracting Interest*, Denton Wilde Sapte's Africa, accessed 17 October 2017, [www.mkono.com/pdf/Mining%20and%20upstream%20petroleum%20Burundi](http://www.mkono.com/pdf/Mining%20and%20upstream%20petroleum%20Burundi).

<sup>26</sup> Rollo May, *Love and Will* (NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 1969), 130.

<sup>27</sup> Hohensee, 19.

Bumbiri Church members, as well as in groups of prayer for the demon-possessed to respond to their challenges in a biblical contextualized method.

### **The Need for Theological Formation**

There is a need of theological formation among the SDA in Burundi so that they may respond effectively in number and knowledge to the requests of the people. Church members lament that the period allocated to a pastor in Burundi to dwell among them is too short. The average time a pastor works in a place is one or two years then he moves to another territory.

The informant Butoyi also said that some pastors and church members do not understand the work of casting out demons. He added that a person can get ill and that involves him or her to be one of the member's prayers. He said that those groups of prayer need official rooms in the church for those activities to pray for cursed and other forms of demonic attacks. White advises praying with persistence but did not recommend that sick people must be kept in lasting prayers for a long time.<sup>28</sup>

The interviewees observed that many times pastors have so many churches to serve and a few times allocated to them to cover the work. This problem of time and theological formation limits the effectiveness of the work of a pastor or a missionary. This seems to be difficult in an area like Buganda that demands process for some cultural changes to fight demon possession.<sup>29</sup> Pastors could get occasions to know the context of the new place, to identify the real needs of people, to design appropriate strategies, to plan their work, to define their objectives, to execute activities their planned, and to evaluate the result.

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<sup>28</sup> Ellen G. White, *Prayers* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2002), 232.

<sup>29</sup> Kraft, *Issues in Contextualization*, 126.

The interviewees indicated that the habit and practice of beating and touching confidential parts of the body during prayer sessions can be example of the reasons there is a need of proper theological instructions to face the problem of demon possession at Buganda. They are introduced in the Bumbiri Church members from prayer groups against demon possession of the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. Groups of prayer increased in number nearby the 1990s when Burundi was the most dangerous country in the world<sup>30</sup> because of civil war and prayed for peace and demonic deliverance.

The interviewee Nzoyihaya Charles, 35 years, said that when members of a prayer group touch sensitive parts of the body as chops, the patient can move. Then, they say that it is demons that move and they beat them with hands or books. If the patient moves, they say that it is demons that are moving. He confirmed that false teachers brought Pentecostal practices at Bumbiri Church. He noted that the problem of how to handle demon possession is delicate and complex at that point because more women are possessed and harassed by demons than the men.

A woman named Ntiyankana Ellen (58 years), when interviewed about the impact of activities done in prayer sessions said that the problem of demon possession is historic at Buganda. She explained that demons can enter in a person who lives many years with them. She confirmed what certain authors wrote about symptoms that the demon-possessed person can present.<sup>31</sup> She cited supernatural forces, anger, or fascination by occult practices.

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<sup>30</sup> Christian Aid, "*Where We Work*" Christian Aid in Burundi, accessed 24 August 2017. <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/whatwedo/africa/burundi.aspx>.

<sup>31</sup> Prince, 165.

She indicated that they can be attached to secret sins, dedicated objects to idols, or an organ of the human body. She affirmed that when they attack someone because of killing a person, sexual immorality, or ancestor's practices<sup>32</sup> that need to be kept by next generations, they can dwell in secret in an SDA family at Bumbiri.

She explained that it can depend on where or what demons are based on. She said “*aho vyarikiye*” Kirundi word that means “footholds and strongholds of demons.” She said that as they pray, they touch with hands inside and outside of the sex to chase demons from a woman or even a man.

The genuine interpretation of what White said does not give credit to the above practice of touching confident parts of the human body. The majority of participants in the seminars and interviews explained that by these activities of prayer groups are misunderstood for the same reasons as when the pastor of a Charismatic Church who was accused of molestation when he touched the sex organ of a woman by his finger or foot during prayer.<sup>33</sup>

### **Role and Importance of Prayer Groups**

Nzohabonimana Charles of 45 years old is one of the groups of people that pray for patients at Bumbiri. He said that there are many patients at Bumbiri. He indicated that as the Bible says in James 5, patients call for help and prayer. But the members of the prayer group could not get time to reach everyone at his home to pray for him. This is why every morning and every evening sick people come to the church for prayers. Even on the Sabbath morning, they come. Some people accompany

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<sup>32</sup> Kraft, *Issues in Contextualization*, 186.

<sup>33</sup> Julien Lynn, “Reporters Witness a Christian Pastor Molesting Women at Demon-Banishing Service,” *Friendly Atheist*, Christian Reporters, April, 2011, accessed 30 January 2018, <https://www.google.com.br/search?q=Julien+Lynn%2C+%E2%80%9CReporters+Witness+a+Christia>.

members of their family. The groups of prayer join in hospitals and homes those who cannot manage to walk.

Another interviewee, Nkurikiye, aged 54 years, has been demon possessed. She remembered how she suffered so that she understood the need for help of people who are demon possessed. She said that during that period of possession many neighbors Adventists left her alone and fled. They thought that demons could enter them from her. His husband brought her to an Evangelical church to ask prayers from their pastors. She said that before those prayers, they were listening to voices in their house, when they slept they felt things fall on the roof.

She said that Evangelicals protected her from going to see witches doctors. When she was delivered from demons, she asked her husband to create at home an altar for seeking the face of God. The local church members did not understand the importance of such prayers. Some of them did not believe that an Adventist can be attacked and even die because of demon possession.<sup>34</sup>

Nkurikiye mentioned the problem of authorization for such prayers. She said that the church elders did not permit them to continue their activities. They said to them that only the people qualified to pray for demon-possessed people are the church pastor, church elders, and deacons. But this is not true because the experience and the Bible show that every believer can pray for them (Matt. 10:8). Nkurikiye could ask permission and pray for those who ask her to avoid misunderstanding in her activities.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ewoo, 18.

<sup>35</sup> Ellen G. White, *Patriarch and Kings* (Nampa: Pacific Press, 2006), 638.



She added that many church members; including leaders do not understand the importance and the place of prayer groups in evangelism. She said that they fear that false teachings can enter through those groups, making them to lose the control over their activities. She affirmed that it is practical to pray for the demon-possessed in a restraint group of people.

Again, understanding the importance of prayer groups becomes more problematic because when Western missionaries came in Burundi they neglected the problem of traditional beliefs and demon manifestations.<sup>36</sup> Many Christians adopted the western way of thinking about the existence of demons or/and believe that demons attack only people that are not Christians.

However, there is a necessity to correct the way some prayer groups meet in adoration.<sup>37</sup> In July 2017, Buganda church elders were still anxious and complaining about some strange and long-held attitudes of some church members manifested in prayer sessions for the demon-possessed. These church members combine Christian manner of worship and African traditional beliefs. The Burundian historian Emile Mworoha indicated those traditions.<sup>38</sup> When the researcher went at the place, he found the healthy church members seated down on “*akarago*” a Pentecostal term referring to plait, while a leading woman was at the center, some of them shouting in stranger voices. The sick people were quiet. Before entering in the prayer session, the sick people were obliged to confess their sins to leaders of the prayer group. Then, members of the prayer group get visions about the nature and origin of their problems.

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<sup>36</sup> Isichei, 131.

<sup>37</sup> Sampson M. Nwaomah, Robert Osei-Bonsu, and Kelvin O. Onongha, ed. *Music and Worship in Africa* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 2014), 140.

<sup>38</sup> Mworoha, 197.

What amazed interviewers is that, they succeed in their divination and when members of those prayer groups intercede for the sick and demon-possessed people, they are healed. That form of syncretism<sup>39</sup> raises confusion among the church members. They do not understand from where that power of healing comes from. White<sup>40</sup> and the Bible warned against such misrepresentation of demons as angels of light (2 Cor 11:14).

On the one hand, they feel they cannot accept in bloc certain practices that are not biblical; on the other hand, they do not reject traditional practices that they consider, after they experience, as being helpful to them. Nevertheless, there are bad cultural acts like “*gutura intobo*” to commit adultery with ones’ daughter or daughter-in-law. The participants affirmed that generally demon possession occurred when church members remain attached to those traditions.

Other church members use to seek help and deliverance from pastors of other religious confessions, or even from witches. They did this because they feel there is none to teach them how to deal with demon possession in their context.

A man interviewed, Nyandwi, 51 years old, affirmed to get visions during prayer sessions. He got serious problems when he announced to another church member that he could die by an accident in December 2017. When Nyandwi was interrogated for investigations, he told his pastor that an emotion came to his heart and he felt pity about the misfortune that was to happen to the other one. So, he decided to inform to him what he thought to be God’s revelation.

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<sup>39</sup> Kelvin Onongha, “Discourse with Diviners: Discipleship Implications for Adventist Mission in Africa”, in *Culture, Adventist Theology, and Mission in Africa*, ed. Sampson M. Nwaomah, Eriks Galeniaks, and Davidson Razafiarivony (Nairobi, Kenya: The Theological Seminary of Adventist University of Africa, 2016), 395.

<sup>40</sup> Ellen G. White, *Last Day Events* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1992), 166.

The above cases of so-called visions are some of other many cases. Consequently, people killed their neighbors, and others fled from their churches and their homes for the reason of demon possession accusations. In February 2017, two men accused of witchcraft have been killed at Kivogero and another one at Ruseseka not far from the Bumbiri Church. Rumors said that the first two have cursed a woman that was an Adventist. The brother of that woman that is also a church member has been implicated in the massacre of those two men.

### **Summary**

In brief, the majority of interviewees as well as participants in seminars revealed their need for theological instructions for pastors or lays people. They indicated that the pastors with theological formation are limited in number. And sometimes, even these pastors did not learn lessons about demon possession. The consequences are the unbiblical beliefs and practices related to the task of casting out demons. This dishonors God and discourages some people who could benefit spiritually, socially, and physically from the church.

## CHAPTER 4

### SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

The previous chapter showed different problems faced by the church members of Bumbiri while they deal with demon possession. The researcher observed there five main problems related to some practices and cultural beliefs that are opposed to the Bible. He collaborated with them to get their biblical responses.

This forth chapter contains suggested solutions. It responds to the following questions: How can SDAs church members in Buganda District better respond to demon possession? How prevalent is demon possession among church members in Buganda district? How does demon possession impact church in Buganda district? And what can church members do to respond to demon possession?

Consequently, the following are three suggested solutions: (a) the theological studies, (b) the small groups' evangelical strategy (evangelical activities realized within small groups of individuals), and (c) the biblical contextualization. They are divided into two sub-titles: (1) the preparation of church members to respond to demon possession, and (2) the contextualization of the teachings of the Scriptures. They mostly consist to the replacement of wrong and cultural beliefs and practices by biblical beliefs with emphasis on the three encounters and the biblical discipleship.

## **Preparing SDA Church Members to Better Respond to Demon Possession**

### **Theological Education**

To the question about what do church members need to know to best respond to demon possession, Pastors Nziguheba Jerome and Barakamfitye Lameck answered that there is a need for theological teaching and pastoral care at Bumbiri Church to respond to different problems like demon possession. Theologians might use these theological instructions in biblical discipleship to prepare SDA Church members to better respond to demon possession.

Jesus set an example.<sup>1</sup> He associated with people, responded to their real needs, and then made them His disciples. Pastors might learn Christ's method of working.<sup>2</sup> The idea of discipleship requires a pastor to have enough time in the locality because he must learn the style of life of the people as he teaches them biblical principles in their context.

The participants in seminars and pastor Nziguheba, when asked about the biblical aspect of deeds in prayer sessions and their results, they answered that their careful observation showed that many kinds of demon possession ends badly. Previously, victims can practice divination and hearing for a certain period of time, and then they lay on the ground for many years before they die. They can lose reasoning completely. Their family member (i.e., the wife, the husband, or the children) can kill him when during visions, sorcerers or members of prayer groups reveal that the victim is the cause of demonic attacks. However, sometimes, when the victim acknowledges the pastor, he may feel comforted.

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Wommack Ministries, "Discipleship Versus Evangelism," accessed 31 October, 2018. [https://www.awmi.net/reading/teaching-articles/discipleship\\_evangelism/](https://www.awmi.net/reading/teaching-articles/discipleship_evangelism/).

<sup>2</sup> White, *Acts of the Apostles* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2006), 365.

During demon possession, the victim may lose all control to the spirits and /or become the medium for the spirits. But, the experience showed that some demon-possessed people may often still continue to respect their pastors mainly at the beginning of possession. They can cry, get some illness like headache and run away from their homes. When people are attacked they call demons “*Intezi z’abavyeyi*” which means “attacks of dead parents.” Interviewees affirmed that demon possession can come in an unexpected way to anyone. But a person can also invite or prepare to be demon possessed. Then, members of his family can alert the pastor at time. The researcher and interviewees observed that many times demons, for the above preparation, claim goods that are familiar to people at the time such as umbrellas, clothes, food, and shoes. They also frequently demand ritual songs, traditional dances, eating meat, drinking beer, human and animal sacrifices, immoral practices, or smoking tobacco. This is similar to what the book (Chapter 3) said about demon possession among the Akamba people.

So, there is a need of training church members during a period of time as did King David to his son Solomon before he died (1 Chron 22:5). Nehemiah took time for the investigation of the areas at Jerusalem before he started building (Neh 2:12-15). Paul himself spent three years with believers to mingle with them so that he would no longer need a recommendation in the future (Acts 20:31, 2 Cor 5:12).

God is the source of the true knowledge (Deut 33:3). While the Israelites were in apostasy, the prophet Samuel found the solution in the school of the sons of the prophets (2 Kgs 2:3-7). Jeremiah also advocated that God provides knowledge and understanding of shepherds (Jer 3:15).

Jesus presented his disciples as the light and salt of the world (Matt 5:13-14); he illustrated this by a blind man that leads others blind (Matt 15:14). Then, he taught

the twelve among them for evangelism (Mark 3:14-15). Jews were learning till to higher levels (Luke 2:46). Paul learned from Gamaliel and taught Timothy (Acts 22:3, 2 Tim 3:10).

As pointed out the interviewees, most of those demon possessed people are weak in their knowledge of the Bible. Their faith is not enough based on Scriptures. White tells us that to be strong against the evil, we need to study the Bible.<sup>3</sup> For the accomplishment of that some church members associated themselves within small lay organizations and said that they can contribute monthly for scholarship funds to support pastors who want to study.

This is because the lack of money has often been the excuse of going to school to increase the number of educated pastors. There are also some church members who proposed that such a scholarship can be among the subjects in the annual budget of the church. Church members think that it can be a request to Church leaders to consider the feasibility of plans adopted in local churches as they move a worker for another place. Others proposed that seminars and basic theological teachings can be offered to church members so that they can assist the pastors more effectively.

So, traditional practices can change as people receive biblical teachings from their pastors who share with them their everyday life during enough time. If not, when a pastor is replaced earlier, the newcomer often finds himself with the obligation of starting instead of continuing from what did his predecessor. Those activities can become simpler when church members are trained and follow biblical guidance about demon possession.

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<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *Christian Education* (WA: Review and Herald, 1913), 107.

## **Small Group Strategy**

The church members interviewed suggested working in small groups at Bumbiri while they experience how to deal with demon possession. One of things that helped church members, according to those interviewed, is the seminars the researcher conducted in November and December 2017. For the success of the small group strategy in evangelism at Bumbiri, they got an occasion to exchange and get biblical answers to their different problems and expressed their appreciation for knowing more about how to deal with demon possession. Those seminars should be reproduced all over the country to equip church members for a better attitude and right acts about casting out demons.

Bukuru, who was demon possessed and delivered, proposed that prayer groups could work in a balanced way, without exaggeration, but in submission to church and Bible authority. She added that faith is the way for healing, and that Church leaders could identify wrong practices in prayers, and what are right. She gave an example for those who when they pray may tempt to touch all organs of patients. She affirmed that that is neither decent nor biblical. She said that where someone cannot touch, he may ask Jesus to touch there. For those who are fighting against those bad habits of prayer groups she said that they may do it in a good way without hurting members of prayer groups. She said: “they are God’s people, so we have to keep them faithfully for his glory.”

She indicated that there is a danger and temptation of self-esteem, and self-glorification for those who pray for sick people. She explained it saying that there are some members of prayer group who are considered as idols by sick people. When they are not present in the prayer sessions, the majority of sick people decide to return at home without services.



Such her family background in occult and negative prenatal or childhood influences of unfaithful parent may be weaknesses through which demons gain access to human personalities.<sup>4</sup> The interviewee Nkurikiye revealed the hidden danger of witchcraft among old people and youth at Bumbiri. She affirmed: “Among witches, some are in the church.” The youth go to them to search for prosperity, security, and fortune. She affirmed that even small Adventist children of 14 years go there to search for success in school examinations, jobs, and winning the love of a girl or boy for adultery or marriage. So, she explained that it is in small groups that such kind of secret and problems can be easily revealed.

The small group evangelical strategy facilitates and supports the discipleship because it seems that both are impossible where there is no solid relationship.<sup>5</sup> Adam and Eve represented the first small group of the humanity (Gen 1:27). Noah built the ark and fled in with a small group of people (Gen 6:18). Abram is called with his family as a group of people (Gen 12:1-5). Other biblical patriarchs like Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, were selected from family or small groups (Exod 2:1-5, 1 Sam 16:3-13). Elijah, Elisha, and Gehazi often- worked as a small group (2 Kgs 2:1-7, 5:27). Jesus used to work with his disciples in groups like of two, three, twelve, seventy (Mat 11:2, Luke 9:1-6). First Christians met in houses for prayers and other church activities as small groups (Acts 2:1-4, 1 Cor 16:19).

In the 1980s, Christian churches in Burundi faced problems with civil authority. There was only one political party, but they were accused of supporting the opposition. During that period, the SDA Church in Burundi faced serious challenges

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<sup>4</sup> Prince, 103.

<sup>5</sup> Thom Rainer, “*Small Group Evangelical Strategy*,” accessed 12 April 2018, <https://thomrainer.com/.../10-ways-make-small-group-evangelistic/>.

so that the government suspended its activities for three years and six months (February 1984 to October 1987). Then, some church members left the Church and joined small groups that became new congregations.

By reductionism, today church members think that small groups of prayers for the demon-possessed can open the door to false teachings or be a beginning of new churches as it happened in the past. So, the leaders of groups of prayers demanded the participation in prayer sessions of the elected church elders or pastors. The interviewees suggested that church members can elect members and leaders of groups of prayer and that they may receive biblical instructions about casting out demons in seminars.

### **Contextualization of Biblical Teachings**

Biblical contextualization is a missionary strategy concerned with finding appropriate means and methods of presenting the principles of the never-changing Word of God in the context of an ever-changing world in such a way that these principles are correctly understood by each context. As such, contextualization is not a one-time event but an ongoing process.<sup>6</sup>

The contextualization of biblical texts is the main solution suggested. It is oriented to three important points that the researcher, participants in the seminars and interviews adopted. It is about the identification of the wrong traditional beliefs and practices, the fighting of the cultural principle of negative solidarity, and the selection of some traditional beliefs and practices that are rejected because they are contrary to the Bible, when others can be adapted to biblical teachings.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Sanou, "New Testament Precedents to the Practices of Contextualization in Contemporary Mission," 7.

<sup>7</sup> Vincent Roger Same, "Contextualization without Syncretism: Adventist Mission Challenge in Africa", in *Culture, Adventist Theology, and Mission in Africa*, ed. Sampson M. Nwaomah, Eriks Galeniaks, and Davidson Razafiarivony, (Nairobi, Kenya: The Theological Seminary of Adventist University of Africa, 2016), 370.

## Identification of Wrong Traditional Beliefs and Practices

As noted in the interviews, traditional beliefs and cultural forms of worshipping affect most of those demon-possessed people. The main important issue that identified most of the participants in this study is the attachment of demon possession to traditional beliefs.<sup>8</sup> People found themselves in a confusion of syncretism that combines Christianity and animism because many of their beliefs are not in line with biblical teachings.<sup>9</sup>

This is similar to what Oskar Skarsaune and Tormod Engelsviken wrote in their article entitled “Possession and exorcism in the history of the church” about animism and demon possession. They said that in the modern experience of the church, demon possession appear as normal. They added that exorcism took place primarily in paganism as it is today in animistic paganism. By comparison with 17 centuries, they said that demon possessions at present are rare in Christendom.<sup>10</sup>

They affirmed that demon possession in the first time of Christianity started not as the problem of disease, but as the problem of idolatry or pagan worship. They explained that when people seek to contact the spiritual world in non-biblical cults, there is a danger of them being occupied by demons.<sup>11</sup>

White advised that the believers should go before God with the Bible, and plead with him for an understanding of his Word, and know the real principles of the

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<sup>8</sup> Turaki, 164.

<sup>9</sup> Kraft, *Issues in Contextualization*, 99.

<sup>10</sup> Oskar Skarsaune and Tormod Engelsviken, “Possession and exorcism in the history of the church,” 2002, 85.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

truth; and then when they meet opponents, they will not have to meet them in their own strength. The angel of God will stand right by their side, and give them success.<sup>12</sup>

Cain brought an offering that God did not command (Gen 4:3-4, Lev 2:1-11). God is jealous of his allegiance and worship (Exod 20:1-6, Deut 4:35). Jews could not cut flesh as pagans (Lev 19:28). Joshua and Elijah condemned syncretism when they addressed people (Jos 24:14-15, 1Kgs 18:21-27). God's people are at risk of dwelling in communities that teach them to worship other gods (2Kgs 17:26-27). Faithfulness is required for worshiping (2Chron 19:9).

The participants in seminars agreed on the need of seminars about praying for the demon-possessed. This will correct some errors advocated above and condemn false teachings. Among those traditions mentioned are beating patients during prayers, touching on parts that are sensitive like on sex, dancing with bad ancestral drums, entering in visions and divination. Some members of prayer group ask biblical guidance so that they can change and conform to the Bible.

### **Appropriation of Biblical Teachings**

There is a deadly form of syncretism in some SDA Churches.<sup>13</sup> New generations of believers secretly tend to imitate their parents in wrong traditions and practices. The story of Ananias and Sapphires shows the danger of hiding sin in God's business<sup>14</sup> (Acts 5:1-11). In the Old Testament, the sins of Achan and Gahazi illustrate well the matter of hiding sin as a member of a certain community (Jos 7:11-

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<sup>12</sup> White, *Gospel Workers* (Nampa: Pacific Press, 1992), 386.

<sup>13</sup> Eriks Galenieks, "When the King Himself Goes to a Witch: The Deadly Dangers of Syncretism," in *Culture, Adventist Theology, and Mission in Africa*, ed. Sampson M. Nwaomah, Eriks Galenieks, and Davidson Razafiarivony (Nairobi, Kenya: The Theological Seminary of Adventist University of Africa, 2016), 370.

<sup>14</sup> White, "A Warning against Hypocrisy," Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1911.

12, 2Kgs 5:21-25). Members of the community generally invite to share traditions (Prov 1:10-15, 1Cor 15:33). But the Bible is clear on that point because everyone is responsible for his actions (Ezek 18:19-20). This kind of distinction of sacred things and secular ones in the everyday activities of the community can glorify God (Phil 2:3). And the confession is one evidence of true conversion and readiness if not a condition for salvation (Jas 5:16).

To those who always try to hide bad traditional practices, the participants demanded the use of the box of suggestions in rooms of prayer. Then, the one who reveals the information can remain anonymous. There are also some church members that choose to discuss confidently with the pastors or church elders. A church leader can offer a moment when he can listen in privacy to church members who want to present to him their demands. In a meeting or a theological conference, church pastors may discuss with church members about the rejection of some traditional beliefs and the adoption or adaption of others. A council of theologians and missiologists are expected to evaluate and confirm the decision the local church members.

### **Summary**

In conclusion, the chapter four presented different solutions suggested in responding to the challenge and impact of demon possession in Buganda District: (a) the theological education, (b) the small group evangelical strategy that promotes the discipleship, (c) and the biblical contextualization. They are the fruit of the collaboration that characterized the researcher and the participants in interviews and seminars. These people responded willingly and with openness to questions about how to effectively deal with demon possession at Bumbiri Church. Then, they proposed biblical solutions to the challenges that are against the profound transformation of the population by the Gospel. Wrong traditional beliefs are

considered as the main cause of demon attacks and demon possession. Some church members decided to make some immediate resolutions and changes.

The seminars ended with a list of common approvals to keep right habits and abandon wrong ones: (a) church members might maintain as habit to first consult modern educated health specialists in case of symptoms of demon possession, (b) continue to pray for the demon-possessed, (c) and evangelize through the prayers for sick people and the demon-possessed. (d) They convened never ritualize the service of prayer as in exorcism because traditional beliefs and practices take place there on “akarago” Kirundi used word which means “to sit down, to confess to someone and then to gate God’s responses and visions,” (e) neither to claim to have bad and dangerous visions concerning other people because participants in the seminars and interviews remarked that conflicts and divisions may arise from such visions.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Summary**

This work tried to respond to the challenge and impact of demon possession at Bumbiri local church. It has portrayed the situation of demon possession in that Church. It also presented how the Bible reveals reality, existence, and activities of demons. It showed that different authors mainly, evangelicals indicated various ways of responding to demon attacks and that even if the majority of Burundians are Christians, demonic activities like demon possession are frequently observable in many areas of the country.

The project contains five chapters. Chapter one includes the background of the problem, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, a brief description of the literature and research related to the problem, the explanation of terms, the delimitation, and the methodology.

Chapter two presents the theoretical foundation for responding to the demon possession problem. It has four parts. Firstly, it is the biblical foundations of fighting Satan and his demons as a cosmic controversy. The cases of demon possession are found mainly in the New Testament; the Gospels and Acts when the Old Testament has generally and comparatively few of such events.

Secondly, come the counsels of Ellen G. White on dealing with demon-possession and other demonic activities. She recognized their existence and proposed fervent prayers presented with faith in the name of Christ by sanctified people.

Thirdly, the same chapter two indicates the understanding, position, and approaches of some Adventists authors concerning demon possession. In comparison with other evangelicals, they seem to be more reticent to believe in every kind of demonstration of supernatural powers. This is because of the eventual disguises of demons in angels of light and cautious to be fanatic or victim of sensations according to the warning of the Bible and Ellen G. White, and the western worldview where the SDA Church has its primary roots.

Fourthly, it informs about views and practices of non-Adventist authors in case of demon possession. The evangelicals authors including Adventists showed the problem of the excluded middle by the comparison of the western and the African worldviews and denounced the danger of the expended middle which is observable among Pentecostals and Charismatics, and then promoted the calmly and balanced way of dealing with demons taking the example of Christ.

Chapter three describes the setting of the Bumbiri community where the research took place. It illustrates the challenges and impact of demon possession at Buganda that can be the same in various places and communities in Burundi as well as in other African Christian countries. Even if that country has various minerals and petrol, it is characterized by poverty and permanent civil conflicts that often end in wars since the independence period.

The participants in seminars and 15 interviewees presented five challenges that they considered as the strongholds of demons at Bumbiri Church to be the traditional beliefs and practices, the negative solidarity of people in hiding unbiblical teachings, the tribalism and social insecurity, the need of theological instructions, and the misunderstanding of prayer ministry through prayer groups. They also denounced



the form of syncretism that still complicates the expected effective transformation of people by the Gospel where Christianity entered the century ago.

One of the most challenging barriers the prayer groups had were the visions of their members that divided church members and the community when delicate information about why and who caused misfortune to victims of demon possession. The other important obstacle of groups of prayer is their vulnerability to non-Adventist teachings and practices that mainly can come from cultural beliefs, or the Pentecostals and Charismatics, and the wrong interpretation of the Scriptures (2 Pet 3:15-17).

Chapter four is a biblical foundation and detailed proposal of solutions to the problems. The researcher worked with the participants in the interview, and recommendations from seminars and prayer sessions to reach the suggested solutions. They assumed that those solutions are based the Bible and writings of Ellen G. White for the better responses to demon possession.

Firstly, among answers came the theological education to equip and increase pastors in number. Secondly, there is the use of the small group evangelical strategy to let members benefit the knowledge and experience discipleship. Thirdly, the contextualization of biblical texts that is oriented to two important points that the researcher and participants adopted. It is about the identification of the wrong traditional beliefs and practices, the fighting of the cultural principle of negative solidarity, and the replacement of them by biblical teachings.

Then, in the light of Scriptures and from suggestions of participants for the responses to demon possession in their context, the researcher found that what they said is mostly similar to what wrote various authors about the subject. They said that the problem of demon possession is for them an opportunity to search God. To be able

to resist and fight victoriously, they could remain faithful in God's truth in the unity of the Spirit waiting for the second coming of Christ, which is the final and eternal deliverance. Those solutions demand a work done in harmony in which all believers might be involved in unity, integrity, contentment to avoid kinds of divisions and human weaknesses. This is why after seminars, participants agreed to consult first modern educated health specialists, to pray, and to reject "*akarago*" and its phenomenal "visions". Chapter five contains the summary of the project, the conclusions, and recommendations.

### **Conclusion**

The researcher read about and observed Catholics using exorcism, Pentecostals touching and crying during prayer to cast out demons, and Charismatics demonstrating mystic powers in beating, touching, blowing on patients to get healing and deliverance from spirits. The researcher also witnessed how that Evangelicals used a more balanced and biblical manner in their way of casting out demons.

The researcher remarked that Evangelicals assume to reclaim calmly biblical promises by addressing fervent prayers, and invoking God's power in the name of Jesus. Their preoccupation concerning the identification of which kind of illness (demon possession or natural sickness) is among good and important elements to maintain in the task of casting out demons. They do not exhibit objects, names, any words or people. In addition to that, Adventists should be more cautious about demon possession for reasons we advocated above. Then, if it is possible, the North-West Burundi Mission might select among pastors or lay members, those who are in charge of biblical teaching on the prayer ministry to avoid certain failures.

As the researcher thought of this work, he realized by comparison that the darkness of mystical powers, ignorance, poverty, and unhealthy (the people that were

victims of demon possession lost considerable their primary health) detained Burundians in social, spiritual, intellectual suffering for many centuries. Similarly, syncretism of wrong traditional beliefs in Adventism, willingly or unconsciously, seem to be today, tool the Evil is using to tempt to maintain people of Buganda like other Burundians under his slavery.

Bumbiri is one of many other local churches in Burundi struggling with the problem of demon possession. Different approaches can be proposed. There are some people who design specific models to follow in deliverance. The researcher thinks that those kinds of models lead to exorcism. Again some people dare to call others for deliverance in exchange for money or other material gifts. The world SDA Church does not give credit to such conduct in the prayer ministry. In some local churches or even other hierarchies of the church like in missions, there is not representative of that ministry. So, church members find themselves in need of leadership at that point.

The remedy is as it is advocated above in the proclamation of the Gospel. Through this study, the researcher became conscientious that the way the Gospel is presented can be helpful or not for the problem of demon possession in Africa. It means that the emphasis could be on Jesus in his love, the healthy, the pardon, the repentance, the prayer, but not on the identification, the accusation, or the condemnation of witches. Hire, the researcher reminds that some of them do not know how they became witches. They never choose to be witches. This kind of conduct promotes repentance, security, and prevents people from persecution and judiciary procedures in cases of incidents or crimes that could happen.

The Gospel should be presented in the aspect of the three encounters (power encounter, truth encounter, and allegiance encounter). They might be taken together in dealing with demon possession. At that point, the power encounter concerns the

human freedom from sin or demonic power. The truth encounter is about the biblical knowledge of the truth so that people may understand what they are supposed to do and avoid falling in mistakes like extremes as to expect demons everywhere or to overestimate the importance of casting out demons. The allegiance encounter seems to be the purpose of the two other encounters, and indicates the relationship with Jesus who often used the prayer, the commands, and the Scripture to fight the enemy. This requires enough time of discipleship. So, that relationship with God may keep people in security for eternity.

### **Recommendations**

The participants in this study realized the interest of it. Then, they proposed the repetition of the above seminars on dealing with demon possession in other parts of the country. When approved, a copy of this work will be available at the North-West Burundi Mission as a contribution for the service of casting out demons. Burundians could publish in the future other books in Kirundi language about demon possession.

There is a need for the collaboration of missiologists and theologians in the elaboration of evangelical plans because of the people's worldviews that vary in the majority people of Burundi, Africa, and the West. The spiritual world could not remain ignored in Western countries because that affects their manner of dealing with demon possession and their understanding of ways of the contextualization of the Gospel in African communities.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### LETTERS

#### LETTER FOR REQUESTING PERMISSION

15<sup>th</sup> October, 2017

Mr. RWASA Therence

RE: Permission to conduct Research Study

Dear Pastor President of the North-West Burundi Mission,

I would like to request permission to conduct a research study at Bumbiri Adventist Church.

I currently study MA Missiology at Adventist University of Africa (AUA). This Research is for the accomplishment of the academic requirements. The topic of my project is "Responding to the Challenge and Impact of Demon Possession in Buganda District, North-West Burundi Mission".


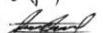
The data of this study will remain absolutely confidential. I will conduct seminars on how to deal with demon possession for the profit of church members. The summary of the seminars' lessons and the Interviews' questions are attached on this letter. The timeline of the study will be in consent with the participants.

Sincerely,

RWASA Therence

**For Endorsement:**

Church Elders of Bumbiri Adventist Church

NIRERA James   
HABIYARE MUG Justin 

Pastor of Buganda District



## LETTER FOR PERMISSION

Blank area for writing the letter for permission.

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

#### **Interview Questionnaire in Kurundi Language**

#### **TUBASABA GUTANGA INYISHU KURI IBI BIBAZO BIKURIKIRA**

1. Mbega impwemu mbi hari abo zobazifata mu ntara mvugabutumwa ya Buganda? Hari aho mukunze kubona canke mukumva havugwa abantu basinzikajwe n'impwemu mbi hano i Buganda?
2. None impwemu mbi zoba ziteje ikibazo na hano kuri iri shengero ryanyu? Mbega abizera bibamerera gute iyo umuntu wo mw'ishengero afashwe n'impwemu mbi?
3. Kuciyumviro canyu ni abahe bantu bakunze gufatwa n'abadayimoni? Ni izihe mvo zituma abo badayimoni bibandakuri abo bantu?
4. None abizera bakora iki iyo habonetse umwizera yatewe n'abadayimoni?
5. Ni uruhe rutonde rw'ibintu abizera bakorera umuntu yatewe n'impwemu mbi?
6. Mwasanze urwo rutonde rw'ivyo bintu rubereye kandi abantu barakira?
7. None ivyo bigize urwo rutonde bijanye n'inyigisho ya Bibliya?
8. Mu ciyumviro canyu, abizera bakeneye kumenya iki kugirango barushirizeho guhangana n'ico kibazo c'abadayimoni batera abantu?
9. Mu ciyumviro canyu, nigute abizera b'Abadventiste b'Umusi w'Indwi bokwifata mu guhangana n'impwemu mbi mu gihe ziteye abantu bamwe bomori ryo?



10. Ni igiki abizera bakeneye kwiga kugirango barushirize guhangana n'impwemu mbi mu buryo bubereye mu gihe izo mpwemu ziba zateye umuntu?

### **Interview Questionnaire Translation**

1. How prevalent is demon possession among church members in Buganda district? How often do you witness or hear about church members being demon possessed in Buganda district?
2. How does demon possession impact your church? What are the effects on church members when someone in church becomes demon possessed?
3. In your opinion, what kinds of people are more prone to demon possession? What practices open people up or make them more prone to demon possession? Why do you say so? Please explain.
4. What do church members do when a church member gets demon possessed?
5. What procedure or procedures do church members follow to deal with demon possession?
6. Is the procedure effective or successful?
7. Is the procedure in line with the Bible (or with biblical teachings)?
8. In your opinion, what do church members need to know to better respond to demon possession?
9. In your opinion, how should SDA Church members respond or react when there is demon possession in their midst?
10. What do they need to learn to better respond to demon possession?

APPENDIX C  
INFORMED CONSENT

**Gushima n’igisabo:**

Ndabaramukije Amahoro y’Imana.

Nifuza kubasaba kumfasha dusome kandi dusoze ivyigwa ku gusengera abagwayi kw’ishengero ry’Abadventiste rya Bumbiri. Muraziko ndiko nkurikirana inyigisho kuri Adventist University of Africa (AUA). Kwandika ikigitabo kiri muvuyo badusaba gukora. Umutwe wa kino gitabo ni “Responding to the Challenge and Impact of Demon Possession in Buganda District, North-West Burundi Mission.” Ndiko nyobora za seminaries kugusengera abagwaye impwemu mbi kuneza y’abizera n’icubahiro c’Imana. Igihe cose bizoba bishoboka nta majambo tuvugana nzokwararaza. Ndashima rero ukuntu twakoranye kandi ndanabamenyesha ko nkikeneye inyunganizi yanyu. Biramutse bikenewe twozobisaba tukanahana amasango y’ibihe vyoguhana inama muri ikigikorwa. Murakoze.

**Inyishu y’abaterera ivyiyumviro:**

Naramenyeshajwe ko kwunganira mw’iyandikwa kw’iki gitabo ari igikorwa umuntu akora kubushake adasaba agahembo. Nico gituma bibaye bishoboka amazina yanje hamwe n’ivyo maze kwumva mwacanditsewo vyose vyoguma muri ico gitabo bigashikirizwa ishuri utagize akigoro ko kugira ivyo uhinduramwo. Murakoze.

## TRANSLATION (ENGLISH)

### **Presentation and demand of the researcher:**
















I would like to ask you to participate in my research study at Bumbiri Adventist Church. I currently study MA Missiology at Adventist University of Africa (AUA). This Research is for the accomplishment of the academic requirements. The topic of my project is “Responding to the Challenge and Impact of Demon Possession in Buganda District, North-West Burundi Mission.”

I conduct seminars and interviews on how to deal with demon possession for the profit of church members. I will maintain confidentiality as well as possible. The timeline of the study is in consent with the participants.

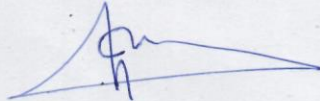
### **Response of informants:**

I have been informed that my participation in this study is voluntary and free. I give consent for the disclosure of my personal and identifying information, as well as details of my story.

List of Interviewees and their signed Consent Information

Name	Age	Marital Status	Year in SDA Church	Experience	Signature
1. Barakamfitye Lameck	64	Married	46	Pastor	
2. Nziguheba Jerome	52	Married	SDA since childhood	Pastor	
3. Nzobonimpa Martin	70	Married	40	Church Elder	
4. Shirambere Martin	57	Married	SDA since childhood	Church Elder	
5. Ntigurirwa Onesime	36	Married	SDA since childhood	Church Elder	
6. Nzoyihaya Charles	35	Married	15	Church Elder	
7. Ruzocimana Edine	38	Married	12	Prayer Group Member	
8. Ndikumana Zelda	42	Married	16	Prayer Group Member	
9. Barikunahasi Berthe	63	Married	10	Prayer Group Member	
10. Ntihabose Adele	52	Married	14	Prayer Group Member	
11. Ntiyankana Ellen	58	Married	16	Prayer Group Member	
12. Nkurikiye (Pseudonym)	54	Married	10	Member	
13. Nyandwi (Pseudonym)	51	Married	8	Member	
14. Butoyi (Pseudonym)	55	Married	SDA since childhood	Church elder	
15. Bukuru (Pseudonym)	48	Single	SDA since childhood	SDA since childhood	

Researcher: RWASA Therence



31<sup>th</sup> October, 2018

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## VITAE

Name: Therence Rwasa

Place of birth: Nyagaseke, Mabayi, Burundi.

### **Academics:**

2000 Bachelor of Theology -

### **Experience:**

2000-2001 Church Pastor at Kivoga, North-West Burundi Mission.

2001-2002 District Leader at Matana, North-West Burundi Mission.

2009-2010 District Leader at Bubanza, North-West Burundi Mission.

2011-2015 Youth Director, North-West Burundi Mission.

2016-2018 District Leader at Muhungu, North-West Burundi Mission.