

The Disciple and Sorcery

"Here the reader is given the rare opportunity to enter a world long since beyond the purview of post-enlightenment populations—a world replete with realities that Western cognitive and lexical domains can scarcely acknowledge, much less apprehend. The book is the culmination of its author's decades of social, cultural and linguistic immersion in, interaction with, and deep appreciation for the Lunda-Chokwe. This extraordinary window into one distinctively African cosmology will be invaluable to theologians operating on gospel-culture fault-lines across the continent."

—Jonathan J. Bonk, Research Professor in Mission, Boston University; Director, Dictionary of African Christian Biography

"Ben Eidse has written a book that displays his life's work: his passion for learning and listening to local realities, and his experiences with Lunda and Chokwe societies in Bandundu province of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Part I, with his clear and comprehensive review of Lunda-Chokwe history, rituals, and worldview, including sorcery, will be of great interest to anyone interested in southern Congo, as well as scholars who study non-Western systems of knowledge. Part II will interest those involved in mission work in African societies. It is indeed rare to find a writer able to write a sensitive and respectful ethnography, and also play the role of North American missionary at the same time."

—P. Stanley Yoder, social anthropologist and specialist in health and healing practices of societies in Africa

"This is a book by a man who has the courage to tackle difficult ideas, situations, and challenges—whether physical, intellectual, or spiritual. Of the many facets of Ben Eidse that stand out for me from the many ways I connected with him (as his student and college development officer), are his persistence in task, precision in interpretation, parsimony of expression, and positivity of spirit. This book exemplifies each of those characteristics. But most outstanding to me is its courage—in its interpretive narrative related to both Lunda-Chokwe and Christianity. Ben Eidse is truly a mukwa mana and a mbunge yibema."

—Lee Bartel, PhD, Associate Dean of Research; Director of the Music and Health Research Collaboratory, University of Toronto

"Most seminarians in North America would not recognize the category of 'sorcery' in their study of theology, even when they take a course on a theology of evil. African Christians across the continent recognize this category and search for ways to respond in pastoral and Christian ways. Speaking out of many years of ministry in the Congo, Ben Eidse weaves together anthropological insights, biblical study and ministry experience to describe how to respond to the spiritual dynamics of the Chokwe worldview. We are all deeply in his debt."

—Daryl Climenhaga, Associate Professor of Global Studies, Providence University College and Theological Seminary

"Ben Eidse is a dedicated follower of Jesus, articulate with a deep concern that people should understand the Bible and live by it. His Disciple and Sorcery is a study in cross-cultural missions. He illustrates how it can be done effectively by understanding the culture one seeks to minister in. Especially noteworthy is the double focus on the practice of sorcery and its connection with spiritual warfare in the western world."

—Harvey Plett, Ph.D., past Steinbach Bible College President and Evangelical Mennonite Conference Board of Missions Chair (The EMC Board of Missions formed to send the Ben Eidses as its first overseas missionaries under the united Mennonite conferences to Congo with Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission.)

The Disciple and Sorcery:

The Lunda-Chokwe View

By

Ben F. Eidse

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



The Disciple and Sorcery: The Lunda-Chokwe View

By Ben F. Eidse

This book first published 2015

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2015 by Ben F. Eidse

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-7729-8

ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-7729-9

For daughters Hope, Faith, Charity and Grace

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Illustrations	ix
Foreword	xi
Preface	xvii
Abbreviations	xix
Acknowledgments	xx
Introduction	xxii
 Part I: The Lunda-Chokwe Traditional Worldview	
Chapter One	2
Myths, Narratives, Proverbs and Fables (Yishima)	
Chapter Two	32
Rituals Venerating the Ancestors (Kukombelela)	
Chapter Three	74
Sorcery Rituals Intended to Cause Harm (Kupanda Wanga)	
 Part II: Implications For Biblical Discipleship	
Chapter Four	100
Reflecting on the Lunda-Chokwe Traditional and Lunda-Chokwe Christian Worldviews	

Chapter Five.....	111
Reflecting on Magic, Miracle and Medicine in Well-Being and Healing	
Chapter Six.....	129
The Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ (Atonement)	
Chapter Seven	149
Misunderstanding the Atonement	
Chapter Eight	157
Magisterial Reformers and Radical Reformers Interact	
Chapter Nine	164
Empowering the Powerless	
Chapter Ten.....	175
Reconciling Leaders	
Chapter Eleven.....	181
The Two Testaments: Conflict or Agreement	
Bibliography.....	193

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Table 1-1. Origin of People

Fig. 1-1. Chibinda Ilunga and Luwej

Fig. 1-2. Women working

Fig. 1-3. Mortars

Fig. 1-4. Woven baskets

Fig. 2-1. Mwanangana

Fig. 2-2. Mwata Muloj

Fig. 2-3. Mukishi statuette

Fig. 2-4. Village chota

Fig. 2-5. Chihongo, male

Fig. 2-6. Pwo, female

Fig. 2-7. Ritual dancing at the circumcision lodge

Fig. 2-8. Dancing around fire embers with akishi

Fig. 2-9. Shamukishi (camp director) displays his authority

Fig. 2-10. Ritual specialist applies clay and medicine

Fig. 2-11. Camp directors at lodge arch

Fig. 2-12. Neophytes prepare for emergence

Fig. 2-13. A neophyte dances in the village

Fig. 2-14. Neophytes sing and dance into the village

Fig. 2-15. Neophytes dance in enclosure

Fig. 2-16. Chokwe hunters

Fig. 2-17. Palm nut harvester

Fig. 3-1. Doctor vaccinates patient

Fig. 3-2. Southern Democratic Republic of Congo

Fig. 6-1. Chokwe Bible translators

Fig. 6-2. Village greeting

Fig. 6-3. Helen caring for orphan

Fig. 6-4. A nurse in training

Fig. 6-5. Churches united to deliver refugee aid

- Fig. 8-1. Dirk Willems rescues his pursuer
Fig. 9-1. Zangio Kampew
Fig. 9-2. Adele and children
Fig. 9-3. Tshiwape Seraphin
Fig. 10-1. Kakesa Samuel and family
Fig. 10-2. Kabangy Moise and Kimbadi Bertine

FOREWORD



Charity Eidse Schellenberg addressed Chokwe Mutual wearing the Mwana Pwo Kalitoza embroidered on her outfit. (John Schellenberg photo). Sadie Wiebe, the first Ben Eidse great grandchild, created a Mwana Pwo mask for a school project.

The Chokwe tribe is present in nine countries of Central and Southern Africa. It crosses the whole continent like a belt, reaching from the Indian Ocean on the east to the Atlantic Ocean on the west. The Chokwe king over this whole empire has his throne in southern Congo, in the Province of Katanga. The Chokwe tribe has settled in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Angola, Zambia, Tanzania, Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia.

On June 30, 2013, the Chokwe people organized a civic association called the Mutuelle Chokwe (or Chokwe Mutual).

They want to unite this far flung people, promote its language and culture (for example its rich art and folklore), so this heritage will not be lost. They also want to develop economic opportunities to help pull the people out of poverty. In April 2014, the Mutuelle Chokwe prepared a huge reception in Kinshasa, the Capitol of the DRC, to receive and honor the king. Chiefs came from all around, dressed in their colorful regalia, wearing the hats and robes and carrying the symbols of authority vested in them.

Since my parents, Ben and Helen Eidse, are considered Chokwe elders, John and I were also invited, among the thousands of other Chokwe people who attended. A green and blue print cloth was chosen as a uniform for the event and we all had outfits made from that fabric to wear to the occasion. On the front of my outfit I had the tailor, Andre Isanzu, embroider the kalitoza, the cross tattoo on the forehead of the “Mwana Pwo” Chokwe mask. In this way, I was identifying myself as a Chokwe mwana pwo, or daughter.

When the king entered the hall, only women were allowed to make up his procession. The Chokwe have a tradition of "sango" (news). When you meet someone, you deliver in a formal way the news of your journey and the message you have come to bring. There are prescribed ways and rules of how and who gives the sango, and acknowledgement of its receipt. This is an effective way, in an oral society, to ensure that the message is communicated completely and accurately, even though it is not written down.

Women are the only ones allowed to communicate sango to the king. We watched this happen at that ceremony. The women relayed the sango in music and dance before the king at the beginning of the program.

I did not know that I would be called upon to address the king. When they did so during the program, I walked up to the podium and started by saying in Chokwe, "I am a Mwana

Pwo." I brought the house down with that sentence because: (1) they didn't expect that a white person could speak Chokwe, which is one of the most difficult of the 400 Bantu languages, and (2) they immediately recognized and appreciated the double meaning. I was stating that I am a Chokwe daughter and at the same time I was identifying with the prominent and esteemed symbol of Chokwe culture, the mask of the Mwana Pwo. This mask is immortalized on the 50-franc bill of the Congolese currency.

I delivered my whole speech in Chokwe, which pleased and honored this people greatly. I had with me the Chokwe Bible that was translated by my father and his team. They cheered deafeningly when I said that the Chokwe people are, of all the peoples of the world, among the most blessed because they have the Word of God in their language. The best way to make sure that their language and culture will endure is to read these scriptures and live by their wisdom. We belong to the Chokwe tribe, by the fact that our parents chose to integrate with the Chokwe, living like they live, learning their language, culture and proverbs and discovering together God's message for the Chokwe. We, their children were born and raised among the Chokwe, meaning that our descendants are also viewed as being Chokwe. Our children are their children; our grandchildren are their grandchildren and so on.

The Chokwe tribe is matrilineal. The people trace their ancestry or family lines through the mother. This is different than we were used to in Canada or, for that matter, in many cultures of the world. The Mwana Pwo mask represents the esteem the tribe has for the woman.

The name of the tattoo on the forehead of the Mwana Pwo is "kalitoza" (or kaditoza; the Chokwe pronounce the "l" more like an "ld"). According to Lambert Tshianze Kandala, Prince of the Chokwe empire, it stands for the four cardinal points,

North, South, East and West, and symbolizes royalty. It also symbolizes the elevated view of woman, who is seen to incarnate royalty.

According to Isanzu the tailor, who is also secretary of the Mutuelle Chokwe, the four points of the kalitoza represent four main roles of the Chokwe woman: (1) Esteemed symbol of royalty. The chief's wife is the only one who has the right to transmit a message directly to the chief, face to face, or as demonstrated on the mask, forehead to forehead. As such, she occupies a place of highest value, considered more important than a man. Traditionally, women may also be chief. (2) Economic center. The woman is the central economic provider for the household and family. She knows how to do many kinds of work to meet their needs. She is farmer, fisher woman, crafter, business woman, etc. (3) Legal counsel, consultant. The woman is the primary counselor of the man. Before a man makes a decision, he is obligated to seek and listen to counsel from his wife. (4) The creation force of the people. As the creation force that ensures the continuation of our people, the Chokwe woman is expected to bear children.

Great lengths are taken to help a woman who has not been able to have children. My father experienced healing prayer with Isanzu's sister, Aline. She was unable to conceive and her husband was considering divorcing her. Dad prayed with her and encouraged her to take in a child who needed a home. Afterward she became pregnant, bore several children and led the women's work for years.

By the same token as a woman is the source of life, she must not die. So, if a man is married and his wife dies, he must fill her place that is now empty, by giving his niece to his in-laws. That niece then represents that daughter to the bereaved family.

Recently my niece in Canada chose to research a school project on the Mwana Pwo mask. I called our friend, Prince Kandala, to tell him about it and he said to give her his email. She could ask him directly since he speaks English.

I emailed her, saying, “So you are as precious to the Chokwe as their own child. They see you as Mwana Pwo, Chokwe daughter who incarnates royalty. You are a princess who carries the highest esteem! Pretty cool, hey? Your mom, as Grandpa and Grandma's grandchild, made the pilgrimage to her Chokwe roots (they called her by her Chokwe name, Lwecho). She brought them pictures of you, who are the first great grandchild, so the people always ask about you. They love seeing pictures of how you are growing into young womanhood. One day maybe, you may make a trip to Africa, to visit the DRC. Even if you have never been here and don't speak the language, you will sense that you really belong. You will be received by these, your Chokwe people, as a princess returning home.”

In the same way, my father's study of the deepest beliefs underlying the Chokwe worldview, reflects the nurturing of a tribe that received us. It marked us like the kalitoza, with its language, culture and values. They confided in us their troubles, hopes and dreams. This study resulted from their taking us into their confidences and us trusting their process.

“Why did your parents choose to come to Africa?” a documentary photographer from Los Angeles, California, asked me recently. We were trekking together through Congo's primary equatorial forest in this province of my birth. Back in the early 1950s, from their home in the farmlands of Southern Manitoba, Canada, my mother and father heard of a tribe in Congo that was eager to receive the “Sango,” the Good News of God in the Bible. This openness drew my parents across continents and cultures. *The Disciple and Sorcery: The Lunda-Chokwe View*, rises from a lifetime

of mutual communion, a soil rich in respect and love, a love that ploughs deeper than all divides.

Charity Eidse Schellenberg
April 5, 2015

PREFACE

This project presents the Lunda-Chokwe view of sorcery (wanga) in the context of the Lunda-Chokwe traditional worldview and spells out its implications for a culturally relevant biblical discipleship. The basic assumptions of wanga are that there are spirits or forces in the universe that knowledgeable persons can manage for their benefit or their clients', to harm or protect. This can be done by: (1) using objects that have been processed to be effective; (2) repeating formulas or gestures; or (3) appropriating psychic powers and projecting them on people, objects or situations.

The thesis is designed to help Lunda-Chokwe Christians overcome the fear of wanga and the temptation to use it to cause harm or misfortune. The main body of the book is divided into two parts. Part I (chs. 1-3) describes the Lunda-Chokwe traditional worldview with particular emphasis on what they consider to be a major source of evil. Chapter One focuses on information gained from Lunda-Chokwe myths, narratives, fables and proverbs. Chapter Two discusses the ritual veneration of ancestors and the nature and function of rituals. Chapter Three focuses on the destructive use of wanga rituals.

Part II (chs. 4-11) spells out the implications of sorcery for the Lunda-Chokwe as biblical disciples. Chapter Four discusses how the Lunda-Chokwe people, as disciples of Jesus, should respond to sorcery. Chapter Five considers magic, miracle and medicine historically and as they relate to Lunda-Chokwe concerns. Chapters Six and Seven present the person and work of Jesus Christ (the atonement) and how the church should understand them. Chapter Eight considers the

Protestant Reformation as a major influence on biblical discipleship. Chapters Nine and Ten show how Christ's example teaches us to empower the powerless and reconcile believers to one another. Chapter Eleven shows how Christ's life and work, as presented in the New Testament, fulfilled an incomplete covenant in the Old Testament. The heart of our faith is the person and work of Christ reconciling us to the Father.

ABBREVIATIONS

Bible Books and Translations

KJV King James Version, 1911
NIV New International Version
N/RSV New/Revised Standard Version
NT/OT New Testament/Old Testament
NEB New English Bible

Select Books of the Old and New Testaments

Old: Gen., Ex., Deut., 1 Sam., 2, Kgs., 2 Chr., Isa., Jer.,
New: Mat., Mark, Luke, NT: John, Acts, Rom., 1, 2, Cor.,
Gal., Eph., Phil., Col., 2 Thes., 1 Tim., Tit., Heb., Jas.,
1 John, Jude, Rev.

General Abbreviations

C. Chokwe
ca. circa. (Lat.), about
ch. (chs.) chapter(s)
ed(s). edited by, edition, editor(s)
et al. et alii (Lat.), and others
f. (ff.) and the following (verse(s), etc.)
Fr. French
L. Lunda
ibid. ibidem (Lat.), the same work
n.p. no page
n.d. no date
op. cit. opere citato (Lat.), in the work cited above
tr. translated, translation
vol(s). volume(s)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to the Lunda-Chokwe people of Kahemba, Tshikapa and Tshikaji areas who befriended us over a thirty-year missionary career and supplied the stories of their traditional worldview and rituals. We also thank the Mennonite Church leaders of Congo who asked us to write lessons addressing sorcery and biblical discipleship. Their contributions to this study are significant. In addition, thanks to our many Lunda-Chokwe friends, such as merchant Zangio Kampew who hauled church supplies gratis, University of Moncton Professor Weva Kabule and fellow Bible translators Pastors Matunda Funda and Khege Andre Mwata-Swana. Also, deep thanks to proof readers Kakhenda Damien, Simplice Mbav' and Charis Schellenberg Kehler.

Anthropologists Stan Yoder and Rachel Fretz joined us in research at Kamayala, Congo, and encouraged us to complete this work. Helen's anthropology course at Wheaton College and her medical service alongside me provided invaluable support. Other colleagues and mentors in the field were James and Ginny Bertsche, Levi and Eudene Keidel and Mel and Elfrieda Loewen. Professors Archie Penner at Steinbach Bible College, Lawrence Burkholder at Goshen College, B. Michelson and K. S. Kantzer at Wheaton Graduate School and A.F. Walls, K. J. Vanhoozer and John Parratt at the University of Edinburgh also contributed greatly to my education and professional growth.

Other colleagues encouraged my research during my years as Steinbach Bible College president and chancellor, including Jon Bonk, Stan Plett, Lee Bartel, Rob Reimer, Harvey Plett, Doreen Klassen, Daryl Climinhaga and Lawrence Klippenstein.

Woodhaven Chaplain Bill Kehler stands out as one who encouraged me while I cared for my wife for 15 years after her stroke in 1995.

During manuscript production, Kevin Wieler and Lenny Elliott dealt patiently with computer issues, and all four daughters contributed in many ways. Charity Eidse Schellenberg wrote the Foreward and helped Faith Eidse type, edit and format; Grace Eidse helped edit and correspond with the publisher and the University of Edinburgh; and Hope Wiebe and John Schellenberg scanned and supplied photos and slides. Niece Charis Kehler also completed a final manuscript edit.

The editorial team at Cambridge Scholars Publishing saw a diamond in the rough and polished it to a fine finish. Special thanks to Christine von Gall, Sam Baker, Amanda Millar and Sean Howley.

INTRODUCTION

This introduction presents the problem of the discussion on sorcery, the research hypothesis, its objective, focus, methodology and the thesis structure or argument.

Background to this study

Through the years, the Mennonite Church leaders in Kahemba territory (southwest Bandundu Province, Democratic Republic of Congo) have been concerned that there are many Christians who continue to fear sorcery and are tempted to use it to harm others. The church in that area of the southern Kwango has a mainly Lunda-Chokwe membership. This study presents the Lunda-Chokwe view of sorcery, which is *ulaj* in Lunda (L.) or *wanga* in Chokwe (C.). It examines its meaning within its cultural context, and spells out its implications for a biblical, culturally relevant, Christ-centered discipleship.

The basic assumptions of *wanga* are that there are spirits or forces in the universe that knowledgeable people can manage for their own benefit, or for the benefit of their clients, to harm, to cause misfortune, or to protect. This can be done by: (1) using an object or objects that have been processed to be effective; (2) repeating formulas or gestures; or (3) appropriating psychic powers and projecting them on people, objects or situations. It is assumed that the right formula or action guarantees the intended result (Lima 1971, 401; Audio Tapes 1975-83).

The recommended suggestions are designed to help Lunda-Chokwe Christians overcome the fear of sorcery or witchcraft

and the temptation to use it to cause harm or misfortune. Both English words “sorcery” and “witchcraft” are covered by the one term in Lunda and Chokwe. “Ku panda wanga” means to practice sorcery or witchcraft. A specialist who practices wanga or ulaj is called an nganga (C. sg. and pl.), or mulaj (L., pl. alaj), meaning either “sorcerer” or “witch.” Chilowa is a synonym for wanga and is derived from the verb kulowa, “to control someone else,” “to cast a spell on,” “to affect with wanga” or “to bewitch.” A person who intends to cause harm may either hire an nganga to do the deed, or purchase the power object(s) (in the past often referred to as “fetishes”) from the nganga and attack the victim personally.

I agree with Victor Turner when he says, “Witch beliefs can no longer—if they ever could be—usefully grouped into two contrasting categories, witchcraft (in its narrow sense) and sorcery.” For a helpful discussion of this issue see Turner 1967, 118-127.

I will use the word “sorcery” rather than “witchcraft” because it is preferred by the Lunda and Chokwe researchers I know best, as well as by my Congolese friends, whenever they communicate in English. When referring to articles by other authors, however, I will use their terminology.

The sorcery problem was first impressed upon me in 1953 during my first year in what was then the Belgian Congo, now the Democratic Republic of Congo. Church members frequently came to renew their Christian commitment, confessing that they had resorted to wanga because they wanted to get even with someone, or because they were scared someone was trying to kill them and they had purchased protective sorcery from a sorcerer. Non-Christian inquirers also frequently confessed having resorted to these practices, and then burned their power objects. Christians and non-Christians alike who were being treated at the medical clinic often were afraid they would die, since they were

convinced that someone had cast a spell on them.

In 1975, at the request of the administrative committee of the Congo Mennonite Church, a school teacher, a pastor and I met to prepare a booklet of lessons on the sorcery problem. These studies were well-received and provoked animated discussions, evidently meeting a strongly felt need. The neighboring Presbyterian Church requested permission to translate the lessons into Tshiluba with the understanding that they could change the illustrations to fit the expressions of mupongo (Tshiluba for wanga) that were more in keeping with the experiences of the ethnic groups of their provinces.

Under the joint auspices of the American Bible Society and the Mennonite Church, a teacher, Bible translator and myself, translated the Bible into Chokwe. In the course of this project, many cultural word studies were done, including sorcery-related concepts. Through the 13 years of translation, the persistence of this problem was evident. Therefore, when I was offered a sabbatical leave as President of the Steinbach Bible College in Manitoba, Canada, I decided to do a more in-depth study of this topic. My African friends have been supportive of this project and I am in consultation with several of them. I have met African colleagues from various countries and have discovered that the great majority consider the sorcery problem to be a serious one in their countries as well.

Research hypothesis

A biblical, culturally relevant guide for discipleship can be developed that will help Lunda-Chokwe Christians deal effectively with the fear of sorcery and the temptation to use it to cause harm or misfortune.

Research objective

The objective of this study is to examine the phenomena of wanga in the Lunda-Chokwe context and to propose a plan for biblical discipleship that will take the Lunda-Chokwe traditional view and the Lunda-Chokwe Christian view into consideration. This will help them deal effectively with the fear of wanga and the temptation to use it to cause harm or misfortune to other individuals or groups of people.

Research focus

The primary focus of this study is the sorcery problem among the Lunda-Chokwe, a Bantu people of central Africa, residing together mainly in the southern Kwango, in the territory of Kahemba in the southwest Bandundu Province. These ethnic groups originated in the Katanga region in south central Congo, migrated to Angola, and then arrived at their present location. Some researchers will question why I refer to them as one group, since there are linguistic, historical and even cultural differences between them. The reasons for my decision are as follows.

The Lunda and Chokwe people have the same historical roots, both claiming to have the same “mother.” They have inter-married so freely that many families are a mixture of both, and have been referred to as Lunda-Chokwe *métis* (Lima 1971:93).

I recognize that in actuality their relationship has been ambivalent, alternating between amiable political and military alliances and open warfare, and that political opportunists have repeatedly attempted to exacerbate this uneasy relationship to their personal advantage. This was often unsuccessful because the groups did not want to be divided. Furthermore, in the spirit of the New Testament, the church has worked to consider them as one people, and I could not

see myself addressing only one group. In my references to sorcery-related concepts held by the Kahemba Lunda-Chokwe people I have not discovered any major differences.

In ethnographic research on the topic, I interviewed a number of them and despite differences in details, none were mentioned that were of major significance. Then too, in my private interviews with either Lunda or Chokwe people, they always gave me the impression that their views on the traditional interpretation of sorcery were identical. Since it would be too confusing to constantly use both the Lunda and Chokwe languages, I have chosen to use the latter more frequently, because I know it better. However, Lunda words are mentioned at particularly relevant points. The abbreviations “L.” and “C.” are used for Lunda and Chokwe words respectively wherever they are referred to secondarily.

Scholars have used a considerable variation in spelling to designate the two ethnic groups and their languages. I have chosen the words “Lunda” and “Chokwe” to designate both the ethnic group and the language because that is the common usage in Kahemba territory.

Research methodology

The nature of a field of study provides the principal control over methodology. Since religion involves all aspects of life, all the human sciences may be involved sooner or later. However, I will focus on those disciplines used most widely.

Cultural anthropology has been particularly relevant in studying Lunda-Chokwe ethnography through my years in Congo and continues to be so. It has been helpful to look at the data from both the “emic” and the “etic” perspectives. The emic endeavors to describe the world from the standpoint of the culture being studied without passing judgment as to whether its views are right or wrong. The etic examines another culture in terms of the analyst's own basic

assumptions and conceptual categories (Hiebert 1983:50-54). Such explanations may not agree with the way the people themselves explain events, but they can be helpful because they account for findings from an external perspective. I also believe that explanations of religious phenomena from the perspectives of various disciplines can be enlightening. However, I reject any interpretation of religion that questions its ultimate reality in human experience.

Throughout our time in Congo, I tried to be open to what was happening around me and kept on gathering information. Occasionally I observed actual practices of rituals, but when this was not possible, I recorded and transcribed interviews with those who had observed or experienced them.

I also received a number of tapes from P. Stanley Yoder, a social anthropologist who did some of his doctoral and post-doctoral research at our home in Kamayala, territory of Kahemba. Our time together afforded many opportunities to discuss the people of the area. Fieldwork interviews, both those recorded by him and by me, include texts on the following topics: narratives of origin and history, childbearing, initiation rites, marriage, death and burial, economics, divining, testimonials and ethnic songs. In the bibliography, his tapes are designated, "Yoder Audio Texts 1979-1982"; mine are "Eidse Audio Texts 1975-1983."

Biblical hermeneutics and theology have informed my approach to the thesis in articulating a program for effective discipleship. Several case studies illustrate the applications I have made on biblical discipleship in later chapters.

PART I:

THE LUNDA-CHOKWE TRADITIONAL WORLDVIEW

CHAPTER ONE

MYTHS, NARRATIVES, PROVERBS AND FABLES (YISHIMA)

Chapter one examines the Lunda-Chokwe worldview with particular emphasis on sorcery. It focuses on information gleaned from their myths, historical narratives, fables and proverbs (yishima). Chapter two focuses on kukombelela (rituals venerating the ancestors), and chapter three on kupanda wanga (sorcery rituals that are intended to harm individuals or groups of people).

Historical developments

A basic chronology of general events and trends helps locate the Lunda-Chokwe in their historical context. The Bantu peoples of the southern savanna of central Africa believe they inherited their land and their foundational culture from the immigrant ancestors, as related in their oral traditions. The spread and establishment of Bantu culture has been dated to the first millennium of the modern era; the emergence of agriculture, metallurgy and sedentary societies AD 500-1000; extensive acceptance of patrilineal political organization during the second millennium; the introduction of New World crops in the 17th century; the spread of the Luba and Lunda political and commercial networks in Central Africa 1700-1850; and the decline of these networks 1840-1900 (See J. Yoder 1992:3, 12, 151-158; Vansina 1966:).

Vansina gives this significant summary: