CHAPTER 1

THE SCOPE AND ARGUMENTATION ON DEMONOLOGY : AN INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

1.1.1 THE IMPERATIVE OF THEOLOGICAL INCARNATION

One of the pressing needs of Christian theology at the beginning of the third millennium, perhaps more than any period in church history, is to reflect whether the Christian message has been fully embraced by the majority of people who profess to be followers of Christ in the world. Since 1945, in the findings of Robert (2000:50), world Christianity has experienced a massive cultural and geographic shift away from Europeans (and Americans) and their descendants towards peoples of the southern hemisphere.

Such an observation is echoed by Mbiti (1976:10) who says, "this is the challenge which theology must face, as the axis of Christianity tilts southwards towards areas, situations, cultures, concerns, traditions, religions and problems which are largely different from those which precipitated or necessitated the theological output of the church in the West over the 500 years at least." In this process of shift of the Christianity's centre of gravity in the modern world from the Northern continents to the South, Africa is playing a significant role in the resurgence of the faith. It is, therefore, important that African theologians "identify some of the challenges which a post-missionary Christian Africa may need to face as an important flag-bearer of Christianity in the new century" (Bediako 1995:ix).

Statistics taken from Barret and Johnson (2000:24-25) reveal that the numerical dominance of Euro-Americans of earlier times has been overtaken by the massive shift to Latin America, Africa and Asia. In the view of Robert (2000:56), there is no doubt that much of the dynamism within world Christianity is occurring below the equator and as Christianity shifts southward, the interpretations of Christianity by people in Latin America, Africa and southern Asia are increasingly coming to the fore. Whereas at the beginning of the twentieth century, Europeans dominated the world church, with approximately 70,6% of the world's Christian population, the typical late twentieth-century Christian was no longer a European man, but a Latin American or an African woman (see Barret and Johnson 2000:24-25).

Such a demographic shift in the Christian population in the world would naturally dictate also a change in the Christian theological reflection. But Mbiti (1976:8) maintains that, although the church is kerygmatically universal, it is still theologically provincial. In illustrating this point, he relates a story (which is incidentally appropriate to the present study) of an African theologian who had been trained in Europe where he attained a doctoral degree in theology. After nine and a half years of study, after getting his junior and senior degrees, he had to return home with the excess baggage which consisted of the Bible in the various languages he had learned, plus works by Bultmann, Barth, Bonhoeffer, Brunner, etc.

On arriving home, there was a big welcoming occasion of relatives, neighbours, old friends, dancers, musicians and many others. In the midst of the dancing and jubilation, and after he had related his experiences overseas, there was a sudden shriek. It was his older sister who had fallen to the ground. When the well-qualified theologian suggested that she be taken to hospital, he was told that the hospital was far. The theologian was then told that the woman was demon-possessed. When the African theologian tried to refer to Bultmann's explanation in the New Testament, he got a shock that Bultmann had demythologised spirit possession.

Although this episode is fictional, it carries a significant truth of what Christians in Africa and those in the Third World are confronted with, almost on a daily basis. Many Christians in the Third World have a perception that orthodox Christian

theology has failed to address burning issues facing them. In socio-political matters and spirit-sensitivity, orthodox (western) theology simply does not "scratch where it itches" (Kraft 1979:150). It is one of the reasons why Biyo laments the legacy that western intellectualism has had on theology in Africa, labelling it "too abstract and too academic ... on the whole remains élitist" (quoted in Tiéneu 1990:73).

This real (or perceived) "theological impotence" (Mbiti 1976:6), coupled with a feeling that "African theologians are no longer satisfied with starting points that portray Africans as passive victims in either the missionary or the colonial process" (Maluleke 2000:50), have, against the expectations of the traditional missionary or "older" churches of the west, led to the emergence of the local theologies in the Third World (see Schreiter 1985). In congruence with this view, Bosch (1991:4) adds: "Western theology is today suspect in many parts of the world, (and) it is often regarded as irrelevant, speculative, and the product of ivory-tower institutions". In many parts of the world, it is being replaced by liberation theology, Black theology, contextual theology, *minjung* theology, African theology, Asian theology, feminist theology, etc. These theologies came about precisely because "even the best of western theological thinking has been found by non-westerners to be answering questions that they (Africans) are simply not asking, while completely ignoring questions about which they are desperately concerned" (Imasogie 1983:8-9).

Realising the inadequacies of orthodox theology (see Khathide 1999a:1f), and in response to the changing theological landscape in the Third World, there has arisen a need on both sides of the theological spectrum (i.e. orthodox theology and local theologies) to demonstrate the ability of the Christian faith to meet the different needs of the Third World people. This is aptly illustrated in the thesis of Boesak (1976:10) who maintains that "black theological reflection must take seriously precisely what Christian theology has hitherto ignored: the black situation". To Boesak, Black theology seeks to interpret the gospel in such a way that the situation of Blacks will begin to make sense. It seeks to take seriously the biblical emphasis on the wholeness of life, which has always had its counterpart in the African heritage, trying to transform the departmentalised theology Blacks

have inherited from the western world into biblical, holistic theology (see Boesak 1976:13).

In their different emphases, local theologies have sought to make the Christian faith meaningful in the context of exploitation, degration and human humiliation, thus reducing the notion of missionary work being viewed as "establishing and maintaining western spiritual colonies throughout the non-western world" or allowing Third World congregations to be "drab copies of the western religious experience" (Hillman 1993:38, 40).

Liberation theology, for example, is an attempt at reflection, based on the gospel and the experiences of men and women committed to the process of liberation in the oppressed and exploited of Latin America. According to Gutiérrez (1988:xiii), the goal of liberation theology "is rather to let ourselves be judged by the word of the Lord, to think through our faith, to strengthen our love, and to give reason for our hope from within a commitment that seeks to become more radical, total, and officious. It is to reconsider the great themes of the Christian life within this radically changed perspective and with regard to the new questions posed by this commitment". While locating itself within the parameters of biblical revelation and spirituality (see Sobrino 1985), and church tradition, liberation theology seeks to interpret the faith in comprehensive terms to those ravaged by human indignities of sorts.

On the African continent, the relevancy of orthodox theology has also been questioned. Its failure to address what appears to be perpetual poverty, political upheavals, fear of spirits, witchcraft, etc., has persuaded African theological thinkers to begin to seek appropriations of the gospel of Christ in Africa. According to Bujo (1992:12), the goal of African theology is to discover a way in which Jesus Christ can be an African among the Africans according to their own religious experience. The deep concern in Africa is to emerge with a type of Christian faith that will be said to be African proper - holistic, engaging and relevant because "beneath the veneer of imported ecclesiastical institutions, African Christians remain African" (Mugambi 1989:9). The foreign image of the Christian faith needs to be replaced by a version of faith that is truly Christian and African at the same time. A perception has been left in African minds that in order to become Chris-

tian, a person must denounce or abandon their cultural heritage. In becoming a Christian, an African is not expected to become a pseudo-Westerner. The challenge to the African is to follow Christ in his call to discipleship, thus forsaking everything that is contrary to biblical revelation, and yet not losing the identity of Africanness.

The process in desiring to make the Christian faith accessible and meaningful to the people in the Third World can be summed up in one word: contextualisation. Contextualisation has taken various forms and terms like inculturation, indigenisation, adaptation, accommodation, etc. (see Bosch 1991:447). The contextualisation of Christianity is nothing more than a process of interpreting Christian truth in terms of, and applying it to the real life issues arising from the socio-cultural contest within which the interpreters live. It involves seriously both everyday human life and God's desire to be involved in it (see Imasogie 1983:7). Of course, it needs to be stated that by 'contextualisation' is not meant a movement towards syncretistic tendencies. Hesselgrave and Rommen (1989:xii) see the task of theology as that of "distinguishing between aberrant and valid contextualisation attempts, of reinforcing proposals that are scripturally sound and culturally viable, and of contextualising the gospel in ways that will contribute to Great Commission mission around the world."

On recognising the importance of inculturation or contextualisation, Pope John Paul II demonstrated his support for the process, by saying,

> Missionaries, who came from other churches and countries, must immerse themselves in the cultural milieu of those to whom they are sent, moving beyond their cultural limitations ... developing ecclesial communities, inspired by the gospel, (with the hope that they) will gradually be able to express their Christian experience in original ways and forms that are consonant with their cultural traditions, provided that those traditions are in harmony with the objective requirements of the faith itself (*Redemptoris missio*, 53).

The proponents of contextual theology view the inadequacy of western theology as caused by solely focusing on scripture and tradition. Contextual theologians, on the other hand, are persuaded that the human experience, in addition to scripture and tradition, should be taken as a serious informing source to Christian theology. The human experience is considered by contextual theologians as an epistemological break. Bosch (1991:423) correctly observes that "since the time of Constantine, theology was conducted *from above* as an elitist enterprise (except in the case of minority Christian communities, commonly referred to as sects), its main source (apart from scripture and tradition) was *philosophy*, and its main interlocutor the *educated non-believer*, contextual theology is theology *from below*, from the underside of history, its main source (apart from scripture and tradition) is the *social sciences*, and its main interlocutor the *poor*".

In trying to find a biblical equivalent or referrent, perhaps because contextualisation or inculturation appears to be foreign to biblical or theological language, the Vatican II council emerged from its deliberations with the emphasis on the primordial and unique principle of incarnation. The fact that God self-communicated himself in Jesus Christ to be the world and that the eternal Word (*Logos*) became flesh (Jn 1:14), means that the Christian faith (and also Christian theology) needs to take cognisance of the fact that "people exist only in limited historical periods, and within concrete cultural contexts, all with their respective symbol systems of communication" (Hillman 1993:31). Hillman, therefore, argues for a need for fleshy visibility, audibility and tangibility in particular historical and cultural forms capable of mediating the meaning of God's Word in the respective times and contexts of each distinctive people. This incarnational theological tendency is derived from the scandalous belief that God in Jesus became one of us in everything except sin (cf.. Heb. 2:14-18; 4:15). In the incarnation God not only came, he *became*. In the words of Kraft (1979:175):

> God in Jesus became so much of a specific human context that many never even recognised that he had come from somewhere else.

The incarnation of Jesus spells tremendous implications for Christian theology. Hillman (1993:35) says that the missionary principle of incarnation, although vari-

ously formulated and frequently ignored throughout church history, may be traced back to its application in Paul's missionary ministry modelled on the mission of the divine Word spoken to humankind in Jesus of Nazareth. The apostle to the Gentiles was challenged, and indeed hounded until his death, by a party of Jewish Christians who had erroneously confused Christianity with their own ethnocentric conventions and cultural practices, which they wished to impose upon all non-Jewish converts to Christianity (cf.. Acts 15:1-30; 17:22-28; Gal. 2:1-4). Vindicated by Paul, the principle of incarnation was applied generously in the Greco-Roman cultural world. By the end of the first century Christianity was no longer another offshoot of the Jewish religion, although born within a Jewish socio-cultural matrix.

The early church Fathers, in their numerous church councils (see Dvornik 1961) set up to formulate their understanding of Christ in the language and culture of the non-Jewish world, demonstrated their acceptance of the incarnational principle. Sanneh (1989:1) states that Christianity, from its origins, identified itself with the need to translate out of Aramaic and Hebrew, and from that position came to exert a dual force in its historical development - one was the resolve to relativise its Judaic roots, with the consequence that it promoted significant aspects of those roots. The other was to destigmatise Gentile culture and adopt that culture as a natural extension of the life of the new religion. The action to destigmatise complemented the other action to relativise. Thus the two subjects, the Judaic and the Gentile, became closely intertwined in the Christian dispensation, bot crucial to the formative image of the new religion (see also Cole 1998:14; Conn 1978:40-41).

One would have thought that Christian theologians, especially those in Africa, would emulate their forebears in this regard. This was, unfortunately, not to be for many years until the International Missionary Council gathering in Willingen where it was agreed that,

> while the church of Christ in any place and at any time must exhibit the marks without which it will not be a church, it has the responsibility to exhibit them in a distinct way, incorporating into the service of Christ whatever heritage

> of cultural values it may have been given by God's grace (quoted in Imasogie 1985:19).

Precisely because God became flesh (Jn 1:14) - not generally, but particularly - manifesting himself as "a human being in the person of Jesus, a Jew, son of Mary, a male ... it follows quite naturally that, if that message is to continue to touch people through our agency, we have to continue the incarnation process" (Bevans 1992:8). Imasogie (1983:19) maintains that no theology is authentic and universal if it does not meet the integrated needs of a particular people in a particular context. This is a view shared by Boesak (1976:12) who believes that Christian theology is, by expectation and nature, a living experience.

Perhaps more than any theological discipline, the incarnational tendency of Christian theology should have been seen in the New Testament studies because the dynamic of the New Testament literature consists of its life orientation. Rather than an abstraction of principles, ideas or dogmatics, it is the treasury of the experiences of the early church.

But New Testament studies have generally not seen a pressing need to contextualise. As a result of this ignorance and reluctance, many African Initiated Churches or independency movements tend to be attracted to the Old Testament, understandably because of the rituals and symbolism found there. What is perturbing, though, in spite of the fact that the New Testament sufficiently addresses the issue of the spirit-world (a problem of magnitudinal proportions in Africa and other spirit-sensitive communities), generally the Old Testament enjoys more preference among the African Initiated Churches. This relegation of the New Testament, instead of being blamed to the ignorance of Africans or AICs, should be laid squarely at the door of New Testament scholarship.

For the purposes of this inquiry, Ericson (1978:71f) gives five reasons that contribute to the rigid attitude of the New Testament to contextualise. Firstly, he cites the characteristic emphasis on the unity of Scripture. Though he agrees that the principle that God is never self-contradictory, and therefore neither is his inscripturated word, is valid, he, nevertheless, feels that this has been emphasised to the extreme with the danger that the distinctive features of the individual units

of literature can be lost. In support of this position, Hasel (1978:216) says that, since no single theme, scheme, pattern of thought or motif is sufficiently comprehensive to include within it all the varieties of the New Testament viewpoints, one must refrain from using a particular concept, formula, basic idea, etc., as the centre of the New Testament whereby a systemisation of the manifold and variegated New Testament testimonies is achieved. On the other hand, and quite rightly so, we need to affirm that as God is the centre of the Old Testament (see also Hasel 1974:65-82), so is Jesus the centre of the New Testament.

The second reason given by Ericson for the rigidity of the New Testament scholarship is the single-minded way in which evangelicals use canonical literature. Too often in evangelical circles a person hears the phrase, "The Bible is all you need". Ericson argues that, without denying a degree of truth in the statement, such a view fails to recognise the many factors which create distance between the modern reader and this ancient literature. The third reason advanced by Ericson, is the tendency to think of biblical literature as a programmed manual of operations. This tendency is known to issue in three-ring notebooks with all the Christian life neatly sorted out into categories and steps. Anything that falls beyond the set categories, is viewed with suspicion and scorn. Such systems use a mechanistic form of eclectic hermeneutics, making little, if any, allowance for the dynamic of the original context or the variables of the contemporary context.

Fourthly, Ericson says that another factor which impedes contextual studies of the New Testament or the Bible in its entirety, is the effort to extract and absolutise the teachings of the Bible. Ericson believes that, though we should admit that there are propositional statements of truth in the Bible, it must also be recognised that the systematising of Christian truth has two ever-active dangers: the first is the mould which the systematiser brings to the biblical propositions, be they philosophical, cultural or tagmatic. The second is that the abstracted statements tend to be sterile, thus making them divorced from real-life situations. These abstracted statements or the church dogmatic tradition formulations "come to be regarded, as it were, a fossilised distillation of the deposit of divine revelation" (Imasogie 1983:23). Such a concept of theological formulation, Imasogie contends, beclouds the dynamic nature of Christ who promises to continue being God to humankind in every situation or context through the continuing activity of

the Holy Spirit. Consequently, the lack of sensitivity to the dynamic nature of theological enterprise made most missionaries unresponsive to the worldview of self-understanding of the Africans they encountered, as well as the role of culture in perception that results from that worldview - thus marginalising African Christians. In tandem with this viewpoint, Kourie (1995:176-177) correctly observes that New Testament studies in the post-modern era witness a shift from a purely theological approach to a religious orientation, meaning that the interpretation of scripture is no longer predetermined by dogmatic and systematic theological considerations, with their noncomitant reluctance to accept psychological development and immanental hermeneutical devices. According to Kourie, while the postmodernist thought does not deny the historical-religious nature of scripture, with its roots in the past, there is a greater awareness of scripture as a contemporary agent. Kourie is convinced that the Bible cannot be seen as a purely neutral object, divorced from an engaged subjectivity. Therefore, Kourie is of the opinion that we can no longer be held hostage to the particularities and contingencies of biblical interpretation bequeathed to us by the Enlightenment and positivism.

Finally, Ericson (1978:73) concludes that the indifference to New Testament contextualisation has been brought about by too little emphasis upon hermeneutics. Ericson says that, while we agree to the general principle of the historical-grammatical method, the problem is that we quickly veer from this to a creed which itself is a contextualised expression of an ecclesiastical tradition (see also Imasogie 1983:23). Though the Bible is our firm foundation, Ericson argues that our hermeneutical methods must be scrutinised for the elimination of the blind spots.

This investigation intends to situate itself within New Testament theological contextual studies. This study seeks to address itself to the concerns and situations of (Christian) people below the equator, especially regarding the spirit-world in Africa. It is an area that has been neglected by New Testament scholarship. Perhaps, more importantly, this study seeks to rediscover the historical Jesus in his miracles of exorcism and the missiological implications for the church's mission in Africa (cf. Khathide 2000a).

1.1.2 RESURGENCE OF INTEREST IN THE SPIRIT-WORLD

The burgeoning fascination with spirits and associated topics is something that Christian theology cannot avoid indefinitely. This requires a response that is based on biblical revelation. Van Aarde (1987:22) observes that "demonology has become the subject of lively debate and, unfortunately a cult, as it was in mediaeval times", and according to Kallas (1975:9), it is no overemphasis today to say that there is no topic as "widely discussed, enthusiastically endorsed and as generally recognised as true as Satan". In another research finding, Petitpierre (1976:45) remarks, "Almost every parish priest of the Church of England is faced these days with a growing demand for his services in regard to the ministry of healing and deliverance." Ministers of local congregations, of whatever ecclesiastical tradition are often confronted with the issue of spirits - something they were never equipped to handle. Concerning this challenge facing congregational priests, Joubert (2000:196) writes:

> As dit aan die een kant waar is dat die duiwel binne intellektuele Westerse kringe min of meer van die toneel verwyder is, is dit aan die ander kant waar dat daar tans in kerklike kringe 'n 'nuwe belangstelling' in die Satan is.

Joubert maintains that while the devil is relegated to the bottom in western thinking, in local churches there is a renewed interest in the devil. Joubert attributes this partly to the postmodern era which, among other things, is a protest against the authoritarian and fixed categories developed by modernism. Generally, there is now an openness to metaphysical issues - people are searching for answers and explanations of hitherto unresolved matters confronting individual Christians, including even those who do not profess the Christian faith.

In his book, *Satanisme: Die reg om te weet*, Seale (1991) shows how school-going children are increasingly becoming interested in the devil and evil spirits. Whereas in the past belief in Satan was discussed in hushed tones, nowadays it is an open talk as more and more people search for freedom of religious and human rights. Although occultism has been practised for thousands of years, its recent upsurge, especially among young people, is a cause for great concern

(see Khathide 1999b:38). To illustrate the popularity of the subject, Lindsay and Carlson (1972) have co-authored a book with the title, *Satan is Alive and Well in Planet Earth*. Green (1981:112f) also shows the popularity of the occult in our times.

Albeit scholars like Kallas (1975:13) may think that "modern demonology is negative, an escapist abandonment of the real world in which we find ourselves, a bailing out, a capitulation of our power", others believe that the subject requires our urgent and serious attention. Joubert (2000:195) believes that, even though modern theological epistemologies tend to interpret early Christian views regarding the struggle between Christ and Satan in terms of a primitive, mythical worldview, the metaphysical worldview of the New Testament ought to be taken seriously. Joubert goes further to say that, as modern believing communities, we need to seriously consider the metaphysical worldview of the New Testament, including the reality of evil, if we still want to lay claim to legitimately being part of the apostolic tradition.

Silvoso (1994:100-101) remarks with dismay, with reference to Paul's statement of "in the heavenlies" (Eph. 3:10), that the average church member in the western world has no idea of what the expression really means. Despite the fact that in western theological thinking belief in the angels and demons is still considered as vestigial survivals of antiquated mythology, the veil of ignorance is gradually being removed.

In the western world catastrophic events like the World War I & II, led to some theological experts to revisit what the Bible has to say about the reality of the powers. Wink (1992:8) writes that visitors to Nazi Germany in the late 1930's spoke of the palpable evil in the air, of a pervading atmosphere that hung over the entire land, full of foreboding and menace. Berkhof (1962:32) tells that he himself experienced almost literally how such powers might be in the air and acted as if they were ultimate values, calling for loyalty as if they were the gods of the cosmos. Owing to the difficulties of the time, Theron (1992:177) writes that the church in Germany slowly began to realise that it had deluded itself in thinking that the principalities and powers were just in the heavens; they were incarnate on earth, as demonic forces within societal structures. Baigent, Leigh, Lincoln

(1996:198), as if they were though controversial, even allege, even though it cannot be proven beyond doubt, that Hitler was associated with occult groups.

Wink (1992:8) relates two other instances where powers were felt. He mentions that those who were leaving South Africa, in the pre-democratic era, that is, remarked on the sense of an enormous weight of anxiety and tension that dropped off their shoulders as the plane left the South African airspace. Another example Wink gives is that of people who remember the assassination of President John Kennedy, of how a feeling of darkness hung over the face of the nation for days. In the South African modern history, the assassination of Chris Hani, the South African Communist Party leader, was so explosive that many people almost 'smelt' the presence of the powers of evil and threatening civil war.

Nevertheless, it should be stated that it is possible to discount or dismiss the cited experiences from psycho-sociological disciplines (see Bodemer 1987:132f), or even theologically (see Gaybba 1987:96f), as misleading and non-existent. But, such a position paternalistically denies or excludes the epistemological framework of those people whose perspective is not only informed by the rationalistic worldview. In whatever way we look at it, there are dangers that C.S. Lewis (1992:9) in his book, *The Screwtape Letters - Letters from a Senior to a Junior Devil*, tries to caution against:

> There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.

This study presupposes the reality and existence of demons and seeks, therefore, to demonstrate the need of the church to be involved by biblically responding by way of spirit-discernment, healing, deliverance and exorcism (e.g. Acts 16:16-18; see Khathide 1999a:82-83; Wink 1992:134). Admittedly, there have been numerous religious gimmicks in the name of Christian exorcism, like, for example, a belief that human beings can, of themselves, do nothing wrong; if

anybody does an evil act, it is because they are 'possessed' of demons and, therefore, need to be exorcised (see Petitpierre 1976:35). But this investigation is intended as an argument that such negativities around Christian exorcism need not warrant the marginalising of such an important subject by Christian theology, especially the New Testament studies.

1.1.3 SPLIT-LEVEL CHRISTIANITY IN AFRICA

Perhaps, more than the two aforementioned points of the background of this study, the spirit-level Christianity links directly with the purpose of this inquiry. The phrase "split-level Christianity" comes from Father Jaime Bulatao, who referred to it in 1962, and later elaborated on the concept in *Split-Level Christianity* (1992).

The central concern of this study is the persistence of a two-tier Christianity or the schizophrenic religious personality seen in world Christianity, particularly in the Third World (see Hiebert, Shaw, Tiénou 1999:15). The persistence of the split-level Christianity in Africa and elsewhere occurs despite centuries of instruction and condemnation by missionaries and church leaders. One finds deeply committed Christians faithfully attending church services on Sundays, praying to God who revealed himself in Jesus Christ, but in time of need or existential crisis, they turn to a local shaman, *inyanga* for healing, a diviner for guidance and to an exorcist, traditional or 'spiritual', that is, for deliverance from spirit oppression. Commenting on the nature of the problem, Williamson (1965:158) writes:

> Most Christians live on two unreconciled levels. They are members of a church and ascribe to a statement of faith. But below the system of conscious beliefs are deeply imbedded traditions and customs implying quite a different interpretation of the universe and the world of spirit from the Christian interpretation. In the crises of life and rites of passage the church is an alien thing.

Imasogie (1983:8, 9) believes that "the observed lack of total commitment of the average Christian to Christ is due to the lack of 'fit' between Christian theology

and African life ... In the absence of such an existential fit between theology and life, the African reverts to his traditional practices in times of serious problems". Ehusani (1992:159) also concedes that there is a wide gap, a split, or a dislocation between theory expressed in ecclesiastical documents and the practical life of many Africans converted to Christianity.

On reflection, some missionaries involved in spirit-sensitive communities, began looking for biblical answers in the face of the African perception that the western exported Christianity in Africa was powerless, as it were (see Khathide 2000:80). Even missionaries themselves felt the inadequacy in their theological training in dealing with spirits. Donald Jacobs, a Mennonite missionary, who in the process of doing missionary work in East Africa, felt that many of his Enlightenment-rooted presuppositions were challenged by the mission context. Jacobs (1992:147) was later to confess: "I distrusted any Christian movement that allowed for subjective learning". Kraft (1998:164) recalls an incident during his missionary stay in Nigeria, of a village shaman who began to come to church. The man soon dropped away, however, probably because there was no power there. But Kraft is convinced that the shaman dropped away also because most of the Christians came to him rather than going to Jesus or the pastor when the needed spiritual help.

Boer (1993:3), in his article, *Worldview: Enlarging the Reformed Tent*, relates a story of a young Nigerian Christian man, who was tormented by spirit-transmigration. Upon realising his inability to help the young man, Boer became miserable and he felt empty, helpless, powerless and ashamed. This, and other similar incidences, prompted the Reformed Ecumenical Council to sponsor a mission conference with the theme "Power Encounter", which was designed to help missionaries wrestle with the question of the spirit world better.

The theological impotence as seen in the western missionaries in dealing with spirit world related issues contributed, to a large extent, to the untenable situation in which the church unwittingly left the African converts "with two Gods in their hands and thus made them peoples of ambivalent spiritual lives" (Idowu quoted in Imasogie 1993:65).

The spiritual ambivalence or split-level Christianity in Africa can be attributable to possibly two factors. Firstly, it can be blamed on the inability (or reluctance?) of Africans to comprehend the requirements of Christian discipleship which proscribes any form of idolatrous behaviour (e.g. Ex. 20:3 - "You shall have no gods before me"). Secondly, it can be attributed to the inadequacy of the gospel-product which failed to address the African situation holistically - a situation that led African converts to Christianity, in view of the insufficiency of the missionary gospel, to revert to their traditional practices which, to a large extent, were not ecclesiastically acceptable.

The researcher hereby submits that the cause of the spiritual ambivalence in African Christianity is more a matter of the inadequacy of the missionary gospel-product than the reluctance (or inability) of African Christians to embrace fully the requirements of Christian discipleship. Admittedly, it is also a valid argument that many African Christians appear satisfied with ambivalent spiritual living whereby there is an exterior allegiance to the God of Jesus Christ, but with an interior and perhaps a mere profound allegiance to the belief systems of their forebears which, in some areas, are opposed to biblical revelation.

But, on the whole, the major contributing factor to the African spiritual ambivalence can be attributed to the people who first introduced the gospel to the continent of Africa. The missionary insensitivity to the self-understanding of the African inadvertently led to the two-tier Christianity on the continent. Understandably, the western missionaries were guided in their theological perception and praxis by the Enlightenment-rooted worldview - a worldview which understands the spirit world as of no consequence in daily life.

Although the spirit world is effectively addressed in the scriptures, the New Testament scholarship generally demonstrates a neglect on the subject - the very thing that made western theologically equipped missionaries fail to engage spirits, demons and witchcraft in Africa.

1.2 THE LITERATURE SURVEY AND THE DEBATE

1.2.1 NEW TESTAMENT SCHOLARSHIP

Any Christian concern about spirits, their nature, functions, activities and destiny cannot overlook the New Testament perspective regarding the subject, if it hopes to be worthwhile. Such an inquiry should lead to the enrichment of the church's understanding of the historical Jesus. The present study seeks to sketch, inter alia, a picture of the historical Jesus in his ministry of exorcism.

A brief survey of the synoptic gospel writers reveals how important exorcism was for them. The synoptic gospels, though not attempting to discuss the origin of Satan and demons (see Khathide 1999a:69), are full of the exorcisms of demonised people. Luke, Matthew and Mark agree that exorcism was an important aspect of Jesus' ministry, and they go so far as to suggest that Jesus' dealings with the demon-possessed is of central significance in understanding Jesus and his ministry (Twelftree 1993:3). In the view of Ladd (1974:51), this background of satanic evil provides the cosmic backdrop for the mission of Jesus and his proclamation of the kingdom.

As exorcisms fall within the ambit of the miracles of Jesus, it is of significance to point out main trends in miracle research. The tendency in New Testament scholarship has been to give more attention to the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus than the *ipsissima facta* (cf. Engelbrecht 1988:42). The one factor that has been problematic to New Testament scholars, is the historicity of the miracles of Jesus. For some, the historicity of the miracles of Jesus is irrelevant, while others feel a renewed interest in this question. Brown (1984:vii), for example, is of the opinion that we cannot have Christianity without the miracle-working Jesus of the four gospel writers. Brown is convinced that the miracles of Jesus provide the key to understanding Jesus. The miracle stories are what enable us to make sense of the gospels as history. Brown goes on to say that the miracles of Jesus are not simply a question of the incarnation of the divine Son of God; they are a question of the Trinity, this referring to the prophecy of John the Baptist, "He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit" (Lk. 3:16).

To help us through the New Testament survey on miracles, Twelftree (1993:3f) observes that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the miracles of Jesus did not feature prominently, even though there were voices clamouring for the revisitation of the miracles in the ministry of Jesus. Among these, were people like Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872), who believed that the specific object of faith is a miracle; faith and miracle are absolutely inseparable. However, Hermann Reimarus (1694-1768), though focusing on the principal articles of faith in the kerygma, concludes that miracles are not essential. The post-Enlightenment people, as exemplified by Heinrich Paulus (1761-1851), offered rationalistic approach in New Testament scholarship. The main interest and objective of Paulus' enterprise was to show that miracles need no longer be an obstacle for the intelligent person. Strauss (1808-1874) postulated that much of the New Testament, including the miracle stories, should be understood, and placed in one of a number of categories as myth. Adolf Harnack (1851-1930), albeit attaching some importance to miracles, felt that Jesus did not himself assign that critical importance to his miraculous deeds which even the evangelist Mark and the others attributed to him.

But, on the other hand, the endeavour, as exemplified by Harnack, to shrug off the problem of the miracle was thwarted by Bultmann in his denial that myth and the gospel could be separated. Bultmann (1984) believed rather that the myth had to be demythologised. This famous concept, if excruciatingly confusing phrase, to 'demythologise myth' means not to eliminate or demythicise the mythology, but, instead to extricate the true, existential meaning of that mythology (see Segal 1996:90). The real purpose of myth is not to present an objective picture as it is, but to express a human being's understanding of themselves in the world in which they live. For Bultmann, myth should be interpreted not cosmologically, but authropologically, or better still, existentially.

Read literally, the New Testament in particular, describes a cosmic battle between good and evil anthromorphic gods, angels and demons for control of the physical world. These beings intervene not only in the operation of nature but also in the lives of human beings. The beneficent beings direct humans to do good; the malevolent ones compel them to do evil. Demythologised, the New Testament still refers to the physical world, but now to a world ruled by a single,

non-anthropomorphic, transcendent God. Because God does not act directly in the world and because no evil powers exist, human beings are free rather than controlled like puppets. Demythologised, God still exists, but Satan and demons do not. Sin becomes one's own doing, and Satan symbolises only one's own evil inclinations.

Bultmann (1984:2-3) contends that, since New Testament mythology can be traced to contemporary mythology of Jewish apocalypticism and of Gnostic myth of redemption, there is a need to make the New Testament relevant to the rationalistic-minded people of the modern world. Insofar as it is mythological talk, it is incredible to men and women of today because for them the mythical world picture is a thing of the past. Therefore, contemporary Christian kerygma is faced with the question as to whether, when it demands faith from men and women, it expects them to acknowledge this mythical world picture of the past. If it is impossible, it then has to face the question of whether the New Testament proclamation has truth that is independent of the mythical world picture, in which case it would be the task of theology to demythologise the Christian proclamation. Since modern thinking is irrevocably formed by science, it is, therefore, impossible to repristinate a world picture by resolve. A blind acceptance of New Testament mythology would be simply arbitrariness and to make such acceptance a demand of faith would be to reduce faith to a work (Bultmann 1984:3). Bultmann (1984:14) believes that "any satisfaction of the demand would be a forced *sacrificium intellectus*".

The demythologising tendency of Bultmann simply means that the mythological picture of the New Testament is finished, including also faith in spirits and demons. Likewise, illnesses and their cures have natural causes and do not depend on the work of demons and on exorcising them. Thus, the wonders of the New Testament were also finished as wonders; anyone who seeks to salvage their historicity by recourse to nervous disorders, hypnotic influences, suggestion and the like only confirm this (see Bultmann 1984:4).

Bultmann, perhaps more than we realise, has had a tremendous impact on New Testament scholarship, especially in the area of spirits. According to Da Silva (1992:4), large segments of New Testament scholarship have followed the course

laid out by Bultmann, accepting his conclusions as determinative for the question of how a person of the twentieth century and of later generations must read elements of the New Testament proclamation which do not fit into a secularised view of the world.

Although Bultmann was trying to contextualise the New Testament message for his rationalistic, Enlightenment-influenced contemporaries, his whole demythologising exercise has had tremendous negative missiological implications for the church in Africa and other Third World countries. The unfortunate part of Bultmann's approach to the New Testament, has been that it is generally taken as normative for New Testament scholarship. Any other supernaturalistic reading of the New Testament texts is labelled as uncritical and, therefore, marginalised. Such a non-supernaturalistic paradigm of the New Testament reading, has unavoidably rendered the New Testament scholarship unresponsive and, thus, powerless in the face of animistic beliefs and behaviours. Another factor that counts against Bultmann's demythologising understanding, is that he did not explain the outbreaks of irrationality in the rationality-dominated worldview of the western world (e.g. manifestations of the demonic and witchcraft in early modern Europe - see Clark 1997).

It is also true that the criticism of Bultmann's demythologising can be taken to an undesirable level. This is exactly what is pointed out by Nineham (1990:172) who, correctly so, maintains that Bultmann's starting point was the fact that any set of religious beliefs has to be expressed in terms of some cultural context, some particular way of understanding reality. If, for example, the message of the New Testament was to be intelligible at the time of writing, it had not only to be formulated in Hellenistic Greek, the only language most of the readers or authors understood; it also had to be stated in terms meshed in with the sort of worldview familiar to most of them. When a worldview is superseded as the New Testament worldview has been superseded, especially in the last two hundred years or so, any religious beliefs stated in terms of it ceases to be intelligible, or at any rate acceptable with integrity, by those whose thought is governed by new ways of understanding things.

Bultmann used the word 'myth' to bring out the obsoleteness of the first-century worldview and, in the light of demythologising exercise, what the interpreter has to do is to release the essential message from its mythical framework, i.e. to demythologise it. What has been overlooked by New Testament scholarship, especially those who deny the existence and impact of evil forces on the material world, is the fact that Bultmann, more than anything else, was trying to contextualise the New Testament message for his contemporaries whose worldview was secular. But to maintain that Bultmann's demythologising paradigm should be normative and thus be imposed on the rest of the believing Christian world, would be paternalistic thinking on the part of orthodox theology, to say the least. Consequently, Christians, especially in the Third World, get denied the opportunity of the ownership of faith and originality in religious expressiveness.

The reason why we have interacted with Bultmann rather extensively is because of his influence on New Testament scholarship on the subject of the demythologising of the first-century 'mythical worldview' which, in turn, has a direct bearing on the topic under current study.

While some New Testament scholars have debated the validity of the exorcisms and other miracle stories in the gospel tradition, there have been also those who have taken demonology and exorcism in the New Testament seriously. Even as early as 1931, Fridrichsen of Uppsala, in his article, *The Conflict of Jesus with Unclean Spirits* (in *Theology* Vol. XXII p. 22), could speak of a growing realisation among New Testament scholars that Jesus himself assigned to the demonic powers a significance beyond the merely accidental, discerning in the background the mystery of the spiritual evil and the recognition that this fact can lead us towards a truer ideal of his interpretation of his own mission.

Another article relevant for this study appeared in 1951 titled, *On a Neglected Emphasis in New Testament* (*The Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol. 4 p.300), in it Stewart says, "My one concern has been to insist that, however we may interpret it, we must recognise that here we are dealing, not with some unessential apocalyptic scaffolding, but with the very substance of the faith". In the view of Stewart, the study of the demonic in the New Testament cannot be relegated

to the periphery of Christian theology. It belongs to the very essence of our understanding of the gospel and the mission of the historical Jesus.

Manson (1952) is also of the opinion that, "the supernatural demonological element in the gospel is not a mere veneer. It is not a temporary trapping which can be stripped away from the gospel. It is ingrained in its very substance. It is needed to bring out its sense" (*Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas*, Bulletin III p.15).

Brunner (1952) says that in the New Testament this dark background - the existence of the powers of darkness (however this may be conceived), is integral to the story of Jesus Christ. To cut out this dark background is to deny the power of the gospel itself.

In recent times, there has been notable contributions to the study of the demonic in the New Testament. Despite the negative postulation about the spirit world by orthodox theology, some western-oriented theologians have started questioning the constant denial of the existence of the evil forces in the New Testament. The admission of Lewis (1960:47) may be appropriate here:

> But I freely admit that real Christianity (as distinct from Christianity-and-water) goes much nearer to dualism than people think. One of the things that surprised me when I first read the New Testament seriously was that it talked so much about a dark power in the universe - a mighty evil spirit who was held to be the power behind death and disease, and sin. The difference is that Christianity thinks that this dark power was created by God, and was good when he was created, and went wrong. Christianity agrees with dualism that this universe is at war. But it does not think this is a war between independent powers. It thinks it is a civil war, a rebellion, and that we are living in a part of the universe occupied by a rebel. Enemy-occupied territory - that is what this world is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed in disguise, and is calling us all to take part in a great campaign of sabotage.

Several aspects can be deciphered in this statement. Firstly, it acknowledges the fact that the devil and the demons do exist. Secondly, the devil is not an equal to the sovereign God of the Bible because he is God's creature. Thirdly, Christians participate in the struggle between God and Satan by deposing the usurper-king whose claim to kingship is illegitimate. In participating in the struggle, Christians proclaim the rightful Lord of creation - Jesus Christ.

Apart from Lewis, others have emerged with formidable arguments in favour of the existence and influence of powers. In support of this view, Wink (1986:6-7) acknowledges the fact that the whole thinking on powers is perceived by some as a scandal, a stone of stumbling, a bone in the throat of modernity. Berkhof (1962:15) feels that others view Paul's thoughts about angels and devils as vestiges of antiquated mythology. If a person wants to bring a discussion to a halt in shocked embarrassment, one should mention angels or demons or the devil (Wink 1986:1). In line with other scholars (e.g. Malina, Joubert, Van der Watt 1996:14), Berkhof (1962:28) holds the view that creation comprises a visible and an invisible, or an earthly and a heavenly part, or put differently, creation has a visible foreground, which is bound together with, and dependent on, an invisible background.

In his belief in the existence of powers, Wink (1984:104) goes further to say that powers have an incarnating tendency in that they exist as inner dimension of the material. In this conviction Wink's view is shared by Bosch (1980:209-210).

> The authorities and cosmic powers in the Pauline letters allude to the way in which supernatural beings, as it were, incarnate themselves in structures - political, religious, intellectual structures (-ologies and -isms) - which hold man in bondage but over which Christ has triumphed and which now wants to employ in his service on earth.

But it is also important to notice that Wink (1984:82) believes that the New Testament prefers to speak of powers only in their concretions, their structural inertia, their physical embodiments in history. Wink (1986) carries his argument further by describing the devil as a "collective symbolisation of evil ... the collec-

tive weight of human fallenness". Though the view of Wink carries considerable force, it cannot be conclusive. There is a general congruence on the incarnating nature of the powers but not to the extent whereby the powers are completely subsumed in institutional structures. The consciousness of spirits and magic of the first readers of the New Testament suggests that spirits were construed as personal and powerful. For Kraft (1995:60), belief in personal demons and a keen interest in supernatural power were characteristic of the first century. The reality of the existence of personal demons and their incarnating tendency was an issue that was never doubted by the ancient people. Malina, Joubert and Van der Watt (1996:14) relate that ancient people regarded the invisible world as the real one, because everything was controlled from there. This is the reason why people were forever arguing about which gods ruled the invisible world. They also point out, though, that the New Testament has no doubt about the matter: God is in charge of everything and everyone (see Rev 4).

Most of the New Testament scholarly works on demons in recent times, even though they highlight the importance of demons and exorcisms in the ministry of Jesus, do not often succeed in pointing out the influence of the powers in the modern world. This is evident in several books and articles on the subject. Kallas (1961) recognises the central significance of the miracle stories in the gospels and has, in turn, seen the importance of the exorcism stories in Jesus' cosmic struggle. Nevertheless Kallas does not critically examine the exorcism stories, nor does he clarify our knowledge of the historical Jesus as exorcist. In a later work, Kallas (1975) sees modern demonology as negative, an escapist abandonment of the real world in which we find ourselves. Though in principle Kallas agrees on the exorcistic activities of Christ in the gospel tradition, he apparently struggles to acknowledge the role of the demonic in the modern world.

Hull (1974) gives considerable attention to the exorcism stories in the synoptic gospels. He uses Hellenistic magical traditions in an attempt to throw light on the synoptic evangelists' portrayal of Jesus, especially as a miracle worker. However, Hull's concentration on the Hellenistic magical traditions to the virtual exclusion of the Jesus' tradition, does not give a complete picture of the background of ministry of Jesus.

Mills (1990) calls into question writing off the tradition of Jesus' command of spiritual forces as the views of ignorant and undeveloped humanity. Her concern is not so much with a detailed historical investigation into the traditions of Jesus as an exorcist but with the control of the cosmic forces and their significance for Mark and Luke.

Green (1981) takes a close look at the biblical account of Satan: his origin, his strategies and above all his defeat. It urges Christians to take seriously the spiritual battle to which they are called, and encourages them to be confident in the knowledge that Christ has won the supreme victory over evil and that the culmination of all history will demonstrate this fact.

Leahy (1975) endeavours through his study to help missionaries on the foreign mission field. With strong emphasis on scripture, and on the Holy Spirit and his work, Leahy's book gives positive guidance to Christians as well as warnings against approaching this subject either from the standpoint of theological liberalism or from an unhealthy subjectivism which panders to the sensational.

Arnold (1992) seeks to provide an in-depth look at Paul's letters and what they teach on the subject of powers. For perspective, he examines first-century Greek, Roman and Jewish beliefs as well as Jesus' teaching about magic, sorcery and divination. Arguing against many interpretations that have seen principalities and powers as impersonal, social, economic and political structures, Arnold contends that the New Testament's view is that such powers are organised, personal beings which Jesus defeated at the cross and will bring into full subjection at his return.

Page (1995) offers a comprehensive exposition of every biblical reference to the demonic and analyses historic and modern views on the subject of powers. In examining the relevant scriptures on demons, Page seeks to show the implications for the believer's stand in Christ.

Böcher (1972) presents a socio-descriptive analysis of demons in the New Testament, the anti-demonic magic employed in New Testament times and how Jesus and the early church handled the demonic in their exorcist ministries.

Russel's (1986) book is a historical treatment of the devil. For Russel, the existence of the devil cannot be meaningfully approached by science, because science is, by definition, restricted to investigating the physical and can say nothing about the spiritual. For science to try to prove or disprove the existence of the devil is the result of a muddle in which science is called upon to pass judgement in matters unrelated to science. The idea of the devil is an important concept in understanding the nature of evil, and as much, it points toward the truth. Russel concludes that the devil exists historically as a long-lived and immensely influential concept aimed at the truth about evil. In this work, Russel makes no attempt to prove the existence of the devil biblically (see also Russel 1977).

Pagels (1995) traces the social background of the origin of Satan in the Old Testament and in the gospel tradition. Pagels shows how God's people, as represented by Israel and the church, demonstrated a tendency to demonise their enemies whether they be other nations, heretics or any group opposed to them. The power relationships among various groups often led to some groups dressing their opponents in satanic garbs.

Twelftree (1993) examines the stories of exorcism in the gospels in his attempt of a search for the historical Jesus, especially in his ministry of exorcism. Twelftree seeks to answer the three-part question: If Jesus was an exorcist, what did the first reports of his activities as an exorcist contain? How would he have been viewed by those who saw him at work? And, how did he understand his ministry of exorcism? According to Twelftree, the sayings of the historical Jesus cannot be understood apart from his miraculous activities, including exorcisms.

Kelly (1968) comes to a conclusion that the vast majority who believed in evil spirits have not believed in the spirits as they are described in the Bible but rather as they have been recreated by post-biblical speculation. Kelly is of the opinion that a great deal of demonology that evolved in the name of Christian teaching can only be characterised as "untheological levity". The representations of the spirit world in scripture betray signs of simple folkloristic origin, and the modifications that these images and myths underwent when they came into contact with later cultures and philosophies are no longer convincing, however satisfying they may have been in past ages. Kelly believes that a continued adherence to these

views, as if they constituted an essential part of divine revelation, runs the risk of exposing the Christian mission to ridicule. Whether or not evil spirits exist, it does not appear to be necessary to believe in them in order to cope with the problems of human life. Given the evils that belief in demonology has caused in the past, and given also the uncertainty of its claim to a place in Christian revelation and theology, it would seem best to act as though evil spirits did not exist, until such time as their existence is forced upon us. Kelly says that, far from constituting an essential teaching of Christian revelation, demonology is an accidental feature that has proceeded, and is a product of a number of serious aberrations in the understanding of revealed religion.

Ferguson (1984) gives a scholarly inquiry that investigates demonology in the first-century world. By going into the apocryphal, pseudepigraphal and Greek writings, Ferguson endeavours to present a background of demonology in the first century world - a background against which the exorcist stories in the New Testament should be interpreted. The goal of Ferguson's study is to show the significance of the study of demonology for the modern-day church. Though Ferguson's work is closer to the current study, he understandably does not indicate the relevance of first-century world demonology to people of animistic background. This oversight is as a result of the fact that his target is the western audience.

Other works that are important for the study of demonology in the New Testament are those of Yates (1980) and Joubert (2000), who argue that the powers or evil spirits in the New Testament need to be taken seriously in order for Christians of today to be able to deal adequately with the spirit world (see also Wink 1984, 1986, 1992). The study of demons has also received a prominent scholarly focus by the combined effort of Van der Toorn, Becking and Van der Horst (1999), entitled, *The Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. This contribution, without which the study of demonology would be poorer and incomplete, is both unique and comprehensive on the subject covering almost every detail that is necessary for a clearer picture of demonology in the Bible.

In summary, there is generally a consensual view among New Testament scholars that the exorcist stories are important in understanding the mission of Jesus

Christ. Although in the past the subject of demonology was neglected in New Testament scholarship, it is encouraging that there is a gradual interest in it. Most New Testament scholarship appears comfortable in dealing with demonology in biblical times but it also shows intellectual reluctance (or spiritual phobia?) in addressing the modern demonology in today's world. In the process, people in spirit-sensitive communities, especially in the Third World, are left without a biblical response to the spirit world.

1.2.2 THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE PARADIGM

The perceived inadequacy of New Testament scholarship in dealing with the manifestations of the demonic has caused some Christians to start looking for answers in the Bible. Orthodox New Testament theology seems not to have categories in dealing with the demonic in modern times. The spiritual warfare paradigm, on the other hand, seeks to fill the lacuna that is revealed in the survey of New Testament scholarship.

The spiritual warfare school takes the spirit world seriously. The approach of Christians involved in spiritual warfare is that Christ has given authority to believers (cf. Lk 9:1; Mt 10:1, 7; Mk 16:17) to engage the powers which often want to hinder the work of the church and the mission of Christ. According to the conviction of the proponents of the school of spiritual warfare, there is a battle for the human soul and the cosmos. Tozer (1996:4) believes that it is still solid Bible doctrine that tremendous spiritual forces are present in the world, and humanity, because of its spiritual nature, is caught in the middle. Wimber and Springer (1992:52) maintain that any system or force that must be overcome for the gospel to be believed, is a cause for a power encounter. Wagner explains power encounter as a visible, practical demonstration that Jesus Christ is more powerful than the false gods or spirits worshipped or feared by a people group (quoted in Wimber and Springer 1992:53). Putting it in militaristic terms, Wimber and Springer (1992:38) are convinced that Christians need to take note that the enemy follows no rules of war and they (Wimber and Springer 1992:40) go on to say that

> in our battle with Satan there are no demilitarised zones. There is never a lull in the fighting. We are born into the

> fight, and unless the day of the Lord comes, we will die in the fight.

The contention of the spiritual warfare block is that the orthodox (western) theology does not address the middle level of the cosmic understanding of the universe i.e. spirits of this world - ghosts, ancestors, demons etc. In what has become the ground-breaking piece of work for evangelical missions, Hiebert (1982:43) in his article, *The Flaw of the Excluded Middle*, admits that "as a scientist I had been trained to deal with the empirical world in naturalistic terms. As a theologian, I was taught to answer ultimate questions in theistic terms. For me the middle zone did not really exist ... for me these [spirits] belonged to the realm of fairies, trolls and other mythical beings. Consequently I had no answer to the questions they [Indian villagers] raised."

The proponents of spiritual warfare teach that there are three levels in the universe: the cosmic layer which includes in its category heaven, hell, God and the devil. Then there is the middle layer which is occupied by angels, demons and intermediaries. This is followed by the empirical world of our senses (see Hiebert, Shaw & Tiénou 1999:45f, 81). The unique tendency of western society has been to ignore the reality of the middle zone. Dickason (1978:65) observes that "many believers recognise our warfare with the flesh and the world; but when it comes to direct warfare with demons, they consider that rather remote or unreal."

Central to the thesis of the spiritual warfare paradigm is the conviction that the biblical portrayal of the world filled with spirits is more accurate than that given by western assumptions. Kraft (1995:ix) says that the Bible very clearly presents a world where spiritual powers exist, and struggle and tensions between good and evil are in focus. God is clearly a God of power, often revealing himself through power encounters with "wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age" (Eph 6:12).

Based on the notion that God is a God of power and that, as Christians we are involved in power encounter with the evil forces, the spiritual warfare proponents focus on how Christians should tackle demonic influence in one's life, family and the country. Christians are encouraged to resist other demonic influences

considered to be variants of the demonic in the form of generational sins and curses (the transference of sins and curses of one's foreparents), occult involvement and the oppression by spirits of evil. All these are said to contribute to the demonic bondage or affliction of the believer (see Dickason 1987: 244f; Wagner 1992b:129; Robinson 1991:53-72; Koch 1961:203-222). Deliverance from demonic affliction is achieved by commanding Satan to leave the afflicted with all his demons. This is coupled with prayer to God (see Dickason 1987:269f; Bubeck 1975:140-141). The believer may tear down what is termed 'strongholds' of the devil and plans of Satan formed against his or her mind, emotions and body (Bubeck 1975:143-144). The believers may also renounce and repudiate the sins committed by their ancestors and verbally cancel any demonic activity, and any curse, coming along the blood line (Dickason 1987:278-279). In the process of exorcising demons, questions can be posed to them in order to find out what their names are, their ranks in Satan's hierarchy and what gave them the right to enter the afflicted person (Bubeck 1975:147). If a believer has given Satan and his demons legitimate ground for them to harass him or her, such ground can then be reclaimed by proclaiming it covered with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, after first having asked God for forgiveness of sins, committed by oneself or one's ancestors (Bubeck 1975:86-87; Dickason 1987:162-163).

Perhaps the more outstanding form of spiritual warfare is spiritual mapping. A term coined by Otis (1993:32), the concept of spiritual mapping has extended the minds of most western evangelical Christianity. Spiritual mapping can be said to be about sincere Christians who are trying to discern and overcome those invisible realities that influence the visible world, especially those that may hinder the success of evangelism and mission (Priest *et al* 1995:19; cf. 1 Thess 2:18). Jacobs (1993:77), a well-known leader in the field of spiritual mapping, sees spiritual mapping in terms of researching a city to discover any inroads Satan has made, which prevent the spread of the gospel and the evangelisation of that city for Christ (see also Wagner 1991). In this context, special attention is given to territorial spirits which are considered to be demonic forces, under the command of Satan, which keep a territory in spiritual darkness (Wagner 1989:278). The territorial spirits are able to keep a territory in bondage, because there is a legiti-

mate reason, a right, for them to do so due to atrocities, evils or sins committed in the territory concerned (Dawson 1989; 1994:34; Frangipane 1991:55).

Demons are also believed to gain control through curses that have been proclaimed (Sjöberg 1993:108-109; Wagner 1992b:130f), or through the (past) worship of idols, other religions or ideologies (Caballeros 1993:145). These elements, or demonic entrances, need to be discovered and mapped out, through historical, cultural and sociological, charismatic inspiration (Frangipane 1991:168; Arnold 1994:47), and at times by questioning demons who are in the process of being cast from individuals (see Tippett 1973:89-90; Priest *et al* 1994:28-29). Equipped with spiritual weapons (Eph 6:10f), such as militant intercession (see Kiesling 1994:26), the quoting of scriptures, indentificational repentance (Kraft 1995:119; Sjöberg 1993:108-109; Mostert 1998), proclamation of forgiveness or deliverance, and by verbally breaking curses or telling demonic forces to go, spiritual mapping is followed by spiritual warfare in an attempt to overcome the demonic powers that hinder the progress of the gospel in that area (cf. Van der Meer 2001:50-51). The proponents of spiritual mapping and strategic high level spiritual warfare, in support of their approach, report an increase in converts, openness for the gospel, church growth, miracles and other spiritual successes (Kiesling 1994:26-27).

Needless to say, the claims of success by the spiritual warfare movement have drawn sharp criticism from segments of the church, particularly the evangelical wing. In response to the claims of the suggestion that God is doing much at present because of the work of the spiritual warfare movement, Lowe (1998a:115) tends to question the fact that not all evidence cited by the proponents and practioners of the spiritual warfare paradigm is of the same value: some is irrelevant; some is inherently dubious; some, beyond confirmation; some simply erroneous. In the view of Lowe, much of the empirical evidence presented by the spiritual mapping group is unconvincing simply because it is haphazardly collected or cited.

Another criticism comes from Van der Meer (2001:63-64), who maintains that, while we may admit that there is some merit and biblical justification for some of the aspects of spiritual warfare (see Page 1995:179f), we may discover that the

church, in the area of spiritual warfare, has become a captive itself, rather than setting the captives free. Van der Meer is of the opinion that we may well discover that the church has become captive to the Indo-European concept of the battle between good and evil. In the wake of World War II, people have been desperately looking for power amidst a general feeling of powerlessness in the face of modern warfare, nuclear threats and technological and environmental disasters (see Russel 1986:253; Hinde 1999:55; Clark 1997:558). Such powerlessness led people to the revival of magic in search for power to control the otherwise radarless world. Van der Meer says that, instead of being a transforming power in our societies today, the church has succumbed to the patterns of this world, which provide us with a mindset other than the mind of Christ and a biblical worldview. Instead of confronting the real powers that are at work in the world, including the powerful dominant modern scientific worldview with its sins and evils, much of the evangelical church keeps it spirituality in the unseen realm of private experiences without any real bearing on the realities of our context.

Newbigin (1986:132) thinks that the dichotomy between the private religious experience and the realities of the public world, is actually part of the dominant ideology of pagan western culture. Consequently, faith has become a private matter concerned with personal salvation, an inward righteousness, morality and peace, without concern for justice, righteousness and peace in the socio-economic and political realm (see Van der Meer 2001:64-65). Yet, Newbigin (1986:95) asserts that Christianity has always addressed the demon-inspired structural evils in its mission to the world. For the sake of a balanced perspective, it might be true that the spiritual warfare movement might be guilty of making faith a private matter concerned with personal salvation (Van der Meer 2001:64), but the assertion that Christianity has always addressed demon-inspired structural evil might not be entirely true. The body of considerable historical evidence would militate against such an assertion (see Sider 1990).

In trying to dispel misunderstandings about spiritual warfare, Kraft (1993:31f) lists several myths which are worth noting - an exercise which is beyond the scope of this study. Another work by Otis (1997) is intended for believers to question the narrow-minded rationalism of some evangelicals and the simplistic pop culture that has grown up around certain charismatics, especially in the mat-

ters of spiritual warfare. An author that we intend to interact with in the course of this study, somewhat briefly, is Wagner (1996), who makes a serious attempt in examining biblical references in regard to the evil spirits.

In summary, it can be concluded that the emergence of the spiritual warfare movement has highlighted the need of the forgotten ministry of the church - that of engaging the spirits that (depending on which side of the debate a person stands) torture and torment humanity. Coupled with this, is the assertion of the authority of the believer in Christ who feels no longer a pawn or victim in the cosmic struggle, but a participant in the triumphant procession in Christ's victory. Another important factor that can be said in favour of the spiritual warfare movement, also noting their haphazardness in data collection and reporting, including some missiologically questionable practices, is the fact that the movement believes that biblical revelation is not static but dynamic which makes it able to address different situations and contexts. Rather than being satisfied with archaic, sterile dogmas that have little relevance to modern people, the spiritual warfare movement seems to have an intention, whether genuine or superficial, to help instil vitality in the religious experience in many Christians that have apparently grown cold. The passion of the spiritual warfare movement for world evangelisation can hardly be brought into question.

As a relatively new movement, as can be anticipated, the spiritual warfare movement also shows gaps that may sabotage the very good work they intend to do. Firstly, generally the movement shows less interest in biblical investigation in the historical Jesus, especially in his ministry of exorcism. This makes the movement lack a proper biblical basis and guidance in what it purports to do. Secondly, the overly dualistic thinking and tendencies inadvertently depict the devil as a completely independent power, something that is contrary to biblical revelation. In such an attitude, the sovereignty of God, which is so central in dealing with powers, becomes trivialised. The usurpation of God's sovereign power by human power becomes a real threatening possibility. Thirdly, too much preoccupation with the devil and demons unfortunately leads to a situation whereby almost everything is demonised - people, places, food, clothes, etc. Instead of people living in the freedom of the victory that Christ has attained for them, they begin to live a life of fear of, "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch" (Col 2:21; cf. 1

Tim 1:7 - "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control").

1.2.3 THE THIRD WORLD (AFRICAN) PRIMAL RELIGIONS

Albeit the debate on spiritual warfare is a useful one for this study, it, to a large extent, still remains a western issue. The spiritual warfare movement has, to its credit, drawn a marginalised subject of demonology to the centre of Christian theological debate. Even though there is still some resistance to regard the matter of spirit engagement as vital for Christian theology in general, and missiology in particular, the debate on the importance of the spirit world for human existence can no longer be shunned or ignored.

The gradual interest in demon studies by the New Testament scholarship and the debate on spiritual warfare have benefited, though not much, the cry for theological contextualisation in spirit-sensitive communities in the Third World. This whole theological trend has opened a wider opportunity for the discussion and engagement of the spirit world in Third World Christian communities. Whereas a few decades ago the subject of belief in spirits and superstitions was considered as appropriate within anthropological studies, it is gradually becoming clear that Christian theology cannot marginalise it if the gospel of Christ is to deepen its roots in spirit-sensitive communities.

The focus on primal religions by Christian scholars with the express purpose of understanding them for the sake of cross-cultural communication is remarkable. As a guide into the phenomenology of the world's primal religions, Turner (1977:27f) proposes a six-feature framework for understanding primal religions as authentically religious, rather than a merely epiphenomena of the social organisation of simple or preliterate societies. Firstly, there is a sense of kinship with nature, in which animals and plants, no less than human beings, had their own spiritual existence and place in the universe as interdependent parts of the whole. Any object of the natural environment may enter into a totemic spiritual relationship with human beings or become tutelary and guardian spirits while the environment itself is used realistically and unsentimentally but with profound respect and reverence and without exploitation. Turner considers this ecological

aspect of primal religions to be a profoundly religious attitude to a human being's natural setting in the world.

Secondly, Turner describes the second feature of the primal religions as the deep sense that a human person is finite, weak and impure or 'sinful' and stands in need of a power not his/her own. Turner links this feature to the notion in Rudolf Otto's (1950) *Idea of the Holy* that "man's basic reaction of the Holy is in terms of a sense of creaturehood". Thirdly, a feature complementing the second, is the conviction that a human person is not alone in the universe, for there is a spiritual world of powers or beings more powerful and ultimate than himself or herself. The universe of primal religions is thus a 'personalised' universe, in which the appropriate question is not "what caused this or that?" but "who did it?" A human being, therefore, lives with an awareness of the presence of transcendent powers which are, however, ambivalent. Not only is there a hierarchy of benevolent ancestors, and of spirits, divinities and high gods, but there is also the range of evil spirits, of demons and malevolent divinities and the lesser, more earth-born occult powers of wizards and witches. The fourth feature which, in turn, completes the third, is the belief that a human person can enter into relationship with the benevolent spirit world and so share in its powers and blessings and receive protection from evil forces by these transcendent helpers. For Turner, this feature, which reveals the profound emphasis on the transcendent source of true life and practical salvation, goes contrary to all the neat projectionist theories that explain religions away as 'man-made' and ignore the primary testimony of so much of the data about religions.

The fifth feature, which Turner sees as an extension of the fourth, relates to the acute sense of the reality of the afterlife, a conviction which explains the important place of ancestors, or the 'living dead' in many primal religions. In the majority of these regions, the ancestors or the 'living dead', remain united in affection and in mutual obligations with the 'living living'. Indeed, the ancestors figure so prominently in the first level or region of the spirit world that they seem to create an ancestor cult and to obscure the spirit beings before whom they otherwise serve as mediators between the transcendent and the human.

The sixth feature is the conviction that a human person lives in a sacramental universe where there is no sharp dichotomy between the physical and the spiritual. Accordingly, the physical acts as a vehicle for spiritual power while the physical realm is held to be patterned on the model of the spiritual world beyond. Even where there is a clear ethnical dualism with respect to good and evil, nevertheless, one set of powers, principles and patterns runs through all things on earth in the heavens and welds them into a unified cosmic system.

Following this interpretative framework and analysis of primal religions, Turner (1977:32) then makes a number of valuable comments which are relevant to the current study. Firstly, he notes that his proposal may be used for the understanding of other kinds of religions besides the primal and can be found readily applicable to the Christian tradition. Then, going on to argue for educational importance of primal religions in religious studies within the Christian tradition, he draws attention to a 'special relationship' of primal religions with Christianity, which arises from the fact that in the history of the spread of the Christian faith, its major extensions have been solely into the societies with primal religious systems (see also Mbiti 1976:10; Robert 2000:56; Barret and Johnson 2000:24-25). These societies were, according to Turner, the Mediterranean world of the early Christian centuries, and tribal peoples of northern and western Europe and finally the primal societies of Africa, the Pacific and parts of Asia.

Bediako's (1995:96) response to Turner's otherwise stimulating analysis is twofold. Firstly, whilst affirming the six-feature structure that Turner outlines, Bediako feels that the sixth and final feature - that of a human being living in a sacramental universe where there is no sharp dichotomy between the physical and the spiritual - provides the real key to the entire structure. Secondly, Bediako is rather surprised that Turner does not state that this 'special relationship' of the primal religions with Christianity and the existence of 'affinities' between the primal and Christian traditions could have a far-reaching significance for our understanding of the nature of the Christian faith itself. If, as supposed, there is only a minimal 'paradigm shift' as we pass from the spiritual universe of primal religions into the spiritual environment of the Christian faith (- 'this is what we have been waiting for' -), then, Bediako argues, one would want to pursue the matter by asking how the primal imagination might bring its own peculiar gifts to the shaping of

Christian affirmation. Bediako (1995:96) seems convinced that "this issue becomes even more pressing of Christian thought which has hitherto been moulded by a worldview from which the living forces of the primal imagination seem to have been expelled".

Apart from Turner's six-feature structure of primal religions, others have realised the importance of the study of these religions for contextual purposes of the Christian message, and we go on to mention but a few. Thorpe (1992) presents an introductory, descriptive review of primal religions worldwide. In it, he concludes that an adequate theoretical stance towards primal religions can only be taken if a person is acquainted with the descriptive nature of the various traditions. Only subsequent to such a review can a valid theoretical stance towards primal religions in general be adopted (see also Steyne 1990; Burnett 1988). Van Rheenen (1991) explores animism not merely as the religion of tribal societies but as a prevalent phenomenon in every continent and which is, in varying degrees, part of every culture. Hiebert, Shaw and Tiénou (1991) examine theories of religion and develop a model for use in analysing folk religions. They also look into the key questions asked and answers provided by folk religions, thus helping an outside observer to explore behavioural manifestations that express folk religious beliefs. This book, furthermore, examines key biblical principles that Christians can use in dealing with the folk religions around them and suggests missiological processes for helping Christians move from where they are to where God calls them to be.

Bediako (1995:97) observes that African Christian scholars who have examined the spiritual universe of African primal religions, have done less than full justice to the complexity of the African primal world. To Bediako's mind, the African Christian scholars in their keenness to show the relationship of continuity between the pre-Christian religions and Christian belief, have stressed, particularly and rightly so, the continuity of God. However, by stressing the centrality and uniqueness of God in African tradition, African theology, Bediako contends, has left the wider spirit world of African primal religions - divinities, ancestors, natural forces - unaccounted for. In other words, African theology has answered to only part of what has been described as the "unity and multiplicity of Divinity" (Leihardt 1961). In this category of African Christian scholars who examine the African religions,

Bediako (1995:97-98) takes two such representatives - Bolaji Idowu (1962) and John Mbiti (1969). In analyzing their perspectives on the African spirit world, Bediako feels that their classifying of divinities and ancestors in one category might not necessarily be a true reflection of the actual situation in Africa. This difference in perspectives, including those of others will find more attention in chapter 4 when a detailed discussion on the African spirit world is entertained.

Several other African scholars have made their voices heard on the subject of the African spirit world. Others have gone to the extent of writing on the African spirit world in the light of what is revealed in the Bible. Among these, to quote a few, are Mugambi (1989), Nyirongo (1997), Sundkler (1961). In as far as demon- or spirit-possession in Africa is concerned, few have ventured into documenting their views. Of those who have done so, the names of Lagerwerf (1987) and Kiogora (1993) and Salala (1998) immediately come into focus.

In summary, it can be said that there is an increasing awareness of the importance of investigative studies in primal religions for Christian theology in order to avoid the mistakes of missionary practices of the past. Understandably, most of these studies have been done or written from a taxonomical approach, i.e. looking at the different kinds of spirits, powers, divination and ancestors found around the world. These studies introduce the reader to the bewildering array of beliefs in primal religions, but little is offered in terms of understanding why many people who profess the name of Christ persist in turning to traditional practices in times of crisis. In Africa, the two-tier allegiance of many people who profess to be Christians brings into question the often exaggerated statistics of the growth of Christianity on the continent.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In many African traditional societies, the felt needs of people are usually met by the services of the shaman. These needs vary and they could include the need for protection against witchcraft and evil spirits. Another need in Africa is for physical and psychical health. These needs are felt by many Africans who are inside and outside the church. Despite centuries of western influence and teaching by

missionaries, these felt needs have not gone away. The sensitivity to the spirit world remains something embedded in the African soul.

When western missionaries came to Africa and other regions of the world where primal religious imagination was prevalent, in many situations they could not touch the crux of (African) people's religiosity, in spite of the heroic and laborious efforts by the missionaries to do so. Oftentimes, the extremely naturalistic, rationalistic and abstract-oriented gospel-product was introduced by western missionaries into supernaturalistic, intuitive and concrete-oriented societies. The uncritical transplanting of the gospel by orthodoxically equipped missionaries oftentimes (if not always) and inadvertently, produced split-level Christianity in Africa and other places. An emasculated western gospel could not possibly have filled the social and spiritual void experienced by African people. The rationalistic theological presuppositions of western missionaries made them unable to respond positively and biblically to the felt needs of indigenous communities. Instead, missionaries responded psychologically and philosophically to otherwise spiritual problems. They did this with the hope that such spiritual needs would vanish with the passage of time which, contrary to expectation, did not happen.

This study seeks to investigate the possibility of looking for solutions for the debacle of African split-level Christianity in the biblical worldview of the New Testament which appears to be akin to that of the African spirit world. The similarities, if any, of the supernaturalistic tendencies of the two worldviews (New Testament and African) could possibly be of help to provide the key to resolve the African religious ambivalence. The response of Jesus Christ and the early church (as represented by the Lucan community) to the supernaturalistic worldview of the first-century world is, therefore, of critical importance to this study. This investigation presupposes that the life, ministry and passion of Jesus Christ were, and remain, of fundamental significance to the life of the church (in Africa).

1.4 APPROACH AND PURPOSE

The present study is an attempt to make a contribution to our understanding of the historical Jesus and to sketch a picture of the historical Jesus in his ministry of exorcism. This study seeks to address a three-part problem:

Firstly, this study is intended to give a picture of demonology and exorcism in the first-century Jewish world. In order to do this, biblical data, as well as apocryphal and pseudepigraphal materials are employed. This is done because the proliferation in the belief in spirits gains prominence both in the apocryphal and pseudepigraphal writings.

Secondly, an attempt is made to show how Jesus, in his exorcism miracles, interacted with the 'spirits-inhabited' first century world and, also how the ancient church comprehended, continued and practised the ministry of exorcism. This is done by examining some relevant scripture portion in Luke-Acts.

Thirdly, this investigation seeks to present a picture of the African spirit world with the intention to discover whether parallels can be drawn between the African spirit world and the first-century Jewish world.

1.5 VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF DEMON POSSESSION

1.5.1 THE MYTHICAL THEORY

The basic ideal of this hypothesis, advanced by Strauss (1836:21f) and the mythical school (cf. Bultmann 1984), is that the whole narrative of Jesus' demon expulsions is merely symbolic, without actual foundation of fact. Demon possession, so called, is but a vivid symbol of the prevalence of evil in the world, and a casting out of demons by our Lord, a corresponding figure of triumph over evil by his doctrine and life.

Unger (1994:90), in response to the mythical theory, argues that in the gospel accounts, the plain prosaic narration of the incidents as facts, regardless of what might be considered as possible in highly poetical and avowedly figurative passages, would make the position of the mythical school lack a factual base.

1.5.2 THE ACCOMMODATION THEORY

The proponents of the accommodation theory say that Jesus and the evangelists, in making reference to demon possession, spoke only in accommodation to the

prevalent ignorance and superstition of their audience, without making any assertion as to the actual existence or non-existence of the phenomena described, or truth or falsity of current belief (cf. Hodge 1891:257). It is concluded that, since the symptoms were often those of physical disease (as blindness and dumbness, Mt 12:22; epilepsy, Mk 9:17-27), or those appearing in common dementia (as in Mt 8:28; Mk 5:1-5), and since the phrase "to have a demon" was apparently used as equivalent to "to be mad" (Jn 7:20; 8:48; 10:20), and since it is erroneously assumed that cases of demon possession are not now known to occur in our day, therefore, our Lord spoke, and the evangelists wrote, in adjustment to the common convictions of the time, and with a view to being clearly understood, especially by the patients themselves, but that the 'demonised' were merely persons afflicted with uncommon diseases of body and mind.

The accommodation theory with its ingenious intention of trying to resolve the improbability of demon possession in the first-century world, creates a greater problem than the one it purports to solve. The body of datable evidence in the gospels and few other scripture portions in the New Testament (Acts) would render the accommodation theory grossly unrepresentative of the miracles of Jesus. Also, the employment of the popular fallacy that demon possession does not occur today is contrary to the testimony of modern missionary history (cf. Gonia 1993:24f; Boer 1993:3f). But even if it were granted that it does not occur today, that would not at all prove that it never existed (Unger 1994:91).

1.5.3 THE HALLUCINATION THEORY

The hallucination theory explains demon possession as a mere psychological delusion on the part of the victim, who, diseased and distraught, becomes psyched up to such a high pitch of emotional frenzy or mental excitement, that he/she imagines himself or herself possessed and controlled by another and more powerful being (cf. Owen 1859:119f; also Nevius 1968:147-150). Under the suppression of human consciousness the dethronement of reason, the person speaks in the character of the fancied demon (Mk 5:7).

According to Unger (1994:92), the hallucination theory fails to explain how a person, so bereft of reason, can in the same instant, manifest a knowledge of

Jesus' deity and sonship (Mk 5:7) far in advance of the most pious and enlightened people of the whole nation. Nor does it explain the violent effect of the entrance of the demons into the swine (Mk 5:13), which alone is enough to demonstrate the absurdity of supposing the possession to be only an imaginary one.

1.5.4 SUMMARISING CONCLUSION

From the foregoing review of theories on demon possession, it is clear that any other explanation except the factual evidence, given by the evangelists, is too vague to inspire confidence. The version of the evangelists on the episodes of demon possession and exorcism still hitherto outweigh the arguments advanced by the proponents of the different theories.

1.6 EXORCISM: A WORKING DEFINITION

It is obvious that all attempts to explain cases of demon possession other than as actual occurrences, and in the simple and plain sense in which they are portrayed in the biblical data, are weak and totally inadequate. It is, therefore, necessary to present the "scriptural view, which is the natural and literal interpretation of the biblical narratives, viewing possession as an actual state of inhabitation and control by one or more demons" (Unger 1994:93). Unger goes on to explain that as wicked, unclean, and vicious spiritual personalities, willing subjects of their leader Satan, demons were divinely permitted a special activity and manifestation during the days of our Lord and his disciples, to exercise a direct influence over certain persons by residing in them, and thus deranging both mind and body (Unger 1994:93). The state of the demonised is such that the affected people are incapable of separating their own consciousness and mental processes from the influence of the demon, and their own identity and free volition are merged, and to that extent lost, in that of their invaders (cf. Nevius 1968:144-145; Unger 1994:95). During the ministry of Jesus and afterwards there were afflicted people whose symptoms were diagnosed as different from ordinary illnesses, by their contemporaries, by Jesus and his disciples and by the evangelists. They diagnosed possession by one or more evil spirits (see Wright 1978:474).

Thus when the word 'exorcism' is used of relief from demonisation, it pictures the inhabiting demons as coming out from within the person and moving out to where Jesus sent them upon his command (cf. Dickason 1987:270). Hence *exhorkozo* means to expel a spirit by a solemn adjuration. In the New Testament the usual verb is *ekballo*, to cast out (a demon). But the phenomenon of exorcism is much more widespread than the infrequent use of the cognate noun and verb suggest. In the explanation of Wright (1978:473), exorcism is now used as a general term of driving out an evil spirit, described in the New Testament as a *daimon,* or *daimonion*, demon, or a *pneuma akatharton*, unclean spirit, or *pneuma poneron*, evil spirit.

Twelftree (1993:13) explains that "exorcism was a form of healing used when demons or evil spirits were thought to have entered a person and to be responsible for sickness and was an attempt to control and cast out or expel evil spiritual beings or demons from people". By his own admission, Twelftree notices that his definition omits the specific techniques and also the exorcism of evil spirits from places. But for the sake of our investigation, the definition given by Twelftree will suffice.

1.7 LIMITATIONS

The focus of this study is the impact and interaction of the invisible world with the material word. Taking a cue from the reaction of Christ and the early church to the spirit world, the modern church, especially in Africa need to learn how to positively and biblically respond to the world of spirits. This study, however does not purport to argue the origin of evil in the world, which is assumed. This study does not also question the existence of the devil and evil spirits, which is presupposed. Also, the spirits of good (i.e. angels) are not discussed seeing that the majority of Christians and theologians (including those in the western world) do not demonstrate a lack of faith in their existence and operations (see Graham 1975).

1.8 CHAPTER LAYOUT

Chapter 1 as an introduction discusses the scope and argumentation on the study of demonology. A survey of representative studies and perspectives in the area of spirits is given and explored.

Chapter 2 is a reconstruction of demonology in the first-century Jewish world. This chapter looks into demonology in the Old Testament, apocryphal and pseudepigraphal literature and in the New Testament in an endeavour to present a more comprehensive picture of demonology in the first-century Jewish world.

Chapter 3 begins with a study of the theology and distinctive features of the two-volume work of Luke-Acts. As an illustration of the interaction of Jesus and the early church with the demonic and the magical world, this chapter focuses on the Baalzebul controversy, the confrontation with Simon Magus (Acts 8), the conflict with a magician on Cyprus (Acts 13), the exorcism in the story of the Philippian slave-girl (Acts 16) and the non-Christian exorcistic and magical practices in Ephesus (Acts 19).

Chapter 4 gives an overview of the spirit world in Africa and how Africans respond to the world of spirits. An investigation is also made into the African concept of the devil and spirit possession.

Chapter 5 deals with the hermeneutical issues, drawing parallels, differences and similarities in the understanding of the spirit world in the first-century Jewish world, Luke-Acts and in the African context. A critical evaluation is presented in the light of the comprehension of Jesus and the early church of the spirit world and magical practices. Areas of further research are also mentioned.