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One of our field teams was preaching the Gospel to a crowd of two hundred Caprivians near Katima Mulilo. They all seemed to be responding very positively until one of our workers spoke out against witchcraft. Suddenly the whole hall was filled with a rumbling sound as many angrily murmured and complained. One man stood up and rebuked us for condemning witchcraft — “It is our tradition!” he declared.

“Are you a Christian?” he was asked.

“Yes, we who are here are all Christians,” came the reply.

“Do you believe that the Bible is the Word of God?”

“Yes, we all are good church members — but how can you speak against our traditions. The witchdoctor protects us against the evil spirits, and heals some diseases that the white doctor cannot.”

Our field worker read from Deuteronomy 18:9-13:

*“Don’t follow the disgusting practices of the nations. . . Don’t sacrifice your children . . . Don’t let your people practise divination or look for omens or use spells or charms, and don’t let them consult the spirits of the dead. The Lord your God hates people who do these disgusting things . . . Be completely faithful to the Lord.”*

The whole hall resounded with angry shouts and threats. Clearly few of these church members were receptive to the Word of God’s condemnation of witchcraft. Nevertheless, our three field workers, on this and other occasions, patiently presented the clear commands of the Scriptures and boldly challenged these animist church members with the uncompromising Gospel message of repentance and faith in Christ.

“Decide today whom you will serve.” Joshua 24:15

“You cannot go to church on Sunday as well as to the witchdoctor on Monday,” we declared. This problem of syncretism — the mixing of ancestral worship, witchcraft and superstition with the Christian Gospel is a widespread one in Africa.

As Elijah challenged the people of Israel on Mount Carmel:

*“How much longer will it take you to make up your minds? If the Lord is God, worship Him; but if Baal is God, worship him!”*□

*1 Kings 18:21*