

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF DEMONS AND ITS
IMPLICATIONS FOR CHURCH GROWTH IN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Demonism is being discussed in theological colleges only in most general way. There is much vagueness and error in most pulpit when Satan and demons are mentioned, because many theological colleges have never given their student sound teaching on how to deal with demons. The ultimate intent of this study therefore, is to examine the implications of Christian doctrine of demons for church growth in Africa.

The aim of the study is to let the theological colleges and churches see the need for Christian doctrine of demons so as to furnish ministers of the Gospel and church members sound knowledge of demonism and to promote church growth.

Consequently, the paper is purely library research work with the use of relevant books, journals and periodicals on Demonology, church growth and others related to the paper.

The writer believes that Demonology should be discussed as part of systematic theology but should also be a separate course that equip with both understanding of doctrine of demons in depth with practical exposure for every student of Bible colleges and seminaries. Any Christian theology or doctrine that do not take demonism serious and present a way out becomes irrelevant to the situation of African church that accepts the reality of demons and their activities.

CONCLUSION

Christian doctrine of demons has implications for church growth in Africa. The teaching is an important and necessary tool for the growth of African churches because; (1) It accepts reality of demons and their activities which is a recognizable problem in Africa, and to the Christian churches in Africa. This makes the doctrine relevant to the African context; (2) It accepts the holistic salvation in Jesus and also calls for total submission to Christ, not only deliverance from demons but also freedom from sin and its consequences, realizing the fact that where sin thrives, death is king, evil is established and demons can thrive. Therefore the teaching promotes holiness and Christian maturity; (3) It shows the Lordship of Jesus Christ over the power of darkness and accepts the total adequacy of the vicarious death of Jesus Christ on the cross in dealing with the problems of Satan and demons; (4) A sound doctrine of demons accepts the fact that deliverance does not provide an easy way out of all the problems of life. Some people deal with demons when the problem is not a demon problem. Most people wants an easy way out, an instant cure and an instant answer. Crucifying the flesh may be more difficult to do, but most often than not, that is the real answer, not casting out of demons; (5) It recognizes the power of the Holy Spirit at work in the believer and the believer's authority to cast out demons. No Christian can successfully deal with Satan and his cohorts without the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit knows all things. He will lead us into all truth and show us how to minister to persons and; (6) It accepts power evangelism. It shows how to deal with people who are under

the grip of powers of darkness in frontier mission, by breaking the strongholds over tribes, cities and nations to prepare the way for evangelization and conserve the fruit of evangelization.

Since belief in the spirit world is a part of African World view demonism is a serious problem facing Africa and sound biblical teaching on demonism will correct wrong conception, ignorance and bring solution. This essay therefore, suggest a study of the Christian doctrine of demons to Christian leaders, churches and Bible colleges and seminaries in African with the following recommendations: Demonology should be discussed as part of systematic theology but should also be a separate course that equip with both understanding of doctrine of demons in depth with practical exposure for every student of Bible colleges and seminaries. This should not be mere academic exercise but a way of producing effective ministers who understand the art of spiritual warfare and are able to lead the captives of the evil one out of their bondages. Seminaries and Bible colleges should see it as a responsibility to make every student in theological school have sound understanding of demonology. This knowledge will aid them to face challenges of demonism in churches and mission fields; they will be able to deal with this problem without fear. They will realize the authority that Christ has given his church over the power of Satan and demons.

When there is a negative attitude to this Bible doctrine and lack of sound doctrinal teaching people may turn to the false supernatural and mysterious. These may account for the increase in demon activities and resurgence of devil worship and occultism around the world in this age. It is vital that believers know what their redemption in Christ entitle them to. We

cannot openly confront demonic power that seem to have come out into open that seem to have captured our society amidst of gospel light, unless we are fully convinced of the authority that is ours because of Christ's victory on the cross over all the powers of the enemy. Therefore, church leaders, ministers of the gospel must see that Christian churches are well grounded in Christian doctrines of demons so as to learn the spirit world and not be ignorant of Satan's schemes. This is the way we can have confidence in our authority over the enemy.

In conclusion Christian doctrine of demons has implications for church growth in Africans. At no time in the history of the modern world has there been such an outpouring of Satanic influence as there is today. The bottom pit of hell is bleaching out its filth in murder, arson, armed robbery, rape, pornography, lawlessness, assassination, human trafficking and ritual killing. To be ignorant of the fact that we are fighting a spiritual war daily is to be the victim of the devil. To be ignorant of the devices of the enemy is to be easily susceptible to defeat. We must realize that we are at war. We must know our enemies, their strengths and limitations, their weaknesses and how to overcome them. Furthermore, any Christian theology or doctrine that do not take demonism serious and present a way out becomes irrelevant to the situation of African church that accepts the reality of demons and their activities.