

A Pagan
Witches
TouchStone

Witchcraft and Witch hunts
in South Africa

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Foreword by Dr. Dale Wallace

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FOREWORD

By Dr. Dale Wallace

A *Pagan Witches TouchStone* is an important publication for a number of reasons. Certainly one of the most important is that for the first time, self-defining Pagan Witches bring into open debate their own perspectives and experiences that result from the negative consequences brought about by the dominant construction of the 'witch' as a practitioner of evil. These constructions mostly emerge in African religious traditions wherein witchcraft is understood as an explanatory cause behind personal and community misfortune, illness, and untimely death; and within many Christian traditions that have historically associated the practice of magic, occult traditions, and alternative conceptions of the divine, with a form of diabolic heresy. In this worldview, a person who engages in some, or all, of these practices, can be labeled 'a witch.'

These two worldviews have vastly different religious and cultural histories. Within each, there is likewise a plethora of different opinions, explanations and definitions associated with the witch and witchcraft. The authors of *TouchStone* could open themselves to the criticism that they do not fully distinguish between the many differences that are inherent in, and between, African and Christian ideas of witchcraft, and also the ways in which their own history, contemporary beliefs and magical practices, participate in similarities and differences with both the aforementioned. The value and relevance of this publication, however, outweighs any such criticism, and lies deeper than the examples cited in the publication. Every month in South Africa, citizens die as a result of being accused of practicing witchcraft, or are driven into ostracized communities where a mere modicum of basic needs are met. Such persons are deprived of their dignity, their human rights, and the opportunity to be full citizens in South African society. Of equal importance, religious prejudice has, throughout history, fuelled intolerance, compromised the human right to freedom of religious belief and practice, manifested in discrimination in the home, the workplace and in wider society. To this day, religious prejudice often leads to bloodshed and the loss of human life.

Under the new Constitution, and in the vision of the society we, as citizens of South Africa, hope to forge, there is indeed little place for the uninformed labeling of 'evil' that is often conferred on alternative religious beliefs and practices by those who claim the right to define what constitutes religion through a single, exclusive lens. Equally, there is little place in a democracy governed by a Bill of Rights, for any form of legislation that discriminates on the grounds of belief or practice. There are essentially two types of anti-witchcraft legislation in place across post-colonial Africa; one renders the accusation of witchcraft an offence, while the other criminalizes the practice of witchcraft. The effects of both forms of legislation have been the object of many academic and legal studies, almost all of which cite the catastrophic failure such legislation has had in reducing, let alone eliminating, incidents of witchcraft-related violence. Rather, they have provided a legislative foundation for the grossest of human rights abuses.

The authors of *TouchStone* raise these issues in an undoubtedly subjective and impassioned fashion. As Pagan Witches they, and others in their community, have been negatively stereotyped and are also subject to the criminalization of their beliefs and practices under any form of witchcraft legislation. They are vehemently

committed to participating in dialogue and finding a role in attempts to seek a solution to the injustices incurred through witchcraft accusations and violence.

It is this commitment that inspires their proposed programme of '30 Days of Advocacy against Prejudice and Violence' that will culminate on Freedom Day 2008. Pagan Witches embrace reconciliation, and look to a future where the religious freedoms guaranteed in the Constitution and Bill Of Rights can be realized, and where discrimination and prejudice on religious grounds belong in our past. They ask this, not just for themselves, but for all South Africans. This is the real importance of *TouchStone*, and its authors should be commended for attempting to raise public awareness of these issues, and for opening the door to a wider and more inclusive debate on a subject that should touch us all.

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Culture, religious prejudice and Witchcraft in South Africa

In September 2007, 62 Pagans, almost all of whom represented existing South African Pagan covens and organizations, met in Melville, Johannesburg to discuss the imminent threat of the tabling of a bill known as the (2007) Mpumalanga Witchcraft Suppression Bill. That meeting elected five self-defined Witches to act as representatives, under the auspices of the South African Pagan Council (SAPC), in order to fulfill what has become known as the 'Melville Mandate'.

The current SAPC Delegation is represented by Enmarie Potgieter (High Priestess - Coven of the Wheel), Luke Martin (Convenor – South African Pagan Council) and Damon Leff (Convenor – South African Pagan Rights Alliance).

The 'Melville Mandate' seeks to initiate urgent legislative reform to the Witchcraft Suppression Act in order to prevent any further or future unfair discrimination and prejudice against citizens of a free and democratic country founded on the recognition of human dignity, equality for all - irrespective of religion or belief, and the advancement of human rights and freedoms for all South African citizens equally.

The 'Melville Mandate' also seeks to reclaim the terms 'Witch' and 'Witchcraft' within a modern Pagan context and representatives have been tasked with fulfilling the goal of reclamation through various educational and other processes, including the possible establishment of a formal Commission of Enquiry to investigate ongoing violence against innocent persons accused of practicing malefic Witchcraft.

The Witchcraft Suppression Act (Act 3 of 1957 as amended by Act 50 of 1970) does not define Witchcraft but determines that any person who professes to use *“any supernatural power, or witchcraft, or professes knowledge of witchcraft or the use of charms, or for gain exercises any supernatural power or witchcraft shall be guilty of a criminal offense”*.

South African Pagans who self-define as Witches argue that Act 3 prohibits South African citizens from practicing their religion. These citizens of the Republic of South Africa have been and are being denied their constitutional rights to religious freedom, expression, equality, liberty, dignity, security and their right to choose and practice their occupation within South Africa on the basis on an existing piece of apartheid legislation that is itself unconstitutional.

With this argument in mind, the representatives elected in September 2007 have secured the legal services of Lawyers for Human Rights in order to have the Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1957 revoked. We are fairly confident given the protections afforded to religious minorities in our country's constitution that we will succeed in having said act revoked in due course.

Historically the words 'Witch' and 'Witchcraft' have been used in South Africa to describe evil or criminal practices associated with ritual killings, human mutilations and misfortune in general. The 1995 Report of the Ralushai Commission of Inquiry into Witchcraft Violence and Ritual Murder in the Northern Province, defined the term Witch to mean a person who,

...through sheer malice, either consciously or subconsciously, employs magical means to inflict all manner of evil on their fellow human beings. They destroy property, bring

disease or misfortune and cause death, often entirely without provocation to satisfy their inherent craving for evil doing.

Testifying before a Truth and Reconciliation Commission Amnesty Hearing in July 1999 Professor Ralushai confirmed his Commission's definition of a Witch when he was asked by attorney Patrick Ndou to define what a Witch was. Ralushai stated,

"A witch is supposed to be a person who is endowed with powers of causing illness or ill luck or death to the person that he wants to destroy."

The recently proposed (2007) Mpumalanga Witchcraft Suppression Bill attempted to define Witchcraft as:

...the secret use of muti, zombies, spells, spirits, magic powders, water, mixtures, etc, by any person with the purpose of causing harm, damage, sickness to others or their property.

These definitions stereotype Witchcraft as harmful by portraying Witches as a danger to the communities within which they live and work. These harmful stereotypical definitions merely serve to justify irrational public fear of Witchcraft as an allegedly harmful practice that is associated with criminal activity. Maintaining and reinforcing a definition of Witchcraft that is predisposed to eliciting violence against alleged or accused Witches does not promote religious tolerance. It only serves to incite further malice and violence against suspected Witches and thereby fosters further discrimination against Witchcraft as an internationally recognised religion.

The characterization of a person or group of persons (Witches) as 'evil' and so deserving of criminal classification by default – a characterization supported by centuries of religious and cultural prejudice - makes a mockery of the values of human dignity, equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms on which the new Republic of South Africa is founded.

South African Witches regard harmful stereotypical definitions of Witchcraft as injurious to their dignity and the use of the terms Witch and Witchcraft to describe criminal activities as discrimination on the basis of belief. The use of the English term Witchcraft with which to describe harmful magical practices brings into disrepute anyone who may self-identify as a Witch, irrespective of whether or not said self-defined Witch is a European Pagan or a practitioner of Traditional African magic.

The 'Melville Mandate' seeks to reclaim the terms Witch and Witchcraft within a modern Pagan religious context and determines that ***the right to define the words Witch and Witchcraft rests with self-defined Witches themselves and no one else.***

The following definition is a good and accurate definition of Witchcraft as understood and as practiced by Pagan Witches in South Africa.

"Witchcraft is an ancient religio-magical technique and modern Pagan spirituality that employs the use of divination, sympathetic magic and Pagan ritual practices." - SAPRA

CHAPTER ONE

Modern Witch-hunts

Part I. 1980 to 2003

Liberation from political tyranny does not result in automatic freedom from the bondage of superstition and urban legend. If it did, there would not have been cause to write this. In the midst of South Africa's ongoing struggle for an inclusive and participatory democracy based on the principles of equality, dignity, freedom and the rule of law, an irrational fear - not at all justified with good reason or sound evidence - is steadily and measurably feeding a beast of chaos and slaughter in the rainbow nation.

We are not talking about corporate and government corruption, crime, political intrigue and scandal, high unemployment, a lack of affordable housing for the poor, unresolved tenure of occupation and land, environmental degradation and pollution, or the prejudiced and unequal distribution of natural resources and opportunity. These are certainly cause for some anxiety in any country, although not unexpected in ours in the present, given (at least in part) our historical inheritance, but they are not the reason for this beast's feast.

For many South Africans a Witch is nothing but a source of mischief, quarrel, illness, barrenness and sudden death. In common usage the word is virtually synonymous with poisoner, murderer and liar and has become a label of convenience for any archetypal evil that threatens the natural and good societal order. In rural and urban South Africa, the mere suspicion of Witchcraft activity may lead to public accusation, assault, enforced exile or murder, especially in Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Kwazulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape.

Perhaps few other words has elicited more hatred, hostility and suffering in twentieth and twenty first century South Africa than the word Witch. Since 1980 thousands of innocent men and women have been accused of being Witches or of using Witchcraft. Many have been murdered by their communities without trial. Many more have been banished from their villages, their homes destroyed and members of their families murdered or forced to flee in fear of their lives. These all too frequent incidences of communally driven acts of revenge against alleged Witches have been attributed by many to political and social unrest preceding constitutional democracy in South Africa in 1994.

In 1985 then President P.W. Botha declared a state of emergency in 36 magisterial districts following increasing civil unrest and violence. This was extended to the entire country on 12 June 1986 and lasted until 1990 when the then State President F.W. de Klerk un-banned the African National Congress, the Pan Africanist Congress and the South African Communist Party. Under the Internal Security Act of Botha's regime, the South African Police and South African Defence Force were given free reign to intimidate, arrest without warrant, torture, maim and murder. Curfews were implemented to control the movement of non-White civilians. The majority of South Africans lived in a state of perpetual fear and the media was censored or used to promulgate propaganda in support of the government and its policy of 'separate development' or Apartheid.

Whilst the state of emergency in South Africa during the 1980's may indeed have contributed to increasing insecurity and paranoia, Witch hunts did not come to end after 1990. During the 1990's the expelling and killing of suspected Witches occurred frequently in several provinces. The frequency of occurrence of Witch hunts within the Limpopo Province prompted the former Premier of Limpopo Province in 1995, Advocate Ngoako Ramathlodi, to appoint a Commission of Inquiry to investigate, amongst other things, the 'phenomenon of Witch purging'.

The Commission of Inquiry into Witchcraft Violence and Ritual Murder in the Northern Province chaired by Professor N. V. Ralushai revealed the tragedy of Witch purging. The **Ralushai Report** found that prior to 1980 suspected Witches identified through various methods of divination by "witchdoctors" (diviners or traditional healers acting as Witch-finders) were apprehended by members of their community and killed without trial. Many testified before the commission that some murders were politically instigated.

The Ralushai Commission's report defined the term Witch to mean a person who,

...through sheer malice, either consciously or subconsciously, employs magical means to inflict all manner of evil on their fellow human beings. They destroy property, bring disease or misfortune and cause death, often entirely without provocation to satisfy their inherent craving for evil doing. [1]

The findings of the Commission revealed that the majority of people in the Northern Province, and by inference in South Africa in general, including members of the South African Police Services (SAPS), believe in the existence of Witches and fear the effects of Witchcraft. Amongst traditional African people misfortune, illness and especially premature death is often believed to be caused through the agency of Witchcraft.

.. All kinds of misfortune, including matters as varied as financial problems, illness, (and) drought or lightening strikes, are blamed on witchcraft. [2]

In 'AIDS, Witchcraft, and the Problem of Power in Post-Apartheid South Africa', Adam Ashforth writes,

Witchcraft in the South African context typically means the manipulation by malicious individuals of powers inherent in persons, spiritual entities, and substances to cause harm to others... the motive of witchcraft is typically said to be "jealousy". [3]

Findings show that the murder of suspected Witches increased sharply during the 1980's in Venda, Lebowa and Gazankulu in the Northern Province (Limpopo). Between January 1990 and April 1995, 455 cases related to Witchcraft accusations were opened by the South African Police Service in the Limpopo Province. [4] In 1996 the number of Witchcraft related cases dropped from 676 to 417. [5] The Ralushai Commission found that,

In later years the killing was done by comrades (youths) ranging in age from 14 to 38 years. Some people believe that the youths were used by politicians or unscrupulous adults for their own purposes. The perception that many of these murders were politically instigated seems to be borne out by the statistics. [6]

Following the findings of the 1995 Ralushai Commission and several successive national and regional Conferences, the Commission recommended, a) encouraging Traditional healers to *“emphasise the curative and preventative aspect of medicine, instead of pointing out so-called witches”*, b) prosecuting perpetrators of ritual murders (referred to as muti murders) and instigators of Witch hunts, and c) drafting appropriate legislation to govern the activities of Traditional Healers.

In November 1995 Human Rights Watch reported:

In some rural areas of South Africa, violence against women also includes the phenomenon of witchcraft killings, which are most often directed against women, although men are also on occasion attacked after accusations that they have practiced black magic. At least ninety-seven women and forty-nine men were killed in Northern Province during the period April 1994 to February 1995, according to police statistics quoted in an interim report published by a commission of inquiry appointed by the new provincial government to investigate witchcraft and ritual killings in the province. All kinds of misfortune, including matters as varied as financial problems, illness, drought and lightning strikes, are blamed on witchcraft, and traditional healers or “witch doctors” may then be paid to search out the individuals responsible. A number of villages have even been created under police protection to house people accused of witchcraft who have fled their homes. While convictions of the perpetrators of these killings have been secured in some cases, in many cases the reluctance of witnesses to come forward prejudices any investigation. [7]

The number of cases diminished sharply after 1996 and no cases were reported at the beginning of 1998 but Witch hunts did not entirely cease during 1998. In response to the ongoing purge of alleged Witches in several provinces the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) [8] convened a ‘National Conference on Witchcraft Violence’ in Thohoyandou, Venda, in September 1998. Professor Ralushai testified at the hearing. **‘The Thohoyandou Declaration on Ending Witchcraft Violence’** [9] was issued by the Commission on Gender Equality in response to the findings of the conference on 10 September.

Participants of The Witchcraft Violence Conference, including survivors and perpetrators of violence against suspected Witches, supported the assertion that accusations of Witchcraft were most often simply motivated by jealousy and that victims of such violence were innocent of the allegations made against them. The Commission released its final report on the conference in Pietersburg in March 1999.

In 1999 Pinkie Mbowane reported in The Sowetan,

Ms Njini told the audience about the day she came home to find that everything had been burnt down. “Today I have nothing - no children, no parents, no goats or fowls,” she said. “Everything was destroyed.” She broke down at this point and had to return to her seat. There was an uncomfortable shuffling everywhere in the room. Her audience included politicians, religious and traditional leaders, police and the very people who had reduced her life to the state of a homeless beggar. [10]

In response to the findings of the Conference the CGE launched its **‘Action Plan for the Eradication of Witchcraft Violence’** by committing itself to monitoring the progress of *“legislative reform, victim support, the reintegration of victims into communities, and reconciliation and public education programmes”* aimed at eradicating *‘witchcraft violence’*. [11]

The **National Conference on Witchcraft Violence** served as a catalyst to structures that previously ignored the life-threatening effects of violence against accused Witches on families and communities. Political parties, safety and security institutions, civic organisations, churches and labour movements committed themselves to stopping the violence with the adoption of the Thohoyandou Declaration on Ending Witchcraft Violence. [12]

The CGE's Action Plan for the Eradication of Witchcraft Violence included:

- a) strengthening the South African Police Service's ability to respond appropriately to incidences of violence related to Witch-hunts and accusations of Witchcraft,
- b) making the eradication of violence against suspected Witches a national budget priority,
- c) special training for police in handling Witchcraft violence,
- d) the creation of special investigative units,
- e) the creation of victim support units to facilitate reintegration and conciliation,
- f) the adoption of a comprehensive public education and awareness campaign, and
- g) comprehensive legislative reform of the existing Witchcraft Suppression Act.

To date (February 2008) the Witchcraft Suppression Act 3 of 1957 as amended by the Witchcraft Suppression Amendment Act 50 of 1970 remains unchanged despite the CGE's best intentions. It is not clear to what extent victims of Witchcraft violence have successfully been reintegrated into their communities, nor to what extent attempts at reconciliation have indeed succeeded in preventing further Witch hunts.

It is also not clear what *'public education programmes and awareness campaigns'* were intended to attempt to eradicate Witchcraft violence. If indeed these *"road-shows"* have been undertaken either by the Commission of Gender Equality or by affected local Municipal structures, they have failed to challenge the fundamental beliefs motivating Witch purges, as violent Witch hunts against suspected Witches and against people suspected of using Witchcraft continue unabated.

Testifying before a Truth and Reconciliation Commission Amnesty Hearing in 1999 Ralushai confirmed his Commission's definition of a Witch when he was asked by attorney Patrick Ndou to define what a Witch was. Ralushai stated,

A witch is supposed to be a person who is endowed with powers of causing illness or ill luck or death to the person that he wants to destroy. [13]

In 2003 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Amnesty Committee gave further credence to the findings of the 1995 Commission of Inquiry into Witchcraft Violence and Ritual Murder in the Northern Province by publishing in its report,

... a belief in witchcraft was still widely prevalent in certain rural areas of South Africa. Moreover, it became clear to the Committee that the issue of witchcraft had – at certain times in some rural areas – been a central factor in some of the recent political conflicts between supporters of the liberation movements and the forces seeking to entrench the status quo. The former were of the opinion that traditional practices and beliefs related to witchcraft had been exploited by the latter to advance their positions. The Committee accepted the following finding of the Ralushai Commission of Inquiry: Apartheid politics turned traditional leaders into politicians representing a system which was not popular with many people, because they were seen as upholders of that system. For this reason, traditional leaders became the target of the now politicised youth. It further accepted the view of the Commission of Inquiry that in some cases the youth

intimidated traditional leaders in such a way that the latter had little or no option but to sniff out so-called witches. It was also clear from the evidence heard by the Committee that, in Venda particularly, the liberation forces used cases of witchcraft and ritual killings to politicise communities. This strategy was facilitated by the fact that local communities were dissatisfied with the manner in which the apartheid authorities had handled such cases. For example, the failure of the authorities to act against people who were believed to be witches resulted in a belief that the government was the protector of witches. In Venda, where traditional leaders with relatively poor education were politically empowered and were associated with some of the most heinous abuses, the situation was ripe for political conflict. In some cases, where comrades and other pro-liberation movement activists were perceived as having died as a result of witchcraft, community organisations took steps to eliminate those they believed to have been responsible for these deaths. The Committee shares the widespread concern expressed by civil society about the continued prevalence of practices and violent incidents related to a belief in witchcraft in certain areas. It is the Committee's view that this issue warrants further attention by the appropriate government authorities. [14]

Part II. 2000 to 2004

Incidences of Witchcraft accusations and revenge attacks continued unabated between 2000 and 2005 despite the findings of the Thohoyandou Declaration on Ending Witchcraft Violence and in spite of the Commission of Gender Equality's undertaking in 1999 to monitor the progress of reconciliation and public education programmes aimed at eradicating Witchcraft violence in the execution of its 'Action Plan for the Eradication of Witchcraft Violence'.

The use of the term 'Witchcraft violence' is unfortunate as it implies, incorrectly, that Witches are the ones perpetrating violent actions when in fact innocent men, women and children are almost daily the victims of deep-seated prejudice and violence perpetrated by their accusers.

2000

On 20 September 2000 African Eye News Service reported that 16 people, eight of whom were teenage girls, accused 58 year old Mrs. Matjatji Selaelo Makhuna of Mokgolobotho village, Tzaneen (Limpopo Province) of Witchcraft after a 27-year-old villager, Flora Mohale, was killed in a car accident. The villagers besieged Mrs. Makhuna's house, breaking windows and dismantling the roof in their attempt to apprehend her. She was rescued together with three daughters and two granddaughters by police and they were forced to spend three nights in the Tzaneen police station for their own safety. Tzaneen police spokesperson Inspector Caroline Sidutla advised Mrs. Makhuna not to return to Mokgolobotho village and undertook to help settle her and her family at Lusaka village 10km away. [15] The article confirms that the 16 accused appeared in the Ritavi Magistrates' Court near Tzaneen and were charged with malicious damage to property and illegally identifying someone as a Witch.

An article of 31 October reports that although Mrs. Makhuna and her family did move to Lusaka village, they were evicted by residents and forced to settle at another unnamed village 20 km away from Mokgolobotho. The 16 accused were released with a warning not to engage in further acts of revenge and the case was postponed to 16 January 2001. [16]

On 10 October the South African Press Association reported that an elderly woman suspected of being a Witch and five others burnt to death after their home in Ngema in northern KwaZulu-Natal was attacked and set alight by five men. Neighbours only informed the police of the incident two days later. The victims were reported as being Makhemu Ngema (65), Mbhejile Sibiya (28), Hlengiwe Ntuli (20), Samukelisiwe Masikane (7), Khanyisane Ngema (6) and Siyabonga Masikane (aged 3). [17]

In 'Bewitched rooster case set for trial' of 2 November Zenzele Kuhlase reported that five of the six men accused of hanging a suspected Witch, Simon Magagula (30), from a graveyard tree in Nelspruit, Mpumalanga, were freed on R1 500 bail each. The sixth, a minor when he was arrested, was released into the custody of his parents pending trial. Mr. Magagula was hanged on 26 December 1999 after being accused of bewitching roosters. Four people who had been pecked by roosters belonging to Magagula complained of headaches and died shortly after. A chief of the local Clau-Clau tribal trust issued instructions that all roosters be killed and he established a committee to investigate the deaths of the four people who had been pecked. The committee consulted a sangoma who accused Mr. Magagula of being responsible for bewitching the roosters. [18]

In December 2000 Dumisani Zondi reported that 76 year old Mrs. Maria Ngcobo was hacked to death in Khokhwane, Pietermaritzburg (Kwazulu-Natal) by an unknown assailant. Her grandson Sibusiso Ntombela (26) was shot. His body was discovered 150m from his home. Mrs. Ngcobo was in her home with her two grandchildren Andile (8) and Siyabonga Ntombela (6). Andile and Siyabonga escaped through a window and ran to fetch their neighbours. Andile sustained severe lacerations to her face and neck. Her sister Sibongile (14) told journalists she believed the attack was prompted by continuous accusations that her grandmother was practising Witchcraft. Zondi reported that neighbours suspected the attack was linked to the death of a local policeman who had died from an unknown cause. [19]

2001

In February 2001 an unnamed 60 year old woman from Gumbani village in Malamulela, Limpopo Province, was accused by villagers of being a Witch and of involvement in the death of a local headman who died after an illness. Her home was set on fire and her family was expelled from the village. The woman laid charges against the villagers responsible for malicious damage to property and public violence at a local police station. The family was placed in protective custody. [20]

In April four Limpopo Province farm labourers appeared in the Duiwelskloof Court on a charge of accusing Khensani Makhubele (31) of being a Witch after hiring a prophet in September 2000. The four accused painted Makhubele white and she was dismissed from work. The accused were released with a warning and the case was postponed for trial to July 10. [21]

In August a 67 year old man named Amoni Mokoena who was accused by a mob of being a Witch was burned to death in Masoyi village near Hazyview in Limpopo Province by angry school children and community members who were convinced he had bewitched a schoolgirl. The group forced Mokoena from his home, tied him up with wire, and took him to an isolated spot where they assaulted him before setting

him alright. Mokoena, a night watchman at the same school the girl attended, was accused of having turned her corpse into a zombie. [22]

In October 2001 Sekororo village, near Tzaneen (Limpopo Province) was placed under police surveillance after seven people and two goats were struck by lightning and killed. Lowveld police spokesperson Inspector Moatshe Ngoepe is alleged to have said to a reporter, *"It is common for violence to erupt in villages if people believe such things are as a result of witchcraft"*. [23]

2002

In March 2002 a Durban (Kwazulu-Natal Province) police sergeant shot Lina Magagula at her home with his service pistol after accusing her of killing his father, mother and son through Witchcraft. Magagula was seriously wounded. [24]

In May 2002 pupils at Makgongwana High School in Makanye village, Polokwane (Limpopo Province) attacked a 15-year-old whom they accused of *"casting a spell to make more than 20 girls faint during break"*. Pupils allegedly smashed the windscreen of a police van with stones. The accused was taken into protective custody. [25]

2003

In January 2003 13 people in Polokwane (Limpopo Province) were arrested after attacking Mr. Matome Molele (67), whom they accused of Witchcraft. Police initially arrested 30 people who participated in burning down five houses in their attack on Molele. Molele managed to flee without being injured. [26]

In March 2003 Riot Hlatshwayo reported that parents of pupils at Madlala High School in Justicia village, Bushbuckridge (Limpopo Province) were raising money to hire a sangoma in Swaziland to "sniff out" a Witch whom pupils were convinced was responsible for bewitching their school. After several deaths and incidences of violence at the school, pupils boycotted classes for two weeks until police formed a committee to investigate their concerns. Captain Moatshe Ngoepe of Mopani police warned the community that *"witch-sniffing"* was illegal. He told reporters that terrified villagers had killed a baboon believing it to be a Witch's familiar. [27]

2004

After 2003 the number of reported incidences of Witchcraft related violence increased quite dramatically. Two of these reports, 'Witchcraft made donkey do it' (February 2004) [28] and 'Monkey scares village' (November 2004) [29] covered stories involving the alleged use of animals by Witches to bring harm to individuals and villages. They are reminiscent of the themes explored in 'Bewitched Rooster' (2000) [18] in which Simon Magagula, accused of bewitching roosters to peck people, was hung from a graveyard tree, and 'Bewitched School' (2003) [27] in which a baboon was killed because villagers believed it to be a Witches familiar.

In 'Witchcraft made donkey do it' an Mpumalanga inyanga (traditional herbalist) claimed Witchcraft made a donkey maul Ditgetho Motjieng's face. Bushbuckridge inyanga, Daniel Ngobeni said to reporter Riot Hlatshwayo,

"A witch might have sent the donkey to attack the boy... But you are one of those educated people who believe there is no witchcraft, so I won't tell you how it happens, because it is a big secret." [28]

In 'Monkey scares village' villagers believing a monkey to be a Witch's relative searching for the Witch started to accuse each other of Witchcraft after one of the women claimed she saw a monkey herd cattle out of her yard.

In June 2004 a Phalaborwa tribal authority in Limpopo Province refused to grant permission for a Witch hunt after local women complained that evil spirits were raping them at night. [30]

In July Limpopo villagers demanded their local Induna (tribal leader) Daniel Magomani, account for R300 they raised for a Witch-sniffing ceremony in 1996. The money was allegedly collected to hire a car with which to evict a villager accused of using Witchcraft. [31]

Also in July an Mpumalanga man slit the throat of grand-mother Grace Chabalala (80) in front of shocked neighbours at her home in Peterskraal near Groblersdal after accusing her of bewitching him. [32]

Hlalaphi Malandula (45) was hacked and stabbed with butcher's knives, doused in petrol and set alight at her home in Khumbula tribal trust near White River in Mpumalanga Province in August by her own family, including her father, two sisters, brother and cousin, because they believed she had used Witchcraft to kill someone. [33]

Also in August a Mozambican-born man was banished from Rhulani village near Tzaneen (Limpopo Province) after neighbours accused him of using Witchcraft to drive three people to commit suicide. [34]

In September Umtata High Court Judge Irma Schoeman sentenced Siyabulela Ndoda for the murder of his grandmother, Mamlothana Ndoda, and Manqoma Novumile Tyebisa on the night of April 4 2000. Ndoda claimed he had contacted a witchdoctor to find the cause of the illness and death of his two children and the witchdoctor had identified the two women as Witches. [35]

In November 2004 Bismark Lubisi reported that Pastor Mphatsi Mazibuko of the First Apostolic church in Langeloo, south of Malelane in Mpumalanga Province, went into hiding with relatives after his village accused him of Witchcraft and burned down his house on October 31. Villagers accused him of bewitching a 17 year old girl who had died of unknown causes. [36]

Part III. – 2005 to 2006/7

2005

In February 2005, 90 teenagers in Polokwane (Limpopo Province) appeared in the Giyani Magistrate's court after they torched 39 houses in four villages in an area north-east of Polokwane. Police reported that the vigilante crowd told the occupants of the houses *"you are a witch!"* before setting their homes on fire. When some of the youths opened fire on the police who were trying to stop them police returned fire, killing Solly Mathebula (20). [37]

In March a 15 year old Limpopo girl from Timbavati village tried to drink paraffin three times after being expelled from Timbavati Primary School because teachers and pupils believed she was a Witch. *"The girl was accused of writing a letter, placing it on the teacher's desk, and telling her friends that the teacher would die if she opened it."* When confronted, the girl allegedly confessed to practising Witchcraft. The girl's grandfather sent her to Masingitana High School the following year but teachers there also allegedly *"refused to touch her books"*. [38]

Also in March 2005 an Mpumalanga family burnt and buried a doll they were told was placed at their front door to bewitch them. They were assisted by a local prophet, Knowledge Makhubela, who performed a cleansing ceremony for the family. A family member named by reporters as Shadow Tshabalala allegedly said in an interview, *"Though we all know that witchcraft exists, the Constitution doesn't recognise it, so we have to let this incident slide"*. [39]

In April villagers of Giyani in Limpopo Province accused a rooster and hen of being Witch's familiars. The rooster and hen were allegedly smeared with ochre. One resident, Josiah Rikhotso, suggested the rooster and hen be killed to identify the Witch. He said, *"Every black person knows that if an animal used for witchcraft is killed, then the owner of that animal dies magically"*. Giyani police confiscated the chickens. Captain Maano Sadike of Mopani police is reported to have said, *"We're afraid these chickens may spark a witch hunt in an already volatile area"*. [40]

In August Micas Khoza (65) was attached with a panga and locked inside a burning house in Bushbuckridge (Mpumalanga) by his two grandchildren aged between 12 and 16 after they accused him of being a Witch. [41]

In September Pietermaritzburg police in the KwaZulu-Natal midlands offered a reward of up to R25 000 for information which could lead to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for the death of two middle-aged sisters, Madudu Shandu (57) and Bongekile Zungu (59) who had been accused of being Witches. [42]

Also in September a Howick magistrate's court in Kwazulu-Natal granted bail of R10 000 to a man believed to have been involved in the death of Bheki Sibiyi, a traditional healer in the Mpophomeni area in the KwaZulu-Natal midlands. Sibiyi was attacked by members of his community who accused him of practising Witchcraft. He was stoned to death. [43]

In October a Pretoria man named William Nkuna accused the family of his alleged victim, Frances Rasuge, of trying to bewitch him. He stated, *"I found out the Rasuge"*

family had gone to a witch doctor in order to bewitch me because they blamed me for her disappearance". In Nkuna's trial for the alleged murder of Frances Rasuge he told the Mmabatho Circuit Court sitting in Ga-Rankuwa that Rasuge had been forced by a police Captain named Simon Letseka to hire a hitman to kill him. [44]

Also in October, 22 people were arrested in NwaXinyama village near Makhado (Limpopo Province) and charged with public violence after attempting to stone a grieving father at his daughter's funeral. Superintendent Ailwei Mushavhanamadi of the Vhembe police in Limpopo clarified that his daughter had died in a motor car accident but the mob had accused her father of using Witchcraft to cause her death. Mushavhanamadi said, *"her father had also believed someone had cast a spell on her, and was conducting a spell of his own to bewitch whoever had caused her death"*. The man's identity was withheld by the police. [45]

In November police in Tzaneen (Limpopo Province) arrested 17 people after a mob attacked a 73 year old woman at Sasekani village, accusing her of Witchcraft. Mopani police spokesperson Superintendent Moatshe Ngoepe said, *"It is very disturbing that even though we are more than 10 years into democracy, people continue to call each other witches and take the law into their own hands"*. Suspects were charged with public violence, attempted murder, defeating the ends of justice, malicious damage to property and contravening the Suppression of Witchcraft Act. [46]

In December two men who admitted they killed Alice Mamtshulu Mntungwa because they thought she was a Witch received 15-year sentences in Pietermaritzburg (Kwazulu-Natal). The article reported, *"Judge Vuka Tshabalala said that because Siphela Jobe Sithole and his friend Thokoza Mvelase (both 20) are from a rural background and genuinely believed the elderly woman was a witch, they deserve a lesser sentence of 15 years' imprisonment, instead of life"*. [47]

And also in December 2005 Neville Maakana reported that a 14 year old schoolgirl had told her community that she had been abducted by Witches at night and forced to drink human blood. She accused a 73 year old woman in Sasekani village near Tzaneen (Limpopo) of being one of the Witches, claiming to have seen zombies at her house. The old woman was ordered to leave the village but she refused, challenging community leaders to hire a sangoma to conduct a proper Witch hunt. On October 31 villagers attacked the woman. Seventeen people were arrested in connection with the incident. [48]

News coverage of incidences of Witchcraft related violence between 2000 and 2005 has not been independently verified. It is not know to what extent justice was served in every cited instance. The fact that Witch hunts continued to make news headlines both prior to and after 2005 only begins to reveal the actual scale of these atrocities.

Journalist Chris Makhaye reported in The Sunday Independent of October 2, 2005,

Hidden in the dry, rocky flatlands of Limpopo Province lies a small village called Helena. With its dusty roads and cattle pens it looks like any other village in the region. But it has an air of mystique. Neighbouring villagers call it Tulo Yabaloyi - Place of Witches. Some say Helena is populated by sorcerers who are capable of sending deadly thunderstorms to wreak havoc on an enemy's home, or of using muti to bring about misfortune on their rivals. But its residents call it a sanctuary for those who have been falsely accused of witchcraft. There are 42 households lining Helena's dusty road. They come from different parts of Limpopo Province and were forced by circumstances to

settle there. Each family has a tale to tell about how they were uprooted from their daily lives because they were accused of witchcraft. [49]

2006/7

Witch hunts in South Africa made international headlines again in 2006 when the U.S. Department of State's International Religious Freedom Report found,

There were reports of killings allegedly linked to the continued targeting of purported practitioners of witchcraft, particularly in Limpopo Province. In August 2005 an elderly couple in Umlazi (KwaZulu-Natal province) suspected of practicing witchcraft were beaten, stabbed, and burned to death. Six persons were arrested and charged with murder, conspiracy to commit murder, and arson. The trial was ongoing at the end of the period covered by this report. Two men accused of the April 2005 killing of their grandmother in Ritavi, Limpopo, were convicted and sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment in April 2006. In February 2006 a mob of approximately ninety youths set alight thirty-nine houses in four villages in Limpopo, accusing the occupants of being witches. Thirteen suspected ringleaders were charged and were due to appear in court in August. In March 2006 a group of boys burned the house of a sixty-six-year-old woman accused of witchcraft. The investigation was ongoing at the end of the reporting period. [50]

In March 2006 Limpopo Premier Sello Moloto, in a speech delivered on Human Rights Day to launch the Provincial Crime Prevention Strategy, drew attention to ongoing Witchcraft related violence.

...challenges remain with regard to such crime categories as witchcraft related violence, racially motivated killings, child and women abuse, and domestic violence. As government we will intensify the implementation of this strategy by ensuring that harsh sentences are given to those found guilty of these crimes. [51]

Also in March 2006 Limpopo MEC for Safety, Security and Liaison Ms. Machwene Semanya, outlining research and planning programs to be initiated in the 2006/7 financial year, included in her outline, *"a survey on the role our communities can play in reducing ritual killings and crimes related to witchcraft"*. [52]

In the 2007 'Fourth Sitting of the Third Democratic Legislature of Limpopo', Premier Moloto again made pointed reference to Witchcraft, Witchcraft violence and ritual 'muti' murders by admitting governments failure to curb ongoing Witchcraft related violence.

The one security area we are not succeeding in as a province to put under control is that of alleged ritual killings and witchcraft. In the recent past we have seen the escalation of these heinous acts to uncontrollable proportions. The provincial government had to organise a multi-stakeholder conference in order to co-ordinate our response to this challenge. The most important resolutions from this conference include the need to establish a police specialised investigating unit focusing on occult-related activities, the review of legislation dealing with this matter and the scaling up of public awareness programmes. We hope and trust that the implementation of the conference resolutions will go a long way in curbing this scourge. We have already discussed the matter of legislative amendment with the Minister of Justice and she promised to deal with the matter. [53]

In May 2007, after visiting Thohoyandou Prison in Limpopo, Parliament's Correctional Services committee chairman Dennis Bloem accused Magistrates of wasting taxpayers' money by sending women to prison for calling others Witches. [54]

The only existing special investigative Occult-related Crimes Unit (ORCU), first established in 1992 to investigate "occult-related crimes", was dissolved and incorporated into existing law enforcement services in 2001. During its 10 year existence during which it investigated in excess of 300 cases of muti-related crimes (murders committed for the express purpose of harvesting human body parts), the ORCU's mandate included:

- a) investigating occult-related crime,
- b) in conjunction with the South African Police Service Crime Intelligence, promoting the prevention of occult-related crime,
- c) managing the use and dissemination of information on occult-related crime, and
- d) rendering services to victims of occult-related crime.

The ORCU defined 'occult-related crime' as,

...any human conduct that constitutes any legally recognized crime, the modus operandi of which relates to or emanates primarily from any belief or seeming belief in the occult, witchcraft, satanism, mysticism, magic, esotericism and the like. Included in the scope of occult-related crime are ritual muti/medicine murders, witch purging, witchcraft-related violence and sect-related practices that pose a threat to the safety and security of the Republic of South Africa and/or its inhabitants. [55]

Between 1992 and 2001 the South African Police Service's Occult Related Crime Unit focused its attention primarily on investigating muti-murders; ritualized murders in which human body-parts are harvested for use in magic and to a lesser extent on crimes committed by alleged Satanists. But according to the U.S. Department of State's International Religious Freedom Report for South Africa for 2006,

"There were no reports of killings linked to the practice of Satanism. The government does not keep records on cases of reported witchcraft and satanic killings. These cases are investigated and prosecuted as homicide by law enforcement officials." [56]

South African Law does not validate the existence of Witchcraft because the existence and efficacy of magic can not be proven. A belief in Witchcraft provides its own cultural and religious reasons as 'proof', but belief in Witchcraft can not be said to be irrefutable evidence of its existence. The law does however recognise that criminal acts can be motivated by a belief in Witchcraft and magic. The Witchcraft Suppression Act 3 of 1957 as amended by the Witchcraft Suppression Amendment Act 50 of 1970 makes it an offense to both profess knowledge of Witchcraft or to use Witchcraft to cause death, injury, grief, disease or damage to a person. [57] The Act does not actually define Witchcraft. Definition in a court of law must be derived by referring to so-called expert testimony.

One must of necessity explore the underlying belief systems that motivate a belief in the Witch as a willing and unwitting agent of misfortune, tragedy and death. We shall attempt to do so in the next chapter by examining both existing traditional African beliefs concerning Witches and Witchcraft as well as Christian beliefs concerning the occult, Witchcraft and Satanism. One also cannot ignore the role of Traditional healers, Witch-doctors, Churches, the Occult-related Crime Unit and the Witchcraft Suppression Act in perpetuating ideologies of conflict in South Africa.

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Extract: Witchcraft Suppression Act (Act 3 of 1957 as amended)

...any person who: -

- (a) Imputes to any other person the causing, by supernatural means, of any disease in or injury to any other person or thing, or who names or indicates any other person as a wizard;
 - (b) Professes or pretends to use any supernatural power, witchcraft, sorcery, enchantment or conjuration, imputes the cause of death of, injury or grief to, disease in, damage to or disappearance of any person or thing to any other person;
 - (c) Employs or solicits any witchdoctor, witch-finder or any other person to name or indicate any person as a wizard;
 - (d) Professed a knowledge of witchcraft, or to use the charms, and advises any person how to bewitch, injure or damage any person or thing, or supplies any person with pretended means of witchcraft;
 - (e) On the advice of any witchdoctor, witch-finder or any other person or on the ground of any pretended knowledge of witchcraft, uses or causes to be put into operation any means or process which, in accordance with such advice or his own belief, is calculated to injure or damage any person or thing;
 - (f) For gain pretends to exercise or use any supernatural power, witchcraft, sorcery, enchantment or conjuration, or undertakes to tell fortunes, or pretends from his skill in or knowledge of any occult science to discover where and in what manner anything supposed to have been stolen or lost may be found;
- Shall be guilty of an offence and liable to conviction.

CHAPTER TWO

Ideologies of Conflict

Part I. African Traditional Religion

What is 'evil'? What are the underlying ideologies that motivate a belief in evil? Why is the Witch regarded as a willing and unwitting agent of evil and misfortune in Africa? How do belief systems contribute to the killing of suspected Witches in South Africa? Why does the suspicion of Witchcraft cause such irrational fear as to drive ordinary men, women and children to attack and murder friends, family members and neighbours? Who are the Witch-finders of South Africa and how do they identify suspected Witches?

There is no simple or generalized answer to the question of 'evil' within an African context, only many variations of several existing themes. In order to attempt to answer these and other questions we need to acknowledge the diverse cultural and religious belief systems that comprise the new South Africa and her 47.4 + million people. [1] South Africa is a multi-cultural society with 11 official languages: English, Afrikaans, Ndebele, Northern Sotho, Xhosa, Venda, Tswana, Southern Sotho, Zulu, Swazi and Tsonga. South Africans include the Nguni speaking Zulu, Xhosa and Swazi, the Sotho, the Venda, the Tsonga, and of course southern Africa's First People, the Khoisan, but also includes the predominantly Afrikaans speaking Griqua and Afrikaners and diverse groups of English speaking peoples.

South Africa is rich in diverse religious expressions. An estimated 80 percent of South Africans are Christian, including in order of prevalence Protestant (8 million +), African Independent Churches (8 million+), Dutch Reformed Church (4 million +), Roman Catholic (2.4 million +), Methodist (1.8 million +) including Baptists, Congregationalists, Seventh Day Adventists, Assembly of God and Apostolic Faith Mission, Anglican (1.2 million +), Lutheran (800 thousand +), Presbyterian (460 thousand +), Greek and Russian Orthodox (27 thousand +), and Mormon (7 thousand +).

The remaining 20 percent of South Africans include people who adhere to the following faiths in order of prevalence, Islam (400 thousand +), Hinduism (350 thousand +), and Judaism (100 thousand +). The smallest religions in South Africa include Bahai, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Paganism (with an estimated but unconfirmed figure of only *5 thousand). [2]

*Note: Paganism was not listed on the 2001 census. The figure of 5000 is an unconfirmed estimate only.

Since incidences of Witch-killing do not occur within all existing cultural groups within South Africa I will begin the search for answers by looking at those cultures and religious groups within which Witch hunts have or do occur in this country, but before I do, I must first ask and answer the question, what is evil?

'Evil' [OE. *yfel* OS. OHG. *ubil* Gmc. *ubhilaz*] is that which causes or results in harm. Evil is usually defined by referring to its effects; misfortune, bad luck, disaster, and sin as both a cause and an effect of evil, but also as something that motivates and arises as a result of slander and deceit. Evil is also closely associated with something or someone having or exerting a malignant influence on a situation, person or thing, through a simple look – the "evil eye". [3]

For a religious person, evil is any behaviour that is morally objectionable. It is most often the result of an immoral act, vice, or broken taboo in more tradition-bound cultures and societies. Evil is also used as a term describing someone or something that is intrinsically corrupt, wantonly destructive, inhumane and selfish. The online Wikipedia says the word is almost always used to describe "*acts, thoughts, and ideas which are thought to (either directly or causally) bring about withering and death – the opposite of life*". [4]

Different cultures have defined the nature and purpose of evil in very different ways, but always affirming in doing so that evil is that which causes or results in harm, both for the individual and for the community.

Amongst the two largest and most dominant subgroups of the Nguni speaking peoples, the isiZulu and isiXhosa, predominantly found living in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and on the borders of Limpopo and Mpumalanga, evil is that which destroys the balance between the natural, social and spiritual worlds. The harmony of these worlds is maintained through traditional custom, obligation and taboo. Zulu (approximately 10 million people) and Xhosa (approximately 8 million people) hold that evil (misfortune or illness) may result from four primary sources; the wrath (and calling) of the ancestors, ritual impurity as the result of breaking cultural taboos, evil spirits, and Witchcraft. [5]

The Ancestors

It would not be an unfair generalization to say that most if not all urban and rural black South Africans believe in the existence and influence of the ancestors. The ancestors are generally viewed as disembodied but still living spirits who continue to dwell amongst the living. The ancestors are believed to have a strong and tangible influence on the lives of the living. They communicate with the living and especially with their nearest descendents through dreams and intuited omens. [6]

The ancestors are intermediaries between the living and the Creator, in isiZulu named *Umvelinqangi* (or *uNkulunkulu* – God of the ancestors), and in isiXhosa named *Qameta*. Traditional religious rituals, initiations and feasts are all employed in honouring the ancestors and in giving recognition to and for their constant guidance, protection and blessing. Whilst the ancestral spirits are generally benevolent, sometimes, when important rituals of propitiation and blessing are not performed or deliberately ignored, or a taboo or sacred custom is broken, the ancestors are believed to cause illness and misfortune for the person or family concerned.

In 'Rituals and Medicines' David Hammond-Tooke wrote,

The usual reason for ancestral interference in the affairs of the living is (a) neglect of the 'customs of the home', the necessary rituals that should be performed, particularly

at the pivotal points of the life cycle (birth, initiation, marriage, and death) and (b) failure to accord due respect to seniors. [7]

According to tradition, the spirit of a deceased relative does not become an ancestor until the surviving relatives of the deceased welcome it back through prescribed funerary rites into the family hierarchy. Whilst it is the male head of a household who is usually responsible for the performance of many sacred rituals and customs, it is the function of the traditional diviner (isangoma (Zulu)/amagqirha (Xhosa)) to determine if indeed misfortune or illness is the result of ancestral displeasure or not.

Evil spirits

Like the Swazi, Sotho, Venda, Tsonga and Ndebele, the Nguni speaking peoples believe the world of the living to be inhabited by the spirits of the ancestors, and also by hosts of both good and evil spirits, usually closely associated with Nature. Spirits, both good and bad, inhabit the ocean, lakes and rivers, forests, particular trees and plants, rocks and sacred sites in often remote places, but are also associated with natural phenomena such as rain and lightning, flood and drought. Another entirely different kind of spirit are those of dead people for whom no burial rituals were performed.

It is the traditional healer's function, in part, to cooperate with those nature spirits defined as good, confine those spirits regarded as troublesome, and drive out those which are evil. Many spirits of nature identified as good are closely associated with assisting traditional healers in their work, whether for divination, healing or the expulsion of evil. Some of those better known spirits of nature associated with evil must be mentioned in relation to the third traditional African explanation for the reason for misfortune, illness and untimely death, Witchcraft.

Witchcraft

African author Gomang Seratwa Ntloedibe-Kuswani gives the following traditional African definition of witchcraft:

...witchcraft (bolo) is a system of evil, a result of ill-relationship or disharmony between the living, nature and the Divine. [8]

In isiZulu and isiXhosa a Witch is an *umthakathi*. According to traditional belief, an umthakathi is a person, woman or man, believed to have been born with the ability to harm others. This ability is believed to pass from generation to generation "through the breast", i.e. from mother to child. Umthakathi are reputed to be able to shape-shift, to fly, to work their Witchcraft (abathakathi) at night, and to employ the use of both familiar spirits and animals in harming others.

In chapter one I recounted several news reports of people alleging that a rooster (2002), a baboon (2003), a donkey (February 2004), a monkey (November 2004), and chickens (2005) were bewitched to bring harm to villagers. The umthakathi is also believed to have the power to raise the dead and to use dead people as zombies ('Teen forced to drink blood' by Neville Maakana - African Eye News Service - 6 December 2005).

Not only is the umthakathi able to use animals to do his or her bidding, it is believed that the Witch also relies on the assistance of evil spirits located in nature. Amongst the Xhosa peoples the most significant of these mythical spirits include the uthikoloshe, impundulu, umamlambo, ichanti and imfene. These are said to be handed down from parents to children and could be called familial spirits. They are believed to be used by the umthakathi to cause diseases such as small pox, bovine pleuro-pneumonia, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted infections, including AIDS [9].

The most well-known of these familial spirits of the umthakathi is the uthikoloshe. Described as goblin-like, either male or female, it is believed to befriend and favour children. In the hands of an umthakathi however the uthikoloshe becomes an instrument of evil and death. They are said to reside in mud huts under dark and stagnant river water. Oothikoloshe (plural) are said to carry with them a charmed stone which enables them to become invisible, are reputed to love milk and fear salt. Traditional healers often divine dreams in which the victim feels strangled as the work of an uthikoloshe.

In 'The Story of my Mission in Southeastern Africa' missionary W. Shaw wrote:

"the people [Xhosa] universally believe that, aided by some mysterious and evil influence, the nature of which no one can define or explain, bad persons may enter into league with wolves, baboons, jackals and particularly with an imaginary amphibious creature, mostly abiding in the deep portions of the rivers, and called by the Border [Xhosa] utikoloshe. By mysterious intercourse said to be maintained with these and other detested or imaginary creatures, the evil-minded wizards and witches are supposed to obtain their supernatural powers for doing harm to those whom they design to injure in person or property". [10]

The lightning-bird called impundulu is described as a rainbow-coloured or white bird with scarlet legs and beak. Believed to feed on human blood, the impundulu is said to seduce women and turn them into witches. It is said to be accompanied by owls, eagles and hammerheads, animals traditionally associated with conveying messages of evil omen and impending death by lightning strike. Hemorrhaging and miscarriage are said to be the work of impundulu.

Umamlambo is a mythical river snake believed to appear to men as a seductress only to cause the death of a senior male relative. The imfene is said to be a baboon that harms cattle. An umthakathi is said to use the imfene as a horse. Another animal closely associated with the umthakathi is the hyena, also allegedly used as a horse. The izithunzela are the spirits of dead people whom an umthakathi has raised from the grave to do manual labour, i.e. zombies.

In the previous chapter we explored the prevalence and tragic consequences of Witch hunts in the new South Africa, Witch hunts primarily motivated by traditional African beliefs such as those briefly outlined in this chapter. According to the U.S. Department of State's 'International Religious Freedom Report' for 2006, the South African Police Service do not keep statistics on Witch killing.

Given a) the prevalence of such incidences, b) the amount of attention paid to such incidences by several commissions of inquiry into these frequent occurrences between the 1980's and 1990's, c) the establishment and operation of the Occult-

related Crimes Unit between 1992 and 2001, d) the existence of the Witchcraft Suppression Act 3 of 1957 (amended Act 50 of 1970), and e) the 1999 public undertaking by the Commission on Gender Equality to monitor the progress of legislative reform, reconciliation and public education programmes aimed at eradicating Witchcraft violence, [11] it is alarming that no one thought it expedient or indeed absolutely necessary to keep accurate statistics on actual incidences of violence against suspected Witches. How does one monitor the success or failure of public education programmes without accurate statistics?

Between January 2006 and May 2007 only 7 incidences of Witch killing were reported by the African Eye news Service and the South African Press Association. These incidences occurred in the Mpumalanga and Limpopo Provinces. Does this mean that Witch killings are not occurring as frequently or as widely as they did in 2005, or does it mean that Witch killings have become so common place as not to qualify as news?

Without accurate statistics there is no way of knowing for sure. Judging from public statements made by the Limpopo Premier Sello Moloto in March 2006 and February 2007 concerning *"the witchcraft problem in Limpopo"* cited in chapter one, the Action Plan for the Eradication of Witchcraft Violence has not succeeded in stemming Witchcraft accusations and Witch killings.

In March 2006 African Eye News Service correspondent Riot Hlatshwayo reported that pupils of Z B Kunene Senior Secondary School in KaNyamazane near Nelspruit (Mpumalanga) held teachers hostage in a classroom after Mpumalanga education officials and the school governing body refused to dismiss a teacher whom the pupils had accused of bewitching them. [12]

In August Zinkie Sithole reported that a growing tendency among Mpumalanga school pupils to accuse their teachers of Witchcraft saw separate riots at four schools in Mpumalanga since March. According to Sithole, one pupil was killed, three were injured, and a teacher who accused a colleague of Witchcraft was dismissed. Provincial education spokesperson Hlahla Ngwenya is quoted as saying, *"Our preliminary reports indicate that the pupils protested after some of their peers died in succession over a short period... They seem to believe this was the doing of their teachers."* I will quote the rest of Sithole's report with good reason...

The department of local government and housing is drafting new legislation to crack down on witch hunts. Anyone involved in "sniffing out" or persecuting suspected witches will be prosecuted in terms of the proposed Mpumalanga Witchcraft Bill. They would face fines up to R5 000 or prison terms up to five years. The bill will not, however, outlaw witchcraft itself. South Africa's constitutional Bill of Rights guarantees freedom of religion and therefore legalises witchcraft, sorcery, Satanism, and various other controversial beliefs. [13]

Are we to assume that public education programmes aimed at eradicating Witchcraft violence were not presented at these schools? Or are we to assume that if indeed they were that they were perhaps in part responsible for the mass hysteria of pupils?

Reminiscent of a report by Neville Maakana in December 2005 in which a schoolgirl accused a 73 year old woman in Sasekani village near Tzaneen of keeping zombies at her house, [14] in early 2007 a 16-year-old schoolgirl from Burghersdorp village

near Tzaneen (Limpopo Province) appeared in the Ritavi magistrate's court on charges of contravening the Suppression of Witchcraft Act after she accused an 80 year old woman of keeping zombies in her house. [15]

Also in February Thabisile Khoza reported that a 20 year old woman in Mpumalanga had committed suicide by drinking car oil after her sister- and mother-in-law repeatedly accused her of being a Witch. In her suicide note, according to Schoemansdal police spokesperson Inspector Thulani Mnisi, the woman wrote, *"God knows that I'm not a witch. Stay in peace"*. [16]

In March 2007 Nkosana ka Makaula reported that members of a Nelspruit community in Mpumalanga Province had accused a 60 year old woman of bewitching teenager Lwazi Madonsela after she hung herself with a scarf from the rafters of her bedroom. The unnamed woman had apparently told the girl's family that she had dreamt that "lots of people would converge on their home" prior to the girl's suicide. Nelspruit Constable Chicco Nkosi is reported to have said,

"Accusing someone of witchcraft is a crime - that's why we arrested the two women. Then, when the 60-year-old woman confessed, we were put in a really difficult position. We have a unique situation here... we arrest two women for making unfounded accusations. Then it turns out that the arrested women were not wrong, after all. How are we going to prosecute the 60-year-old woman? What do we charge her with? The police are bound to protect the 60-year-old woman. We cannot allow anybody to take the law into their own hands." [17]

Whether or not the old woman was indeed guilty of bewitching the young girl, or whether she was simply overcome by the accuracy of her prophetic dream and felt somehow complicit due to her foretelling of the event, remains a matter of speculation. But her admission and the uncertainty of the constable on which way to proceed facing such a legal paradox highlights an important concern held by many South Africans who define themselves as Pagan Witches.

With few exceptions reported cases of Witchcraft related violence show that between 2000 and 2007 incidences of Witchcraft accusation and violence against suspected Witches occurred primarily within predominantly Nguni speaking provinces, namely within the Limpopo Province, Mpumalanga, Kwazulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape. We are not however implying that only Zulus, Xhosa and Swazi peoples are prone to making Witchcraft accusations, nor that the traditional belief systems of these peoples are solely responsible for inciting Witch hunts in 21st century South Africa. Witch hunts are not exclusively restricted to these four provinces or peoples.

The 'problem of evil' is often stated in the question, 'why does God allow evil to exist'? As we have seen, the umthakathi is an essential part of the answer to why, for a Zulu or Xhosa at least, evil occurs in Africa. Misfortune and illness not identified as originating either from an understandable natural cause (and even here there are also exceptions to the rule), the ancestors, or as the result of ritual impurity, is believed to derive from the work of evil spirits and Witchcraft.

As we shall see the influence of Christian beliefs concerning Witches, the Occult and Satanism have and do also play an influential role in perpetuating the promotion of suspicion, prejudice and fear against Witchcraft and Witches in this country.

Part II. Christianity

The concept of the nature and purpose of evil amongst coloured and white Afrikaans and English speaking South Africans is no less diverse. As most English and Afrikaans speakers are either nominally or devoutly Christian, and since Christianity has the largest number of adherents, it would be illogical not to examine what Christians of various denominations have to say about evil and Witchcraft in particular.

In *Witchcraft and Social Relations in a South African Village: Implications for Development Policy and Practice* (2003) Frederick Golooba-Mutebi writes that anti-Witchcraft movements *"have in the past sprung up in the guise of millenarian movements with religio-Christian characteristics. Some have even been encouraged or led by clergy of mainstream or fringe churches."* [18]

African Initiated Churches number more than 10 000 in South Africa, most of who are predominantly Protestant. The Zionist Christian Church is the largest AIC denomination numbering more than four million mostly Zulu and Swazi members. Many AIC's have incorporated traditional African beliefs concerning the nature of evil.

Allan Anderson remarks,

The African world is filled with fearsome and unpredictable occurrences demanding a Christian answer. The hermeneutical process of Pentecostal-type AIC's seeks to be relevant to the total existence, and to proclaim biblical deliverance from the very real fear of evil. Whatever the source - evil, misfortune and affliction are the experience of people everywhere. The Pentecostal-type churches in Africa are endeavoring to provide a solution to this compelling need. [19]

In AIC's prophets assume the role previously held by traditional diviners and healers.

The prophets are the ones to whom God reveals his will and through whom he manifests his power. Although sometimes the prophets are revealers of the will of ancestors, for most members the source of the revelation is the Holy Spirit. He is the one who gives the prophets the power to heal sickness and overcome evil generated by the deep-seated fears and insecurities inherent in the traditional world view. [20]

If Witchcraft is suspected as a cause of illness or misfortune prophets perform exorcisms to expel evil spirits and maleficium.

Our respondents said that affliction and trouble came from various sources: from Satan, from failure to keep the instructions of the Bible or of the church leaders, from hatred and fear of other people, from witchcraft and sorcery, from the ancestors, and even from God. The solution was to trust in a power greater than the afflicting power. Most said that faith in God and his ability to bring deliverance was the prerequisite for salvation. [21]

Numerous Christian Biblical references strongly condemn the practice of Witchcraft and divinations as an abomination to God. One in particular incites Christians to *"not suffer a witch to live."* [22]

Other Biblical references often cited against Witchcraft in the King James version include:

Deuteronomy 18:9-15

When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God. For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so to do. The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;

Leviticus 19:31

Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God.

Leviticus 20:6

And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.

1 Samuel 15:23

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

Galatians 5:19-21

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

1 Chronicles 10:13

So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it;

Isaiah 8:19

And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?

Micah 5:12

And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand; and thou shalt have no more soothsayers:

1 Corinthians 10:14-21

Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship

with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

The Bible explicitly motivates and encourages prejudice against Witchcraft and calls on Christians to expel practitioners of Witchcraft, referred to above in the King James Bible as '*witches, sorcerers, enchanter, necromancers, wizards, soothsayers and diviners*'. In a Christian sense, Witchcraft is closely associated with idolatry, sacrifices, familiar spirits and devil-worship, but also with foresworn common religious practices of pagan (pre-Christian) cultures of the time.

In 21st century South Africa, Christians are presented with a unique paradox. The law of the land prohibits the accusation of Witchcraft and forbids incitement to harm. The African National Congress government's promotion of equality has been resisted by some Christians in South Africa. Much of this resistance has been targeted at rights afforded to minorities and previously disadvantaged persons, rights seen to be diminishing their own right to hold religious beliefs contrary to those enshrined in the Bill of Rights, law and legislation.

In January 2000 the African Christian Democratic Party's President Kenneth Meshoe, objecting to the 'Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Bill' tabled in parliament said,

[This] Bill is going to directly affect a number of rights enshrined in the Bill of Rights such as the right to freedom of belief, freedom of religion, freedom of association, freedom of speech and freedom of conscience. The ACDP regards this Bill as one of the worst and most far-reaching interventions by this Government in the regulation of private life. [23]

The Act in question (Act No. 4 of 2000) prohibits the advocacy of hatred based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion that constitutes incitement to cause harm. [24]

In his criticism of the 'Religion in Education Policy', ACDP MP Rev. Kenneth Meshoe writes,

The department (of Education) justifies its multi-faith Religion in Education policy by quoting the constitutional right of equality, which allows "fair discrimination" in favour of people who are seen to have been previously disadvantaged. The government sees Christians as the previously advantaged group against which "fair discrimination" is now a necessity. Government has been en route to this juncture since the signing of the Constitution and policy and legislation since then have been preparing the way. Christians who oppose government's agenda are seen as bigots and labeled intolerant, while Minister Asmal proudly makes good on his promise to ensure that no learner is ever again "indoctrinated" with Christianity. [25]

In September 2002 Cheryllyn Dudley ACDP MP said in Parliament,

Moral regeneration... sounds good! But...what exactly do we mean? Biblical morality for example, is diametrically opposed to the morality, which is diligently promoted in South Africa. Humanism has replaced Biblical foundations, and now dictates the new South African, and new World Order. This new order does not seek to restrain and punish evil and protect good but seeks to change and reform mankind through laws and policies, which they say will free us of every evil. Take the Equality Act for example, designed to free us from prejudice but entrenches homosexual rights and renders Christians guilty before Equality Courts, for simply quoting the Bible. [26]

Christian prejudice against Witchcraft in South Africa has largely been targeted at what National Co-ordinator of 'Africa Christian Action' Jeanine McGill refers to as the "*mass marketing of witchcraft*" through J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series. McGill writes,

Professor Quirrell's statement, "There is no good or evil, there is only power, and those too weak to seek it" is didactic. Potter fans claim that this statement can't be taken seriously, since Quirrell was controlled by evil at that point. It would appear from the warm picture presented in books that Harry believes in good and evil, and aligns himself with good. However, when measured against an objective standard (the Bible), Harry's attitudes and acts align him more with the sinful nature. (Galatians 5: 19 to 21 includes idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy.) [...] We are engaged in a massive spiritual battle. If we as Christians do not do our job, JK Rowling will "evangelise" our generation into witchcraft bondage and "discipleship" of hedonism, selfishness and despair. Real, eternal destinies are at stake. Rather than giving in to self-indulgence and pleasure seeking, let us seek God and evangelise and disciple our world for the King of kings. [27]

Peter Hammond echoes these sentiments in 'Through the Wardrobe'.

Unfortunately, because of the success of the "Harry Potter" series, many have assumed that the "The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe" is something similar. However, while Lewis's "Chronicles of Narnia" have a Christian worldview, the "Harry Potter" books and films are occultic. C.S. Lewis made clear in his writings that it is wrong to use magic. Magic is forbidden in the Bible (Deuteronomy 18:8-13; Leviticus 19:31; Revelation 21:8). However, in the "Chronicles of Narnia," Lewis uses the word "Magic" as a synonym for the unchangeable Laws that God has written into the universe. [...] In contrast, the "Harry Potter" books are thoroughly occultic. In their ontology, the world can be manipulated through magic. Things change shape. Nothing is really real. There is no need for a Saviour. One merely has to have the right incantations and formulas to manipulate reality for one's own selfish ends. While Christians should avoid the occultic "Harry Potter" series, both the books and the films; Christians can enthusiastically support "The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe" film, and the book on which it is based. [28]

Christian prejudice against Witchcraft has also focused on the celebration of Halloween. In The Bible and Halloween, African Christian Action states,

Halloween is a religious day, but it is not Christian. Tom Sanguinet, a former high priest in Wicca has said: "The modern holiday that we call Halloween has its origins in the full moon closest to November 1, the witches' new year. It is a time when the spirits (demons) are supposed to be at their peak power and revisiting planet earth... Halloween is purely and absolutely evil, and there is nothing we ever have, or will do, that would make it acceptable to the Lord Jesus." [...] Instead of participating in paganism, walking with Wicca, being in harmony with Halloween, having our children celebrate cruelty, and dabbling in a day of death, we should focus our family and congregation on celebrating Reformation Day this 31 October. [...] Every Bible believing Christian should celebrate the Reformation. No Christian should have part in celebrating the occultic Halloween. We are in a spiritual world war. Cruelty to animals, vandalism and even murders occur with far greater frequency during Halloween. Every Halloween many thousands of animals, and even people, are sacrificed in satanic rituals worldwide, while millions of other people, including well meaning Christians, participate in Halloween celebrations. Halloween is a prime recruiting time for witches and Satanists. Many people have testified that they were introduced to the occult at a Halloween party. Halloween is very religious, but it is not Christian. [29]

Note: Halloween finds its Celtic origins in the pagan Irish festival of Samhain. It is prudent to note here that South African Pagans do not celebrate Samhain in October but rather at the start of May, the start of the season of Winter in the southern hemisphere. Pagan Witches neither proselytize nor practice blood sacrifice.

In an article published in Christian Action Magazine in 2004 entitled 'The Paganisation of South Africa', Director of the Christian Action Network Dr. Peter Hammond attempted to draw cause and consequence between pre-Christian animistic paganism, human sacrifice and slavery.

When the President of South Africa calls for "an African Renaissance", what exactly does he mean? Is he calling us to the humanism of the European Renaissance that culminated in the French Revolution and the Soviet Gulags? Or is he merely desiring a return to the pre-Christian Paganism and Animism that afflicted Africa prior to the spread of the Gospel? [...] We want God to bless South Africa. However, we cannot expect God to bless a nation which is in rebellion to His Laws. Consider how we have broken the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20: 1-17). Our leaders are too proud to bow before God in prayer at the beginning of Parliament. At state events, our leaders have committed idolatry, worshiping other gods who are not God at all. God's Name is routinely taken in vain on national television and at cinemas, and this blasphemy is constitutionally protected and regarded as "entertainment". [30]

Peter Hammond, director of the Cape Town-based Frontline Fellowship, was charged with assault in 2005 after he gave his children paintball guns and instructed them to target Halloween trick or treaters on the streets of Cape Town. The Cape Argus reported,

Many fundamentalist Christians believe Halloween, with its pagan origins, is a celebration of the "powers of darkness". Some describe it as "an evil day of Satan", and say participation sends a message to children that witchcraft, demonism, Satanism, and the occult are fun, entertaining and harmless. [31]

Perhaps the most vehement opposition to Witchcraft and the occult in general in South Africa was published in an on-line publication of Servamus Safety and Security Magazine. [32] This Special Edition is still available online.

Servamus provides its readers, primarily in the South African Police Services, with the following definition for Witchcraft:

1. A witch is a person who is possessed by a spirit of witchcraft.
2. Witches cause misery, destruction and bloodshed.
3. Witches and magicians work with spirits who ultimately carry out Satan's orders.
4. The only escape for a witch is to accept Jesus Christ - FOR HELP: 083 917 JESUS (53787).

The cited sources for this discriminatory propaganda against Witches and other occultists include amongst others, 'The Solution, Youth and Satanism Exposed' by F. H. Havenga and Kobus Jonker, [33] and 'Satanism in South Africa' by Els, Lien and Jonker. [34]

Kobus Jonker founded the ORCU in 1992. In 2000 Jonker's occult-related policy structure was accepted as SAPS policy, which led to the first occult-related crime

course in South Africa. 'Satanism in South Africa' became compulsory reading for all ORCU detectives.

In a featured article on Kobus Jonker published by Servamus entitled "God's Detective: Left But Not Lost", Madaleen Fourie writes,

Having suffered some terrible childhood years, Kobus has always had a passion for the youth and an interest in the supernatural. The beginning of Kobus Jonker's involvement with occult-related investigative work started after Senior Supt Kobus Jonker had given his life to Jesus Christ in the early 80's. [35]

In preview of the Servamus Special Community Edition on 'Drugs & Occult-related Crime' featuring the work of Jonker, the editors of Servamus claim,

"In a time when information addiction is rife, the line between fact and fiction, and right and wrong becomes even finer, and compromise even easier. The SAPS, in carrying out its constitutional duties, endeavours to promote a safer South Africa, and, along with the community, is doing all it can to curb drug- and occult-related crime. The need for accurate information about these crimes was identified and, especially, the provision of an answer for those involved. This project is mainly sponsored by the private sector. More sponsors will be needed to reach our aim of 1 million copies. This special edition forms part of a proactive action and supports priority three of the SAPS policing priorities focusing on the combating of crime against women and children and is fully supported by our National Commissioner J S Selebi." [36]

Is religious discrimination being sanctioned by the South African Police Services? The South African Police Service Code of Conduct requires all police officials to ***at all times uphold the Constitution and the law, protect the fundamental rights of every person and act impartially.***

The Community Edition in question, published in a magazine whose target audience are members of the South African Police Services states,

Ninety-five percent of all mass murders in history are said to be directly related to the occult. In South Africa more than 60 statutory Acts concerning the occult, have been and are still being violated. These crimes include murder, attempted murder, rape, attempted rape, sodomy, bestiality, drug abuse, weapon smuggling, kidnapping people (to cruelly torture and sacrifice them to Satan, for example street children, the homeless and prostitutes), abortion (of unwanted babies usually fathered by other Satanists, who are then sacrificed to Satan), cruelty to animals (to torture them and sacrifice them to Satan), desecration of graves, etc. [...] You cannot be a satanist and not be involved in crime. [37]

Remember, according to the U.S. Department of State's International Religious Freedom Report for 2006,

There were no reports of killings linked to the practice of Satanism. The government does not keep records on cases of reported witchcraft and satanic killings. These cases are investigated and prosecuted as homicide by law enforcement officials. [38]

Yet the Servamus Special Community Edition on 'Drugs & Occult-related Crime' claims that *"Ex-Satanists or survivors of Satanism say that this cult is growing rapidly"*. The article also states,

A witch or wizard is a person who is possessed by a spirit of witchcraft. A black witch is more feared than the white and grey witches. Witches and wizards cause misery, destruction and bloodshed. They use magic and charms for their powers. They have spirit eyes with which they are able to see into the spirit world at all times. For example, whenever the witches are angry with a person and wish to destroy him/her, they will place a spiritual mark upon the forehead of that person. This mark can only be seen in the spirit world with witch eyes. No matter where this person tries to escape, s/he can never get away. The witches in the new location will see the mark and begin fighting against that person until they have destroyed him/her. The only escape is to accept Jesus Christ. A witch, wizard, or magician can travel in the astral world. Working with the servient spirits, they are the ones who ultimately carry out Satan's orders. The servient spirits are called so because they serve the Principalities, Powers and Rulers of Darkness. The familiar spirits, they are the ones who ultimately carry out Satan's orders. The servient spirits are also servants, but one of their primary functions is to gather information about humans for the Dark Kingdom. Evil spirits must have a physical body in order to operate in the physical world. These spirits cause sickness, poverty and even death within the human race. Only the word of God and the Name of Jesus are powerful enough to stand up against these wicked spirits. [39]

This definition and description of a Witch as a servant of Satan, one popularized and promoted by Kobus Jonker [40] is one often repeated by Christians against both ancient and modern Witches.

Peter Hammond writes in another article entitled 'Hostility against Christianity',

The publishing of our new book Biblical Principles for Africa sparked a lot of interest and controversy. [...] On a secular radio programme (702 Talk Radio), I was astounded at the intense opposition to the book from listeners calling in. [...] The first caller attacked me and my new book over something that the book doesn't even deal with. This lady declared that the Bible contains the six most destructive and dangerous words ever written: "You shall not suffer a witch to live". Beside from the fact that that's actually 8 words and not 6, I was quite surprised that she would have thought that the most important issue to bring up. I pointed out that as witches throughout history have engaged in human sacrifices, it should be evident that it is most appropriate to have the death penalty for such murderers. [41]

The statement: *"...witches throughout history have engaged in human sacrifices, it should be evident that it is most appropriate to have the death penalty for such murderers"* constitutes incitement not only to expel suspected witches, but to legally sanction their execution. No evidence is given by Hammond to support his statement that Witches throughout history have engaged in human sacrifices.

Pastor James Lottering, an ex-member of the South African Police Service and assigned to the Occult Related Crimes Unit as Provincial Coordinator for the Eastern Cape between July 1992 and 31 December 1997, now runs 'Warfare Ministries'. [42]

'Warfare Ministries' website states,

During this time he was appointed to assist in the investigation of Satanism, witchcraft and other supernatural occurrences which constituted crimes through these practices. God took James to another level spiritually and placed him into the DELIVERANCE ministry to assist people who are bound, demon possessed and where curses and bondages have been placed on their lives to set them free through the blood and the Name of Jesus Christ. During this time he was appointed to assist in the investigation of Satanism, witchcraft and other supernatural occurrences which constituted crimes

through these practices. James has been involved in the training up of Pastors, leaders and members of churches to do deliverances and to cause damage to the kingdom of satan. [...] The vision that James has is to raise up leaders all over South Africa, Africa and the world to do what he does as to become a nightmare to the devil's kingdom. [...] Businessmen and –women who are Christians are also coming under attack in the market place. The competition are consulting with sangomas, mediums, witchdoctors and other occult practices to curse the Christian businesses. Instead of the Christian calling on their spiritual leaders in the church, they also in turn consulting with the devil, which then opens the door and satan destroys their businesses. [43]

Lottering himself writes,

As a member of the South African Police Service for 21 years, I (James) was assigned to the Occult-related crimes unit as Provincial Coordinator, Eastern Cape in July 1992. At that stage the unit consisted of 52 members but today, due to the sensitive nature of this work, there are only two of us left, namely myself and Kobus Jonker. During this period I was invited to lecture at 300 different venues, where many lives were touched and changed by Jesus Christ. I received many telephone calls daily from concerned parents who were worried about their children being involved or dabbling in satanism/the occult. During this time I also helped 200 young people out of Satanism. Due to the fact that we are dealing with the supernatural many of these children fall back into the occult because they do not receive ongoing specialized counselling. Eph. 6:12 - "for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." The constitution of South Africa declared freedom of religion thereby recognising satanism as a religion. Due to this, Marie and I had to seriously consider my future within the Police Service. We eventually decided to step out in faith and run "WARFARE MINISTRIES" on a full-time basis. We will be opening a counselling office and in due course a centre to help these adults/children. [44]

In order to understand what is meant by 'warfare ministries' we consulted two definitive on-line sources of information. In the first entitled 'A Quick Primer on Spiritual Warfare', spiritual warfare is defined as,

... a battle between the kingdom of darkness ruled by Satan and the kingdom of light ruled by God and His Son Jesus Christ. The weapons of this warfare are not fleshly human weapons but spiritual weapons such as truth and righteousness, blessings and curses, forgiveness and repentance. The battle involves an intense wrestling with powers and principalities "in the heavenly realms" from which Christians need protection. [45]

The recommended procedure according to this manual, for dealing with any occult involvement includes the following advice:

1. Do a personal inventory of both your involvement and your families involvement in the occult - could your grandmother tell fortunes, did you have an uncle who was a magician (not tricks - real magic), were your parents members of an organisation like "The Spiritualist Church". Remember the punishment for these sins goes down the generations and could be affecting you. Confess all these that you know of to God and ask His forgiveness. [...] Break associations with the sins of parents and ancestors particularly those involving the occult or idolatry. Exodus 34:6,7 says such sins bring a curse "to the third and fourth generation". We have to break ties with such sins by not participating in occult ceremonies that may be traditional and even confessing such involvement of your parents and ancestors and forsaking them in a prayer of renunciation to God. The essential thing is to make a clear break with the familial sin in your own heart, mind and spirit.

2. Burn everything that is associated with the occult -jade Buddhas, temple wind chimes, tarot cards, magic books, demon masks, even the "dark" kind of heavy metal music, things with pentagrams on it (the five pointed occult star), astrology books, love magic , charms, books from cults such as the JW's or Mormons, when in doubt destroy it. Many people are trapped by the value of these items as they can be covered with gold or silver or be "old and rare books" etc. The Ephesian Christians burnt 50,000 drachmas (about 5 million dollars worth) of magic books when they became converted. The Bible tells us (Deut 7:25) that we are not to covet the silver or the gold that is on them - its tempting but its dangerous. [...] Get rid of objects that bring a curse particularly objects associated with pagan worship, idolatry or the occult. For instance if we have our Grandmothers pack of tarot cards we need to get rid of them. (Deuteronomy 7:25,26) The Ephesian converts were moved by the Holy Spirit to burn their magic scrolls and occult objects. (Acts 19:18-20). [46]

In The Spiritual Warfare Mini-Handbook demons are defined and described as having the power to cause mental illness.

Demons can and do cause mental illness:

- They can make a person be not in his 'right mind' (Mark 15:15).
- They can cause screaming and convulsions, foaming at the mouth (Luke 9:39).
- They can cause self-destructive thoughts and actions (Mark 9:22).
- They can make a person appear to be 'raving mad' (John 10:20).
- They can cause immoral, anti-social behavior that makes the person seem not right mentally (Mark 5:15; Luke 8:35).

It cannot be said with certainty if all mental illness is demonic or not. Other factors are involved such as chemical imbalances, birth defects, damage from injury or drug usage, etc. Demonizing must always be considered until completely ruled out. One way to tell if it is demonic or not is the person's willingness to listen or talk about Jesus. If they fall asleep, change the subject constantly, don't seem to be hearing you, get violent, want to leave in a hurry, etc., you have good reason to suspect demons are involved. [47]

This handbook condemns Witchcraft as a sin, including as sins any occult practices, including astrology, fortune telling, séances, hypnotism, psychic healing and all new-age practices and beliefs. But it also lists playing Dungeons and Dragons together with these occult practices as *"those which can allow Satan and his demons to have access to demonize you."* [48]

In the new South Africa, any person who incites violence against a suspected Witch is liable on conviction to imprisonment under the Witchcraft Suppression Act. The Constitutional protection of religion and belief prohibits religious discrimination against Witchcraft as defined by modern Pagans.

The South African Bill of Rights determines that *"no person may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth"*. [49]

Part III. Muti, ritual sacrifice and human mutilations

Concurrent with the phenomena of Witch killings in South Africa outlined in chapter one is the frequent abduction, murder and dismemberment of men, women and children for the illegal trade in human body parts. Between 1992 and 2001 the ORCU focused its attention primarily on investigating muti murders; ritualized murders in which human body-parts are harvested for use in magic. During its 10 year existence the ORCU investigated in excess of 300 cases of muti-related crimes according to Kobus Jonker.

The word 'muti' is a Zulu word meaning 'medicine'. African traditions ascribe supernatural properties to medicines derived from both plant and animal sources. In extreme circumstances, unethical traditional healers resort to using muti made from human body parts, a practice widely eschewed by traditional healers.

According to traditional African beliefs, the use of human organs or other body parts increases the power of muti. An important distinction needs to be made between those who only use plants and herbs for purposes of healing, i.e. traditional healers, and those who also use human organs and other body parts, i.e. witch doctors. This paper deals with the latter category. Several instances have been reported about the trafficking of persons within South Africa or from neighbouring countries to South Africa whose organs or other body parts ended up in the muti of witch doctors. Although it could not be established with certainty, there appear to be certain organised gangs which provide human organs or other body parts to witch doctors... Authorities generally prosecute only the perpetrators of the murder and not the witch doctor who has ordered the organs or other body parts. Unless the organs or other body parts are found in the possession of the witch doctor, the police have no evidence to link the killing to the witch doctor who often denies knowing the perpetrators. Given the belief that witch doctors possess supernatural powers, it is found that members of the community are often scared to testify against them. [50]

It is important to note here that whilst muti murder is seldom associated with actual Witchcraft or Satanism in the press, there are exceptions where such association is not accompanied by or based on actual evidence of the existence or influence of Witchcraft. Muti murder is not in any way associated with Witchcraft as practiced by modern Pagan Witches, nor with Satanism.

The ORCU never-the-less defined 'occult-related crime' as,

...any human conduct that constitutes any legally recognized crime, the modus operandi of which relates to or emanates primarily from any belief or seeming belief in the occult, witchcraft, satanism, mysticism, magic, esotericism and the like. Included in the scope of occult-related crime are ritual muti/medicine murders, witch purging, witchcraft-related violence and sect-related practices that pose a threat to the safety and security of the Republic of South Africa and/or its inhabitants. [51]

Available evidence will show that the muti murderers themselves are neither Witches nor Satanists, but are most often paid by unscrupulous so-called traditional healers to harvest human body parts and tissue for use in magic.

In February 2006, 4 year old Connie Ncube was abducted and murdered by traditional healer Mandla Ephraim Zulu because he wanted to remove parts of the young girl's body to make a muti for financial prosperity. He was hired by hairdresser Lourence Eric Ngoveni. In court investigating officer Captain Jerry Mokgotho described a photograph of Connie's body. *"The flesh around the eyes is completely*

removed. Her eyes are wide open, her lips cut off and the flesh around the neck and chin removed". Connie was also missing a little finger on her left hand. [52]

Dr. Hendrik Scholtz, a South African expert in ritualistic murders who took part in a second autopsy of the girl, told a news conference that the body of Connie Ncube bore the hallmarks of a ritualistic death.

He said human sacrifice would be staged by a few people seeking to obtain supernatural powers to be successful in something like business or politics. "The person is sacrificed to awaken the supernatural force required to attain that goal," he said at the National Police Training Centre in Bramshill, southern England. "It is my opinion that the nature of the discovery of the body, features of the external examination including the nature of the wounds, clothing and mechanism of death are consistent with those of a ritual homicide as practiced in Africa," Scholtz said. He said that the fingers, brain and skull of the victims were used as potions and medicines for those who wanted to awaken the supernatural forces. [53]

More recently the Mail & Guardian online reported that KwaDabeka police investigating the beheading of a seven-year-old KwaZulu-Natal boy believe a "*witchdoctor syndicate*" may have been behind the crime. The body of Vuyani Ngqulunga who went missing on November 1 was found with his head and testicles removed. The perpetrators of this heinous crime were allegedly paid R20 000. Police spokesperson Captain Bongani Khomo is quoted as saying,

"We believe the boy's private parts were bought by an inyanga [witchdoctor] for muti purposes. We are also investigating the possibility that a witchdoctor syndicate to get body parts for muti is operating in the area... If we find the person who bought the testicles, he will be arrested for being in possession of human tissue." [54] [55]

Traditional Healers in South Africa opposed to such practices tend rather to identify the perpetrators of muti-murders as witch-doctors, perhaps a misnomer as the term itself implies a doctor of witches or one who euphemistically takes care of witches when they are perceived to be a nuisance. Traditional Healers (iSangoma – diviners / magic workers or iNyanga – herbalists) allied to formal Traditional Healers associations and organisations use only herbs, roots and animal sacrifice in their practice and have publicly distanced themselves on numerous occasions from traditional healers who practice human sacrifice and dismemberment or who trade in human body parts.

However in a recent article published in The Daily News on October 31 and republished on IOL entitled 'Muti killings on the rise in KZN', the unnamed reporter stated,

"In KwaZulu-Natal, poverty and human suffering are believed to be some of the reasons behind the rise in muti killings and witchcraft". [56]

The reporter alleges that Kara Heritage Institute director Dr. Mathole Motshekga told [him / her] that,

"...the increase in witchcraft and muti-related crimes was the result of the socio-economic conditions that affect the majority of South Africans... witchcraft and muti-related crimes posed a major challenge to the country". [57]

It is clearly the assumption of the author of this article (and of Dr. Mathole Motshekga) that muti-murders and Witchcraft are related, and that Witches must

therefore be the ones responsible for perpetrating murder and human mutilations, crimes which are alleged to be on the increase according to former head of the Occult-related Crimes Unit (ORCU) of the SAPS Kobus Jonker.

The article in question however does not provide any evidence to prove, or link, actual cases of murder and human mutilations to the practice of Witchcraft. The alleged Witches appear instead once again to be rogue traditional healers acting outside the boundary of accepted traditional practices and without the sanction of credible traditional healers themselves.

The article cites muti-related cases in which several traditional healers have been found collaborating with alleged criminals. President of the KwaZulu-Natal Traditional Healers Association Sazi Mhlongo distanced traditional healers from the practice of human mutilations by allegedly calling those traditional healers found using human body parts "*Witchdoctors*" and "*charlatans*".

On SAfm on 25 October 2007, responding to a question regarding the recent arrest of an iSangoma believed to have been assisting criminals with evading arrest through the use of magic, Dr. Motshekga stated that iSangomas are led by good spirits to heal and Witches are led by evil spirits to commit crimes.

Motshekga claimed that since the iSangoma had acted criminally, his activities should be regarded as Witchcraft and should not be used to assert that therefore all iSangomas are criminals. Of course the learned gentleman failed to apply the same rigor of common sense and fairness when discussing Witchcraft and Witches.

As early as 1933 Alice Werner wrote,

" Another belief, held strongly in practically every part of Africa, is that witches hold their revels at the graves of those recently dead, digging up and reanimating the corpse, and then killing it again, eating the flesh, and taking some of the parts as ingredients of the most powerful charms. But this is not their only reason for resuscitating corpses. There is a strange and horrible superstition, widely distributed, with considerable local variations, to the effect that it is done in order to obtain a familiar, who can be sent about on the warlock's evil errands. [58]

Of course Werner was merely repeating the same propaganda that had been leveled at Witchcraft and alleged Witches in Europe by Christians between 1300 and 1700, allegations which inspired and sustained the European Inquisitions against heresy, and the Witch-trials of Salem, Massachusetts between 1692/93.

As recently as February 2007 this belief was strong enough to convince a 14 year old girl and ten others of her village to accuse an 80 year old woman of keeping zombies in her house. Ten villagers responded to the girls accusations by burning down the homes of the accused woman and her sons. [59] Another girl claimed to have been abducted by a 73 year old woman and forced to drink human blood. The accused was stoned and banished from her village. [60]

A December 2007 SABC Africa Special Assignment documentary on "Muti murders" in Limpopo Province, written by Johan Abrahams, proved convincingly that ritual killings are perpetrated by criminals who then sell their human tissue harvest to inyangas/traditional healers.

The presented evidence linking ritual murders in which human body parts are harvested by traditional healers was well researched. Two Traditional Healers (S.Hlathi and M.Neluyhola both from the Traditional Healers Association THA) were interviewed who stated that the practice of ritual murder of humans should not be encouraged or undertaken by inyangas.

The programme then featured four traditional healers who were found guilty in court of purchasing and using human body parts in their practices. These unscrupulous traditional healers are NOT Witches and do NOT practice Witchcraft. They do however practice a traditional form of African magic. This distinction should be made. It is an important one.

Within the last 5 minutes of the report Witchcraft was mentioned twice, first by Johan Abrahams who said,

“...here the belief in witchcraft and muti murder is strongly entrenched...”.

Abrahams said this with reference to a rural Limpopo community of Christians.

... and then by Professor Victor Ralushai who stated,

“...Make it a point that people are taught in schools about certain practices which are dirty, like muti murder and witchcraft... let us teach the youth that not every custom is good”.

Professor Anthony Minaar (Criminal Justice Studies: UNISA) said,

“Get church and religious leaders in so that you educate the people on a religious level that there is no substance to these beliefs.”

Absolutely no evidence was given to link Witchcraft with ritual killings. Witchcraft was never-the-less implicated by belief (and not through evidence). The evidence will prove that Witchcraft as Pagans know it is not related in any way to ritual killings (muti murders).

Part IV. Christian spiritual warfare and the Satanic conspiracy

An October 2007 e-mail alert [61], originating from Pastor Conrad Kruger of Acts Christian Centre of Constantia Kloof in Gauteng, levels serious allegations of human sacrifice by "*Satanic covens*" in South Africa on Halloween. Acts Christian Centre is a spiritual warfare ministry. The ministry's primary cause for existing is to counter what they regard and name as the dangers of the occult. The "*spiritual warfare attack team*" of Acts Christian Centre is led by Pastor Conrad Kruger and Nadia Oosthuizen.

South African Pagans who by their own admission neither identify themselves as Satanists nor practice human or animal sacrifice expressed offense at Kruger's deliberate demonization of the Pagan holy day of Halloween and at the Pastor's stereotypical criminalization of all Satanists as kidnappers, pedophiles and murderers.

In responding to several complaints from justifiably angry Pagans, Kruger, whilst admitting that Pagans are not Satanists, repeatedly questioned why Pagans should be taking offense to his diatribe against Satanists and their (his alleged) predicted alleged activities between October 22 to October 31.

Pagan Charles Van Bergen accused Kruger of hate speech against Pagans.

"Halloween is a Pagan festival and has absolutely nothing, no matter which hemisphere we live in, to do with Christianity, and therefore, absolutely nothing to do with Satanism! This is therefore hate speech designed to induce fear of and hatred for Pagans by aligning us in the eyes of Christians with their natural enemies, Satanists. This kind of malicious and willful mis-/disinformation endangers each and every one of us. By turning Halloween into some sort of Satanic festival, even if only by association, they are attacking Pagans." [62]

Convenor of the South African Pagan Council Luke Martin, in a letter of objection to Pastor Kruger wrote,

"Let me tell you with total honesty, you are wrong about Halloween and every one of your other malicious statements, which are in fact hate speech. The vast majority of "covens" in this country do not recognise the Judeo-Christian entity, Satan. Neither do they celebrate Halloween (Samhain) at this time of year. It is Beltane we are about to celebrate in the Southern Hemisphere." [63]

South African Pagans celebrate Halloween, a festival traditionally celebrated at the beginning of Winter, on the eve of May 1. Also called Samhain, Halloween is regarded by Pagans throughout the world as a sacred feast day in honour of the Ancestors and 'the Dead'.

Terri Moore, Executive Member of the South African Pagan Rights Alliance, questioned Kruger's insistence on promoting the belief in Satanic ritual abuse in South Africa.

"Satanic Ritual Abuse has been thoroughly debunked by the FBI as well as others, but these Christians just keep dragging it back from the dead, especially around this time of year." [64]

The e-mail in question lists very specific alleged activities to be undertaken by alleged Satanists, including:

- (a) the ceremonial planning and kidnapping of a (?) sacrificial victim between October 22 and 29,
- (b) the sacrifice of the kidnapped victim on October 28,
- (c) another human sacrifice (presumably with a different victim?) and "sexual orgies with demons, animals and children in order to attempt to enter the gates of hell" on October 31, and
- (d) yet another human sacrifice to mark the end of Halloween between November 1 and 3.

The Pastor adds that another human and animal sacrifice will take place on December 22, and that a male and female sacrifice will occur on December 25. [65]

Unfortunately Kruger mistakenly assigns December 22 as a "summer equinox" instead of the Summer Solstice, another sacred holy day for Pagans and one in which reverence is given by Pagans to the Sun as the source of Life and Light on Earth.

The Pastor's apparent inside knowledge of these alleged occult activities is derived, by his own admission in personal correspondence, from the work of Kobus Jonker and F.A. Havenga. [66] The so-called Satanic Calendar [67] originated by Havenga and adopted without question by Kruger in motivating his call to action against Halloween and its alleged Satanic practices, has been thoroughly discredited by a number of authoritative sources, including self-defined South African and international Satanists themselves.

According to encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com,

"Dr. Ed Murphy is the author of a modern 600 page tome on the subject from the point of view of deliverance ministry entitled *The Handbook of Spiritual Warfare*.... [] ...The excesses of unsubstantiated allegations made in the Satanic Ritual Abuse phenomena of the 1980s and 1990s has also prompted critical reviews. Some apologists in the Christian counter-cult movement have expressed concerns that spiritual warfare techniques seem at times to have been based on spurious stories and anecdotes without careful discernment and reflection. Some of these general concerns have been expressed by apologists like Elliot Miller (Christian Research Institute), and Bob and Gretchen Passantino in various articles published in the *Christian Research Journal*. Others, such as Mike Hertenstein and Jon Trott, have called into question the claims of alleged ex-Satanists like Mike Warnke and Lauren Stratford whose stories have subsequently influenced many popular books about spiritual warfare and the occult. Bill Ellis' work *Raising the Devil* has detected the presence of folkloric stories about the occult and demons circulating in evangelical and charismatic circles, which later become accepted as unquestioned facts." [68]

Despite existing evidence to the contrary on alleged Satanic ritual abuse and criminality internationally the irrational and uncorroborated allegations leveled at Satanists and the occult in general by Pastor Kruger find an echo in an article published online by 'Africa Christian Action' based in Claremont Cape Town.

"We are in a spiritual world war. Cruelty to animals, vandalism and even murders occur with far greater frequency during Halloween. Every Halloween many thousands of animals, and even people, are sacrificed in satanic rituals worldwide, while millions of other people, including well meaning Christians, participate in Halloween celebrations. Halloween is a prime recruiting time for witches and Satanists." [69]

By their own admission however, Witches do not recruit or proselytize and do not practice human sacrifice. [70]

The published work of Kobus Jonker, F.A. Havenga and many others on the subject of Satanism and the occult in South Africa have become the definitive sources for almost all debate on the subject of Satanism in South Africa. They are studied by new police recruits, social workers and theology students. Their work is quoted as authoritative source in courts of law.

The fact that little or no material exists to counter the bias and weight of their work on the occult and Satanism in South Africa in general is one reason for the prolific mushrooming of "spiritual warfare" [71] Christian groups and individuals. These groups and individuals accept the assumed authority of the sources they consult, usually without question or further research.

Evidently ritual crimes in which human body parts are harvested for sale for use in magic which do occur in our country are most often incorrectly used by Havenga et al as de facto proof that Satanism is alive and well in South Africa, despite the fact that actual evidence shows that human mutilations in South Africa are performed by criminals who do not identify as either Satanists or Witches.

African Traditionalists accuse Witches of human mutilations. Christians in general blame Satanists. The truth of course is that neither Witches nor Satanists are guilty. We're just convenient scape-goats.

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[60] Ibid.

[61] E-mail alert originating from Pastor Conrad Kruger of 'Acts Christian Centre'
Halloween
Acts Christian centre
S.W.A.T Spiritual warfare attack team
Past. Conrad Kruger
On 31 October 2007 will be Blood and sexual rituals performed by Satanic covens around South Africa.
There will be sexual orgies with demons, animals and humans AND THERE WILL BE A HUMAN SACRIFICE -
KEEP YOUR CHILDREN SAFE ESPECIALLY YOUNG BOYS
October 22-29 - Ceremonial planning and kidnapping of sacrifice.
October 28 - Human sacrifice to enter into Halloween.
October 31 - Human sacrifice & sexual orgies with demons and animals and children to attempt to enter
the gates of Hades.
November 1-3 - Human Sacrifice end of Halloween.
December 22 - Summer Equinox - Human and animal sacrifice - The birth of the sun god - through the
goddess of the moon.
December 25 - Male and female sacrifice.
This Sunday 28 October - a Christians response to Halloween. Do you realise the spiritual implications of
Halloween? And do you realise curses will be pronounced by Satan and his cohorts from 22 - 31 October?
KEEP YOUR CHILDREN AND ANIMALS SAFE.

[62] Charles Van Bergen - quoted with permission from the South African Pagan Council Mail-Forum.

[63] Luke Martin, Convenor of the South African Pagan Council - letter to Pastor Conrad Kruger quoted
with permission.

[64] Terri Moore, Executive of the South African Pagan Rights Alliance - quoted with permission from the
South African Pagan Council Mail-Forum.

[65] E-mail alert originating from Pastor Conrad Kruger of 'Acts Christian Centre'

[66] From: "Acts Christian Centre"
Subject: Re: Halloween
Date sent: Mon, 22 Oct 2007 17:12:55 +0200
Satanism is more real than you can imagine
Source referencing - well there are many - S. A Police - Kobus Jonker occultist unit wrote a book on
Satanism
F.A. Havenga 18 years experience in the S.A . Police - Book and course on S.R.A - Satanic Ritual Abuse
with reference.

[67] The Dictionary of Cults, Sects, Religions and the Occult by Mather & Nichols, (Zondervan, 1993), P.
244, quotes 'The Satanic Bible' as listing the main Satanic holidays as: Walpurgisnacht, Halloween, and
the member's birthday.
http://www.religioustolerance.org/ra_date.htm

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<http://www.encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com>

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<http://www.christianaction.org.za>

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http://www.frontline.org.za/articles/Halloween_and_the_Bible.htm

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CHAPTER THREE

The Scapegoats

The Occult, Paganism and Witchcraft in 21st century South Africa

Part I. The Occult

In our opinion, religious prejudice against the Occult in general in South Africa is largely motivated by Christians who believe that those who traffic with the Occult are trafficking with 'the devil'. Numerous Biblical references already cited are used to encourage spiritual warfare ministries to not only convert but attack occultists through prayer and 'spiritual warfare'.

The prejudicial beliefs promoted against the Occult and Witchcraft (as an Occult spirituality) in particular by Traditional African religions and Christianity, and propagated by religious leaders, religious organisations and so-called expert authorities and authors associated with the Occult-related Crime Unit, do not approximate the whole truth.

Why does the Occult-related Crime Unit's (ORCU) definition of ritual crimes single out only three internationally recognised religions - Witchcraft, Magic, and Satanism - as more likely than most to lead to the committing of a violent crime when the evidence does not support this prejudice?

Between 1992 and 2001 the ORCU defined ritual crimes as 'occult-related crime' and defined this as,

...any human conduct that constitutes any legally recognized crime, the modus operandi of which relates to or emanates primarily from any belief or seeming belief in the occult, witchcraft, satanism, mysticism, magic, esotericism and the like. Included in the scope of occult-related crime are ritual muti/medicine murders, witch purging, witchcraft-related violence and sect-related practices that pose a threat to the safety and security of the Republic of South Africa and / or its inhabitants. [1]

An examination of the terms used in conjunction with Witchcraft, Magic and Satanism reveals that the drafters of this definition were motivated not by evidence of wrong-doing on the part of actual Witches, Magicians or Satanists, but rather by religious prejudice against incorrectly defined "new age" spiritualities, spiritualities which threaten the existence of Christianity according to believers.

Some of these spiritualities are very young. Satanism was created by Anton Szandor LaVey in 1966 [2] with the founding of the Church of Satan in the United States. It should be noted that Satanism is neither an ancient pagan nor a modern Pagan religion or spirituality.

Wicca, popularised by Gerald Brousseau Gardner [3] in the 1950's, is a Pagan religion and spirituality. Gardner himself was initiated into an existing coven of what has become known as British traditional Witches in England.

But the occult, Witchcraft, mysticism, magic and esotericism however have an ancient pre-Christian history amongst diverse pagan peoples and cultures throughout the known world.

The word **occult** means *hidden wisdom*. It derives from the Latin *celare* (hide), and refers to knowledge of the hidden according to The Concise Oxford Dictionary. [4] An understanding of the modern and ancient history of the development of ideas and initiatory philosophies in both the west and east will show that occultism is wholly concerned with inner spirituality and spiritual evolution.

The most illumined self-defined Occultist of her age Dion Fortune (Violet Firth) wrote of the Occult,

Until one studies the literature of the subject, one is utterly unaware of its extent; it reaches from the oral traditions on the one hand, through the mythologies developed and systematized in the ancient literatures, to the writings of the highly trained philosophers whose speculations led them "beyond our bourne of time and space"... Occultism, however, is more than a science to be pursued objectively; it provides also a philosophy of life derived from its experiences, and it is this philosophical, or even religious aspect, that attracts most of those who devote their lives to it... Occultism is a sacred science and must be approached with reverence... to study occultism is to connect oneself up with a great power-house in the Unseen. [5]

Occultism has found many variant expressions through a wide variety of modern Orders, Lodges and Covens, but it has also suffered an unfortunate interpretive disfigurement. Films, novels, reporters and so-called experts keep reminding the general public (without producing any actual evidence) that the Occult is dangerous and should be avoided.

Perhaps precisely because the essence of Occult practices and philosophies have traditionally always been kept secret from the uninitiated, the hidden wisdom is mistakenly assumed by those who believe that no good can come from anything that is not already sanctioned by society (Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Islam) to be clandestine in the most dangerous sense of the word.

In *The Occult Roots of Nazism* professor of Western Esotericism at University of Exeter Goodrick-Clarke wrote,

Occultism has its basis in a religious way of thinking, the roots of which stretch back into antiquity and which may be described as the Western esoteric tradition. Its principal ingredients have been identified as Gnosticism, the Hermetic treatises on alchemy and magic, Neo-Platonism, and the Kabala, all originating in the eastern Mediterranean area during the first few centuries AD. [6]

According to the New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia, occultism includes various practices including, "*Animism, Astrology, Divination, Fetishism and Magic*". [7]

Esotericism means a *hidden wisdom* philosophy or doctrine meant only for the initiated. [8] Esotericism refers to a body of traditional knowledge or traditional belief passed on through training and initiation. Esoteric (inner) knowledge is gained through following self-proscribed religious and ritual practices in order to achieve communion with the Inner Self / Higher Self / Divine Self / Holy Guardian Angel / God – Goddess within.

Mysticism is derived from the Greek words *mystikos*, an initiate of the ancient Greek (and pagan) Eleusinian Mysteries; [9] and *mysteria* meaning *initiation*. Mysticism means *direct communion with the divine* through the contemplation of hidden wisdom either directly in meditation or through the medium of awe-inspiring symbolism. A Mystic seeks direct experience of and communion with the Divine within the Self and within or through Nature.

Pagans; Witches, Magicians, Druids and Shamans are practitioners of the esoteric in the sense that we work with a body of spiritual (occult - hidden) knowledge that is passed on through training, personal revelation and initiation.

It should be noted that all three terms are associated with modern Paganism and modern Witchcraft as practiced by self-defined Witches in South Africa. These terms may however equally apply to several other larger religions including Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism and Islam. The concealing of religious or spiritual wisdom through symbolism and allegory is common to all religious expressions.

Part II. Paganism

The word *Pagan* is derived from the Middle English word, which in turn is derived from the Latin term *paganus* meaning a *country dweller* or *villager*. [10] The Latin *paganus* is derived from the word *pagus* which refers to the country/heath and rural areas. Roman armies referred to civilians as *paganus* and the early Roman Christians referred to anyone who worshipped the old pre-Christian Gods as *pagans*. The label became an insult for anyone who did not enroll in the army of the One True God, but who were members of "false religion". [11]

The 'pagani', more often than not, practiced ancient Roman, Greek, Celtic, Teutonic and Egyptian religions, religions very closely associated with Nature as is evidenced in what we now know about their beliefs, their Gods and Goddesses and their relationship to natural places, elements and forces (wind, wave, rain, fertility etc.).

The general use of the word in ancient Rome made no direct reference to religion at all. A pagan (or heathen) was simply a person who dwelt in the country and in this Roman context may have referred equally to members of very divergent belief systems and spiritualities.

Various dictionaries define a Pagan as someone who has no religion, one who does not acknowledge the "*one true God*", is a "*worshipper of idols and false gods*", a heathen and a hedonist. These definitions are biased, inaccurate and based on Judeo-Christian dogma and belief.

paganism, with a small 'p', is a term still used as a form of derision by Christian Missionaries and Churches in reference to pre-Christian religious belief systems and practices. Today the term is commonly used to collectively define very diverse and divergent pre-Christian cultures and religions, cultures and religions which do not necessarily define themselves as pagan. [12]

Within a fourth century Christian context a pagan referred specifically to non-Christians not only in Rome but throughout the Mediterranean world. Colonization and the work of Christian missionaries broadened the usage of the words pagan and heathen to include pre-Christian and non-Christian religions of Europe, Asia, Africa

and the Americas. The reader should bear in mind that adherents of these religions did not refer to their faiths as paganism or heathenism.

Paganism, with a capital 'P', refers to the modern renewal and revival of the ancient religious, spiritual and ritual practices of pre-Christian peoples. Modern Pagans have reclaimed the term 'Pagan' to define their modern religion, a religion characterized by diversity of spirituality and belief and by tolerance of religious and theological diversity.

In 21st century South Africa Pagans are a recognised religious minority. Modern Paganism, also called Neo-Paganism (new Paganism), has gained both official and academic recognition in Europe, America, Australia and South Africa, as a religion of the twentieth century.

In February 2008 the Department of Home Affairs approved an application submitted by the South African Pagan Rights Alliance's (SAPRA) for designation as a religious organisation in terms of and in accordance with section 5 (1) and (2) of the Civil Union Act (Act 17 of 2006). According to section 5 of the Civil Union Act SAPRA may now solemnise marriages and civil partnerships. This is the first time in history that Pagans will be permitted the opportunity of becoming religious marriage officers. SAPRA is the first Pagan organisation to be granted this designation.

Prior to the advent of the Civil Union Act in December 2006 the Marriage Act (Act 25 of 1961) prohibited religious marriages conducted according to Pagan religious rites of custom and tradition by stating that religious marriages may only be conducted "according to Christian, Jewish or Mohammedan rites or the rites of any Indian religion".

Modern Paganism is an eclectic and syncretic tapestry of established religious and spiritual traditions that claim either direct or indirect descent from pre- and post Christian forms of religion and spirituality. But Pagans themselves tend to define Paganism as a Nature-venerating religion.

A Pagan is a person who feels a strong connection to Nature, who believes the Earth and all its creatures to be sacred, one who seeks personal connection with the Divine in Nature through the celebration of the seasonal and astronomical cycles which govern the Earth, our Divine Mother.

Paganism embraces environmental awareness and conservation, the reverence of Mother Nature, and the worship of the Divine in its myriad of forms, but particularly as an embodiment of natural forces. For this reason Pagans observe the seasonal cycles and undertake the personal (esoteric) quest for spiritual growth.

Modern Paganism is expressed through a number of recognised Pagan Paths (denominations). Each of these paths embodies distinct schools of thought, belief systems and spiritual practices (tradition).

The most influential spiritual Paths within modern Paganism include Witchcraft, Wicca (Gardnerian, Alexandrian, Seax, Celtic, etc.), Streggharia, Druidry, Shamanism, The Northern Tradition (including Odinism, Asatru and Vanatru), diverse Western and Eastern Magical and Mysticism Traditions, and Goddess-centered spiritualities.

The word 'Heathen' is a North-European equivalent of the Latin-derived 'Pagan', having similar connotations, i.e. dweller of the heath / country-side, and is the preferred term of many modern Pagans who adhere to Teutonic Traditions.

Modern Paganism has no central doctrine or theology and embraces diverse belief systems including but not restricted to polytheism, monotheism, pantheism and animism.

Paganism draws spiritual and religious inspiration from many credible and authentic ancient and modern sources of religious doctrine, theology and philosophy. Modern Pagan theology is composed of beliefs and practices originating in many distinct pre- and post-Christian religious traditions. Pagans may embrace all or part of this tapestry of belief systems.

Pagans may explore their family and ethnic heritage to discover the indigenous practices of their distant ancestors. Others do respectfully incorporate indigenous practices that belong to a wide variety of cultures. Many Pagans create new practices which in turn may form part of a new Pagan tradition.

Pagans do not believe in an entity called Satan, which automatically excludes the possibility that they worship any anti- Christian-Judaic-Islamic demonic entity.

South African Pagans do not practice human blood sacrifice and due to the fact that many Pagans live in urbanized cities very few slaughter their own food, a still common practice amongst traditional African, Judaic and Islamic religious cultures in South Africa.

Each Pagan community is bound by its own religious rules, regulations, and codes of conduct, traditions and religious theology. Entry into many of these communities involves an initiatory rite of entry into the mysteries of their chosen Pagan path. Initiation, the introduction or admittance of an individual into a group, religion, or spiritual consciousness could be described as (a) the transformation of one's ideals and values into the ideals and values of a particular chosen path, but it is also (b) the moment of inner realization of greater spiritual awareness, one facilitated through Pagan ritual.

Paganism is not a proselytizing religion. If the Pagan path is right for you, you will find your way to it, whether through devotion to Nature, reading published books on Paganism and Pagan paths, or through actual apprenticeship to an initiate of an already established Pagan tradition, Coven (a community of Witches), Grove (a community of Druids), Lodge (a community of Magicians), or Pagan study group.

Part III. Witchcraft

Witchcraft is not only a recognised spiritual path of modern Paganism but has also been one of the most influential paths in the formation of Paganism in the 20th century.

The English word Witch is derived from the medieval English word *wicche*. The medieval word in turn derives from the Anglo-Saxon words *wicca* (meaning a male Witch) and *wicce* (meaning a female Witch). The words *wicca* and *wicce* are derived from the Old High German word *witega*, meaning *a prophet* or *seer*. The word is akin to the Middle High German *wicken* (to bewitch) and with the Old High German *wih* (holy). Some say it finds its roots in the Germanic *vik* (to bend – as in bending reeds for basket making) and *witan*, a *wise* person.

The Barnhart Dictionary of Etymology derives the origin of the word Witch as,

witch n. About 1250 AD *wiche*, in Genesis and Exodus: developed from Old English *wicce* - 'female magican', sorceress (about 1000AD), feminine of *wicca* - 'sorcerer', wizard (about 890AD). These words are related to, and probably derivatives of Old English *wiccian* - 'to practice witchcraft', itself related to Old English *wigle* - 'divination', *wiglian* - 'to divine', and *wig* - 'idol', all cognate with Old Frisian *wigila* - 'sorcery /witchcraft' and probably with Middle Low German and Middle High German *wicken* or *wikken* - 'to bewitch', Old High German *wih* or *wihi* - 'holy', Old Icelandic *ve* - 'temple', and Gothic *weihs* - 'holy'. Before 1200AD *wicchen*; developed from Old English (about 1000AD) *wiccian* - 'practice witchcraft'. [13]

Witchcraft is an ancient religious and magical technique and belief system that employs the use of divination, sympathetic magic and pagan ritual practices. Modern Witchcraft does not necessarily confine itself to the worship of deity, nor to any specific religion or culture.

Witch and author Pauline Campanelli writes of Witchcraft,

Witchcraft is a religion whose essence is rooted in Neolithic shamanism. Through ritual celebration of seasonal changes Witches attune themselves to the creative forces of the Cosmos... [] ... Witchcraft shares with ancient shamanism the fundamental belief that all Nature is a manifestation of the Gods and that therefore everything has a spirit. [14]

Witches practice or employ natural sympathetic magic and ritual. Loosely defined, magic is the practice of harnessing the energy that exists in the natural world for a specific purpose. A magical practitioner, whether he or she is a Witch, Druid, Shaman or Magician, regards magic as a natural and sacred force of Nature.

Witches like other Pagans employ divinations including reading the Tarot, consulting astrological charts, scrying over a bowl of water, or interpreting dreams, for a wide variety of reasons, and employ herbs (whether European or African) for both medicine and magic.

Witches do not believe in an entity called Satan, do not worship any anti- Christian-Judaic-Islamic demonic entity, and so therefore do not sign pacts with any "devil".

Prejudice against Witches has a long historic precedent both in Africa and in Europe. Since the 1950's hundreds of authors, many of them Pagans and Witches have attempted to present the truth about Witchcraft from the perspective of those who actually practice Witchcraft as a religion. A few notable modern authors include Margot Adler, Raymond Buckland, Janet and Stewart Farrar, Gerald Gardner, Doreen Valienti, John Evan Jones, Starhawk and Ronald Hutton.

Gerald Gardner popularized a form of British Traditional Witchcraft, which he named Wicca, in England in the 1950's. Wicca is an initiatory, polytheistic (with exceptions), Pagan mystery religion inspired by various pre- and post-Christian western European beliefs and spiritual practices. The central deity in Wicca is either a Mother Goddess or a God and a Goddess of Nature. An initiate of the Wicca is one who traces his or her initiatory lineage back to Gerald Gardner or one of his initiates.

Wicca and Witchcraft are not necessarily the same thing. Not all Witches define themselves as 'of the Wicca'. Although the Anglo-Saxon word for a male Witch was *wicca*, and for a female Witch *wicce*, in modern usage the word Wicca is used to describe both male and female initiates of the Pagan mystery traditions of '**the Wicca**'. British Traditional Witches initiated into the Gardnerian Tradition have accorded themselves the sole right to use the term Wicca with which to define their unique Pagan mystery tradition. The terms Witchcraft and Wicca are however used interchangeably for the "Craft of the Wise". All Wicca are Witches.

The 'Wiccan Rede' exhorts those who define themselves as 'of the Wicca' to follow the guidance of one's inner divinity and to harm none (including ourselves) in whatever we do. The rede encourages Witches to lead virtuous and mindful lives, respecting all and everything.

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CHAPTER FOUR

Paganism and the Law

Part I. Mpumalanga Witchcraft Suppression Bill (2007)

In June 2007, the Office of the Premier of Mpumalanga Province, South Africa, leaked a draft Witchcraft Suppression Bill which threatened to undermine the freedoms and rights already guaranteed to an existing religious minority – Witches - by deliberately criminalizing and prohibiting said religious minority's constitutionally guaranteed right to exist and to practice their religion. The Bill sought to suppress Witchcraft and to imprison self-defined Witches on the assumption of automatic inference of criminality.

In submitted formal objections to the proposed Suppression Bill the South African Pagan Council (SAPC) and the South African Pagan Rights Alliance (SAPRA), supported by Pagans across the country who define themselves as Witches, criticised the Mpumalanga legislature's decision to base their Bill on a piece of Apartheid legislation – the Witchcraft Suppression Act (Act 3 of 1957 as amended by Act 50 of 1970).

The Bill elicited outrage from traditional healers as well. According to Enmarie Potgieter, High Priestess of the Coven of the Wheel (COW) and member of both the SAPRA and the SAPC,

"It took some time to explain to the THO that we are not going to budge from calling ourselves Witches, and after explaining the history - they were able to see that they are currently in a very similar position. (i.e. a subtle smear campaign against traditional healing practices). They are completely livid that the bill contains incorrect definitions for words such as Muti, (which means medicine) and which can not be anything other than good by definition. Thanks to the media, the word 'muti' can now denote anything from human tissue to herbal concoctions. Traditional Healers will tell you how passionately they feel about the fact that their perception of muti is not the same as that which is put forward in the media, especially by those critical of Traditional Healing practices." [1]

The Mpumalanga Witchcraft Suppression Bill defined *muti* as:

Muti means any mixture of herbs, water, woolen cuffs etc, used by wizards, igedla, inyanga, African Churches, Foreign traditional Healers, etc for the purposes of curing diseases, helping others who come to consult to them for whatever purposes and including causing harm to others or their properties. [2]

Traditional healers offered the following alternative definition for *muthi*:

'Umuthi' - means an object or substance used in traditional health practice for the purpose of:
a) The diagnosis, treatment or prevention of a physical or mental illness; or
b) For any curative or therapeutic purpose, including the maintenance or restoration of physical or mental health or wellbeing in humans. [3]

In 'Healers, pagans oppose new witchcraft bill', published in the Sowetan on 18 July 2007, Riot Hlatshwayo reported,

About 50 THO members, led by its national president, Nhlavana Maseko, met the Local Government and Housing Department. Maseko said they were opposed to definitions such as umuthi and ubuthi. He said umuthi was a substance used in traditional health practice to diagnose, treat and prevent physical or mental illness, whereas ubuthi was used in the application of negative energy with the intention to kill or harm. Maseko said the proposed bill did not differentiate between "witchdoctors" and traditional healers. "Let there be two bills, not one," he argued. "Witchdoctors and traditional healers are not even on the same platform because they are different," he said. His organisation accused the government of failing to consult all stakeholders. [4]

Pagan Witches opposed the Bill on the grounds that it incorrectly defined Witchcraft as,

Witchcraft means the secret use of muti, zombies, spells, spirits, magic powders, water, mixtures, etc, by any person with the purpose of causing harm, damage, sickness to others or their property. [5]

The South African Pagan Rights Alliance offered an alternative definition of Witchcraft:

Witchcraft is a religio-magical occupation that employs the use of sympathetic magic, ritual, herbalism and divination.

The revelation of the existence of self-defined Witches was met with both shock and surprise by traditional healers themselves. In 2004 hundreds of Traditional Healers, members of the Traditional Healer's Organisation (THO) were invited by Pagans - many of whom defined their personal spiritual path as Witchcraft - to celebrate 10 years of religious freedom in South Africa on Freedom Day, 27 April 2004 at Zoo Lake. [6] The guest speakers of this 'Pagan Freedom Day' event included Dr N. Maseko, the President of the THO, an organisation currently representing over 20 000 traditional healers in South Africa. Although traditional healers knew who Pagans were, they did not realize that many Pagans were also Witches.

In 'Bewitched or de-witched?' published in the Mail & Guardian on 20 July 2007, Tshwarelo eseng Mogakane and Sydney Masinga reported,

There was confused silence when Luke Martin told a group of traditional healers this week that he is a witch. Phephsile Maseko, the national coordinator of the Traditional Healers' Organisation (THO), quickly had to explain that some white people consider witchcraft to be a religion and were open about practising it. There was still some apprehension, however, because the healers come from communities where witchcraft is considered evil and where people have been evicted from their villages or even killed because they were suspected of being witches. Now here was someone standing up and admitting to being one. [7]

The THO presented their own definition of 'witchcraft' in their comments in objection to the Suppression Bill.

Witchcraft is:

(a) Any act or conduct, which causes or leads to the infliction of injury, illness, or even spiritual damage to another person through the use of ubuthi [1] or other destructive

means;

(b) Any act or conduct that leads to the death of another person through ukuthakatha [the practice of witchcrafts];

(c) Any act or conduct which is perceived by the community as unnatural and capable of causing danger or damage to the person or property of another through some negative energy;

(d) Any conduct or act which cannot be explained in western scientific terms but which is perceived or believed to exist and can be proved so to exist by those trained in African Science through diagnosis. [8]

Luke Martin, Convenor of the SAPC and member of SAPRA, is quoted as responding,

"My idea of the word 'witch' is different from the others". *In objecting to the Bill Luke said*, "It is a mirror image of the apartheid-era's Witchcraft Suppression Act. It discriminates against the practices of minority groups." [9]

Martin's sentiments were echoed by hundreds of Pagans who lodged personal objections against the Bill with the Office of the Mpumalanga Legislature. Martin coordinated objections against the Bill and submitted many of these objections in person on behalf of South African Pagans.

The Suppression Bill contradicted 11 clauses enshrined in the Bill of Rights, Chapter Two of the Constitution of South Africa, by denying self-defined Witches the right to dignity, equality, religious freedom, expression, association and the right to choose their trade, occupation or profession freely. The Act would in effect have denied equal citizenship to South Africans who define their religion as Witchcraft.

The SAPRA and the SAPC presented an alternative 'Witchcraft Protection Bill' to the Mpumalanga legislature for consideration as a replacement to the current Suppression Bill. [10] Chapter 9 (4) of the Constitution of South Africa makes provision for the drafting of legislation to prevent or prohibit unfair discrimination. Both Pagan organisations called on the Mpumalanga Legislature to protect self-defined Witches, protect Witchcraft as a belief system and religion, and prohibit discrimination against persons claiming to be Witches, or alleged to be Witches or practicing Witchcraft.

The SAPC and the THO met with the Mpumalanga Legislature and presented petitions and documents requesting that this draft legislation be scrapped. The SAPRA called on the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development to support the enactment of legislation to prevent or prohibit unfair discrimination, to protect and advance persons or categories of persons (Witches) disadvantaged by unfair discrimination, and to promote the achievement of equality for a specific historically disadvantaged religious minority. The SAPRA also submitted objections to the MEC C. Mashego-Dlamini of the Mpumalanga Provincial Government, appealing to the MEC to consider the ramifications of permitting acceptance of the Mpumalanga Witchcraft Suppression Bill on residents of Mpumalanga Province who do define themselves as Witches and who do define their religion as Witchcraft.

In July 2007 the SAPC started an international petition against the Suppression Bill. [11]. Since 24 July Pagans and Witches from almost every continent have signed the petition in support of South African Witches against the proposed draft.

The Mpumalanga Provincial Government and Legislature has not pursued the draft Bill and has given assurance that the Mpumalanga Provincial Government and Legislature have absolutely no intention of pursuing the draft Witchcraft Suppression Bill or of discriminating against the religious minority of Witchcraft.

Witchcraft is already a recognised belief system and religion in South Africa and as such, Witches are already accorded all rights, protections and privileges enshrined in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of South Africa [Act 108 of 1996] by virtue of South African citizenship.

The Mpumalanga Premier's Office has stated that the Mpumalanga Provincial Government have a mandate to draft legislation to:

- (i.) prevent ritual killings, and
- (ii.) prevent accusations of witchcraft which lead to violence.

Part II. Legislative Reform and Reclamation

The national Witchcraft Suppression Act (1957) prohibits not only the knowledge and practice of Witchcraft but also the practice of divinations. The Act also makes it illegal to accuse a person of either being a Witch or of using Witchcraft to cause harm. The Act however does not define Witchcraft.

Despite numerous inter-governmental investigations into the phenomena of 'Witch-purging' by individuals and communities within South Africa and in spite of numerous very detailed published reports, including the Thohoyandou Declaration, no attempt has been made to reconcile the two very different world-views at stake when discussing Witchcraft from a prejudicial traditional African and Christian perspective, and Witchcraft from a South African Pagan perspective.

The draft of the Mpumalanga Witchcraft Suppression Bill was based on the Witchcraft Suppression Act. The draft and the subsequent national Pagan objection against the bill prompted the South African Pagan Council to host a Pagan Conference in Melville, Johannesburg. [12]

In September 2007 South African Pagan leaders elected five Pagan representatives (all self-defined Witches) to pursue the repeal of the Witchcraft Suppression Act and to reclaim the words Witch and Witchcraft within a modern Pagan context. The reclamation of the terms Witch and Witchcraft, an essential part of the Melville Mandate, requires a challenge to the urban legends and religious beliefs that currently incite and sustain prejudice against Witches and Witch hunts in South Africa. Reclamation also requires the fostering of mutual and hopefully beneficial dialogue between Pagans and Traditional healers, Christians and Witch hunters.

Phepsile Maseko, national coordinator of the Traditional Healers Organisation (THO) urged South African Witches at the Melville Conference to strengthen themselves for the coming struggle. Maseko reassured delegates that the THO did not wish to infringe on religious minority rights and that traditional healers now realized there was a minority group who would be injured by pursuing legislation against Witchcraft. [13]

Maseko is recorded in the minutes of the Conference as saying,

We need to strive for unity. We need each other more than ever. This is a revolution. Join hands against the tribulation. Samora Machel said, "The act of liberating yourself is within you". Be prepared to face tribulations. Who else can do it but yourselves? Stand up! Command your coming together to strategize. The People want you to come out. The challenge is to educate the public. We need to know we have sisters and brothers in you if you want us to walk with you. THO and Forum need to stand together! Remember that no legislation can stop you from believing in your belief. The 1957 Act never stopped us in our belief. Many were killed. Your blood will fertilize the struggle. Stand up. Fight to ensure that you are in control. The THO will go the journey with you. But we need to know you. We have come to understand that WC is positive in your belief. It means 'wise'. From the African point of view it is the opposite. This was caused by the disparities of colonization, poverty, etc. You need to reclaim the word Witch. It is going to be a lot of work. The THO will support you in your definition of yourself. [14]

Chapter Five References

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CONCLUSION

By calling ourselves Witches, we honor our oppressed foremothers (and fathers) who survived centuries of inequities...we in Reclaiming call ourselves Witches for the very reason that others do not. It's an in-your-face word.

M. Macha Nightmare

It has been argued that maintaining and reinforcing a discriminatory and prejudicial definition of Witchcraft that is, by its very nature, predisposed to eliciting violence against alleged Witches is not in the best interest of reconciliation. True reconciliation requires a renaissance of belief and action on the part of the Witch-hunters themselves (whether individuals or communities, Christian or Traditional African).

Witch-hunts are motivated by beliefs. Beliefs lead to action. Beliefs that instill fear often motivate violence in response to a perceived threat, whether or not that threat is real or merely imagined. Self-defined South African Witches do not practice ritual killings or blood sacrifice. Witches are not responsible for the crimes they are being implicated in - implicated not through evidence, but through belief.

In reality those who seek the hidden mysteries and who practice mystery traditions based on ancient pagan and modern Pagan customs in 21st century South Africa are not guilty of the bad reputation with which society in general has judged and continues to judge us.

There is no just cause to automatically assume that if someone is a Witch that person is more likely to commit criminal acts than Christians, Jews, Hindus or Muslims! There is no justification to single out Witches through convenience and necessity to be the scapegoat for the ills of society!

South Africans have inherited several prejudicial urban legends on the nature of 'evil', 'misfortune' and 'maleficium' in relation to Witchcraft. These beliefs have and continue to elicit suspicion, mistrust, fear, hatred and violence within communities in several Provinces. Perhaps they continue to do so because culture, religion, law and politics grants them sanction under the rubric of 'respecting cultural traditions and religious beliefs'?

Should cultural practices and religious beliefs that promote the murder of innocents on the basis of belief be tolerated in our society? This is a controversial question. But clearly the answer must be a resounding NO.

Despite legal ambivalence and intellectual skepticism on the one hand and enthusiastic gullibility on the other by those who believe that no good can come from tolerating Witchcraft or Witches, a small but growing minority of predominantly white South Africans have been re-claiming the word Witch in an altogether different context to that in which the word is commonly used by society today.

In South Africa self-defined Pagan Witches represent the largest 'denomination' within one of the smallest religious minorities on the African continent.

There are several contributing factors to the slow growth of the Pagan movement in South Africa, including but not limited to the pervasive traditional African and fundamentalist Christian beliefs and attitudes towards anything associated with the Occult in general and with Witchcraft in particular.

We sincerely hope to see an end to Witch hunts in this country. Even though our Constitution does provide for national legislation to be drafted in order to prevent or prohibit unfair discrimination, legislation alone will not be enough to vanquish the Witch devouring beast. The South African Bill of Rights already determines that no person may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.

An end to Witch hunts will also not be accomplished through transforming existing South African legislation. The Witchcraft Suppression Act 3 of 1957 as amended by the Witchcraft Suppression Amendment Act 50 of 1970 must certainly be revoked entirely. The characterization of a person or group of persons (Witches) as 'evil' and so deserving of criminal classification by default makes a mockery of the values of human dignity, equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms on which the Republic of South Africa is founded.

The existing prohibition against professing to have knowledge or use of *"any supernatural power, witchcraft, sorcery, enchantment or conjuration"*, as well as the prohibition against anyone who *"undertakes to tell fortunes, or pretends from his skill in or knowledge of any occult science to discover where and in what manner anything supposed to have been stolen or lost may be found"* constitutes unfair discrimination against Witchcraft as a Pagan spirituality.

But even legislative prohibition against identifying and accusing suspected Witches of using Witchcraft to cause harm or damage to any person has not prevented accusations and Witch killings. The irrational fear of Witches and Witchcraft thrives in spite of the law.

We humbly suggest exploring the potential of a true South African 'renaissance of the soul', one in which the ignorance and fear that perpetuates Witch hunts is relegated to a painful but never forgotten history; one in which citizens of every religious persuasion will embrace a common vision of humanity, compassion and true enlightenment. Is such a vision possible or even probable? We would argue that such a vision already exists. The popular definition of Ubuntu is a belief in humanness and humanity.

In his book 'God has a Dream' Archbishop Desmond Tutu writes:

(Ubuntu) is the essence of being human. It speaks of the fact that my humanity is caught up and is inextricably bound up in yours. I am human because I belong. It speaks about wholeness, it speaks about compassion. A person with ubuntu is welcoming, hospitable, warm and generous, willing to share. Such people are open and available to others, willing to be vulnerable, affirming of others, do not feel threatened that others are able and good, for they have a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that they belong in a greater whole. They know that they are diminished when others are

humiliated, diminished when others are oppressed, diminished when others are treated as if they were less than who they are. The quality of ubuntu gives people resilience, enabling them to survive and emerge still human despite all efforts to dehumanise them.

Stanley Letsoko writes in an article entitled 'The Ubuntu Philosophy', *"There can be no human being who is not a fellow human being."*

Could such an attitude of compassionate commonality transform the Witch-killing beast lurking in the soul of every man, woman and child?

We believe it can and must do so. Without a moderating perspective on the question of Witchcraft and a true renewal of both theological and cultural understanding of the nature of evil in relation to this question, no room will ever be created within which to achieve any form of true equality, dignity or humanity for self-defined Witches in South Africa.

'30 days of Advocacy against Prejudice and Violence'

29 March and April 27 2008

Between 29 March and April 27 2008 South African Witches will be launching '30 days of Advocacy against Prejudice and Violence'.

The authors of this book would like to encourage South African Pagans to speak out against religious discrimination against Witchcraft and against Witchcraft-related violence in South Africa.

We hope that this work will enable rational dialogue on the subject of Witchcraft within a new South African context; one that recognizes the right of religious freedom and equality, self-identity and self-determination of religious minorities.

The '30 days of Advocacy against Prejudice and Violence' will culminate on Freedom Day (April 27) with 'Pagan Freedom Day' celebrations in 5 cities around the country.