

“AND THEY REVEALED SECRETS
TO THEIR WIVES”: EXAMINING
I ENOCH AND THE CHALLENGE
OF FEMINISM TODAY

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INTRODUCTION

A pentecostal preacher, Helen Ukpabio draws thousands of people to her revival meetings. Her books and DVDs, which explain how Satan possesses children, are widely known. So well-known, in fact, that Ms. Ukpabio's critics say her teachings have contributed to the torture or abandonment of thousands of Nigerian children; and of course women — including infants and toddlers — suspected of being witches and warlocks. So vast is Ms. Ukpabio in this area that she confidently posited in her book *Unveiling the Mysteries of Witchcraft*, that, “...if a child under the age of 2 screams in the night, cries and is always feverish with deteriorating health, he or she is a servant of Satan.”¹

Women and Children accused of being witches and wizards are blamed for whatever goes wrong in their families. This could be death, disease, business failure, accidents or childbirth difficulties. They are accused of witchcraft at home by parents and family members; in churches by ignorant and unscrupulous pastors; at shrines by primitive-minded traditional medicine men or witch doctors; or on the streets by mobs and gangs. These women and children are forced to confess to being witches and wizards or to have taken part in witchcraft activities by family members or by mobs, in

most cases through physical and mental torture. In Ghana, about one hundred and sixty women were driven away from the comforts of their homes, families, jobs, and loved ones to a village called Gambaga in Northern Ghana after being labeled witches.²

These individuals alleged to be witches and wizards are persecuted through torture and inhuman and degrading treatment, which sometimes leads to their death. They are starved, chained, beaten, macheted or even lynched. In Churches, pastors subject them to torture in the name of exorcism. Witchdoctors force such women and children to drink potions (poison) or concoctions that can kill them or damage their health. It is upon this premise that I intend to examine the Enochic and associated accounts of witchcraft and magic vis-à-vis feminism and the challenges therefrom.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Book of the Watchers (one of the Apocryphal materials) expands upon the enigmatic story in Genesis 6:1-4, in which the "sons of God" (בני-האלהים) take human women for themselves. In particular, the Watchers teach women the heavenly mysteries of "sorcery and spells," among them methods of divination by observance of heavenly and earthly phenomena. These, however, are not the true secrets of heaven – they are the "rejected mysteries," which the Watchers ought not to have taught human beings. *The Book of the Watchers* sets up a gendered dichotomy between the Watchers' human wives and Enoch; women are recipients only of rejected mysteries, while Enoch learns the true secrets of heaven from the revealing angels when he ascends to heaven alive, thereby accentuating the gender biases that characterize the Bible.

The issues addressed in this paper therefore includes: 1) Why the focus in particular on the labeled 'evil' role of women in the story of the fallen Watchers? 2) Why did the Book of the Watchers report that

women in particular are recipients of magical knowledge from their angelic husbands? Earlier biblical associations of women with forbidden magic and sorcery, especially in the prophetic corpus, where foreign women, especially foreign cities imaged as women, are accused of sorcery, show that there is already an established patristic tradition that connects women with witchcraft. 3) Were the daughters of men sexually abused by the "Sons of God as seen in the society today?" 4) What roles can Feminists and Biblicists play vis-à-vis the challenge facing women and children labeled witches today?

THE DAUGHTERS OF MEN

Why focus in particular on the role of women in the story of the fallen Watchers? Concern about women as mediators of the relationship between the earthly and heavenly worlds is already found in the biblical story of the cohabitation of the "sons of God" with the "daughters of men." Gen. 6:1-4 highlights the importance of women as the link between earth and heaven, between God (or gods) and man (or humanity).

(1) When men began to increase on earth, and daughters (בנות) were born to them, (2) the sons of God (בניהאלי) beautiful the daughters of men (בנותהאדם) were; and they took wives (נשים) from among those that pleased them. (3) YHWH said, "My breath shall not abide in man forever, since he too is flesh, let the days allowed him be one hundred and twenty years." (4) It was then, and later too, that the Nephilim appeared on earth, when the sons of God cohabited with the daughters of men, who bore them offspring. They were the heroes of old, the men of renown.

In the biblical account, the "daughters of man" stand at the center point, between "men" and the "sons of God, with a picture of something to be used and discarded." They are the mediators

between human and divine beings, providing a sexual and reproductive link between man and God. At the point where the "sons of God" take them from "men," they become "women" whom the "sons" choose and then "cohabit with." It is plausible that since they were daughters, they were perhaps young girls who only became women after the "sons" took them as wives. Noted is the fact that despite their central position, the women do not act on their own behalf; rather, the sons of God "see," "take," "choose," and "cohabit with" them. The only act that they themselves perform, rather than being the object of others' actions, is giving birth – although in this case they also gave birth to or for the sons of God. The text is even unclear on the identity of their children. Unlike other Genesis passages that speak of giving birth, this sentence does not tell us to whom they gave birth.

Instead, it turns quickly to the matter of the "mighty men, the men of renown," so that the reader is left guessing that the women gave birth to these "mighty men," who were perhaps so "renowned" because their fathers were divine beings. Women may stand at the central point of this narrative, but they are not important for themselves – rather, their importance lies in how they furnish a link between earth and heaven. This mediating function is one of the reasons that women are important in the Book of the Watchers. In addition to their role as the sexual partners of the Watchers and mothers of the destructive giants, women are significant recipients, and transmitters, of the evil teachings the Watchers passed on to them.

WOMEN AS WITCHES

Why would the Book of the Watchers particularly single out women as recipients of knowledge about sorcery and divination? The image of women as witches is already built up in certain biblical traditions that the composers of the Book of the Watchers would have

known. The most detailed image of women as witches occurs in several places in the prophetic corpus, while the picture is more mixed in legal and narrative material. Exodus 22:18, part of the Covenant Code, explicitly uses the feminine form in commanding, "You shall not permit a witch (מכשפה) to live." Deut. 18: 9-18 provides a more comprehensive list of forbidden ritual practitioners and practices, all of them male, including, "one who passes his son or his daughter through the fire, or an auger (קסםקסמים), a soothsayer (מעוּנָן), a diviner (ומנחש), a sorcerer, (ומכשף) one who casts spells (והברחבר), one who consults ghosts or familiar spirits (ושאלאובידיעני), or one who inquires of the dead (ודרש אל המתים).³ This passage is concerned with the ritual practitioners that the people of Israel should not consult, in contrast to the practices of the previous nations residing in Canaan; rather, they should depend upon God to give them a prophet like Moses, and he will tell them God's will.⁴ Some of the terms that appear in this passage occur in the feminine in several other places, including the above mentioned Ex. 22:17 and Lev. 20:27, which decrees death for both men and women who "have in them" a ghost or a familiar spirit: וְאִשׁ אוֹ אִשָּׁה כִּי יִהְיֶה בָּהֶם אֹב אוֹ יְדֻעָנִי.⁵ After expelling האבותואתהידעמנים (those who act as mediums for ghosts and familiar spirits) from the land, King Saul resorts to a אשתבעלת-אוב a woman who is a ghost-medium), who brings up Samuel from the dead (1 Samuel 28:3-28).

Several prophetic passages make a connection between evil women (or cities represented as evil women) and witchcraft or sorcery. The prophetic passages also often connect sorcery and sexual sins, and denounce foreign women (Jezebel) or cities (Nineveh, Babylon) as witches. Jezebel is accused of performing "countless harlotries and sorceries (עֲזוּנֵי אִיזְבֵּל אִמֶּךָ וְכַשְׂפִּיהָ) (2 Kings 9:22). Ezekiel attacks the Israelite women "who prophesy out of their own imagination" (המתנבזותמלבהן) (Ezek. 13:17), using techniques of divination they learned in exile in Babylon.⁶ Nahum 3:4 denounces Nineveh as a prostitute and sorceress: "Because of the countless

debaucheries of the harlot (טובתחן , gracefully alluring (זנוניזונה , mistress of sorcery (בעלתכשפים , who enslaves nations through her debaucheries (בזנוניה , and peoples through her sorceries (בכשפיה . Verse 5 goes on to describe her punishment in language very reminiscent of the humiliation of Jerusalem in Ezekiel 16 and 23: "I am against you, says the Lord of hosts, and I will lift up your skirts over your face; and I will display your nakedness to the nations and your shame to kingdoms (וגליתישוליהך על פניך והראיתגויםמערך) . In these two cases, the harlot (Jerusalem or Nineveh) is punished through public nakedness and shaming. Isaiah 47:9, 11-13 denounces Babylon as a sorceress, an enchanter, and one who resorts to those who predict the future by examining the skies. None of these skills can save her.

Both of these shall come upon you in a moment, in one day: the loss of children and widowhood shall come upon you in full measure, in spite of your many sorceries, and the great power of your enchantments (ברב כשפיד בעצמתחבריהך מאד) . But evil shall come upon you, which you cannot charm away (לאתדעי שחרה) disaster shall fall upon you, which you will not be able to ward off (לאתוכלי כפרה) and ruin shall come on you suddenly, of which you know nothing. Stand up, with your spells (בחבריהך) and your many enchantments (ברב כשפיד) with which you have labored from your youth; perhaps you may be able to succeed, perhaps you may inspire terror. You are helpless despite all your art; let those who study the heavens (הברי שמים) stand up and save you, those who gaze at the stars (החזים בנוכבים) , and at each new moon predict (מודיעיםלחדשים) what shall befall you.⁷

Babylon, like Nineveh and Jerusalem, is stripped naked as a mark of humiliation. Although the sins of Babylon do not include (in this passage) sexual sins, she still receives the same punishment:

Get down, sit in the dust, Fair Maiden Babylon; Sit, dethroned, on the ground, O Fair Chaldea; nevermore shall they call you the tender and dainty one. Grasp the handmill and grind meal. Remove your veil, strip off your train, bare your leg, wade through the rivers. Your nakedness shall be uncovered, and your shame shall be exposed (תגלעורתך גמטרא חרהפתך).

The denunciations of Jezebel, Nineveh, and Babylon as sorceresses and harlots create a composite image that is more detailed than that found in legal and narrative biblical passages. They link sexual seductiveness with sorcery and the evil nature of foreign women (nations) who oppress Israel and lure them to evil ways, building upon the already established prophetic sexual image of Israel's unfaithfulness to God through liaisons with foreign nations⁸ and the figure of the "strange woman" in Proverbs. While 1 Samuel 28 portrays the medium of Endor in a sympathetic manner, as a woman who assists Saul when all others have failed him, these prophetic passages link female figures to the evil of witchcraft and divination. The prophetic image of the seductive foreign witch may provide some of the background for the connection between women and sorcery in 1 Enoch and in rabbinic texts.⁹

BOOK OF THE WATCHERS

The short tale of Genesis 6 has been subjected to great elaboration in 1 Enoch. The *Book of Watchers* is the first part of 1 Enoch, comprising chapters 1-36, dated by most scholars to third century B.C.E. Palestine. Chapters 1-5 are an introduction to the book, while chapters 6-16 deal with the story of the fallen angels. The figure of Enoch does not appear in the *Book of the Watchers* until chapter 12. He is not part of the introduction (chs. 1-5) or part of the original story of the sinning Watchers (chs. 6-11).⁹

Chapters 6-16 tell the story of the angels who saw that the "daughters of men" were fair and descended from heaven to take them as wives and beget children from them. According to 1 Enoch the "sons of God" of Gen 6:2 were angels, the "Watchers" (עִירִין) of heaven. They lusted after the "beautiful and comely" daughters of men. Their leader, Shemi'azah, persuaded them to swear an oath together to descend to earth and take human women as wives and beget children.¹⁰

Chapters 6-11 are composed of several separate traditions of the angels' descent that a later author has combined, but it is still possible to discern what some of these separate traditions were. Chapters 12-16 seem to assume the existence of 6-11 in its present form, building upon the earlier section but introducing the figure of Enoch (not present in chapters 6-11) and presenting details about the angels that are in some cases quite different from chapters 6-11. Annette Yoshiko Reed has convincingly argued that chapters 12-16 were written as a transition from chapters 6-11 to chapters 17-36 of the *Book of the Watchers*, and that they resolve some of the contradictory traditions found in chapters 6-11.¹²

Enoch is introduced rather abruptly at the beginning of chapter 12: "And before these things Enoch was taken up, and none of the children of men knew where he had been taken up, or where he was or what had happened to him. But his dealings were with the Watchers, with the holy ones, in his days." When Enoch was "taken up" (Gen. 5:24), he did not die, but instead dwelled with the angels in heaven, the "Watchers" and "holy ones." His task was to rebuke the fallen Watchers for their sins; he also served as their intermediary before God, and thus he is called "the scribe of righteousness."

1 Enoch 6-11

One tradition in chapters 6-11, in which Shemi'azah is the

leader of the sinning angels, concentrates on the sin of the Watchers—their descent from heaven, their defilement by intercourse with women, and the sins of their children, the giants, who destroy the earth. In this tradition, “there is no hint of the view that the women themselves are impure because of their human nature,” and human beings do not share any guilt with the angels or the giants. The flood comes upon them because of the sins of others.

A second tradition describes how the Watchers led human beings to sin by teaching them the secrets of heaven. This tradition occurs in two forms; in the first one, the angels, led by Shemi'azah, teach women magical arts and heavenly secrets. In the second one, another rebel angel, Asael, teaches metallurgy, weapons, and cosmetics to human beings. According to the Shemi'azah version: “These (leaders) and all the rest took for themselves wives from all whom they chose; and they began to cohabit with them and to defile themselves with them, and they taught them sorcery (חרשא and spells and showed them the cutting of roots and herbs.”¹³

The text goes on to give more details about which angels taught what skills:

Shemi'azah taught spell-binding (הברו) and the cutting of roots; Hermoni taught the releasing of spells, magic, sorcery, and sophistry (חרשלמשראכשפוחרטמוחושין); Baraqel taught the auguries of the lightning; Kokabiel taught the auguries of the stars (נחשיכוכבין); Zikiel taught the auguries of fire-balls; Arteqif taught the auguries of earth (נחשיארע); Simsel taught the auguries of the sun (נחשישמש); Sahrel taught the auguries of the moon. And they all began to reveal secrets to their wives...

If we look back to the sins that Isaiah ascribed to Babylon, figured as a woman, several of them also occur here: casting spells (בחבריד)

sorcery (ברב כשפיד) studying the skies (הברי שמים) gazing at the stars (החזים בפוכבים) and predicting by the moon (מודיעים לחדשים). According to Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Nahum, Isaiah, and Ezekiel, the mantic and magical arts that they denounce belong to the practices of foreign nations – the nations of Canaan, Babylonia, and Assyria, the latter two identified as female personifications of the cities of Babylon and Nineveh. Given the Babylonian antecedents of the figure Enoch, and the connections that was demonstrated between Jewish apocalyptic and Babylonian divination, it is interesting to see that just those arts that the Babylonian wise men, astrologers, and diviners engaged in are those that the angels teach their human wives.¹⁴

In the second version of the teaching tradition, Asael teaches the arts of civilization that lead people into sin. According to one of the Greek manuscripts of the Book of the Watchers, this form of instruction leads to women's seduction of the angels. The translation of Syncellus implies that the women who learned the arts of beautification from Asael then turned around and seduced the other angels: "And the sons of men made for themselves and for their daughters, and they transgressed and they led astray the holy ones." In this case, when the women learned to adorn themselves with jewelry, precious stones, colored clothing, and makeup, they tempted the angels to sin with them. They are not innocent, as in the Shemi' azah version, but share guilt with the angels for the downfall of humanity. The prophetic image of the foreign seductive woman who engages in witchcraft may have been a factor in the creation of this version. The idea that women were not innocent victims, but instead purposely lured the angels by their beauty is found in several sources dependent upon 1 Enoch and in rabbinic sources that incorporate earlier traditions. Even if this is true, weren't the angels willing to be led astray?

1 Enoch 12-16

Chapters 12-16 of 1 Enoch transform the combined traditions of chapters 6-11 in several ways.¹⁵ One of the most noteworthy differences between them is that the miscegenation between angels and women is now described in terms of a dichotomy between spiritual and fleshly. The text sharply distinguishes between spiritual angels, eternally dwelling in heaven, and human women (and men), who are mortal, fleshly, and dwell on earth. The angels, who are clearly male in 1 Enoch, belong in heaven, but they have sought human women, who symbolize the passing, perishing nature of earth and flesh. 1 Enoch 15 explicitly opposes the angels as they used to dwell in "high heaven, the eternal sanctuary" "spirits, living forever," and their present condition in which they have defiled themselves with women on the earth and have begotten flesh and blood children, "who die and perish." They have defiled themselves through sexual intercourse with women, and what is more, with the blood of women's menstruation. The angels are spiritual and immortal beings who have now entered the fleshly realm. Philo (1953)¹⁶ makes a similar point in his remarks on this verse: "But the substance (ουσια) of angels is spiritual (πνευματικη); however, it often happens that they imitate the forms of men and for immediate purposes, as in respect of knowing women for the sake of begetting [giants]." Women may be the dupes of the angels, and thus not responsible for the evil of their giant children, but they are responsible for propagating the teachings the angels gave them and causing further evil on earth. Enoch denounces the fallen angels with these words: "You were in heaven, and there was no secret that was not revealed to you; and unspeakable secrets you know, and these you made known to women in your hardness of heart; and by these secrets females and mankind multiplied evils upon the earth." 1 Enoch 16 does not spell out what the "unspeakable" or "rejected" mysteries are but since chapters 12-16 were written with chapters 6-11 in mind, it is probable that the "rejected mysteries" that the angels

have taught women were the previously mentioned cosmetics, sorcery, incantations, the loosing of spells and cutting of roots, as well as the signs of the stars, lightning-flashes, the earth, the sun, and the moon. They are the opposite of the secrets of heaven that Enoch learns from God and the angels.

Chapters 6-16 of the Book of Watchers thus create an antimony between the righteous knowledge that Enoch gains by ascent to heaven and the polluting knowledge that women and men gain from the descent of the Watchers to earth, hereby showing off the patristic inclination. Enoch is the special one who can ascend to God's throne, speak with God, tour the heavens, and learn divine mysteries. The women whom the angels take as wives, on the other hand, learn sorcery and other "rejected mysteries." However, after the angels descended, they became entangled in sin. As in other accounts, their essential transgression was intercourse with human women, which defiled the angels. The sin of the Watchers, the birth of giants, and the corruption of "all animate beings" brings on the punishment of the flood and destruction of all life. Enoch serves as the witness against the Watchers for their sins. Noah's instructions for his grandsons understand the sins of the Watchers and the destructive nature of the giants as cautionary tales for human actions. Fornication, uncleanness, and injustice led to the flood: the illicit intercourse of the Watchers with women, their uncleanness after they married the women, and their destructive giant children. Since "uncleanness" is distinguished from "fornication," this may mean that they are guilty of intercourse with women during their menstrual periods thereby making menstruation an ugly, detestable, sinful, degrading and debasing thing only fit for the women and to be eschew by men.

A number of writers have recently suggested a scribal social context for the composition of 1 Enoch, which may help further in understanding why women in the Book of the Watchers are

associated with the origins of sin and evil. George Nickelsburg, has compared the image of the scribe in the Wisdom of Ben Sira to 1 Enoch and shown how the titles and activity ascribed to Enoch in the Enochic booklets parallel Ben Sira. Benjamin Wright, has demonstrated that Ben Sira and 1 Enoch have a common interest in calendar, dreams and visions, and esoteric knowledge. Annette Yoshiko Reed, has pointed out that the negative attitude in 1 En. 6-11 towards the angelic transmission of secrets to human beings is surprisingly similar to the "skepticism towards the quest for hidden knowledge" in the biblical and post biblical Wisdom Literature.¹⁷ Hence, there is one area in which Ben Sira and the Enoch books appear to have same views - the connection between women and evil. In the Book of the Watchers, women are taught various evils by the Watchers, especially sorcery and methods of divination. Ben Sira, for his part, describes women as the origin of human sin: "From a woman sin had its beginning, and because of her we all die" (25:24). In this case, he is probably referring to Eve and her eating from the Tree of Knowledge as the source of evil. Ben Sira also writes, "From a woman comes woman's wickedness. Better is the wickedness of a man than a woman who does good" (42:13).

CONTEXTUAL EXAMINATION OF WITCHCRAFT

Beliefs in witchcraft and other occult forces are widespread in Africa, as they are in many other parts of the world. Animist beliefs consider death, disease, crop failure and other disasters not as natural occurrences, but as the result of the activities of supernatural powers. Families commonly consult traditional healers who divine the cause of the calamity.¹⁸ In some cultures, spirits are held responsible, while in others, individuals are identified as witches and blamed for the misfortune; just as the book of 1 Enoch "blamed" the women for bringing into the world "giants of old".¹⁹ Usually old and marginalized persons are scapegoated, but in recent years there have been increased reports of children, even toddlers, being accused of

witchcraft in parts of Africa. Once accused of sorcery, children are forced to admit to being witches and to reveal the name of the "witch" that has passed on the evil power to them.²⁰

In the ensuing process of healing and restoring balance in the community, children accused of witchcraft are beaten, cut, burned, and sometimes killed. Many are chased from their communities. Stigmatized and unable to return to their families, they end up abandoned, on the streets of big cities. Kinshasa (capital of the DR Congo) alone harbours more than 20,000 street children who have been accused of witchcraft.²¹ In the Central African Republic it is an offence to be a witch and prisons are filled with children and adults accused of sorcery.²² Children accused of witchcraft number in the thousands in the DR Congo, the Central African Republic, Southern Nigeria, and parts of Angola.²³ Anthropologists have identified the combination of crises as the underlying cause for the epidemics of witchcraft accusations against women and children, according to Theis.²⁴

Economic hardship, conflict, urbanization, displacement, family breakdown and HIV/AIDS have spread insecurity in large parts of Central Africa (and of recent, Akwa Ibom) these have profoundly undermined many communities.²⁵ In parallel, revivalist and Pentecostal churches have proliferated in many parts of Africa offering spiritual stability in times of uncertainty. Some of these churches, run by unscrupulous preachers and self-appointed prophets, have seized upon the fears of the population and are offering exorcism services at exorbitant costs. These rituals subject children to further violence and abuse and have become a lucrative business for some pastors. In Nigeria's Akwa - Ibom State and in the Niger - Delta, the explosion of witchcraft accusations against children have been traced back to a film produced by a prominent priestess, which has fuelled popular beliefs in child witchcraft.²⁶

At the dawn of African independence it was widely assumed by modern elites and by development agencies that formal education, media, monotheistic religions, economic development and democratic political systems would sweep away traditional African beliefs. Instead, as the case of witchcraft accusations against women and children shows, traditions are being reinvented and adapted to the challenges and insecurities of a globalised world.²⁷ From a child protection perspective, witchcraft accusations against children are a form of child abuse. Each "outbreak" of witchcraft accusations has to be studied in order to understand its origins and the forces and interests in society that drive it. Raising public awareness is an important part of prevention, as is the mobilization of church groups, the police and the justice system, as well as traditional healers to take decisive action against the maltreatment of children. Effective support for abused and abandoned children requires functioning child protection systems that ensure children's access to psycho-social, health and educational services, and to justice.²⁸

Anthonia Essien,²⁸ submitted that: a close study of the activities of the witch-doctors, religious witch detectors are to sanitize the society of witches and give deliverance and salvation to the victims of these malevolent powers. They rely chiefly on the very subjective methodology of the reception of "heavenly spiritual messages" from the "spirited" members whose psychological state are never verified. Within this religious tradition, they act as intermediaries between God and the rest of the members. During the prayer sessions, these 'spirited' members appear to be in a state of trance and semi-unconsciousness and prophesy to the clients the source of their problems or sickness. Having studied a number of these religious groups, a common denominator in their prophecy circles around the activities of witches and other evil forces and the problems these forces cause to the human beings. Throughout her field work, she was unable to record spiritual prophesies that centred on means of progress, scientific discovery or way of improving governance for

common good. But nearly every prophesy was around witchcraft activities. The detected "witches" are always close family members: parents, brothers, sisters, mother-in-law, father-in-law, old people in the kindred etc. Her extensive field work on the subject matter revealed that the social problems caused by these self-styled "spirited" people and religious leaders in South-east Nigeria are enormous. This moving story of a child is an example of the numerous situations of the social problems in South-east Nigeria:

I was attending a fasting and prayer service at Church with my parents when the pastor identified me as a witch. He then beat me in front of the congregation and sent me out from the Church. When I got home my father also beat me and then sent me away from the house. I wandered the streets for more than a month surviving on stream water and scraps from the market. I felt so sorrowful and sad. Eventually my father came and took me back home where he locked me up in a room with some goats. He then tied my arms and legs with twine rope and seriously beat me for weeks on end telling me to confess to being a witch. When I refused, the beatings continued. I often begged him for food and drink but he refused. Eventually one day, my brother set me free. I ran to the village where someone took pity on me, feed me and took me to CRARN to avoid being murdered.

Many such occurrences were recorded in many communities in Akwa-Ibom and Cross River States. The researcher's team visited the Prison at Uyo and met a young lady who was serving a life sentence for killing her mother in cold blood. According to her, the prophecy that the mother was a witch and marring her progress angered her to the point of murdering her mother. Another victim serving a life sentence too was interviewed at Ikot-Ekpene prison. Like the first case, he murdered a relative whom a religious movement prophesied to be a witch and had tied up the man's fortune in the witch-world.

Apart from this firsthand information on this issue, there are lots of information in the periodicals. *The Insider*: a Nigerian weekly magazine of September 1, 2003, No. 35 P. 18 records blood chilling murders that have accorded in South East Nigeria as a result of the prophecies from religious movements and witch doctors. These murders have cost untold social problems for the victims' families.

The following episodes are just but a tip of the iceberg in the ocean:

a) In Afaha Atan, in Ibiono-Ibom Local Government Area, Innocent Edem Effiong, 29, hacked his aged father Donald Edem Effiong to death and latter hauled the corpse into a wheel barrow and emptied it into a deep-well near the village primary school and took to his heels. The police arrested him later. When he was visited in the police custody, he confessed that he received the prophecy from a spiritual church that his father was a "witch".

b) In June 2002, Effiong Akpan, 33, from Obong in Abak Local Government Area murdered his 70 year old father in cold blood; prophesied by a Church to be a witch.

c) Also at Ibiakpan Nto Akan village, Ikot-Ekpene LGA, a middle aged man Archibong Udo Essien, was picked up by the Police in June 2002 for attacking an 80 year old woman, Nkwa Nkwo Inyang, after cutting off her right hand, and inflicting two deep cuts on her head for being a witch.

d) At Mbak Etoi in Uyo LGA, a 30 year old man hacked his grey-haired old mother to death and also killed his younger brothers, who were both accused of being witches. He received the prophecy from a spiritual church.

e) A 15 year old Enefiok Sylvester of Utu Ikot Ekpenyong in Ikot-Ekpene LGA, according to police reports, was tied to an electric pole

and burnt to death in 2001 by his uncle, Udeme Akpan Adiauke on accusation of being a witch.

f) In February 2002 at Obio Etoi in Uyo LGA, Sunday Edo, 50, reportedly tied his son to a stake, poured petrol and set him ablaze. The reason for his death is that the deceased became a "born again Christian" and was fond of accusing his father of practicing witchcraft.

g) Markson Akpan Udom, 67, of Ikot Idiong village in Ukam, Mkpato Enin LGA was accused of being a witch by youth in his village and taken to a distant bush where he was severely beaten and injected with a lethal substance suspected to be acid on the neck and on other parts of the body which resulted in his death.

h) Again in 2002, in Abiakpo Ikot Essien in Ikot Ekpene, LGA, the Village Head reported to the Police how 20 irate youths stormed the village hall where a meeting of the village council was going on, dragged out three young men whom they had previously accused of being witches, stabbed them continuously, before setting them ablaze.

i) A house -to - house search for witches, which took place in 2002 at Ikot Ewang in Ikot Ekpene was ignited by the mysterious death of a child, the third to die within a year in one particular family. In a suspected sanctuary of a witch, some pictures, under wears and other fetish items were discovered. The suspect was a brother to the father of the deceased child. He was lucky to have escaped unhurt to the police station. Another suspect of this case was apprehended, cut into pieces and his remains exhibited alongside the sanctuary which was publicly displayed before it was burnt.

j) In 1997, the state-owned Weekend Pioneer published an incredible story of how an aged woman was lynched to death in Uyo.

the State Capital of Akwa Ibom State, on suspicion that she was a witch because she merely strayed into an unfamiliar residence to request a cup of drinking water. The residents of the compound, a superstitious set having heard of a roving sorceress with the power to kill through accepting drinking water from somebody" the paper wrote, raised an alarm, witch, witch, witch.Minutes after that, the innocent woman lay sprawled on the road side, lynched to death.

CONCLUSION

As an organized force, feminism dates from abolitionism in the early 1830s. Abolition was the radical anti-slavery movement which demanded the immediate cessation of slavery on the grounds that every man was a self-owner; that is, every human being has moral jurisdiction over his or her own body. It was the first organized radical movement in which women played prominent roles and from which a woman's movement sprang. Therefore to the Grimke sisters, who smoothed the path for future feminists by breaking sexual taboos, and to Lucretia Mott (1793-1880), 29 who encouraged civil disobedience through her involvement in the Underground Railroad, equality meant equal protection under just law and the equal opportunity to protest injustice. This is the crusade left for advocates of feminism today, and this is the challenge they must face. This challenge includes de-constructing the patristic inclination of the Bible and allied materials that see women as synonymous with evil, something to "see", "take", "use"(albeit, forcefully), and abandon. The supposed secret knowledge examined above where not requested for by the women, but consciously and deliberately given to them by the Watchers, yet, these women were labeled harbingers of evil and evil children. But where were the angels when their children were becoming demonic, destructive, evil and grossly unmanageable? The same "machonistic" and patristic character is seen today, as women and children are being labeled witches as a result of socio-economic and political challenges.

Anthonia Essien³⁰ however, noted the following in a similar research as part of the lessons for today:

i) Accusations of witchcraft releases people from acknowledging the responsibility for their wrongdoing, their sins and their inadequacies, and putting them on someone else, often a poor person, who becomes the enemy of the whole community. Yet Pentecostals claim to support the oppressive and the poor in society.

Thus Shorter, rightly sees witchcraft accusation as "auto-salvation or self-justification."

ii) Teachings on witchcraft and demons, coupled with testimonies from "exorcised witches" subject the congregants to pressures quite disproportionate to the phenomena described. Thus people are psychologically led to confess antisocial behaviours and nocturnal issues which baffle their understanding as witchcraft activities. These confessions can attract stigmatization from other members of society, and thus instead of deliverance and healing leading to liberation, the physical and psychological conditions of such people worsen and in extreme cases lead to death.

iii) Many of the symptoms taken as witchcraft or spirit possession can be explained away by medical sciences. In such cases repeated deliverance worsen the person's condition.

iv) The socio-economic factor in Africa causes many people to begin prayer centres just as means of financial support. Since it does not need any training, certificate, or formal recognition from a body of Christians to begin a prayer centre, charlatans and the unemployed who have strong personalities can easily claim spiritual encounters and begin centres with a profit motive in mind. Linked with this socio-economic factor are the deliverance teachings at the centres, which consider health and wholeness as the result of obedience to biblical principles on blessing, at the neglect of biblical

principle of suffering (e.g. 2 Cor. 12:7-12; Lk. 13:1-5; Rom. 8: 35-39). This causes people to strive after modern riches at their own peril.

v) By the demonisation of all other faiths apart from the Evangelical/Pentecostal, in this pluralistic world, neo-Pentecostals deter healthy ecumenism and often cause unnecessary tension between Pentecostalism and other faiths.

vi) The process of deliverance, which often involves breaking links with families, eventually divides the traditional extended family system and promotes individualism.

vii) The theology of "witch-demonology" reinforces the primitive animistic belief systems that keep communities in servile fearfulness and hampers progress.

viii) The uncritical approach adopted by both proponents and adherents of this ministry encourage dubious people to deceive others with their exaggerated or fabricated testimonies. People who attempt to challenge some of the testimonies are branded as skeptics. Besides, it is assumed that theologians cannot understand "spiritual things", and by implication cannot teach such people.

The major problem with this is that such exorcists can lead genuine people to doom, just like the massacre of over 780 members of the Church of the Ten Commandments in Uganda in the year AD 2000 and other cult-inspired deaths elsewhere in the world. Aside from this, the most serious problem in the suffer - not - the - witch - to - live episode lie in the many independent churches and Nativistic Religious Movements in Akwa Ibom State that have become centres of diagnosing witches. These categories of religious leaders and adherents do not hesitate to quote Exodus 22:18 to support their stance on witches detection and elimination. The untold social problems these bring to the people are too awful for words.

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5. See also Lev 19:31: "Do not turn to ghosts (הַאֲבֹתָיִם) and do not inquire of familiar spirits (הַיִּדְעֹנִים) to be defiled by them (לְנִטְאָחָרִיתָם) I am the Lord your God"; and Lev 20:6: "And if any person turns to ghosts and familiar spirits and goes astray after them (לְנִטְאָחָרִיתָם), I will set my face against that person and cut him off from among his people." Male-only passages: Ex 7:11; Deut 18:9-18; Dan 2:2; 2 Kings 21:6; 2 Chron. 33:6; Isa 8:19-20, 44:24-25; Jer 27:9, 50:35-36; Ezek 21:26-28; Mic 5:11; Mal 3:5. Male and female passages: Lev 20:27.
6. This same passage also denounces the male prophets who have "envisioned falsehood and lying divination" (Ezek 13:6). Moshe Greenberg (*Ezekiel 1-20* [AB 22; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983], 240) has argued that the description of the women's divinatory methods can be explicated by reference to Babylonian techniques. Nancy R. Bowen ("The Daughters of Your People: Female Prophets in Ezekiel 13:17-23," *JBL* 118 [1999] 417-433) argues that (pp. 421-22) Ezekiel's elaborate condemnation of these women "looks very much like a Mesopotamian magical ceremony. On the basis of both a

- structural and functional comparison with *Maqlû*, Ezekiel's oracle is as much an act of magic or divination as what the female prophets are engaged in."
7. In Isa 44:24-25, the prophet also denounces the diviners and wise men (NJPS translation): "It is I, the Lord, who made everything, who alone stretch out the heavens and unaided spread out the earth; who annul the omens of diviners (וקסמיםיהולל מפראותו בדים) and make fools of the augurers (משיבוחמיםאחור) and make nonsense of their knowledge (ודעתם יסכל)". According to VanderKam (*Enoch and Apocalyptic*, 72), in Isa. 44:25 the word בדים should be emended to ברים to refer to a certain kind of Babylonian diviner. John McKenzie (Second Isaiah [AB; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1968], 73) comments: "The baru priest is known from Akkadian literature, and the text is restored from this word. The sage was the professional wise man, a counselor and a spokesman of traditional wisdom."
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13. 1 En. 7:1 (Ethiopic). Translation is by Black, *The Book of Enoch*, 28. Matthew Black edited the Greek manuscripts of 1 Enoch in *Apocalypsis Henochi Graece* (PVTG; Leiden: Brill, 1970). He describes the manuscripts as follows (7-9). The Gizeh fragment, also called Codex Panopolitanus, is a sixth-century papyrus from Akhmin in Egypt. It covers 1 En. 1-32:6. The second Greek manuscript, the Chester Beatty papyrus, is from the fourth century, and covers 1 En. 97:6-104 and 106-107. Substantial parts of 1 Enoch are also preserved in the works of Georgius Syncellus. The Aramaic texts were found at Qumran and subsequently published by J. T. Milik, in collaboration with Matthew Black, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976).
14. Vander Kam, *Enoch and Apocalyptic*, 8, 52-75. He comments on 1 Enoch 8:3: "The context shows that the author considers this particular revelation of such knowledge to be sin; these arts lead to untold wickedness and misery. This approach to the secrets stands in a certain tension, it appears, with the AB [Astronomical Book] in which astronomical information was revealed to Enoch with no effort to suppress it (cf. also 2:1-5:3), but it also acts as a foil for Enoch's reception and transmission of revealed knowledge in the remainder of the AB." See also Michael E. Stone, "Enoch, Aramaic Levi, and Sectarian Origins," *JSJ* 19 (1988) 159-70, on the Babylonian antecedents of much of the learning in 1 Enoch.

15. VanderKam, *Enoch and Apocalyptic*, 129. Chapters 12-16 presuppose the two main stories that were blended in chapters 6-11, "but the writer of the new section makes significant additions to and alterations of these accounts as he brings the Watchers into direct contact with Enoch for the first time. Actually, though the finished text indicates the author's knowledge of both stories (or, rather, an editor's awareness of them), aside from 13:1-2 which is most awkward in its present context, chaps. 12-16 recapitulate and expand only the version associated with Shemihazah (without ever mentioning his name)." See also Dimant, *Fallen Angels*, 72-79, and Newsom, "Development," 316-19; Reed, "Heavenly Ascent," 53-65, and Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 44-49.
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