Jesus: God, the only God, or No God?
A study of Jehovah’s Witnesses’ and Branhamism’s influence in Kolwezi, DRC

MB MUFIKA

Student ORCID.org/ 0000-0001-6004-2024

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Promoter: Prof. dr HG Stoker

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PREFACE

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,

Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ,

His only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,

born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead;

He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father almighty; from whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. Amen

And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

(Revelation 22:12-17)
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Many people have helped me bring this work into existence, so many that I cannot name them all.

I am most deeply indebted to our God for His protection during the many travels I had to undertake for the purposes of this research - by foot, by car, and with His direction to appropriate sources of information.

When I lost my wife last year on 20 February 2015, it blacked out all things, including the research itself. My family and I went through a turbulent time for about half a year. I ended up as a hypertension patient at the cardiac clinic at Potchefstroom General Hospital (10 March 2015 – 24 June 2016).

I am grateful to Dr Radebe Musa for his kindness, friendship, and for professionally giving me all the attention needed to treat my high blood pressure to the point where it is now very stable.

I would like to thank my promoter, Dr HG Stoker, for his brotherhood, friendship and for his professional and Christian attitude during the writing of this dissertation and during the death and funeral of my late wife. I was invited to participate in his first born daughter, Louisa Stoker’s, wedding in Balito Bay in Kwa-Zulu.

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My special thanks go to the leaders of the churches back home: Rev. Jean-Louis Nyingika, Pastor Ignace Kayembe, all the deacons and members of the Manika Church of Kolwezi, for their tremendous support for my stay in Potchefstroom.

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I am mostly gratefully to my late wife, Louisa Kayi Mutumpa, who was the big support and motivation to fulfil this dream of all my life (from 1986). I wish she could be with me today to receive all the honour.

This work owes its existence also to my son, Cosmas Mufika Mwawoka and his wife, who gave their total support, which is unforgettable.

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Finally, I am grateful to my fiancée and sister, Eva Wangechi Njeru, for her engagement and wonderful support to achieve this work, which is of great importance to the community of Kolwezi.
DEDICATION

To my grandparents

To my parents – Matheo Mufika 1913–1994

Elisabeth Kabwiza Kafuchi 1924–2016

To my late wife – Louise Kayi Mutumpa – 20/02/1956–20/02/2015

I dedicate this work to these persons because they provided the primary context that gave me the courage to know God and to study and work hard in life.

I also dedicate this work to my children and grandchildren, including the churches of God. May you know Jesus, the Son of man and Son of God.
ABSTRACT

This Christian apologetic thesis focuses on the question of the identity of Jesus. Is he God, the only God, or not God? The aim of the work is to bring back a Biblical understanding of basic Christian doctrines in Kolwezi and other places in the DRC and Africa in light of the influence of the teachings of the Jehovah’s Witnesses (JW) and Branhamites. The research starts with the history of Kolwezi, and this includes the people, culture, customs, behaviour and social life. Then it describes the introduction of Christianity in Kolwezi and follows its growth from colonial times until the independence of the DRC (1885-1960). The different periods of the country and city’s history, including the period of the Congo Free State (1885-1908); the Belgian Congo (1908-1960); the Democratic Republic of Congo (1960-1965); Congo-Zaire (1965-1997); and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (1997-2014), have all influenced the insight and understanding of Christianity and Christian doctrines. When the Christianity came to Kolwezi, it found the people involved in ancestors’ worship, practising magic powers in the indigenous communities.

With this as background, the focus is on the religious life of the people in Kolwezi for the last fifty years. The research examines the influence of Arius by tracing the doctrines and the growth of the JW on the one hand. In 1985, this group had about 300 members, but today they are 37 times more (12 000 members). On the other hand, the research investigates the heresies of Sabellius (influential in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th century) by tracing the beliefs of the Branhamites in and through the life and teachings of their prophet, William Marrion Branham.

In Kolwezi, these two groups seized the opportunities provided by unstable situations such as the civil war (1960-65), tribal conflict (1961-63, 1992-93) and political crisis (1990-1991, 1998-2001, 2008-2012) to influence Christians in all walks of life with their end-time prophecies. The JW prophesied the end of the world several times (1914) and the Branhamites also (1977) prophesied the end time of the present world. While none of their prophecies have been fulfilled, their influence is spreading. This is in contradiction with the way Christians view the end time Christians believe according to Biblical prophecy that the second coming of Christ and the end of this era will be accomplished once and for all in the future.

Not only their involvement in Kolwezi, but also the similarities between the JW and the Branhamites provide reasons to study them together. These similarities include this such as that both groups consider their founder to be a messenger of God; both see the organization as the only true church; both teach a Christology that differs radically from Christianity and the Bible; both deny the Trinity; both deny the bodily resurrection of Christ; both deny the personality of the
Holy Spirit; both have wrongly prophesied the end time; both use manipulation techniques; and both deny the Apostles’ Creed.

The thesis employs Christian apologetics to evaluate the two groups in an effort to understand what the task is and what method must be implemented so that the people of Kolwezi can be reintroduced to Jesus of the Bible.

**Keywords:** Jesus, God, Trinity, Christology, Kolwezi, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Branhamites, Heresy, Heretical, Christological heresy
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CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND, PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RATIONALE

1.1 Background to the Study

In an effort to further the cause of the Christian doctrine and theology through Christian apologetics in Africa, this thesis focuses on the central question of Jesus’ identity as a response to the Jehovah’s Witnesses (from here onwards JW) and Branhamite influences in the city of Kolwezi. These cults (as they are called in the Christian tradition, see Martin, 1985) question the most basic teachings of Christianity. It is not only crucial for Christian apologetics to respond to these criticisms, but also to understand how these groups made such progress by winning thousands of proselytes from the Christian churches in Kolwezi. It seems that their goal is to weaken the Christian ideology, perspective, or way of life to such an extent that they can replace it.

The cults multiply criticism of the Christian doctrines through literature and media (Baker, 2006:5). They even use terror and fear to persuade Christians to join their organization as the only godly option. The work of the Witnesses among nominal Christians and new converts has caused the Church of Christ much trouble (Gruss, 1970:4). In support of this claim, Kneedler (cited by Gruss, 1970) says that their “work is parasitic on established Christian work and very confusing to new Christians and to those not well-grounded in the reasons for their beliefs.” I do agree with Kneedler in that the shame is that most Christians and pastors are not sufficiently aware of the Witnesses’ history, their doctrines and their methods, so that they can deal intelligently with this stumbling block (Gruss, 1970:5). Christians in Kolwezi urgently need to understand Christian doctrine and salvation according to the Bible (Gruss, 1979:91). Gruss, himself an ex-Witness, posits that the failure of the Christians to witness what they believe is an important reason for the emergence of the cults. This even while cults are not able to offer the experience of true salvation, peace and happiness that is part of true Christianity (Dencher, 1961:52-53). Christian leaders should be able to read, explore and analyse the critical challenge from the cults and should be able to compare these teachings to what the Bible teaches. If Christian apologists could approach the JW and Branhamites with love, friendliness and true Biblical doctrine, it can change the current development of the situation. If the Witnesses could listen to the truth of the Bible, the truth can set them free (John 8:36-38).

---

\(^1\) Martin (1985) distinguishes between cults and traditional churches.
1.2 Problem Statement and Rationale

Since 1941, the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society has been publishing materials against the Christian belief in a Triune God in their booklet “Let God to Be True” (WTBTS, 1941:100-111). This tract is one of the most famous publications of the Watch Tower Bible Tract Society where the divinity of Christ is strongly denied. It is a poisonous attempt to undermine Christian beliefs. The JW vehemently deny the doctrine of the Trinity by asking: “Is Jesus God almighty? …Such a doctrine, with its attempted explanation, is very confusing… God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33). It is at once seen that such doctrine is not of God.” This criticism is published over and over in thousands of copies in the major language of Kolwezi. It needs a response and this is the aim of this thesis.

Similar criticism is often reprised by the Branhamites. William M. Branham strongly emphasized in his sermons as early as in 1953 (and in his famous sermon entitled “Christ, the mystery of God revealed”, 1963) that Christ is the manifestation of God in three offices or roles. He is at the same time Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Though he called it a new revelation, he actually adopted the modalistic view of Sabellianism (Wilson, 1988:95-97).

The JW and Branhamites proclaim basic Christian beliefs to be false and religionist (Gruss, 1979:24). The JW teach that Jesus is not God Almighty. He is a creature created by God (WTBTS, 1941). Meanwhile, the Branhamites teach that Jesus is the only God of the Bible (Branham, 1963b:9-20). Burguess and McGee (1988:95-97; 110-111) describes how the charismatic, independent movements emphasize signs and wonders to attract people, rather than teaching basic doctrines. Gruss (1979:132-138) asserts that “if (the Church) ignores the Biblical truth (and) sound doctrines, it will be very difficult to make any defensive task of Christian apologetics.”

Ironically, both the JW and Branhamites are use similar methods and believe similar major doctrines: both groups believe more in the teachings and calling of the founder of the organization than in what Christ reveals (John 14:1-2); they trust more in the organization’s literature than in Scripture itself (Dencher, 1961:19; Bowman,1995:20); they deny the Trinity, the bodily resurrection of Christ, Biblical salvation only through faith in Jesus and not by works; they both reject other churches and parts of the Apostles’ Creed since they claim that only their organization is the true church and God’s sole organization on earth; they both prophesied the end of the world for certain dates, which did not happen.

Many Christians in Kolwezi have a strong ancestral worship and animist background. They are used to consulting diviners to learn about their illnesses and suffering (Burton, 1933:50-
They have welcomed massively the end time message with no doubt. In other words, Christians in Kolwezi have been influenced by the teachings of the JW and Branhamism since they are in a sense susceptible to such teachings. The influence is so great that for the Apostles’ Creed is no longer confessed in many Pentecostal and independent churches in Kolwezi. They say that the Apostles’ Creed is not Godly (interviews). People pray in these churches by repeatedly using the expression “Father God Jesus.” Under the influence of Branhamism many believers in Kolwezi understand by God the Father is simply Jesus of Nazareth. If we compare these claims with Matthew 6:9-13 or we explore the JW and Brahmanism in light of Johannine literature, who Jesus really is according to the Bible, is not found in their teachings. Even though they refer to Jesus frequently, their teachings about him differ widely from what He teaches about Himself. The aim of this study is to offer African Christians a way to talk to JW and Branhamites.

The silence of Christian churches in Kolwezi is the result of an absence of arguments to answer (give an ‘apologia’) to the teachings of the JW and Branhamites. The majority of Pentecostal and independent churches in Kolwezi for example already agree with William Branham by saying: “Spiritual matters, like running a church, don’t need training, neither is there any need for theology. The revelation and anointing of God is required to do a powerful ministry, as propounded by prophet Branham…” (Branham, 1963a). Christian pastors are openly teaching Russell and Branham’s doctrine without fear of being contrasted, while their members don’t know that they are ignoring basic Christian traditions and beliefs. In rejecting the Apostles’ Creed these church leaders indirectly reject Jesus, who taught the apostles (Schaff, 1877:20-24). Through these influences the doctrine of the Trinity has become a taboo in many parts of Kolwezi. After independence, the recruitment of pastors has not been based on training as is the normal way, but on testimonies, gifts and good relationships with the church. The missionaries have been forced to leave the country and have left a gap with only uneducated laymen to fill it (Garrard, 2008:20-30). The JW and Branhamites seized the opportunity of civil war, violence, suffering, poverty, tribal conflict, and ignorance to impose their end time prophecies and reach more people. As a result, their numbers have increased dramatically in the past 30 years.

In my search for answers and ways to help the Christian church in Kolwezi to react to the cults that have such an influence, I could find no Christian apologetic articles aimed at the believers in Kolwezi in response to the JW or Branhamite teachings. This study aims to help to reintroduce the “Jesus of the Bible” in Kolwezi among Christians influenced by the teachings of the JW and Branhamites. This thesis wants to make a contribution to help fill this gap in African Christian apologetics, because the need is indeed great for Christians in Kolwezi and
the DRC to understand what they believe and why. Whereas Arianism for centuries challenged fundamental Christian beliefs such as the deity of Christ, it could not succeed in eradicating or replacing Christianity in the West. However, by claiming that they are Christian and truly Biblical, the JW and Branhamism have been spreading this age old heresy to a Christian community with immature Christians, with the result that many of these believers have come to join their organizations. To be of service to the churches, this study of the JW and Branhamites from the perspective of Christian Apologetics centres on the dichotomy of the doctrines offered, the one affirming only the humanity of Christ (JW), and the one claiming only the divinity of Christ (Branhamism).

Churches in Kolwezi also need more schools for training its pastors and leaders so that these individuals can offer a Christian apologetics that can bring back to Christianity those who were influenced by the two cults. A response to the JW and others requires a focus on the person of Christ and how salvation is lived by faith in Jesus (Kern, 1995:11-13).

1.3 Preliminary Literature Study

This endeavour would be incomplete without a deeper understanding of the JW’ adaptation of Arianism as a revival of the old heresy and the teachings of Branham as a revival of Sabellius in modalistic Christology (Grudem, 1994:242). The following scholars are worth studying for various reasons: Reginald H. Fuller, Charles C. Ryrie, Wayne Grudem, Louis Berkhof, Charles T. Russell, William M. Branham, John Calvin and Philip Schaff.

An important school of thought that came up with a different Christology than orthodox Christianity, namely one that preaches the inferiority of Christ and the denial of his deity, became known as Arianism. The JW can be described as Neo-Arians. Charles T. Russell (1852-1916) is important as a primary source, because he presents Christ, the “Word” (John 1:1) as “a god”, as a creature of God (WTBTS, 1946a:100). He is the founder of the American JW. The movement is essentially a reaction to the orthodox Christology and their doctrine of the Trinity (WTBTS, 1989a:109). After his death, Joseph Rutherford, the new leader of the group, emphasized the fundamental views of Arius and his predecessor in arguing the opinions against deity of Christ and Trinity (WTBTS, 1941). Their teachings in Kolwezi on the denial of Christ's deity has found support from other religious groups such a Muslims, Hindus, and African Traditional Religion. Furthermore, the believers of the Christian community found it difficult to celebrate Christmas or to confess all church creeds because the JW deny the birth of Jesus. Also they critically deny the Trinity and consequently the Christians churches avoid this central doctrine in their confessions on Sunday. For instance, the Pentecostal movements in Kolwezi do not confess the any creeds in their services. They believe unfortunately that the
JW may be right regarding the birth of Christ and the Trinity. When it comes to the cross, the death of Christ and bodily resurrection, the JW have greatly confused the minds of many Christians in Kolwezi. Many Christian Churches find it difficult to emphasize the cross like the apostle Paul in the other apostles did (1 Cor1:18-25; 15:1-21). They do not emphasize on the bodily resurrection; they speak as the Jehovah’s Witness of a spiritual body (1 Pet 3:18).

The Branhamites can be described as Neo-Sabellians. Sabellius proclaimed the manifestation of Christ in three offices or roles at the same time. That means Jesus manifests in three offices, namely as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Sabellius regarded Jesus as the only God (Branham, 1963b; Dencher, 1961:58-60). William M. Branham (1909-1965) is important as a primary source in dealing with the Branhamism. His Christology, known as the “Jesus only” doctrine, is widely embraced by the oneness movement of Pentecostal churches in the world and in Kolwezi. He denies the Trinity strongly by saying that “there is no Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” (Branham, 1961a; 1964b:12-14). In His sermon entitled “Christ, the mystery of God revealed”, Branham (1965) confirms that Christ accomplished three offices at the same time on the day of Pentecost: that of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Their Teachings in Kolwezi on the true baptism, only in Jesus name and the revelation and manifestation of Jesus in three roles has led so many Christians away from the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. Therefore, it seems difficult to many Protestants in general, and Pentecostals in particular, to confess the Trinitarian formulas at the baptismal services in Kolwezi. They adhere to Branhamite views out of ignorance. They don’t know how to argue against these views. The dichotomy brought about by the two movements in Kolwezi has caused Christological controversies which need to be handled and answered.

John Calvin cited by Wendell (1963:165), in his Christian Institutions 1, 13.2 teaches that God reveals himself as the one God in such manner that He offers himself to our contemplation in three distinct persons. Calvin’s position is that the Trinitarian dogma must be maintained in its entirety. Calvin and Luther agree on this (Wendell, 1963). Their position on the Scriptures is very important to this thesis because the Scriptures is should be the basis for all doctrines. The two heresies by the two groups require a deeper analysis of the Scriptural context of each declaration by each founder of the movement.

Philip Schaff (1879:452-511) is also important because of his work on church history. He focuses on different parts of the Christology according the creeds and their history. To him, the creeds are a summary of the apostle’s teachings (Schaff, 1879:6-12). The Apostle teachings are based on Christ himself. The church history as described by Schaff should be emphasized in the churches in Kolwezi. They ignore the history of the church, the different stages, deviations, heresies, and the solutions which the church fathers found through
councils. This book is recommendable to church leaders in Kolwezi because these two heresies are simply a renaissance of Arianism and modalism per say.

Barclay (1955) points out that the humanity of Christ is aptly revealed in the Gospel of John. For instance, Jesus was angry (2:15); he sometimes tired (4:6); became hungry (4:31); had sympathy with those who were afraid (6:5, 20); he wept (11:33,35,38). Ironically, this part of Christ's life is accepted and taught by the JW in Kolwezi, but they differ on the bodily death and resurrection. Them, they deviate into their position, which lacks logic and evidence. They question the historical report of the gospels about the resurrection (Matt. 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20). Through the humanity of Christ, Barclay goes on to explore the incarnation that the two movements deny because of their dogmas (Barclay 1975b). Through the incarnation, the redemption can be understood.

Erickson (1983:74) also shows how the humanity and divinity of Christ is central to the fourth gospel. The Johannine literature presents the two natures of Christ in one person (John 1:1-14; 18-29). The gospel shows the two nature sometimes separately, as human Christ (John 2; 3; and 4). It shows both natures (for example 11:20-44). Erickson teaches that Jesus is Son of God and Son of man.

Reginald H. Fuller and Perkins (1983:122) presents an enlightening overview of traditional and contemporary Christological debates. Christianity traces its development in the early Church to the classical Christology of Nicaea and Chalcedon. The author describes how Christ is regarded by different gospels, religious groups, Jews, Greeks, and gentiles, and this can aid the understanding of these cults.

Wayne Grudem (1994:239-242) is chosen for his theory, which asserts that the three persons in the Godhead are distinct: The Father is not the Son; the Son is not the Father and the Holy Spirit; and The Holy Spirit is not the Son and the Father. He in essence presents a Christian doctrine. His presentation is very helpful in the context of this thesis in the sense that the relationship between Father and Christ is central to the two movements under discussion. Grudem is practical in that he gives the different opinions from different religious groups in Christianity.

Louis Berkhof (1996:86) is chosen for his analysis of the Trinitarian doctrine grounded in the Old Testament as a clear anticipation of the doctrine of the Trinity Many Christian ignore the correlation about the Trinity within the Bible-from the Old Testament unto the New Testament. Because the two movements criticize the Trinity and deny it strongly, and the Christians in Kolwezi seem to believe it, it is very important to answer with the materials offered by Berkhof.
Charles T. Ryrie (2005a:59-61) is very useful because of his treatment of the Trinity and the person of Christ as the central doctrines of the Church. He clarifies the historical background and Christological controversies. Also he shows that Christ is not the Father or the Holy Spirit.

1.4 Research Questions

In an effort to offer an apologetic answer to the believers in need in Kolwezi, this study aimed to answer the following specific research questions:

- How did the political history of Kolwezi and the DRC before 1960 contribute to the current situation in Kolwezi?
- What is the role of African traditional religion in Kolwezi?
- How did the religious history of Kolwezi with the introduction of Christianity and the cults culminate in the current situation and how did church life change after 1960?
- What is the JW’ influence in Kolwezi?
- What is the Brahmanist influence religion in Kolwezi?
- In what ways do the teachings of Christ himself differ from the teachings of the JW and Branhamites?
- How should the task of Christian apologetics in answer to the cults in Kolwezi be defined?

1.5 Aim and Objectives

1.5.1 Aim

The main aim of this apologetic study is to understand how the Jesus of the Bible must be reintroduced in the city of Kolwezi where Christians have been influenced by the teachings of the JW and Branhamites. The secondary aim is to put forward a way to persuade the believers of both the JW and Branhamites to change their view on the Trinity and on Jesus.

1.5.2 Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- explore and understand the background and the religion of Kolwezi before the introduction of the JW and Branhamism;
- explore and understand the background and the religion of Kolwezi after 1960 and on the introduction of the JW and Branhamism;
- analyse and evaluate the JW’ influence and teachings in Kolwezi;
- analyse and evaluate the Branhamist influence and teachings in Kolwezi;
• compare and examine the teachings of the JW and Branhamism with the teachings of Christ himself; and to
• define the task of Christian apologetics and to reintroduce a solid Christology in Kolwezi.

1.6 Central Theoretical Argument

The central theoretical argument of this study is that not only the teachings of the JW, but also the modalistic Jesus claimed by Branhamism is simply a Jesus different from the one described in the Bible. The two arguments offered by the JW and Branhamism are not new messages, but a revival of old heresies, namely Arianism and Sabellianism (Grudem, 1994:242-243). Since these teachings are erroneous and far removed from the basic teachings of Jesus of the Bible, the people of Kolwezi must be reintroduced to the Jesus the Scriptures proclaim.

1.7 Concept Clarification

Kolwezi: Kolwezi is a mining city in the Democratic Republic of the Congo’s Katanga province. It was founded in 1937 by the Belgian Congo State (1908-1960). It is very rich in mineral resources such copper, cobalt and many others (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2013). Its population has grown to about one million because of the economic boom between 2008 and 2013. The city is used to the presence of foreigners (Africans, Europeans, Americans, Australians, Asians) and other Congolese from other provinces who come for jobs and mining business. There are hundreds different charismatic, Christian churches and other religions of the world that are co-existing in Kolwezi.

Christians: In this study “Christian” refers specifically to those believers who believe in the holy Trinity, meaning is they believe in God the Father, in Jesus Christ as the Son and in the Holy Spirit (Harrison, 1960:117).

Teachings: Different discourses that together constitute a doctrine, which is a belief statement of a church, religious movement or a congregation (Kittel, 1964:139)

JW: The movement founded by Charles T. Russell (1852-1916) in the USA, initially called Bible Students. After a short time, the movement started calling itself Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. After the Russell’s death, their new leader, Joseph Rutherford, changed their name to the JW in 1942. According to Bowman (1995:10-11) they have prophesied the end of time at different dates (1914, 1925, 1931, 1941, 1975, 1999). They deny the holy Trinity, the deity of Christ, the existence of hell, the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ and many other parts of Christian doctrine (WTBTS-, 1989a).
Branhamism: The movement founded by William M. Branham (1909-1965). The believers are often called Branhamites, though they deny the name. Some prefer to be called Message Believers. They believe that Branham is the last prophet from God. His message concerns the end time prophecy. They deny the concept of the Trinity and baptism in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To Branham, the true baptism is in Jesus’ name only. They are also known as the “Jesus-only Movement” (Wilson, 1988:372).

Christology: The study of the person of Christ. Christology concerns his life, teachings, deeds, death and his resurrection. The second coming is also a part of Christology (Ferguson et al., 1983:135; Ferguson, E. 1993:432).

Christological heresy: Heresy refers to an opinion opposed to the commonly received doctrine. It tends to cause or dissension. Christological means that it is relative to Christology. Christological heresy therefore means an opinion that is contrary to the orthodox belief of the wider church. For instance, Gnostics and Arians were considered heretics or Christological heretics by the church’s Council at Nicaea (Schaff, 1879:12-30).

1.8 Provisional Classification of Chapters

(1) Introduction to the study
(2) Kolwezi before 1960: the political and cultural history and the introduction of Christianity
(3) Kolwezi after 1960: the political and cultural history and church life after independence
(4) The history of the JW and their influence in Kolwezi
(5) The history of Brahmanism and its influence in Kolwezi
(6) A comparison of the teachings of the JW and Branhamism with the teachings of Christ himself
(7) The task of Christian apologetics in Kolwezi, the DRC and Africa
(8) Conclusion and recommendations

1.9 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter provided a brief introduction to the problem that the study aims to address. This was followed by a cursory look at the available literature, the research questions, aim and
Chapter 2 discusses the political and religious history of Kolwezi to give insight into the current situation.

**Table 1-1: List of Chapters**

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Figure 2-1: Map of Congo

2.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is to examine how the political and religious history of Kolwezi has culminated in the current situation where great numbers of Christians are joining the two cults in question. There are many different factors that have influenced this situation over the years. The province has a certain ethnic composition and culture that lends itself to the current situation, as explained later on in this chapter. Furthermore, the political history of the DRC has had certain direct effects on religion, resulting in shifts and changes in the religious
The chapter starts off with a delineation of the current composition of the province, where after it relates the history of the country chronologically. This exposition does not merely relate facts, but aims to show how the political and religious spheres interweaved and interlinked, causing culture and belief to change.

Kolwezi city lies in the Katanga province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, otherwise known as Congo Kinshasa (Anon., 2014b). Katanga is rich in mineral resources and it is therefore a vibrant area that attracts large numbers of people. The Katanga province is home to many ethnic groups, but the major groups are the Luba, Lunda, Chokwe (Tshokwe), Yeke, Sanga, Lamba, Kaonde and Hemb.

2.2 The Early Ethnic Composition of Kolwezi

The Luba people were the earliest permanent settlement in the Katanga region. Traditional sources claim that the Luba people’s ancestors were the first to settle in the Upemba depression near the Lake Upemba, having moved from the North in four separate migrations (Kisangani and Bobb, 2010). They followed the waterways and passed through the equatorial forest, forming kingdoms and empires such as the Kingdom of the Kongo, the Kingdom of Kuba, the Empire of Lunda and the Empire of the Luba (see the map of the Congo). During these early times the groups who had settled in the Upemba depression started a cooperative to build and maintain dikes and drainage ditches. This kind of communal cooperation made possible the construction of dams to stock fish during the long dry season (Kisangani and Bobb, 2010). By the 6th and 8th century the Luba were working iron and trading in salt, palm oil and dried fish. They used these products to trade for copper, charcoal (for iron smelting) glass beads, iron and cowrie shells transported from the Indian Ocean. The Luba people made copper crosses to serve as monitory units. Trade in slaves with the Portuguese made the Luba people even richer in 18th century, but in 19th century their wealth declined because of the competition from other states (Encyclopaedia of Africa, 2010:312). The history of the Luba Empire, however, begins approximatively in the middle of the seventeen century. Before that time there were neither kings, nor necromancers in the country. The ancient Luba extended their region up to the south of Katanga. This population was called “Bakalanga” – “people who cook nicely.” Their skins were of a lighter hue than those of the original Luba. They paid taxes only to the spirits who, so they believed, reside in trees and rocks (Burton, 1961:383).

The area occupied by the Luba was invaded by the Basonge. Nkongolo, who was actually of Basonge origins, conquered the region between Lualaba and Lomami. He established the first Empire of the Luba. The Babui conquered the area situated between Lualaba and Tanganyika. Later on, Ilunga Mbidi (Kalala Ilunga) from Bakunda conquered the empire established by
Nkongolo and established the second Empire of Luba. It later extended up to the south of Katanga (Verhulpen, 1936:22-24). So, the Luba culture is older than any other southern African culture, for the first Luban Empire was founded before the 15th century at the time when the southern-most parts Africa were populated by Bushmen and Hottentots. Their art is richer than that of their neighbours and was probably stimulated by contact with the Portuguese.

According to English explorer Stanley (1885), the people who had settled near the Lualaba River and near Kolwezi by the time Westerners reached the area were the Basanga, Ndembu, Lunda, Chokwe and Luba tribes. The Luba traded copper and fish (Verhulpen, 1936). Because of the presence of copper and other minerals, M’siri was attracted to the region and he conquered the place through his vassal chiefs of the Basanga, namely Chief Mpande and the Lambas and Chief Katanga, his father-in-law. M’siri’s as the Great Chief of Katanga ruled Kolwezi together with the Luba and Lunda. From the 1880s, M’siri’s vassals, Chief Koni, Mwamfwe and Mutanda, ruled the region of Kolwezi. At the same time, the Lunda’s expansion reached Kolwezi through Chief Kazembe and Chief Kanongesha. These two Lunda chiefs went to settle in what is now Zambia.

At the time of colonization, the Belgians found the above assortment of tribes in the Congo. The first introduction of Western culture and religion was met by a deeply entrenched African religious worldview. It is worth looking at this worldview before continuing the narrative that is the history of the DRC.

2.3 African Religion in Kolwezi

It is important to understand the fundamental difference between the African worldview and the Christianity that entered Africa. According to scholars such as Mbiti and Tempels, the most fundamental point of departure is that the African never views man as an isolated individual. Among Africans, the individual is necessarily a clannish being. The life of the individual is conceived of as participation (Mbiti, 1969:23-25; 34-36; Tempels, 1965:30-32). As such, the meaning of life is found in community and participation, and the community does not end with the living. The religious beliefs of Africans are traditionally dominated by myths, rituals, ceremonies, ancestors, gods and spirits (Mbiti, 1969: 118-120). These beliefs are still very common today. In Kolwezi for instance, the Chokwe, Lunda, Luba, Sanga and Ndembu all still adhere to the same practices, with only a few differences in details (Bastin, M.L. 1982).
The Chokwe people’s practices, rituals and ceremonies can be considered illustrative of the typical African religious “doctrine.” Most other tribes share these beliefs or believe very similarly (Muhunga, 1962). Some of their practices include the following:

- **Mukanda** or **Tshavula**: The initiation of boys by means of circumcision in the bush (not in hospital). It is a true school of life where young boys receive traditional training on how to live in marriage, on their sexuality, how to hunt, agriculture, war, and rites such as those for funerals. This process takes three-and-a-half months (Schmidt-Wrenge, 1973).

- **Tshiwinbi** or **Tshavula**: The initiation of young girls with instruction on the same topics presented to the boys, but this time for girls between 14 and 16.

- **Wali**: A ceremony for a girl on menstruating for the first time. There is also the belief that when a girl is married and she is a virgin, she will have a show of blood after her first intercourse. Once this occurs, a ceremony is conducted by the family of the husband to honour the new wife in her new life. They prepare a kitchen party.

- **Uyanga**: This is a ceremony for hunters where ancestors are invoked to give success in hunting.

- **Zemba**: A mystical or occult initiation in a private place. It is secret and the initiate is trained in ways to get power, courage, audaciousness, determination and the potential to face any difficult situation

- **Mungonge**: A ceremony to celebrate a victory, a success in war, in fighting or a royal birth. This a secret celebration in the bush only among men.

- **Musheta** or **Munema**: A funeral ceremony that takes place at house of the deceased person. It involves mourning with different songs and an invocation of ancestors to receive his soul.

- **Ngombo**: A divination to find the cause of death or sickness by using a branch of a palm tree, a dish, or a white plate to predict the future.

- **Mahamba**: An invocation of spirits. The ancestors’ spirits are invoked by means of special formulas and prayers to clean a haunted house or a cursed person for example. It is also done to chase away an evil spirit or the spirit of death, which is frequent practice nowadays in Kolwezi. Some diviners have become Christians and prophets like Simon Magus in Acts 8:9-24; 13:4-10.
The beliefs of the Luba people provide further insight into African religion. According to the Luba, their ancestors are imbued with authority and right. However, they have unrestricted power of intervention only in the lives of their descendants. One can easily observe the manner in which the living are bound to their ancestors by observances of customs, taboos, by naming children after their ancestors. Those who fail to follow the traditional customs are a danger to the whole community, including its deceased members. Such failure leads to the fatal interruption of the vital flow that unites the living and the dead (Nkulu, 1992:36).

Verhulpen’s statement can be supported by my own experience. When my wife was pregnant with a baby boy, my mother, who came from a kingship lineage, told me to name the boy after certain ancestors without combining it with any other name. I refused totally because this practice involves ancestor worship or appeasement. She told me that it is an order that it is something that she dreamt. I maintained my position. The ancestors have taken revenge in all of my children’s lives. We face many trials, but the God of Christianity prevails (Rom 8:33-39).

The Luba, like many other African tribes, believe that man does not really die. A person’s soul is still alive in the village of the ancestors. They believe that ancestors have the most profound knowledge of the vital force. The death of a man does not destroy the vital force which is in him. This force separates from the corpse and preserves its own existence elsewhere (Burton, 1961:45). Burton writes, “The dead often reappear in some animal, either to protect or to harm… it is believed that all leopards are reincarnations of forefathers, so that when they kill a leopard, they make a fence, with a door around an open space where they are about to skin it, they place a mat ‘for the chief’… that there are man-leopard and man-lions is generally believed that the spirit which is in the animal may have been a man, and that there is a danger that it may bring sickness, calamity or death (Burton, 1961). The Luba people, convinced of the “reincarnation” of ancestors, ask help from them, placate them with offerings. They believe that man does not really die. A person’s soul is still alive in the village of the ancestors. They believe that ancestors have the most profound knowledge of the creator.

In the Luba culture, elders are supposed to invoke ancestors. A man invoking his ancestral spirit would kneel before a hut containing wooden dolls, rub himself with white clay or kaolin powder, which in the Luba call “Mpemba itoka”, and make his request known. Kaolin powder is thought to link with the ancestral world by nature of its colour, which corresponds with the colour of ancestral bones. White is a symbol of beauty, purity, good luck and prosperity, a protection against sickness and the attack of enemies, a guarantee of the fidelity of a spouse, and fruitful and abundant hunting. Kneeling before ancestral spirits when invoking them, could possibly suggest a relation to a higher force and a dependent relationship (Burton, 1961:34).
The Luba believe that death and life are intimately linked and therefore inseparable. According to this view, life has two stages: life in the living village, and after death, in the ancestors’ village. The idea is that earthly life is dominated by death, and life after death is dominated by life. This view is supported by Makanzu (1983:60-63), who wrote, “The dead are everywhere and can live in several bodies; a single person lives in his corpse, and simultaneously in the tomb; in the tomb; in the cemetery; in the village of the ancestors; in an animal’s body; in a tree or in a baby who is yet unborn; it can be a ghost or phantom; it lives; it lives again and again, and eternally.” From this point of view, we can say that for Luba people, the dead are never dead. They are still alive in another world, somewhere else. They are still influential in society. This point of view inspires fear of chiefs, witchdoctors and death. We had an experience in our family where a family member developed phobia of a dead person. The Luba believe that death and life are intimately linked and therefore inseparable. According to this view, life has two stages: life in the living village.

The traditions around ancestors, fears and taboos involve rituals. A ritual is primarily a religious act, an action to secure mystical power and blessings. This may take a positive or negative form. Neglecting rituals is associated with some repentant act or punishment Verhulpen (1936:242) states, “It is admitted that ancestors’ spirits may appear among the living by their shades (double). This shade can reappear in the world; in being reincarnated into a child, or into an animal like lion, leopard, cheetah, or crocodile. The child born will receive the name of one of the deceased ancestors of his parents. He will be named by his parents – ‘Nkambo’. That is, ‘ancestor’ or ‘Grandfather’. If someone happens to take another name, the reincarnated ancestor will take revenge. Only sacrifices or offerings can appease him.” These practices show how religion involves every aspect of life, and how there is no religion separate from vital force.

Since religion involves all aspects of life, believers practice witchcraft also. According to Booth, the word witch in Luba, “mfwishi”, is derived from the same root as “kufwa”, to die (cf “mufu”, the dead person). The root of these words seem to suggest an idea mentioned earlier, namely the diminution of life and the disruption of the harmonious relationship, which is what is most feared by the Luba (Booth, cited by Barsewich, V. 1987:78). As such, magic, sorcery and fetishism is very much alive in these cultures.

Magic is the art of using hidden forces of nature and sometimes also those of ancestors and spirits in order to serve the group to which one belongs. It resorts to magic proceedings, magic words, charms, to fetishes. Sorcery is the art of subduing, by magic proceedings, forces of nature, spirits and shades of ancestors to one’s group (Verhulpen, 1936:243). Magic is approved of whereas sorcery is condemned by society. In Luba traditional society, there is a
“mfwishi”, among the different counsellors whose charge is to look out for sorcerers. Sickness, misfortune etcetera is felt to be caused by sorcerers, spirits and ancestors. This puts people under the obligation to protect themselves against these powers. Magic is used to protect oneself, to prosper, to fight against sorcerers, to counteract evil and spells. Magic, generally, is seen to complement medicines when medicine fails. Sometimes it happens that the use of magic practices precedes the use of medicine (Wolford, 1995).

In many African cultures sorcery is attributed to males and witchcraft to females. At a certain level this distinction rests on the conscious control of magic power. One kind of power involves taking control of the environment (sorcery) and the other, an unconscious power, suggests the use of the natural power available to women (witchcraft). According to Verhulpen (1936:244), witchcraft is inextricably linked with magic. This implies that there is good magic or medicine on the one hand, which safeguards the moral order and is approved, because it is applied in the public interest. On the other hand, there is evil magic and witchcraft, which is bad and feared. The two forces are personified in the person of the tradition healer and witch or sorcerer. These form two extremes of the same axis of magic, which as a power is in itself usually regarded as being neutral. In Kolwezi as in Africa, witchcraft is not the only agency that is suspected of causing misfortunes (Verhulpen, 1936:244).

The context of misfortune is usually more significant than its intrinsic nature. Witches typically send particular unaccountable blows. Witches and witchcraft have a place in Luba cosmogony, and automatically in Kolwezi, where there are still many today. Their cosmogony admits the possibility of things going wrong. It explains the confluences of events that many families experience as unexplained, including my own family. In 1989, after a strong discussion with my parents on the same issue my wife did unexplained abortion. Witches did often such actions to intimidate others in the family. Among the Luba, like all the Bantu people in Kolwezi, witchcraft manifest a theory of causation.

Luba people believe also in the power of fetishes. The term ‘fetish’ derives from the Portuguese word “feitico” and is translated as “made”, “man-made” or “artificial.” The word is used now to denote objects to which man has added some element in order to bestow upon it metaphysical powers or to make it into a vessel of powers stemming from a metaphysical reality. The Luba call a fetish “nkishi”, that is, a carved image, or “lusengo”, a horn which contains a powerful substance and that is consecrated by a “nganga”, a traditional healer. There are various kinds of fetishes among the Luba. According to Burton (1961:129; 1947), the Luba make charms to protect themselves from the everyday minor misfortunes they anticipate within the context of their own families and lives. The most important function of the fetish is that of guardian. Thus, the Luba people have charms to prevent their children from
stumbling, or for their sons to grow up into strong men. Charms protect the individual from personal mishaps such as theft, bad hunting, or quarrels, as well as from natural disaster such as sterility, drought or illness. They can ensure harvest, successful hunting, propitious business, marriage or war. Charms are usually worn around the arm, leg, neck, or waist. Verhulpen states that a fetish is not an idol, but a magic object, facilitating relations with superior powers, spirits, ancestors or witches. In Kolwezi, almost all tribes use this custom to solve problems.

The task of the traditional healer must be pointed out. In many African cultures, as among the Luba, the traditional healer’s task is one of revealing and dealing with the causes of misfortune or death. Although the traditional healer discloses what has happened, his main goal is to make a fetish for a client that will affect future events. So, he can simultaneously be soothsayer. The *nganga’s* function is to protect the community from those who would want destroy it (Burton, 1933:78). Burton enumerates the different kinds of charms found among the Luba people of Kolwezi; charms to cause harm, “*majende*”; charms in hunting and fishing in the Lualaba river; charms used by the craftsman; “the *kiswenene-bwanga*” for bewitching; the dream-child’s hoe, “*kanzunji*.”

Divination is another means used by the Luba people to know the reason of misfortune and the way of counteracting it. Though they have a large number of enemies, be they spirits, ancestors, sorcerers, magical exercises or charms, the ordinary individual is ignorant of the originators of wrongs and what to do in order to appease them. For this reason, the Luba, like many African tribes, resort to soothsayers. The latter predict the future, reveal the past and the cause of all inexplicable phenomena involving misfortune, bad luck, sickness and so forth. The soothsayer would offer a medical remedy and propose offerings to perform. He reveals to the Luba the will of spirits, the ancestors and the means of fighting sorcerers (Verhulpen, 1936:249).

Burton illustrates several instruments or ways for divining among the Luba, for example, divining with the oil gourd, divination by hand, by poison trial “*mwavi wa kibale*”, by the red-hot axe “*mwavi wa kasolwa ka mudjilo*”, by boiling water “*mwavi wa mema a saluka*”, by an iron ring dropped into the eye “*mwavi wa kalonda mudiso*”, by chips cut from a tree, “*mwavi wa kibale*”, by tidying up the ashes “*kuolola buto*” (Burton, 1961:65-71).

The fetishes and the divination instruments differ in their specific functions and in the way they are used, but they all share a concern with the world of the dead, invisible powers and religious and magical beliefs. For the Luba, magic and religion are closely bound.
When the Belgians came to the Congo in 1892, there was a meeting of a European Christianity with these African beliefs. The interaction between these belief systems, thrown together by history, has resulted in the current situation. It is therefore important to keep the above cursory discussion of the African religious reality in mind while examining the political history of the country.

2.4 The Colonization of the Congo

In 1892 Belgians entered the Luba people’s land as part of the colonial drive of the 19th century in search of riches. With the colonization of the Congo came Christianity. At this time, the people of the Kolwezi region were under Chief Kasongo-Nyemo’s reign. By the end of the 19th century, the Luba people’s kingdom had weakened because of the Chokwe invasion, creating the ideal opportunity for the Belgians to take over (Coupland, 1939a).

In the 1880s King Leopold II of Belgium launched a project to explore the Congo and thereafter established the Congo Free State (CFS) in 1885. The King’s intention was to establish his own kingdom since he was not a Belgian by origin. He saw less interest in the future of Belgian Kingdom. With the assistance of a British explorer, Henry Morton Stanley (1883); Stanley’s reports of copper in Katanga and the possibility of gold, drew the King’s attention to M’siri’s Kingdom. M’siri tried to stall and play off Leopold’s expeditions against those of his European rival, Cecil Rhodes, until Leopold sent the Stairs Expedition to raise the Belgian flag in the Congo Free State’s, by force if necessary. It was indeed by force. Many sources indicate that M’siri was uncooperative, and was killed by the expedition in December 1891 at Bunkeya in the Kolwezi District (Ceulemans, 1959:280-281; Morel, 1920:40-42)).

2.5 Introduction of Christianity in the Colony

The introduction of Christianity in the Congo is often associated with the story of the explorers and missionaries of 19th century, such as David Livingstone and Sir Henry Morton Stanley. These two explorers reported on the wealth of the Congo, including mineral resources, rivers, fauna, and agriculture. The first to explore the country was Dr David Livingstone. He was interested in finding the mouth of the Nile River, but he got lost in the process. He followed the watersheds found around the mouth of the Congo River (Livingstone,1998).

Stanley was commissioned by the English authorities to follow and find Livingstone. The latter was not only an explorer, but also a Christian medical doctor. He explored Eastern Africa from the Coast of Zanzibar. From there he followed Livingstone’s itinerary until he found him at Udjiji near what is now known as the Congo, or between Zambia and Zimbabwe around Lake Victoria (Stanley, 1885:125-34).
Ceulemans relayed that Stanley confirmed Livingston’s report on the Congo, namely that this region of Africa would be very good for business. Stanley’s discovery inspired King Leopold II to organize a special committee for studies about the Congo in 1877-1878. Stanley became a key person of the Belgian King, and he went on many expeditions into the Congo. During his travels, adventures and discoveries, he met many influential men, such as Cameron, Livingstone, Tippu Tipi, and other chiefs in the Congo (Stanley, 1885). The most influential trader that Stanley dealt with was Tippu Tip. His true name was Hamad bin Muhammad bin Juma bin Rajab el Murjebi. He was a representative of the richest families in Saudi Arabia. Stanley cooperated with him in many trade deals for King Leopold II and Tippu Tip recruited an army and militia for the king. The same procedure was followed for the rail way enterprise in the Katanga province and other places (Brode, 1902:175-179).

In addition to business partners such as Tippu Tip, the Belgians used the Catholic Church as legal partner in the Free State of the Congo (1885-1908). The king did not have direct contact with the Vatican, but he did have personal contact with the Belgian Catholic Church, of which he was king. He had the power to appoint a priest or vicariate in Brussels to work in the Congo. According to oral tradition, Bishop de Hemptinne was his relative, as was the majority of the administrators and personalities such Governor-general Janssen (Ceulemans, 1959).

The relationship between the Belgian government and the Roman Catholic Church meant that the country’s politics became intertwined with different missionary efforts in the Congo from 1885 up to independence. There were different missions to the Katanga province and to Kolwezi in particular. First, there were the Roman Catholic missions in Katanga and in Kolwezi. Second, Brethren Missionaries went to M’siri’s kingdom. Third, there were the Methodist missions in Katanga and in Kolwezi and fourth, the Congo Evangelical Mission (CEM).

2.6 Roman Catholic Missions in Katanga and Kolwezi

Christianity arrived in Lubumbashi just before 1900 when the Congo Free State fell into the hands of European nations. This change in governance brought with it an abuse of power towards the indigenous people. In 1908, the Congo Free State ceased to be and became the Congo Belgian State (1908-1960). The Roman Catholic Church’s mission in Lubumbashi was recognized by the capital, Leopoldville, on 5 August 1910. This created an apostolic prefecture of Katanga under the apostolic vicariate of Leopoldville. Bishop Jean Felix de Hemptinne, OSB, was appointed on 6 August 1910. This Bishop ran the church in the province from 1910-1958. In 1932, he was promoted to Apostolic Vicariate of Katanga. After Bishop de Hemptinne, Archbishop Jose Floriberto Cornelis, OSB, was appointed as Archbishop from 1959-1967. The Vatican appointed a black Archbishop of Katanga in Lubumbashi, namely Eugene.

Stanley documents that the Belgian King Leopold I needed different active persons to run his project of a Congo Free State (1885-1908). The Roman Catholic Church was cautiously invited for multiple reasons. They were a political ally, and they could see to the socialization, education and moralization of the indigenous people of the Congo. Initially the missions in Kolwezi were small private endeavours of different catholic congregations.

From 1905-1925, the Belgians used the Mpala Mission for slave trade. Mpala was a first Catholic mission with the assignment to buy slaves and to house them until they could be sent to Bunkeya or to Dilolo, Bengwela. The mission had a bad reputation and never grew at all. Thousands of people were sold as slaves, which is a misrepresentation of Christianity (Coupland, 1939b:123; Morel, 1905:50-52).

The opening of a mine in Kolwezi obliged the Belgians to build a chapel for Catholics at Ruwe or Mutoshi Township to moralize the workers in 1938. Another church was built from Belgian funds at Kanzenze in 1940, and with it was erected a schooling programme to educate the people. In the same year other mines were opened at Musonoi, Kapata, and Luilu. The education programme started in 1940 and lasted until 1958. With this, the Vatican headquarters become involved in Christianizing the population of Kolwezi (de Hemptinne's report on the Katanga. The positive contribution of the Roman Catholic Church in Katanga and Kolwezi is the on education and socialization. The majority of schools were still Catholic by 1960. Every mining camp had one or two churches, all Catholic because of a strong partnership between the state and Catholic Church (Burton, W.F.P. 1927). However, the negative side was that according to oral tradition, priests reported confessions to the police and this resulted in arrests of people involved in any actions against the state. In this way the RCC lost credibility in the eyes of the people.

2.7 The Brethren Mission in M'siri's Kingdom

After M'siri conquered Katanga, he offered a place to private missionaries from the Brethren Mission in Ireland to Christianize the tribes under his control in 1880s. These missionaries worked privately in cooperation with M'siri. By 1886, the Brethren Mission was implanted in various places where M’siri had control, such as Bunkeya, Lwanza Mulongo, Lubi, Kilwa, Kasaji, Kisenge and Dilolo.

The Brethren missionaries assisted M'siri’s attempts to occupy the land with the aid of firearms, trade, and copper. They also bought slaves for him and fed them for him until the
time of their departure to their destination (Burton, 1933). The Brethren Mission faced cross-cultural obstacles such as language, culture, the social status of the friends of M’siri, a cruel man, and political challenges (Hesselgrave, 1983). They were forced to learn the language and to adapt the culture by trading clothes, medicines, sugar, salt with local food, jobs, agriculture, building houses and chapels. Missionaries also bought and traded in gold and ivory to sustain themselves (Burton, 1967).

Christianity could not grow in these conditions. The human heart is closed to grace when it knows the end is to be sold as slave to Arabs or the Portuguese. Many people pretended to be Christian to please the Chief and out of fear of being beaten or killed. This may be one of the reasons why Africans did not stop consulting ancestors, spirits and gods. It was like they were serving two masters (Matt 6:24).

After the death of M’siri in 1891, the Brethren Missions were neglected by the Belgian administration that killed M’siri. If there was any favour to grant the churches, the Brethren Mission received none, since they were considered allies to M’siri.

2.8 The Methodist Mission in Katanga and Kolwezi

The Methodist Mission first depended on Bishop John McKendree Springer (1873-1963). He was an American bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Methodist Church, elected in 1936 (Eltscher, 1991:286). He was notable as a pioneering missionary, instrumental in developing Methodism on the continent of Africa.

Springer was sent as a pastor and superintendent to the Old Umtali Industrial Mission in Rhodesia in 1901 until 1906. From there onwards he built a career in Africa, serving different dioceses and places (Kurewa, 1997).

In Kolwezi, the church grew and became a diocese with three districts of nine to ten local churches each. Compared to the Roman Catholic missions who had political power, the Methodist mission had a missionary motive as part of a calling to missionary pioneering in South Congo from 1910-1963. The missionaries worked under the General Board of Global Mission of the Methodist Church. They were funded to finalize projects in the Congo. The positive aspects of these missions is for instance the Church planting programme, education, literacy and alphabetization, Bible and theological schools in Mulungwishi, Likasi, and Kafakumba. The mission had a church building project as well. They provided accommodation for pastors and created medical infrastructure at different stations. They were not involved in slaves trading, but rather focused on education and socialization. Their weakest point is that
they neglected catechism, Sunday school and Bible study to strengthen the leaders and membership.

2.9 The Congo Evangelical Mission

This mission was the pioneering work of William F.P. Burton (1886-1971). William Burton was born in Liverpool in 1886 he came from a strong Christian background. Keith Malcomson portrays him as a pioneer of Pentecostalism in Africa and the world (Anon., 2014a; Atkinson, s.a).

During the time where C.T. Studd was planning to go to Congo, he suggested that William Burton go with him, but Burton refused because he had not yet witnessed that this was from the Lord. In May 1914, God spoke clearly in his heart, reports Whittaker (1983:157). He even knew the date on which he had to embark for Africa. He sailed for South Africa on the 5th of June. The following year, he was joined by Jimmy Salter. This work would eventually be called the Congo Evangelistic Mission.

Burton and his party arrived in Elisabethville in July 1915. They were interviewed on the nature of mission by the Belgian authorities for weeks before they received a work permit and land certificate to evangelize. The Belgian Administration favoured the Roman Catholic and restricted access for the Protestant churches to certain areas: Methodist were given the Lunda area, which comprises the southern region of Katanga, from Elisabethville to Kapanga and Dilolo, including Likasi, Kambove, and Kolwezi. The Luba Land was given to Mr. Burton (1908-1960). Burton (1961:55-75; 165-167) reported how God escorted them in dangerous situations. They faced sickness, malaria, fever, mosquitos, wild animals and sorcerers in the Luba land (Burton, 1970; Whittaker, 1984). They lost some missionaries to malaria and yellow fever. They established their headquarters in Mwanza, which is situated in the heart of the Luba region.

From 1918, Burton started the outreach to villages. In eighteen years, they reached about 1000 villages and established stations along the Lualaba River, including Kabenga, Kinkondja, Ngoimani, and even Kipusha and Katompe (Burton, 1967:97). From 1916-1926 they opened stations such as Kabondo-Dianda, Kisanga and Mulongo. They differ from other missions in that the missionary waited for the right time as signalled by God to move forward. They respected the legal procedures to get work permits and land certificates. They maintained good relationships with the Brethren and Methodists as brothers in Christ (Burton, 1967:97). They opened Bible schools for church leaders, a professional school for women, a hospital and a fishery as well.
The negative side was the lack of Sunday school, Bible study, the order of church service and exercise of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Their emphasis on charismatic aspects sometimes created confusion as believers could not see the difference between a witch and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Liturgical and hermeneutical aspect received too little attention.

2.10 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter documented the colonization of Kolwezi and traced how Christianity attempted to find its path among African tribes and religions. The different traditions that engaged in mission work in the Congo had different levels of success and different impacts. The next chapter explores how the political and religious events after 1960 mixed with what is discussed in this chapter to create the perfect conditions for the entrance of cults.
CHAPTER THREE: KOLWEZI AFTER 1960: POLITICAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY AND CHURCH LIFE AFTER INDEPENDENCE

3.1 Introduction: The Dawn of Independence

After the Congo was granted its independence in June 1960, Katanga became an autonomous province. On July 11th, Katanga broke away from the new Congolese government of Patrice Lumumba, declaring its independence under Moise Tshombe, leader of the local Conakat party. Despite this, the Katanga government did not enjoy support throughout the province, especially in the North of the Baluba areas (Anon, 2012).

Only two weeks after independence, the country was thrown into crisis (1960-1963). During this crisis, violence, murder, hatred and total chaos prevailed in the province of Katanga and people turned to fetishism, sorcerers, spirits, and ancestors worship for protection and power (Kabemba, 2005; Wikipedia, 2010). The church suffered more than other group in society for many reasons. For one, the missionaries did not prepare left in a hurry when the country forced by the Belgian army to cross the Congo River, so they did not prepare successors. The newly appointed church leaders were uneducated and immature for leading the flock. What is more, the environment was unable to allow a church to breathe normally.

Early on 27th January 1960, Belgians and Congolese politicians, meeting at a specially convened round table conference, decided that democratic institutions should be established in the Congo and that the country should become independent on 30 June (Hoskyns, 1965:1). Hoskyns portrays the situation saying by saying: “The decision to grant immediate independence meant that within six months national and provincial elections had to be held for the first time, an assembly and a senate set up from nothing, and a wholly African government chosen among politicians who, through no fault of their own, had no experience of the top levels of either government or administration” (Hoskyns, 1965:1). The relationship between the Belgians and Congolese became difficult very quickly. From 1957 to 1960, there was a significant shift in political parties in the Congo. Several parties were founded, but two major parties among them were the Abako (Association of Bakongo) and Conakat (Confederation of natives of Katanga). Both of them were at January 1960, Belgians and Congolese politicians, meeting at a specially convened round table conference, decided that democratic institutions should be established in the Congo and that other parties were against federalism. One of these were the MNC. (Movement National of Congo). It was a national consciousness that wanted to rise above tribal or regional interest. This party was founded in 1958 in Leopoldville by a group of young educated Congolese who came from a variety of
tribes and regions. The president was Patrice Lumumba and the vice-president was Cyrille Adula. This party was opposed to Abako, who wanted a federal state of Bakongo (Hoskyns, 1965:27). The Balubakat was opposed to the Conakat. The Balubakat was in alliance with the Chokwe, while Minungu was in alliance with Lumumba (Hoskyns, 1965:27). The Balubakat in general were divided into two groups: one group was positive to Moise Tshombe, and the leader was Emanuel Ndaye. The other group was very influential and hostile to Moise Tshombe and federalism. This group was attached to Patrice Lumumba and its leader was Jason Sendwe (Gerard-Libois, 1966:25, 27, 234).

Tribal tensions among the different ethnic groups living in the Katanga province were rife. There had been tension between the Baluba and Lunda for leadership for centuries. Another tension was between the Baluba Katanga and the Baluba Kasai (Verstratel, 1964:45). In colonial times when the expeditions from Belgium needed workers, they did not look at the province of Katanga as the natives resisted their entry into the region. They went into Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Rhodesia and the Kasai province to find a cheaper working market (Gerard-Libois, 1966:30-45). The Belgian administration collaborated more with foreigners and Kasaiens as allies and that created frustration and hatred among the natives of Katanga (Hoskyns, 1965:22-26).

Hoskyns (1965:8-14) in his work also focuses on the Belgian attitude towards the Congolese. According to Hoskyn, Belgians policy had been based initially on the assumption that Belgium would be able to supervise the entire transformation of the Congo from a backward and underdeveloped country dependent on the colonial power to a fully industrialized modern state capable of running its own affairs. Many Europeans could not envisage a time when final responsibility for the Congo would be out of Belgian hands. To the Belgians the idea of handing over a show of power to an African minister while the real work was done by a European permanent secretary was abhorrent; they intended that the Africans should take responsibility slowly and gradually from the bottom up and that in the meantime the top position in all sections of society should be filled by expatriate Belgians. They regarded themselves as holding the Congo in trust for the Africans, and at no time did they consider giving the power to settlers as the British (Morel, 1920 :45-50; Van Bilsen; 1965:50).

This position is supported also by Calder when he said that “The Belgian Congo was created by two men, neither of them Belgian. Leopold was a German by origin and Sir Henry Morton Stanley was a Welshman by birth. Everyone knows about Stanley. He was a Welsh workhouse boy whose real name was John Rowlands.” Calder (1961:11-14) emphasizes that Leopold II was second cousin to Queen Victoria. He ascended the throne of Belgium in 1865 and was by all standards, personally and politically, a rotten King. He wanted to build an empire for
himself and he saw his opportunity in Africa. He “scoped” the other governments who were in the process of dividing up Africa by sending an emissary to waylay Stanley when he arrived in Marseille from his Congo exploration in 1878. He hired Stanley to go back to the Congo as a private empire builder. Leopold himself never set foot in Africa.

On 4 January, nine days before the announcement was due, violent riots took place in Leopoldville. According to Hoskyns, African crowds ran wild, looting, burning and attacking Europeans. The Force Publique, Leopold’s militia, was called out and the riot was put down with considerable savagery. Many people died and that event was deplored worldwide. Many countries in the west urged Brussels to grant independence to the Congo. It was an “unprepared and unwilled independence” (Hoskyn, C. 1965:10). The Congolese people’s main reason for asking independence was frustration with the injustice towards Congolese. Hoskyns quoted Patrice Lumumba writing as early as 1956 (Lumumba, 1956; 1962:162) while still a postal clerk, stating: “equality in the labour market is ‘demand number one of the educated Congolese.’” They were asked to know algebra, trigonometry, western philosophy and roman history to be a good African administrative officer. By 1960 these complaints had become universal and the fact that even after the riot no real changes had been made meant that the most sedate of African clerks sympathized with the politicians in their demands for independence.

Politically and culturally, independence solved nothing. All that changed is that natives took office, but economically the disaster encroached slowly but surely. Van Bilsen (1962:233) proposes that the independence of the Congo should have been realized around 1990. Maybe he knew about the hidden intentions of the Belgians. By 1960, only students with a first degree came out of universities. They were offered jobs at the highest level without any experience or market relations outside of the Congo. How could they run the country properly, politically, economically and socially? Patrice Lumumba should have asked his enemies to remain and to build the richest country in central Africa. O’Brien, a UN General Secretary Representative in Katanga province at that time, emphasizes the secret contact between Lumumba and N’krumah of Ghana and the use of Russian intelligence services (O’Brien, 1962:7-10) as his advisers. This arouse the suspicions of the USA and Belgium towards Lumumba.

3.2 The Crisis and Civil War in the Congo: 1960-1963

The crisis that overwhelmed the country from 1960-1963 was visible from the beginning of the story of how the Belgians implemented their strategy to manage the richest province. Gerard Libois asserts this view when he focuses on the recruitment of workers and public agents. Belgians collaborated more with people from abroad than natives of Katanga. This strategy
hampered the relationships with the Katangese leaders. Albert Kalonji (Luba Kasai) was the spokesman of these immigrants, and he was listened to much more than other Katangese leaders (Libois, 1966:80-88).

The Congolese crisis was multi-layered. In Katanga, there was a merciless conflict between two great leaders: Moise Tshombe of Conakat and Jason Sendwe of the alliance between the other parties. They had opposing ideas regarding the future of the country. Tshombe favoured a federalism to manage the country. Sendwe wanted a united Congo like Lumumba. According to Libois, even Tshombe, a Lunda by tribe, espoused the ideas of Leopold II to build a rich state in Katanga as a free state that can allow the development of the other provinces (Libois, 1966: 50-61). Tshombe had obviously some Belgian advisers who were opposed to the Belgians authorities settled in the capital city. The Belgians were also divided. One group supported Leopold’s view to have a Belgian empire in southern Congo. They worked for years for that and the industrialization of Katanga came too quickly for that purpose (Calder, 1961:11-18). However, the other group did not support the federalism of Tshombe, nor the idea to postpone the day of independence.

The Belgian advisers manipulated and armed Tshombe for a Katanga secession (1960-1963). They used some of Tshombe’s friends such as Godefroid Munongo, a grandson of M’siri and Jean Baptist Kibwe. Their party, Conakat, became allied with Ucol, (Union for Colonial Leaders), a party of Belgians who preferred to settle in Katanga. These Belgians guided Tshombe from a virtual government to a point where they could proclaim the independence of Katanga. Practically, on 11 July 1960, Katanga became an autonomous state. There was infrastructure available for this New State of Katanga, funded by the Union Miniere du Haut Katanga (UMHK), a powerful Belgian company who was ruling Katanga at that time. The only problem with the Katanga secession was that it did not have any support from the Luba group led by Jason Sendwe or from the central government, the Belgian authorities or the Parliament in Brussels (O’Brien, 1962:132). Morel’s (1905) report served in parliament in 1961 to enlighten the situation in the Congo about the agenda of the Belgian. The Parliament saw the hidden hand of Belgians behind Moise Tshombe.

In Leopoldville (Kinshasa) a different layer of the crisis stemmed from the tension between Kasavubu, the president, and his prime minister, Patrice Lumumba. The two personalities had different views on the governance of the Congo. Joseph Kasavubu, a native of the Kongo tribe, was a federalist and believed in the federal Congo, which would mean that each province should benefit from its own resources (Calder, 1961:20-28). Patrice Lumumba, a native of Kasai and the Batetela tribe, was skilful and a good communicator. He was a mass leader and his view was for the united Congo. He wanted independence immediately. From 1956
onwards, he wrote books on the Congo and expressed his positions against to Kasavubu’s and Tshombe’s political views, which were federalist and secessioneer (Chome, 1960:174; Chome, 1961:79). On the day of independence, Lumumba unexpected gave a speech that attacked the Belgians without modesty and diplomacy. Later on the Belgians and their allies met to analyse Lumumba’s speech and to make decisions.

According to O’Brien, the secret Belgian plan was to eliminate Lumumba as opposition once they found out through Mobutu that he was a communist agent in the Congo. Lumumba promised to give the Congo to Russia for social progress (O’Brien, 1962:95: Libois, G. 1966:277-88). When Lumumba did appeal to Russia instead of the USA, he signed his death. Because of the Cold War between USA and Russia, Lumumba was never forgiven and tolerated at all. Because of Lumumba’s popularity, he was transferred out of Leopoldville to Elisabethville. Colonel Mobut was sent to meet Tshombe in December of 1959 and after the speech of independence to arrange for Lumumba’s transfer to Elisabethville. The other reason was to stop secession of Katanga after the death of Lumumba (Hoskyns, 1965:214-217).

In the Belgian scenario because of continued disagreement between Kasavubu and Lumumba, and Tshombe, they have come to choose colonel Mobutu who was already in relation with the CIA, to lead the country temporally by delegation of power. Davister (1960:300-310) portrayed the crisis in the Congo “Enjeux du Monde” in French that means the Congolese crisis was not Congolese but worldly concern or an international crisis where the two super power were in conflict because of the minerals found in the Congo Belgian. That is the reason why the country will never be calm. It is like a big cake for world market.

### 3.3 Church Life During the Crisis (1960-1963)

In the Congo the dominating religion is Christianity, with the Roman Catholic Church being the largest group with 35 million adherents out of about 70 million inhabitants (2013 statistics), which brings the statistic to about 57%. Calder (1961:17) calls the Roman Catholic Church the second force in the Belgian Congo (1908-1960). O’Brien said in his lecture on the Roman Catholic Church missionaries that: “‘Paternalism’ is the name generally given to the sort of phenomenon we had noticed among the missionaries. I am not sure that the word is not, in most cases, too favourable; affection and a sense of kind ship, two important elements in a really paternal attitude, were both lacking, as far as I could see, in Belgian feeling towards the Congolese” (O’Brien, 1962:172).

If the attitude of the Belgian administration, industrialists and missionaries had been generally paternal in the positive sense of the word, like that of some British administrators in some
other parts of Africa had been, there would have been much to be said for it. A good parent, after all, wants his children to grow up. He does not want to stunt their intellectual growth, he encourages them to take on responsibility progressively, he steps aside, and stays aside, as soon as he reasonably can. There is a little evidence that Belgians in the Congo were paternalists in this good sense.

According to O’Brien, before Belgian rule had been established in the Congo, Christian missionaries had lived unmolested at the court of the terrible M'siri. Seventy years after the destruction of M'siri’s empire by the companies of Katanga, Christian missionaries could not survive in most of Katanga without the protection of European gunmen (Crawford, cited by O’Brien, 1962:174). But, Burton (1961:174-180), speaking on the Church’s life during the civil war, said: “No missionary prevented such situation of generalized crisis. Missionaries were forced by Belgian soldiers to leave all things, home, properties, churches, by whether road and sea to the neighbour country. Many crossed the Congo River to Brazzaville in1960, July-September; other missionaries crossed the lake Moeru and Kasumbalesa boarder to Rhodesia, South Africa.” The churches were thrown into chaos because the newly appointed leaders were unprepared and immature persons. They lacked Biblical training and experience and they failed to manage the people.

In Katanga at Elisabethville, Jadotville, and Kolwezi, there was tribal conflict between rival groups: Conakat against the Atcar alliance. That means a conflict between the Lunda and the Luba, Chokwe and Kasaiens. The members of the alliance were deported to camps or back to their villages. The Conakat was the ruling party during the Katanga secession of 1960-1963. This sometimes created a situation where there would be a Luba pastor leading a church with a majority of Lunda. How could he manage and solve conflict?

### 3.4 The Roman Catholic Church During the Crisis

The impact of the Catholic Church in the DRC is difficult to overestimate. Malula (1970:20) has called it the country’s “only truly national institution apart from the state.” Besides involving over 40 per cent of the population of Congo in its religious service, its schools have educated over 60 per cent of the nation’s primary school students and more than 40 per cent of its secondary school students. The church owns and manages an extensive network of hospitals, schools and clinics, as well as many diocesan economic enterprises, including farms, ranches, stores and artisan shops (Wikipedia, s.a.).

This result was only possible due to the total support of Belgian administration of king Leopold II through his Bishop Jean Felix de Hemptinne (1905-1959). The church was so involved with
colonialism that it could be counted a second force in the Congo. The first cardinal, Joseph Albert Malula (Archdiocese of Kinshasa) said: "For our people, the church was the state, and the state was the church" (Malula, 1970:40, 60).

3.5 Mobutu’s Regime

Before Mobutu has been recognized President, he was first the secretary to Prime Minister Patrice Emery Lumumba. During a political crisis between the President Kasa Vubu and his Prime Minister Lumumba after the proclamation of independence, the country went through a turbulent time from 1960-1963. The crisis divided the country into two groups, the Federalists and the Unitarians. Unfortunately, this developed into a civil war and the Katanga province proclaimed its independence the same year, 11th July 1960 up to 1963 (O’Brien, 1961; 1962). The international community used Colonel Mobutu to manipulate the civil war and in 1965 he took the presidency after a coup to lead the country between 1965 and 1997. His regime resembled the Belgians in that it was very authoritative, dictatorial and very corrupt. Since he lacked governing skills, he led the country unto extreme poverty and need for change (Gerard-Libois, 1965; Kisangani and Bobb, 2010).

3.6 The Roman Catholic Church During Mobutu’s Regime (1965-1997)

After the crisis the Catholic Church distanced itself from the state. One Roman Catholic Church (RCC) source comments the church’s reversal of its role in relation to the state since independence has been striking. The state became most critical of the Roman Catholic Church. Conflict erupted in 1971 when the state centralized and extended its authority, nationalized the country’s universities, including the Catholic Church’s Lovanium outside of Kinshasa (Kisangani and Bobb, 2010). The state attempted to implant the official party’s youth movement, the Youth of the Popular Revolutionary Movement (in French Jeunesse du Mouvement Populaire de la Revolution) in Catholic seminaries, and this was strongly resisted.

In 1972 the conflict intensified when all Zairians were ordered to drop their Christian baptismal names and to adopt African ones as part of the “Authenticity campaign.” For instance, the president’s Christian name was Joseph Desiré Mobutu, but it became Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu Wa Za Banga (Mobutu Sese Seko for short), which means “Mobutu the eternal” (Kisangani and Bobb, 2010). Cardinal Malula protested the decision and told his bishops to ignore it. The regime retaliated by forcing the cardinal out exile for three months
and by seizing his residence and converting it into a JMPR headquarter. In addition, the state banned all religious publications and youth groups (Wikipedia, 2014; Wikipedia. Fact book).

Following a brief thaw in 1973 and early 1974 during which the cardinal was permitted to return from exile, relations between the church and the state continued to deteriorate. The state declared that Christmas would no longer be a Zairean holiday, banned religious instructions from the schools, and ordered that all crucifixes and pictures of the Pope be removed from, schools, hospitals and public buildings. The removed items were replaced by pictures of the President Mobutu. The president was characterized by the regime as a Messiah and the state took over direct control of the nation’s schools. A course in Mobutism supplanted courses in religious instruction. Students in the former church schools found themselves participating in daily rallies led by JMPR members during which they were obliged to chant “Mobutu awa, Mobutu kuna, Mobutu partout” (Mobutu here, Mobutu there, Mobutu everywhere). The chant of Mobutu replaced a daily devotion and the Lord’s Prayer (Matt 6:9-14). Tensions remained high throughout the 1980s and into 1990s. The Bishop’s letter of June 1981 for example, addressed to President Mobutu, castigated the regime for corruption, brutality, mismanagement and lack of respect for human dignity (Bishop Daniel N’Landu Mayi).

3.7 The Protestant Church and Kimbanguism During Mobutu’s Regime

In the Protestant Church and among the Kimbanguists, the leaders chose a non-violent reaction, which was seen as very passive in the sense that they submitted literally to all the state’s instructions. The JMPR was found everywhere in the Protestant Church’s schools and universities. The Protestant Church’s national council, called “Church for Christ in Zaire” (E.C.Z.) was presided over by Bishop Bokeleale, who was not critical of President Mobutu, and who enjoyed the president’s support much more than the Roman Catholic Church. He was probably a native of Equatorial Province, just like Mobutu. As part of his mandate, he facilitated the relationship with the state. The corruption of the state infected the Protestant Church. Nevertheless, in Kolwezi, on 20th October, after a sermon by Pastor Mufika as a senior pastor of the Methodist Church of Manika, Kolwezi, he castigated the government in Zaire for corruption and blamed their love of money for the suffering of the people. He was arrested because of the truth and detained at the Centre National Recherche and Intelligence (CNRI), for a month. During such detention the person is not allowed any contacts with the public or his family (Mufika, 2001).

The Kimbanguist Church supported the authenticity programme openly as a positive response of the state to the doctrine of Simon Kimbangu, considered by many to be the Black Messiah (Encyclopedia of Africa, 2010:757-764). The state promoted the Kimbanguism as a national
church compared other Christian churches who they viewed as Western, importing a foreign God.

3.8 The Tribal Conflict (March 1993-1994) in Kolwezi

In 1990, when the Cold War between the USA and Russia ended, there was no reason to fight communism in Central Africa anymore and Mobutu became useless. When the USA stopped supporting Mobutu’s regime, they asked him to open the country up to multipartyism, but he did not take this well. He promised chaos in Zaire (Encyclopedia Britanica, 2013). The chaos erupted from the state house to the provinces. The opposition requested an overall reformation for the whole country through a National Sovereign Conference. In 1992, when Etienne Tshisekedi, a native of Kasai, leader of the opposition, was elected in the National Sovereign Conference as Prime Minister to lead the government, Mobutu was opposed to it. He canvassed a criminal plan to destabilize Katanga. He did that to create a chaos in the political cosmos of Zaire. The president divided the opposition by nominating Mr. Jean Nguz a Karl Ibond, a Lunda from Katanga, as the new Prime Minister. He also nominated Mr. Gabriel Kyungu wa Kumwanza, a Luba from Katanga, as the Governor of Katanga Province. The president did this merely to separate and oppose Mr. Tshisekedi and Mr. Nguz a Karl Ibond. The result was conflict between the tribes of Katanga and Kasai to prevent them from opposing the Mobutu regime.

Human Rights Watch (Wikipedia, 2010) reported on the hatred incited against Kasaiens in Shaba. In two phases, the Katangese Leaders expelled more than 100 000 Kasaiens from the towns of Likasi and Kolwezi and the surrounding villages. They practiced different methods during Phase I, such suppression of free speech, repression of political opposition, trade embargo with the Kasai province. However, in the second phase, they embarked on an ethnic cleansing of Likasi and Kolwezi. The cleansing of Kolwezi was criminal. About 50 000 Kasaiens were gathered in camps around the railway station, waiting for trains to be repatriated back to the Kasai province. They were removed while at work, from homes, and were left without their property. Because of an individual hatred, a conflict between Mobutu and Tshisekedi, a community had come to suffer.

Mobutu and Kasavubu were fervent catholic believers. Lumumba, Sendwe and Moise Tshombe were fervent Methodists. Mobutu grew up under Belgian care and was trained in Brussels as a journalist, but he denied his Christian beliefs completely for a while and turned unto occultism and Oriental magic power at a secret lodge called “Prima Curiae” (Encyclopedia Britanica 2001). If Mobutu was discipled, all the country could have benefited from Christianity and spiritual income. Church life in Congo before and after independence
lacked discipleship in their programmes of Christian education and lacked a Christian leadership foundation and its reliability in a daily life. The nation was involved in corruption, immorality and mismanagement (Sakombi, 2001:36-38).

3.9 The Rise of Kabila’s Regime (1997-2014)

Kisangani and Bobb (2010:XI) related the genesis of Kabila’s regime as follows: “On 6th October 1996, the Governor of Sud Kivu asked all the Banyamulenge to leave in accordance with the 1995 parliamentary resolution. The Banyamulenge refused to leave and turned to the Rwandan Tutsi-dominated government for help.” The Rwandan soldiers and Banyamulenge began attacking Mobutu’s army in October 1996, and several anti-Mobutu also joined the Banyamulenge-led rebellion through the creation of the Alliances des Forces Democratiques pour la Liberation du Congo (AFDL). This group’s spokesman became Laurent Desire Kabila (Kisangani and Bobb, 2010).

However, the AFDL continued to advance, encouraged by the weakness of Mobutu’s army and the vacuum of political leadership in Kinshasa. Its troops were supported by soldiers from Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi, and subsequently by Angola, Mai-Mai militias and the Katanga Tigers (including former Katanga gendarmes and Lunda refugees) who had been behind the Shaba incursions in the 1970s (Kisangani and Bobb, 2010: LXXIII). Mobutu and his entourage left Kinshasa on 16 May 1997 for Togo (and subsequently Morocco). AFDL forces entered the capital the following day. Kabila sworn in as president on 29 May 1997. He announced that a referendum would be held in 1998 on a new constitution, leading to national election in 1999. He also changed the name of the country back to the DRC (Luluabourg Constitution, 1964). The national anthem and flag of 1964 were also restored and it became clear that Kabila intended to remove symbols of the Mobutu government, which many viewed as illegal (Kisangani and Bobb, 2010: LXXIX).

3.10 Leadership Crisis with Allies and Partners

It soon became clear that in the AFDL everyone had his own vision and this was counterproductive and split the leadership. In the same vein, Kisangani and Bobb describe different tensions and crises between Kabila and his allies: “Soon after Laurent Kabila became president of the DRC, the UN, Humanitarian Rights Organization, and foreign news agencies accused his troops of the massacre of more than 200 000 Hutu refugees. The Human Rights Organization charged that Tutsi soldiers of the Rwandan army, which had backed the AFDL,
committed atrocities. Kabila was also under pressure in Kinshasa. He had excluded Tshisekedi and most opposition politicians in Kinshasa from his government.”

Another tension soon arose between different supporters in his government, including the Tutsis from the east, the former Katanga Tigers and the Ugandan and Rwandan soldiers who had major roles in the AFDL’s military success. The Mai-Mai groups who had helped Kabila during the anti-Mobutu revolt, confronted the Banyamulenge battalion and other militiamen on 7 September 1997 in Kivu. The Mai-Mai accused Kabila of selling Kivu to Rwanda. Meanwhile, the Rwandan government blamed Kabila for not providing security in eastern Congo (Kisangani and Bobb, 2010). President Laurent Kabila decided to end his military relations with Rwanda and Uganda by ordering all foreign troops to leave. The Banyamulenge in Kinshasa saw this as a move against them and they quickly left the capital city. This ended the military cooperation that led to Mobutu’s fall.

3.11 The East War 1998-2003

On 2 August 1998, a second war of the Congo was launched by Congolese Tutsi, former Mobutu officials, and disgruntled Kabila supporters with the support of the Rwandan army. They quickly formed the Rassemblement Congolais pour la Democratie (RCD) with headquarters in Goma, to pressure Kabila to broaden his government, which they accused of corruption and nepotism. Within days, the RCD’s forces took Goma, Bukavu and Kisangani backed by Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi. As the intention was to change the national leadership, they took Moanda on 7 August and Matadi a few days later. As the rebels advanced on Kinshasa, Kabila sought to marshal support from his friends in Southern Africa. On 19 August, Namibia and Zimbabwe pledged to assist Kabila at a meeting of ministers of defence of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) which the DRC joined in September 1997. On 29 August, the Congolese troops were backed by troops from Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia. They drove the rebels out and retook Western Congo and Central or Lower Congo (Kisangani and Bobb, 2010: LXXXI).

With the war in the Eastern parts of the Congo, the cycle of violence and despoliation wore on. Most Congolese remained preoccupied with surviving in a country where the formal economic infrastructure had collapsed, the currency was not trusted, and politicians were viewed with considerable disdain. The main feeling among the Congolese was despair about ever ridding their country of the mentality of “authoritarianism” and plunder that had existed in various forms since the days of King Leopold II.
As the conflict turned into civil war and the war became “internationalized”, almost six countries were involved officially. One of many reports on the “East War in the Congo” reported as follows: “In April 2002, the Government agreed to a power sharing arrangement with Ugandan-supported rebels and signed a peace accord with Rwanda and Uganda. More than 2.5 million people are estimated to have died in the Congo’s complex four years’ civil war, which involved seven foreign armies and numerous rebel groups that often fought among themselves” https://www.state.gov Date of access:09/04/2014. The same source reported further as follows: “By the end of 2004 the death toll from the conflict had reached 3.8 million, but despite instability, political progress continued. On July 30, 2006, the first democratic election in the country since 1970s took place. Joseph Kabila was declared winner in the October run-off election, winning 50% of the vote”. In August 2007, a rebel general, Laurent Nkunda, led a battle between his militia, made up of his fellow Tutsi, and the Congolese army. The fighting continued throughout the year, taking hundreds of thousands of people from their homes in eastern Congo and threatening to spiral the already fragile country back into civil war. Many of them crossed the border looking a safe place to live and they are often found in South Africa as refugees. Nkunda claimed that he was protecting the Tutsi community from the extremist Rwandan Hutus.

Another report of Europe World (Wikipedia, 2012b:1363-1369; Turner, 2014) on the DRC affirmed that even though Kabila was re-elected in an election marred by violence in 2011 November 11; tension still persisted throughout his leadership. In March 2012, Prime Minister Adolph Muzito resigned. His resignation came a little over three months after violent presidential elections. Then, a deputy prime minister was appointed, Louis Koyagialo, to temporarily replace Muzito. On April 18, 2012, former minister of finance Augustin Matata Ponyo was named Prime Minister. In the Spring of 2012, the former rebels who had been integrated into the army in 2009 mutinied, claiming that the corrupt government had reneged on terms of the cease fire that was signed on 23 March 2009. The rebels called M23, the movement that was led by General Bosco Ntanganda, a Tutsi who wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC). The M23 fought the government troops throughout the year, taking over the city of Goma in November 2012.

The same source continues to say that in March 2013, Bosco Ntanganda turned himself in to the American embassy in Kigali, Rwanda, and requested to be brought to the International Criminal Court (ICC). General Ntanganda was accused of crimes against humanity and war crimes, including rape, murder, sexual slavery and the conscription of child soldiers. Ntanganda had spent 20 years fighting in Rwanda and Congo, earning the nickname “Terminator” and a reputation as one of Africa’s most brutal warlords (Wikipedia, 2013b)
3.12 Church Life During Kabila’s regime

3.12.1 The Roman Catholic Church During Kabila’s Regime

In 1997, all the Churches that expected change welcomed the AFDL with Laurent Kabila. The Catholic Church even decided to play a key role in the new government by having a look through some ministers, fervent Catholic members. For instance, the first election after civil war in 2006 was led by a Catholic priest, Abbaye Apollinaire Malumalu, as president of Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). Abbey Malumalu is from the North of Kivu Diocese.

During the time (1998-2003) of the East War, churches in the Congo were often profaned. When a tension erupted, the believers would leave their homes and find refuge within church building. Rebels profaned churches by placing spies among the believers. Thousands of believers died in churches or suffered mutilation and other atrocities. Rebels and soldiers burnt churches in East Congo and even North Katanga. During the same period (1998-1999) of instability, violence and church profanation, three pastors were arrested in Lubumbashi in 1999 at Eglise Fleuve d’Eaux Vives, namely Albert Lukusa, Joseph Mpolondo and myself. There was a church conference for leaders and I gave a paper on Biblical advice for leaders from 1 Timothy 6:6-10, saying that a love of money causes suffering. The arrest of these pastors and I, reveals a lack of free speech in the regime of that time (Wikipedia, 1999; Mufika, 2001:36).

Tension erupted between Catholic leaders and the regime of Joseph Kabila. Archbishop Etsou criticized the regime’s corruption and neglect of human values. After his death, the new Archbishop Monsengwo Pasinya continued with the same line of criticism, suspicious of the governmental leadership in general, and in particular concerning the 2006 elections and the 2011 elections. The Roman Catholic Church regarded the opposition leader, Etienne Tshisekedi, as the winner of the elections, but the official press declared Joseph Kabila the winner (Kisangani and Bobb, 2010:XC). Meanwhile, in Katanga and Kolwezi, the top positions in the province, mayoral office and offices of burgomasters are filled with mostly Catholics. The Catholic Churches these days receive great support from the governor himself and from the rest of his government. Moise Katumbi is known as a fervent Catholic. In Kolwezi schools and churches are being rehabilitated by the mayor’s office, also a fervent Catholic member.

3.12.2 The Protestant Church During Kabila’s Regime

A blind love exists between the regime of Joseph Kabila and the national Board of Protestant Churches. The bishops preferred to serve the regime by participating actively at different levels of the nation as senators. The majority of them are senators. The difference between the
Protestant Church and the Catholics in this context is that the Protestants have never reproached the government, while the Catholics, though also active, engage in critical analysis and thinking beside the government. Many observers regard the Protestant Church as more passive and they are criticized by analysts as corrupted, loving money, glory, instead of evangelizing, making disciples or emphasizing Christian education. Because of the lack of knowledge of basic teachings, the churches are losing thousands of members every year as they join cults in the capital city, and particularly in city of Kolwezi. According to the JW’ website, this cult has shown significant growth since 2013 (WTBTS, 2013. Year Book).

3.12.3 The Cults: JW and Branhamism in Kolwezi

Since 1997 with the arrival of Laurent Kabila, there has been an increasing Asian presence in the country and in Kolwezi in particular. Many Indian groups were involved to develop businesses involving food, banks, informatics, while sectors such as mining, infrastructure, roads and various corporations were given to China. The mining sector is tossed around between South Africa, America, Australia and others (Wikipedia, 2014)

Wherever the Indians and Chinese worked, they opened places to worship their divinities. They set up temples wherever they went. The challenges became considerable when they asked their workers to work on Sunday, and to join their religion if they expect any favour from them. Christians working with Asians are living under constant pressure. If the Protestant Church continues to minimize this issue, the next decade will see a great decline of churches, like in Europe. The church in Kolwezi has serious challenges in the both the cults and the Oriental religious groups. This includes Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism and the African Religions dominated by Kimbanguism, which promotes syncretism (Nsuka, 2013:20).

These groups have had significant growth in Kolwezi. In 1985, the JW were estimated at 387 members and the Branhamites at 300 members. But in 2013 the JW estimated their membership at about 12 000 members and the Branhamites had a membership of 10 000 members.

Kabila’s regime allowed them to work freely as long as they do not criticize the regime, but only the Christian Church. They criticize Christian beliefs such the Trinity, the physical resurrection of Christ, the Apostles’ Creed and they try to predict the precise the end time. At this point, the Christian Church in Kolwezi should question why members are joining cults? What truth do the cults teach? It is also understandable that Christianization was slow and failed to penetrate, to eradicate animism and syncretism to arrive at a monotheism or God alone on the throne of lives in Kolwezi.
Chapter Conclusion

This chapter described the history of the Congo after independence, which had a great effect on the different ethnic groups and caused religious shifts. These events created the perfect conditions for the cults to get a foothold in the Congo. The next chapter provides a detailed description of the history and influence of the JW in the Congo.

Figure 3-1: Conflict Management in Katanga
Figure 3-2: Major leaders of the Katanga State 1960 – 1963
CHAPTER FOUR: THE HISTORY OF THE JW AND THEIR INFLUENCE IN KOLWEZI (DRC)

4.1 Introduction

The doctrinal influence of the JW in Kolwezi has led to many different Pentecostal and Charismatic congregations and independent churches adopting the belief. The doctrine is delivered by means of preaching, declarations, and prayers. Thorough research is needed to understand its influence. This chapter aims to provide and in-depth examination of the history, doctrine, growth and influence of the JW in Kolwezi.

Figure 4-1: Presidents of the JW

4.2 Charles Taze Russell and the Beginnings of the JW

According to many historians, the organization now known as the JW originated in America in 1869-1870. It started off as a Bible Student Movement under Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916). Russell was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, on 16 February 1852 and was one of five children (ZWTR, 1905b:2). His father owned a chain of haberdashery shops in which he later became a partner. The Russell family was active members in their local Presbyterian church, including Charles himself, for he was a strong believer. He reports in his own testimony that he liked to haul up Bible verses that warn people about the punishment awaiting the unfaithful. He did not agree with some of the major doctrines of the church, such as the punishment of hell, the Trinity and the nature of Christ (Bowman, 1995:9-12).

4.2.1 The influence of the Presbyterian Church on Russell While Growing Up

De Bruyn (1976:1) explains that Russell experienced his parents’ faith as too cruel for him, especially the teaching of “hell”, which he found repugnant. De Bruyn continues that “it is of great importance that Russell confessed that he had a probing spirit and became a prey of the logic of unbelief when he started to reason for himself” (De Bruyn, 1976:1). The organization
and structure of the JWs looks similar to the Presbyterian Church. For instance, the governing board is not different to the consistory and directory committee in the Presbyterian world. In addition, the moral codes and customs related to smoking and drinking are similar.

4.2.2 Russell the Rebel

Russell rejected the “hell’s doctrine” that Jesus Christ teaches in the New Testament (Luke 16:9-11). During the period of 1868-1870, Russell lost his trust in the Bible because he could not believe in a God who loved his creatures, but then punish them eternally through fire. Therefore, Russell sought help to solve this “hell’s matter”, as Bowman (1995:12-14; ZWTR, 1881) calls it, in his Adventist period from 1869-1878. He was looking for another explanation on God’s punishment, a judgement other than hell, because hell does not explain the love of God in Russell’s understanding (WTBTS, 1985:168-175).

4.2.3 Russell's Loss of Faith

After Russell left the Presbyterian Church, it seems that his main concern was to find out if there is other explanation for life after death, eternal life. He looked for any alternative explanation through sources such as Walter Martin’s work, which later gave rise to the New Age movement. He also went searching in philosophy, but nothing satisfied his needs. Some sources claim that Russell attended a freemason’s lodge led by his former Presbyterian pastor (Bowman, 1989:80-85). The claim is that he went away from this with a pantheistic teaching that “it is not only the Bible that can respond to the eternity of humankind, but also other sacred books such as the Quran, Mormon’s Bible, and many others” (Salza, 2006:44). Therefore, Russell became sceptical about God and the Scriptures from 1868-1870. Then, when he attended a John Wendell sermon, Russell recovered his faith in the Bible (Bowman 1995, Harris, 1998). Nevertheless, the teaching he received from John Wendell, even from Barbour and Storrs, both Adventist ministers, seemed to be universalist and pantheistic.

4.2.4 Russell’s Contact with Freemasonry

Salza (2006:21) provides a brief history of Freemasonry. According to him, legend traces Freemasonry back to the builders of King Solomon’s temple, but most masons themselves do not believe there is an actual historical connection (Salza, 2006:21). He states that “other historians think Freemasonry rose out of the ancient pagan mystery religions.” A tenable case can be made “that masonry’s ties to the ancient mystery religions were preserved through the movements of Cabbalism, Gnosticism, the Knights Templar, the Rosicrucian’s, and the Illuminati” (Salza, 2006:21).
The Freemasons (hereafter abbreviated as FM) believe in a pantheistic god, for example they view Jesus as "no more than a particular, finite, historical figure, who reveals the divine, not in an exclusive way complementary with other revelatory and salvific figure" (Salza, 2006:44). They equate Jesus with other leaders such as Confucius, Buddha, Muhammad and Moses as great teachers of humanity (Salza, 2006:44).

There was a FM group that used the premises next to Russell’s father’s shop. Some Presbyterians, including the young Russell, attended the FM temple. The leader was James Anderson, a former Presbyterian minister and creator of the modern Freemasonry in the USA. It may be that Russell received his initiation into Freemasonry during these sessions. In an interview with the *Jamestown Evening Journal* (6 Aug 1910), Russell declared: “After I rejected Christianity, I worshipped ‘an Unknown God’ who made all flesh and myself, and my mind has found rest, total rest.”

In the *Watchtower* of 15 June 1895, Russell answered a certain letter by maintaining his position on FM: “From our judgment, the secret society is very beneficial or profitable in knowledge. They don’t have something contrary or against human being needs. The customs and rites within secret society are only children games like.”

After his visit to Egypt to search for pyramids, Russell came to compare the messiah of the Jews of Israel to the great masonic master, called Hiram Abiff (Watchtower, 1905b). For Russell, this great master could be connected to the archangel Michael, or Melchizedek the Priest-King, and finally Jesus, a created man, “a god” (Son of Man, and Son of God).

### 4.2.5 The Genesis of the Doctrines that Became the JW

Russell seems to have been a self-learned scholar of the Bible, because there is no evidence of a higher education *per se*. He worked out his own mixture of doctrine from the influences he came across while searching for an answer to the question of God’s judgement and hell. His belief system is a hodgepodge of the doctrines of religious groups such as the Adventists, Freemasons, New Age and remnants of Presbyterian Christianity (Harris, 1998:30-40).

### 4.2.6 The Influence of the Adventists

Adventists adhere to an Arian doctrine that holds that Jesus is a creature and not the Almighty God. This caused Russell to reject the Trinity (Russell, 1891). Only God should be worshipped, not Jesus, nor the Holy Spirit, which is merely a divine force (WTBTS, 1985a). Another thing Russell adopted from Adventists is the prophetic way to calculate the end time and the second coming of Christ. However, he merged this with a universalist and pantheistic view of things.
that he developed while he frequented the Freemasons. There he learned to call the person of God by “G”, Great Mason, God, or Great Master. From Christianity he retained the idea of the watch tower from the book of Ezekiel (33, 34, 37). Based on this conglomerate, Russell compiled a mixture of pantheistic beliefs.

Russell took from the Adventist especially teachings on the last days. Though it is not directly related to our subject, it will be helpful to examine this shortly for a better understanding of the JW. The Seventh-day Adventist church is the largest of several Adventist groups that arose from the Millerites movement of the 1840s in upstate New York. They are called Millerites because of John Miller, who predicted on the basis of Daniel 8:14-16 and the “day–year principle” that Jesus Christ would return to Earth between the spring of 1843 and the spring of 1844. In the summer of 1844, according to certain sources, Millerites (believers in Miller’s prediction and doctrine) came to believe that Jesus would return on October 22, 1844, understanding that day to be the Biblical Day of Atonement for that year. What happened then? The prediction did not happen and most of his followers disbanded and returned to their original churches. Between 1849 and 1869, sabbatarianism developed within the group. They came together as a small group of people who came from many churches and whose means of connection and interaction was James White’s periodical The Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald. They embraced the doctrines of Sabbath, the heavenly sanctuary interpretation of Daniel 8:44, conditional immortality, and the expectation of Christ’s premillennial return. The famous group was led by Joseph Bates, the preacher of the Sabbath’s doctrine as a day required by God to worship him; James White and Ellen G. White. Later Ellen G. White (2014) came to occupy a particular and central role because of her many visions and spiritual leadership which convinced her fellow Adventist that she possessed a gift of prophecy. Before Ellen G. White joined the movement, the Adventists did a synopsis of their faith in the 1870’s. They experienced challenges to formulate their core beliefs and doctrines, especially as number of early Adventists came from churches that held to some form of Arianism. ‘Sabbatarianism’ refers to the insertion of Arian doctrine into their belief (White, 2014).

The Adventists at that time rejected the doctrine of the eternal punishment. They taught that hell was really just another term for grave, and that death means the annihilation of the person. Also, the Adventists in Russell’s day denied the Christian doctrine of Christ’s divinity, and thereby, the Trinity (Bowman, 1995:9).
4.2.7 Russell’s Meeting with Jonas Wendell

In 1869, Russell attended a lecture on “Hell” delivered by Jonas Wendell, an Adventist preacher. The preacher believed strongly that there was no eternal punishment, and this statement impressed the young Russell so much that he recovered his faith in the Bible (Russell, 1886).

It was John Wendell that first introduced Russell to Bible chronology and prophecy, particularly on 1874, a date for Christ’s return. As Harris (1998:20-24) describes, it seems that Russell found answers to his confusions on the issue of hell. Meanwhile, he met other Adventists who taught him what Christianity was like, such as Georges Storrs. In the same year, Russell was re-baptized among the Adventists believers.

4.2.8 Russell’s Meeting with Nelson H. Barbour

In 1876, Russell met Nelson H. Barbour, another Adventist preacher. They agreed to work together for a while on a magazine they named Herald of the Morning.

In a meeting with Nelson Barbour, the latter convinced Russell that what Christians usually called “Christ’s second coming” was actually a second invisible and spiritual “presence of Christ, that already begun in 1874.” In this case, the Adventist leaders predicted the second coming of Christ to take place in 1874, according to Miller and Ellen White (Harris, 1998:25-28). Russell and Barbour cooperated for a while and published a book on the advent of Christ. However, Russell distanced himself from Barbour when the prophecy did not occur as predicted (Bowman, 1995:12-15). Gradually, the Adventist influence was structured dogmatically in Russell’ beliefs. It was Barbour who introduced Russell to the idea that the rapture would occur in April 1878 and that the second coming of Christ happened in 1874, but “invisibly.”

Therefore, because the rapture did not happen as predicted and as published in their magazine, Russell split with Barbour in 1878 as he did with John Wendell years ago. He began his own publication in July 1879, which he called Zion’s Watch Tower and Herald for Christ’s Presence.

4.2.9 The Bible Student Movement

During the year 1879, Russell formed a Bible study group whose members were known as “Bible students”, and soon the members called him “Pastor Russell.” This raises a question: Based on which qualifications did they call him a Pastor? Russell’s biography does not indicate any scholarship in Biblical studies, any institution, a college or university. He clearly taught his
own rendition of faith. Ankerberg and Weldon (1991:57-61) mention in their book that the JW as a movement finds its reason of success in its leadership, which is divided into six periods of presidency. Each president played a role to advance the organization unto its worldwide expansion.

Russell launched the Bible Student Movement and established its basic foundation in doctrine, practices and administrative organization. Ankerberg (1991:40-46) explains that Russell wrote a “New Bible” for the faithful of his days, which he claimed “came from God through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.” This was The seven volumes of studies in the Scripture. Russell contended that this material was necessary to understand the Bible properly. In the Watchtower magazine of September 1910, Russell wrote: “Without the book ‘Studies in the Scripture’ one could never see the divine plan in studying the Bible itself” (p.298). Practically speaking, the opposite is true: the realization of the divine plan is seen by reading Scripture. To read the Bible under the guidance of Russell’s book means reading according to Russell’s thoughts and perceptions. In contrast, the Scriptures urges believers in Joshua 1:8 to “…meditate on it day and night…” (NIV: 187).

Ankerberg (1991:56-61) points out that the present Watch Tower Society contradicts many of Russell’s doctrines and his divine interpretations of the Scripture. The reason is clear. After many years, the Board of Governors under the leadership of Rutherford found irregularities in Russell’s writings and took it upon themselves to rectify the errors which their founder committed. Harris (1998:17-18) is correct in saying that “Russell only had elementary education which would probably not have helped him in the study of Greek and Hebrew, something that would appear necessary for some of the claims he made for later life.” According to Harris, Russell admitted that he was not familiar with Greek and Hebrew. (The insertion of this quotation is not to defame Russell in any manner. It is rather to conclude from the researcher’s point of view that Russell did not have the necessary qualifications to develop doctrines on the meaning of various words as he did) (Harris, 1998:18).

Russell’s characteristics made a strong impression on his followers up to this point. In his book The Divine Purpose (1910:14), it is easy to see that the JWs did have a rational approach, for instance on the case of the Trinity.

Bowman (1995:10) points out that “C.T.R. launched his own work in 1879 with the publication of the first issue of Zion’s Watch Tower and Herald of Christ’s presence. The magazine focused on the teaching that Christ was already present and has been since 1874.” This view is derived directly from the Adventist preachers named above regarding occurrences that had not taken place as yet. Russell taught that “Christ’s presence would climax in 1914 with God’s
judgment on all human nations” (ZWTR, 1913:10). He added then that “the end of the Gentiles’ times was there.” This raises the question whether this prophecy or prediction was from God. Seeing that it did not take place as predicted, the Bible classifies such predictions as false prophecy (Matt 24:1-11).

Russell wished to safeguard his project of publishing the Word of God widely. The Zion’s Watch Tower Society was formed as unincorporated administrative agency for the purpose of disseminating tracts, papers, doctrinal treatises and Bibles (WTBTS, January 15, 1955:14). Truly, it was a private business for Russell, but beyond the organization called Watch Tower.

Russell died in 1916, believing that “the Gentiles times” ended in 1914 and that World War I was “Armageddon” (WTBTS, 1975). However, there was no actual occurrence to confirm Russell’s prophecies on the end times.

After his death, Russell was succeeded by Joseph Rutherford, who wrote a book, “now living will never die” (WTBTS, 1918b:718-719). He organized the Society and from 1922-1928 the movement grew considerably.

4.3 The Establishment of the JW as a Movement and its History in the USA

After a while a dispute broke out between different groups of Bible Student movements regarding their official name. On one hand, there was the pro-Russell group, and on the other hand the pro-Rutherford group, but each claimed to be the true Bible Student Movement. At a convention at Columbus, Ohio on 26 July 1931, Rutherford proposed the adoption of the name “JW”, based on the Scripture in Isaiah 43:10: “Ye are my witnesses, said the Lord.” The Watch Tower reported: “The new distinctive name was designed to exalt God’s name and end public confusion caused by the proliferation of different groups carrying the name Bible Students” (WTBTS, 1918a; 1931:296-299). At the same convention the JWs motivated: “The new name explained this: it will be a name that could not be used by another, and such as none other will want to use.” (WTBTS, 1931:299)

4.3.1 The Period Under “Judge” Joseph F. Rutherford (1917-1942)

Penton (1988:63) in his book Apocalypse delayed narrates how the traditional Bible Students’ prayer-and-testimony meetings were divided into two groups. One group left the organization that was led by Rutherford, while those who accepted his leadership remained. The question often arises why the Society experienced such an influx of adherents. This can be attributed to Rutherford’s use of manipulation to attract followers.
Rutherford was born in 1869 in Morgan County, Missouri, in the USA. Harris (1998:25) explains that Rutherford’s father was a Baptist, but Rutherford himself was not attuned to their “hell-fire” preaching. According to Harris, in 1894, Rutherford bought three volumes of Russell’s Millennial Dawn and was introduced to Russell’s teaching. Twelve years later, in 1906, Rutherford was baptized and initiated into their Society (Harris, 1998:24-25).

On 6 January 1917 he was elected as second President of the Organization called Watch Tower Society. The Society went through a conflict of leadership during the period of 1917-1918. Within months, four of the seven directors of the Society accused Rutherford that he was acting without consulting the Board. They described him as “dogmatic, authoritarian, and secretive” according to Raymond Franz (2002:120-130). However, Rutherford appointed four new directors to replace the four who had opposed him, claiming that they had no legal status on the board because of conflicts of leadership with the Pennsylvanian law.

Rutherford published his version of the dispute in the Harvest magazine (WTBTS, Aug. 1917). Rutherford was trying to remove some of Russell’s traces to replace it with his finger prints. At least two major splinter sects were formed as a result of the conflict; the Layman’s home Missionary Movement and the Dawn Bible Student Association (Bowman, 1995:11).

After being re-elected in 1919, Rutherford surprised the headquarters by announcing the release of the book The Finished Mystery, dealing with the prophecies of the books of Revelation and Ezekiel and based on Russell’s previous publication The Divine Purpose (WTBTS, 1959a:70). In the Finished Mystery Rutherford introduced a vast advertising campaign to expose the “unrighteousness” of religions and their alliances with “beastly’ governments, expanding on claims that patriotism expected of people to murder others).

It seems the campaign provoked the clergy and governments in North America and Europe, where adherents to the Bible Student Movement were being arrested (WTBS, 1920:712-718). But, on 24 February 1918, Rutherford gave the first of his series of talks Millions now living will never die, Isaac and Jacob would be resurrected.

In 1929, Rutherford even built Beth-Sharim as a dwelling place for the resurrected personages mentioned above. This was done to support his prophecy that “millions now living will never die.” Moreover, according to Harris (1998:50-58), he announced that “Christ’s thousand years would begin in that year, thereby restoring an earthly paradise together with the resurrection on earth of the ancient Jewish prophets.” He referred to this event as “the ancient capital”, of which the “princes” would communicate by radio with all humankind (WTBTS, 1924:225). As a result, the pronouncement prompted many Bible Students to give up their businesses and
quit their jobs and even to sell off their homes. Those who left the Society refused to believe the fallacies of Rutherford and his teachings (Franz, 2005:225). No part of the prophecy came true. Rutherford can be classified as a false prophet just like Russell for having predicted a false end time.

In 1935 Rutherford instructed the Witnesses that they should refuse to salute the national flag, stand for the national anthem, or accept alternative services provided by those who had consecrated their lives to military service.

In 1939, the society changed the name of its flagship publication from Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence to the Watch Tower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom (Bowman, 1995:11). These name changes reflected several developments very clearly. Among other things, it indicated that the Society discarded most of the chronology in Russell's teaching (Bowman, 1995:11-12).

From 1939 to 1942, the Society focused on correcting their doctrines. First, they were forced to accept the fact that World War I turned out not to 'deliver' Armageddon. They had no choice but to secretly abandon Russell's teaching that Christ's presence had become a reality in 1874 (Bowman, 1995:11-12). Second, the Society began teaching that “Christ's presence was a period of time beginning rather than ending in 1914.” This 'corrective' is obviously incorrect and Biblically unproven (cf. Acts1:11-14) compared to the historical background of the event. 1914 is not the beginning of second coming of Christ, which is yet to come. Third, the Society effected this change only after extensive efforts to extend Russell's proposed chronology beyond 1914, but failing in their attempts (Harris, 1998:102-106). The most notable is Rutherford's claim that “1925 would mark the final date for worldly powers and the resurrection from the dead of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and others.” This prediction failed just like Russell's attempts (WTBTS, 1925b).

Rutherford died in 1942 and was succeeded by Nathan Homer Knorr as the Society's third president. Rutherford did not have any advanced training in Biblical and theological education. He was not qualified to translate the Scripture from its original languages since he was not versed in Greek and Hebrew. Instead of correcting Russell's fallacies, Rutherford (WTBTS, 1925a) added the claim of 1925, and began building Beth-Sharim, where he eventually went to live to await the resurrection of the Biblical personages. Rutherford died exposed as a false prophet as well. Under his presidency, the Society knew much growth due to his ingenious spirit of leadership. However, dogmatically he continued Russell's teachings that came from the Adventist influence with an Arian view of Christ.
4.3.2 The Period Under Nathan H. Knorr (1942-1977)

The presidency of Nathan H. Knorr had a strong positive and negative effect, which led the organization into another debacle in 1975. From 1944, Nathan’s positive input as leader became clear with certain changes in the administration. The term “Governing body” began to be used quite frequently, where the term initially applied only to the seven men of the Watch Tower Society’s board of directors. Nathan reorganized the international assemblies that Rutherford used in the 1920s. This strategy allowed significant growth in the movement. In 1958 more than 253,000 Witnesses gathered at two venues, New York’s Yankee Stadium and Polo Grounds, for an eight-day convention where more than 7,000 followers were baptized (Penton, 1988:86; WTBTS, 1959a).

It looks like Knorr commissioned a new translation of the Bible, which was released in sections from 1950 before being published as the complete *New World Translation of the Holy Scripture* in 1961. Because Knorr was a dogmatician in the organization, he also instituted major training programmes, including the Watch Tower Bible School of Gilead to train missionaries and the Theocratic Ministry School to instruct adherents in preaching and public speaking at congregational level (Harris, 1998:27; WTBTS, 1959b). However, the constant denial of Christian beliefs and Biblical doctrines caused “permanent grief” against the movement.

But, on the positive side, Knorr helped to produce a Greek-English New Testament Interlinear translation (*The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of Greek Scripture*), and also a Bible Encyclopaedia (*Aid to Bible Understanding of the Bible, JW – Proclaimers of God’s Kingdom*). Knorr’s vice-president, Frederick William Franz, became the leading theologian for the religion and the pace of doctrinal change slowed (Franz, 2007:150-155). This gradual development would have been effective and helpful if it were not for the “heretical view of Arianism.”

During Nathan Knorr’s presidency, membership of the JW grew from 108,000 to more than two million (Penton, 1988:145-146). Nevertheless, he reached his low point in 1975. Knorr pursued the prophetic line of predicting the end time as started by his predecessors. He stated that “year 1975 will be the end time.” Many analysts of the history of religion refer to “the debacle of 1975.” Penton, M.J., Franz, R., and many other scholars agreed on this matter (Franz, 2007:155-160). Harris (1998:28) asserts that the major crisis in his presidency was in 1975 when another failed prophecy was promoted. Since 1968, the Society began to encourage its members to believe “that 6,000 years of man’s existence on earth would end in 1975 and the thousand-year’s reign of Christ would begin on earth” (WTBTS, 1968:494; Harris, 1998:28). This represents a negative point in Knorr’s life ministry: he followed the wrong calculation of the creation in terms of “six days” and misinterpreted Scripture according
to which “a day is a thousand like” (2 Pet 3:1-15). According to him the six days amounted to 6,000 years. His predecessors made a similar miscalculation. According to the Biblical message (Matt 24:36), no one knows the day or hour of the coming of Christ. The Watch Tower magazine (1966:29-35) even pinpointed the date of 5 September 1975 as “the appropriate time for God to act.” (The publication, Everlasting in Freedom of the Son of God, was recommended to all Witnesses). Unfortunately, none of what was predicted took place on earth. It was widely discarded as simply another deception from the Watch Tower Society.

As was the case previously, the number of members declined significantly after the expectation for the ending of the existing era did not come true. Many Witnesses were disappointed by the failure of the prediction for 1975 (Singelenberg, 1989:50-51; 405). It is noticeable, however, how the leaders remained steadfast and kept on encouraging the congregation by claiming that the rest of Christianity misunderstood the signs. They were to expect the end very soon. Many naïve members remained attached to the Society. Nathan Knorr started off well, but ended his term in shame like his predecessors and was branded as a “false prophet.” He died in 1977.

4.3.3 The Period Under Frederick William Franz (1977-1992)

Harris (1998:29) reports that Frederick W. Franz was born in Covington, Kentucky in 1893. Franz cut short his studies at the university to become a full-time preacher for WBTS. He only took two years of Greek at the university and was self-taught in Hebrew, but was still regarded as the best Bible translator the Society had.

In a Scottish trial in 1954, Frederick Franz experienced the same problem that Russell had before him. His answer to questions indicated that he did not know how to translate the beginning of the second chapter of Genesis. Franz made his ignorance clear during the 1950 August convention at the Yankee Stadium, New York. He made a pronouncement that was not greeted with great cheer by all the Witnesses; many even felt cheated. Franz changed the reference to “princes.” Rutherford (WTBTS, 1921:145-147) had claimed that the princes would return to rule the earth in 1925, from the Old Testament saints to the Congregational overseers. He then dramatically proclaimed that the “princes” were “now amongst us!” (Harris, 1998:30).

In 1977, at the age of 83, Franz he was elected as the society’s fourth president. Three years later Franz had to oversee the largest upheaval of the Watch Tower headquarters since Rutherford’s early days. After 1975, a serious crisis threatened the believers and particularly the body of governors or directors. They found that their teachings were based on erroneous
wrong prophecies by previous leaders. Harris commented as follows: “As many Witnesses began reading the Bible without Watchtower publications they found the truth and discovered that the Watchtower was not God’s organization giving their food at the proper time. Some left and some were disfellowshipped, including Franz’s own nephew, Raymond, a onetime member of the governing body” (Harris 1998:30).

According to Franz R. in his book Crisis of Conscience, proposals were put to the governing body in 1976, 1977 and 1979 to acknowledge the error, but Milton and others recommended that they ignore the matter and hope the Witnesses would eventually forget about it (Franz, 1997:250). Franz, F. died in 1992. It seems that the Society strongly maintained its position on “heresy and fallacy.”

4.3.4 The Period Under Milton G. Henschel (1920-2003)

Henschel was born in 1920 into a second generation family of Witnesses living in Pomona, New Jersey. He was baptized in 1934 when he was 14 years old and initiated into the organization. Henschel was a secretary to Nathan Knorr when he made his world trip in 1945. He was elected as the fifth president of the WTBTS on 30 December 1992. During his presidency he faced the crisis of uncertain times with a decline in membership in Europe and Canada and the challenge to their policy on blood transfusion (Harris, 1998:30).

In 1995, changes were published on their understanding of Jesus’ referral to “this generation” (Matt 24:34) in Crisis of Conscience by Franz, R. (1997:257-272). Throughout the previous four decades, the JW had taught that the generation that saw the events of 1914 would not die out before Armageddon came (WTBTS, 1951). The understanding of “this generation” was again adjusted in 2008 during the period under Don A. Adams (2003-2014). This adjustment was made to appoint the remnant of the anointed (WTBTS, 2008:24). It is asserted, “As a group, those anointed comprise the present ‘generation’ of the contemporaries who won’t pass away ‘until all the things come to pass.’”

A clear observation can be made from analysing the lives of the presidents of the Watchtower Society. The thing that Russell, Rutherford, Knorr, and Henschel all have in common is that they were self-taught students and not qualified scholars. They were not equipped to conduct any theological, dogmatic, apologetic or exegetic argument on an academic level. Only qualified persons should argue doctrinal issues when they want to avoid heresies.
4.4 The JW in the DRC

There is a difference of opinion at the headquarters of the organization in New York on when the JW first began operating in the DRC. Some refer to the 1930s and others mention the 1920s. There are two Watch Tower Students’ Bible groups who worked in the country before its independence. According to Hodges (1976:5-10), there was a Watch Tower Movement led by Australians following Russell’s millennial doctrine that was introduced to South Africa in 1908. This movement entered the rest of Africa through Malawi, Zimbabwe and Zambia and finally reached the Belgian Congo in the 1920s. However, this movement was not recognized in New York. In contrast, the Watch Tower influence from its New York headquarters started in the 1950s as a quiet initiative in the capital city of Leopoldville (WTBTS, 2004:165-215).

4.4.1 Mission Work South of the DRC

The JW was introduced by pioneers from the southern regions of Africa and not from the USA. According to Hodges (1976:9), the Watch Tower Movement and its ideas were carried into Southern and Central Africa by Joseph Booth, an Australian fundamentalist with radical political views. Booth introduced his doctrine to a Nyassa migrant worker, Elliott Kamwana by means of Russell’s *Studies in the Scriptures* in 1908 in Cape Town, South Africa.

Converted to Russell’s creed, Kamwana returned to Nyasaland in October 1908, where he preached among his fellow Tongans, rapidly winning a large following (Hodges,1976:13-16). Kamwana proclaimed the millennium by claiming that “The Millennium will bring the abolition of the hated hut tax” (imposed by the colonial authorities to force Africans into the labour market). Kamwana was continually hounded by the colonial regime. He was eventually arrested and deported to Mauritius in March 1909 (Hodges,1976:9).

After Kamwana’s preaching and deportation, the Nyassa labour migrants took the Watch Tower ideas to the mining compound of Southern Rhodesia (present Zimbabwe), where 10,500 Nyassans were working by 1916. From Malawi, Kamwana’s followers moved to Zimbabwe as a first step of missionary expansion.

When the task was achieved in Southern Rhodesia, the Nyassa labour migrants returned home from Zimbabwe. They left thousands of believers in the Watch Tower message in South Rhodesia, but carried the Watch Tower teaching across the Zambezi River to Northern Rhodesia (present Zambia) where they arrived in October 1917 (Hodges 1976:10-11). They established a stronghold in the Tanganyika district and penetrated the Luapula region with their millennial preaching that focussed on “liberation theology of black people.” The Nyassa preachers included Kunda, Chulu and Tomo Nyirenda. Nyirenda proclaimed that, “After the
Armageddon, the Black People shall be rewarded by Jehovah after much labour and pains imposed by the colonial Rulers...” (Hodges, 1976:10). This is clearly contrary to the Biblical message: “… because God loved the World …” (John 3:16). It is understandable that such sermons increased the hate for the colonial powers and fostered disobedience among the Black people. The colonial rulers opposed this type of theology from the Watch Tower, known at the time as “Kitawala.” This term is derived from a Swahili word “Kutawala” meaning “to reign, dominate or rule.” The colonial viewpoint was that, “Kitawala is a secessionist, rebellious group, opponent to any good governance.” (Hodges, 1976:20). The colonial rulers in South-central Africa viewed the group as a dangerous political movement (Hodges, 1976:10-14).

Tomo Nyirenda was a famous preacher of the millennial ministry and fought against the colonial rulers and all the chiefs collaborating with these rulers. He drew many followers, who were sometimes fanatical. They called him “Son of God”; in Chi Bemba they named him *Mwana Lesa*, which also means “Jesus”, a “messiah of Black people.” This entailed the second step of missionary expansion for the Watch Tower Movement.

Many Africans saw the Watch Tower Movement, especially its millennial philosophy, as a philosophy and theology of liberation for Africans from slavery and colonialism. They also considered this movement as a vehicle for literacy, because in the 1920s and 1930s the Watch Tower readings were virtually the only source of cheap literature available in African languages. Until the Second World War, Africans’ staple reading material in the compounds and villages of large parts of South-Central Africa were the Biblical commentaries of the Watch Tower Bible Tract Society (WTBTS). The extensive labour migrant system that developed with the rise of the mining industry in Southern Africa became the key network for spreading the Watch Tower ideas (Hodges, 1976:20-22).

### 4.4.2 Mission Work North of the DRC

The year books of the JW of 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961 reveal that there were many tentative starts to a mission within the capital city of the Belgian Congo during the colonial time (1908-1960). It failed because the Belgian rulers of that period in the Congo were suspicious of the Watch Tower Society since they cause troubles in the south of the Congo. They suspected this religious movement of being a subversive force behind the indigenous population. The JW’s from Brazzaville tried to penetrate and start a cell in Leopoldville (today Kinshasa) around 1957-1958. There was also a matter of identity. There was confusion between the names Watch Tower, translated in the South of Congo by the word “Kitawala”, which means in English “to reign.” The Belgian rulers see any difference between the Watch Tower Bible Tract Society in the Katanga province and the JW who started in the capital city, since they used the same organizational flag. It was simply misinterpreted politically by the Belgians rulers in the Congo.
as “a newcomer in power.” At this time the movement had a millennial message that promised total independence and new reign for Blacks (Hodges, 1976:10-14).

Only after the independence (1960) was the mission from the USA recognized by the new Black leader, Joseph Kasa-Vubu, and they started functioning within the country, beginning in the capital city, Leopoldville (WTBTS, 1961).

In 1986, during a JW public service held at Kinshasa Stadium, the government of President Mobutu, which had earlier ordered that all manifestations must begin with singing the National Anthem and Flag salutation, noted that this order was not respected; ostensibly because of their doctrine. Thereafter, President Mobutu banned all JW activities in Zaire for a number of years (WTBTS. 1986:14-16).

4.4.3 The JW Move into Katanga

From 1925-1926 Tomo Nyrenda gathered a substantial following among the Balalas people living in North Rhodesia and Katanga in the Belgian Congo, the area that is currently known as Zambia’s copper-belt province. The Mwana Lesa and his association spread the Watch Tower’s teaching where the migrant-labour system needed workers. The presence of mining in Katanga between 1920 and 1935 urgently required migrant labourers, and thus the disciples of Nyirenda came to Katanga province for work. They helped build the mining compound and the railway infrastructure of Katanga in the Belgian Congo.

Tomo Nyirenda found his way to Katanga by passing the border of the Congo at Kasenga through border villages in the Balambas, Balalas, Baushis and Babembas. The presence of Nyassa and Zimbabwean workers increased the support for his ministry as the “Black Messiah.” He ordered all the adversaries to his ministry killed. In the process of implanting mission, he used violence, swords and fire arms to fight those who refused his teachings. The main issue was that he misunderstood the teaching of Russell's Studies in the Scriptures, particularly those about the “millennium.” Moreover, he incorrectly interpreted the Bible verses about the millennium literally instead of prophetically or spiritually. Due to an obvious lack of training, he did not have the knowledge about how to apply these Scripture passages in the situational context. Many African prophets have fallen into the same trap of ignorance, false prophecy, and messianism.

It seems that the Watch Tower Movement started preaching along the Luapula River and introduced their ideas to the mining compounds of Ruashi, Kambove, Kakanda, Likasi, and finally, Kolwezi in 1937-1939 (Hodges, 1976:11-14). The content of their teaching was considered illegal by the Belgian authorities. The Watch Tower Movement was banned by the
Belgian rulers since the 1910s in the whole country. As a result, Nyirenda’s ministry was conducted secretly, particularly in villages. After this movement has massacred large numbers of villagers who refused their teachings, the chiefs sent messengers to the District Commissioner requesting help against the murdering sortie of Tomo Nyrenda and his followers in the villages. The Belgians arrested Nyirenda and deported him to Zambia in 1929. However, his disciples continued the mission until they reached all the tribes of the Belgian Congo. The Roman Catholic Church strongly resisted this outreach mission of the Watch Tower Movement by means of the support of the Catholic governor, Bishop De Hemptine (1905-1959).

4.4.4 The Problem of Identity

The word Kitawala as explained above is derived from the Swahili term with the connotation of dominating and ruling. According to the leaders, the goal of this movement was essentially political: to establish independence from Belgium. Many Africans and Katangese politicians reasoned that the Watch Tower’s view of the millennium could best be achieved under the guise of religion. Nevertheless, the Kitawala groups acquired, studied and circulated the publications of the JW, with the words “Watch Tower” identifying their meeting places.

Long before the JW were established, this Watch Tower Movement became prominent in the province of Katanga in the southern region of the Belgian Congo (1908-1960). According to the yearbook of the JW of 2004, “for decades people assumed that the ‘Kitawala’ adherents were JW.” However, there seems to be a distinct difference. This raises the question of identity. What was the JW and what was the Watch Tower Movement?

“From the investigation above, the JW is clearly the American movement founded by Charles Taze Russell in 1869 in the USA. Beckford defines it as a millenarian restorationist Christian denomination with nontrinitarian beliefs distinct from mainstream Christianity” (Beckford, 1975:118-119; 151; 200-201). According to the organizational statistics for August 2013 published in the 2014 Yearbook of JW (2013:178), its worldwide membership exceeded 7.9 million adherents involved in evangelism; convention attendance exceeded 14 million, and annual memorial attendance figures exceeded 19.2 million.

Harris (1998:10-13) asserts that this “JW are best known for their door-to-door preaching, distributing literature such as The Watch Tower and Awake!, and their refusal of military service and blood transfusion They consider the use of the name of Jehovah vital for proper worship; reject Trinitarianism and subsequent doctrines.” This movement adopted the name of JW to distinguish them from the dissident former Bible Students founded by Russell.
On the other hand, the Kitawala or Watch Tower Society in Katanga is the movement originating from Southern Africa, particularly Cape Town. As was indicated, it was founded by Joseph Booth, an Australian disciple of Russell’s studies in the Scriptures. Kitawala is also a denomination based on millenarian ideas. However, because it was not founded by a missionary from the headquarters of the JW, this movement was not recognized in America. Nevertheless, regarding the doctrine, it is a movement that sprouted from the same roots, the doctrine of Russell. The difference is the political view of the Watch Towers owing to Joseph Booth’s interpretation of the millennium. There is an underlying convergent focus in the sense that Russell’s preaching also encouraged opposition against the American government with a view to restoring the godly government that he envisaged. Such a theocratic government is not that different from what the Kitawala advocated in the Congo. The only difference may be the use of arms and violence. However, the movements share a similar ideology, practices, literature, doctrines, hope and the same founder, namely Russell.

After decades, the JW mission team from the USA forced the government of the Congo to acknowledge that their Society is different from the Kitawala. This was achieved in the capital city, Leopoldville (present Kinshasa) in 1957-1959 and throughout the 1960s. Seeing that the Watch Tower Movement was considered as illegal by the government of the Congo, there are no official statistics on the Watch Tower Society or Kitawala. This is why some writings speculate on their presence before 1960.

Afterwards, the South African Watch Tower recognized the work of Tomo Nyirenda, except for the crimes his movement perpetrated. The South African division provides statistics of the Congo, which differed from that of the headquarters in the USA. After the 1980s the two boards united their views on mission in the South-central region of Africa (Hodges, 1976:13-14).

4.4.5 The JW Organized Mission Field in the DRC (1960-2014)

After the independence of the DRC (1960), the new government led by the president Joseph Kasa-Vubu provided an opportunity for the JW’s mission. This was after the Belgians banned the Society of JW for decades.

4.4.5.1 The First Missionaries in the DRC

For a thorough comprehension of the history, it is important to introduce the biographical detail of the pioneer of the first mission. It was good news for the Witnesses to welcome Ernest Heuser from Belgium as missionary. He arrived with his family and settled in Leopoldville (present Kinshasa). According to the yearbook of 2004, the presence of a missionary home in
the country provided a bridge between the headquarters (New York) and the country. The missionary had various roles to fulfil to put the organization on a better footing in the Congo.

Heuser began in 1962 by acquiring the plot for the location of the office, home and a storeroom for books and literature. The first branch was opened in the capital city on 8 June 1962. The office and living quarters were situated in a third floor apartment on Avenue van Eetvelde (presently Avenue du Marche). Thereafter Heuser borrowed a projector and a film from the Brazzaville branch and presented the film *The Happiness of the New World Society* to the congregations in Leopoldville and to some government officials (WTBTS, 2004:165-189). This brought a new understanding of the Witnesses and it interested people to witness the existence of an international brotherhood of Witnesses all living in peace and happiness. They were surprised to see a Black believer speaking Europeans, to show that it is not for white people only, but for black and white and yellow races. The mayor of Leopoldville enjoyed the film so much that he reacted: “This work (of JW) should be encouraged as much as possible.” As many as 1,294 people attended the first four showings of the film.

Heuser’s second task was to organize a six-week couples’ fellowship training for leaders at the office (WTBTS, 2004). He organized this training to address issues among the leaders regarding tribal rivalries and conflicting customs that challenged the functioning of the organization. For example, tribal rivalries persisted even after independence and some congregation overseers were not on speaking terms with other overseers. If someone was disfellowshipped in a congregation dominated by a certain tribe, the member would be accepted by the elders of another congregation composed mainly of brothers of his own tribe. Decisions made in one congregation were not binding in another. Tribal customs dominated nearly all daily activities and tribal thinking spilled over to the congregations (WTBTS, 2004). This information was often confirmed by those who left the organization. However, from a Biblical point of view, the hidden cause could be pointed out as a lack of true salvation by faith in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17-18).

Further problems resulted from tribal customs. Among some tribes, the relationship between a husband and his wife was based on tribal loyalties and not on the motif of Christ being the foundation for a Christian marriage (Matt 7:24-29; 2 Pet 3:1-7). Marriage among the Witnesses was often viewed as a tribal arrangement. If the members of the tribe did not approve of a marriage, they could force the husband to get rid of his wife and take another one of their choice.

According to the yearbook of 2004 there were other problems as well. From earliest times to the present, many people in the Congo believe that no one dies of natural causes.
Consequently, at the time of burial, ceremonies are performed that supposedly identify the one responsible for the death. People’s hair is shaven off and many other customs are practiced. In some tribes, when the husband dies, the wife is understood to be purified by a male member of their tribe having sexual relations with her. At funerals, remarks are often addressed to the dead person, which reflects the belief that the soul or spirit survives the death of the body (WTBTS, 2004:190-198)

The third task that Heuser took on was to appoint Mr Pontien Mukanga as the first circuit overseer in the Congo. His primary mission was to identify, locate, visit and interview the members of the Kitawala groups in the capital and provinces during 1961. Moreover, because it was too big a task to accomplish in such a short period, he needed to add additional circuit overseers. A training seminar was consequently organized during May to June 1962 for leaders of different congregations in the capital. This led to Francois Danda’s nomination in 1962 as second circuit overseer to assist Pontien Mukanga. The efforts of Mukanga and Danda and many others like them made it clear to people that they must distinguish the JW from the Kitawala movement. They reported to the government on the location of Kitawala, who they treated as rebels against the government. The government was fighting Kitawala, but large numbers of this movement still existed in the rural areas and there the movement was as prominent as before independence.

The presence of missionaries in Kinshasa helped increase the number of publishers (propagators or distributors of their literatures) to approximately 2 000 in 1962, and the attendants to about 6 000 members. In March 1964, more missionaries arrived in Congo. They were sent to the different regions where the Society needed them.

4.4.5.2 Circuits and Missionary Homes Opened

In 1966 the first missionary home outside Kinshasa was opened in Lubumbashi, in the south-east of the country. The yearbook of 2004 reports on the work in the Democratic Republic of Congo. From 1968-1986 over 60 missionaries served in different parts of the country (WTBTS, 2004:165-215). In 1967-1968 a missionary home was opened in Kolwezi, north-west of Lubumbashi, and in Kananga, in the Kasai province.

Circuits were opened locally after the JW trained a large number of distributors, also called publishers, and pioneer teams that were sent into the remote areas of large cities such as Lubumbashi, Likasi, Kolwezi, Kamina and Kalemie. The presence of the missionaries had a strong stabilising influence that helped the Witnesses to live out the strict doctrine of the organization in the Congo.
4.4.5.3 **Annual Conventions Increase the Numbers**

A JW convention entailed the organization of circuit assemblies (i.e. 10-15 circuits meeting in a large hall or stadium or in open-air). JW had the authorization to hold such large conventions, but much preparation was necessary beforehand. For instance, they had to organize Bible dramas, for which costumes were required. They also needed a sound system to attract more of the population that they aimed reached. The attendance varied from 11,214 to 30,400 persons, and at one such an event 465 were baptized in Kinshasa (WTBTS, 1971, 2004).

4.4.5.4 **Bethel School Ministry**

Nathan H. Knorr, from the headquarters in Brooklyn USA, visited the Congo in January 1971. The main aim of his visit was finding a means to expand their mission in the Congo. In 1970 there were almost 14,000 publishers (comparable to disciples in a Christian organization) in 194 congregations. The vision was 100,000 publishers around the year 2000. The motivation for the Bethel School was to increase the zeal and to make publishers who can spread their pamphlets and message as much as possible. After democracy came, the JW in the Congo first sent people to the US for training, but they later rather brought teachers from the Bethel School in America into the Congo to train the disciples or publishers (WTBTS, 1973).

4.4.5.5 **Broadcasting Ministry**

The mission of the JW was to reach many more believers in Jehovah. To help realize this calling, the headquarters in New York provided materials for a radiobroadcasting ministry in the capital city of Kinshasa (WTBTS, 1972). Since this ministry started, the outreach of the mission increased significantly. Some congregations such as Masina, Kimbaseke and Limete reached 50,000 members due to the broadcasting ministry. Currently, Kinshasa has a population of 13 million (WTBTS, 2004).

Such missionary zeal would have been acceptable by God if it was based on a Biblical and sound doctrine. Unfortunately, it is often fallacies and twisted teachings from the Bible that have to be clarified by means of apologetics.

4.4.5.6 **Mission and Influence in Kolwezi**

Kolwezi had two different missions of Watchtowers. These entailed the mission from Zambia in the 1920s before independence (1960), and the official Watchtower from the USA from around 1967-1968, after independence. What is impressive, is the increase in attendance from
1985-2014, from 500 to 14,500 members. This immediately raises the question of what strategy had been used.

4.4.6 The JW Before Independence

According to Hodges, the mining companies prompted the Belgian Congo (1908-1960) to recruit many migrant labour workers to work in the mines around Kolwezi from 1937 to 1940 (Hodges, 1976:9-13). Hodges reports that migrant labour also came from Northern Rhodesia (present Zambia), Southern Rhodesia (present Zimbabwe) and Malawi. The majority of migrants who were accepted were JW. This may be because of their morality and disciplined life and submission to authority at work. The mining investors needed workers who worked hard with no complaints. There was also conflict between indigenous chiefs and investors when the chiefs gave their relatives the work while they were unable to respond the requirements of job (Hodges, 1976:9-10).

The JWs' methods were regular door-to-door visits over weekends. They also invited friends to share tea and coffee in their houses. They used their off times to distribute literature among their fellow workers. These copies were mostly hidden in their luggage because the Watchtower was banned in the Belgian Congo at that time. Beside the migrant labour, there were also traders from Zambia. They travelled through Musokatanda via Mwinilunga, the western province of Zambia. These traders brought potatoes, livestock and other articles from Zambia into Kolwezi. Currently this cross-border business still flourishes in Kolwezi. The Witnesses hid their literature and distributed them at the market, on streets and selected houses. Hodge confirms that the Zambian branch coordinated the mission in Katanga and particularly Kolwezi. Mr Llewellyn was the volunteer manager. He was even arrested for a while and detained at the Kasaji concentration camp from 1932-33 (Hodges, 1976:5-8). However, there is no official report of this arrest, because the Society was banned by the Belgian authorities in the Congo.

4.4.7 The JW After Independence

4.4.7.1 Home Missionary Opened in Kolwezi

After independence, the authorities allowed the JW to preach publicly like any other Christian organization. Under the leadership of Ernest Heuser in Kinshasa a local branch was established and some members were sent to Zambia for training. Among these members was David Nawej, an active publisher or distributor or disciple in Kolwezi. When Moise Tshombe banned the organization in the years 1961-1963, David secretly motivated the mission in compounds. Heuser ordered a home missionary station to be opened in 1967 for local training.
instead of sending pioneers to Zambia. From the time that missionaries became visible in Kolwezi, various activities followed. The increase in publishers became visible following the usual method of door-to-door ministry.

4.4.7.2 Training Seminar and Bible Studies Imposed

The presence of missionaries locally and on visitation reinforced the activity of the organization. The distributors became skilful and had an active ministry of underground preaching, while various types of literature were distributed continuously. Mine workers were selected in their compounds. Some disciples were sent to Luulu compound, some volunteers were sent to Kapata compound; others were sent to Musonoi compound; and those of the Kolwezi mine were asked to bring the message to their neighbours.

In the 1970s the focus was on market traders. The JW sent pioneers to work in the market for two months at a time, preaching individually according to their method. In the 1980s new home missionaries were added to Kolwezi to handle the increase in followers (Yearbook, 2004). The second group focused their ministry on the rural areas around Kolwezi. In 1985, the publishers amounted to approximately 500. Compared to mainstream churches, this number was still insignificant. Their strategy of training publishers and Bible teachers was qualitative and very productive (McGavran, 1979: 70-78). Teachers in schools were targeted to become key persons to lead the masses. It stands to reason: if a teacher is turned into an effective Witness, the whole class can be reached for Jehovah’s kingdom. For instance, it is staggering how many 100 teachers can reach in a year or five years’ time in Congo, a class contains about 50-65 learners (Wikipedia, 2012).

From 1992-1993, the number of attendants in Kolwezi alone amounted to approximately 5 000. During the tribal conflict between the Kasaians and Katangese, 4 000 were deported to Kasai. The numbers decreased significantly because of the mentioned political conflict (see Chapters 2 and 3).

4.4.7.3 Annual Conventions, Huge Motivation

Since the presidency of Adams at the headquarters in New York in 2004, annual conventions were imposed on all local and national branches. In Kolwezi, the conventions were conducted with success under the leadership of Mazel with the support of missionaries from Canada. The latest report of August 2014 about the attendance reads as follows: The Swahili district: 7 300; French-speaking district: 6 870. The total number was reported at 14 170 people attending the annual convention for four days of open-air teaching and Bible dramas. As many
as 368 people were baptized. The convention drew huge crowds and created new initiates (RTMA, 2015).

4.4.7.4 Kingdom Halls Building Project

According to the JW (WTBTS, 2005), a kingdom hall is a spacious building for teaching and Bible study. It is a particular term used by Witnesses. They call their buildings “Kingdom of Jehovah hall” instead of church as the mainstream churches do.

The national office submitted a draft for a project to extend the Kingdom halls in the whole country. As many as 1 000 new Kingdom halls were to be erected from 2005 to 2015. For instance, in Kolwezi, ten new Kingdom halls were planned. The buildings attracted people easily, particularly unconverted ones who are attracted to huge congregations. This reminds one of Jesus’ statements: “…for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in there: Because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matt 7:13-14).

4.4.7.5 The Broadcasting Ministry a Vast Field

The emergence of secular radio stations in Kolwezi provided an income in the media sector for the social development of Kolwezi as a result of an upsurge in the mining industry since 2006 to the present. The mainstream churches launched their own radio stations, amongst others the Roman Catholic and the Pentecostal churches. The JW employ a secular radio and television station to deliver their messages to the city of Kolwezi.

4.5 The Major Doctrines of the JW as it Developed in Kolwezi

4.5.1 The Organization as the Authority of Belief

It seems after reading the book, Reasoning from the Scripture (WTBTS, 1985) and What the Bible Teaches (WTBTS, 2000) the JWs in America emphasize the authority of God, but the emphasis is on the organization, which they say represents God. The Watch Tower Society teaches that God is only one person; therefore, witnesses in Kolwezi reject the doctrines of the Trinity, as an “invention of pagan imagination.” They still deny this teaching and call the Trinity “a false doctrine”, which is promoted by Satan for the purpose of defaming Jehovah’s name. For the JW in Kolwezi, the authority lies not only in the Bible or the Word of God, but also their Body of Governance that leads, decides, declares and quotes from the Bible. No one can question what the Body of Governance has proclaimed. The members of this office are all anointed and are considered part of the 144 000 saints who will go to heaven (WTBTS, 1998:1-6).
Ankerberg (1991:66-72) points out regarding JW’s belief about God, the Bible, and the Trinity: “Witnesses believe and teach that the God of Christianity is a false and even satanic counterfeit of the one true God, Jehovah.” Years before this century, Russell wrote that the Christian God was “the devil himself.” Nowadays, JW in Kolwezi also view God as a single person, not as a single being in whom three persons are united, as taught in the Christian doctrine, the Christian view of God. The Witnesses also deny that God is present everywhere, and they therefore limit God’s omnipresence.

4.5.2 Jesus is not God Almighty (Jehovah’s Name)

The JW book, *Should you believe in Trinity? Is Jesus the Almighty God?* (WTBTS, 1989a:12-15), clearly says: “what comes through very clearly to an impartial reader is that God alone is the Almighty, the creator, separate and distinct from anyone else, and that Jesus, even in his pre human existence, is also separate and distinct, a created being, subordinated to God.”

The Witnesses teach in another book that God the Father has to be addressed and preached of as “Jehovah” in order to enjoy an intimate relationship with Him and also to distinguish Him from all the false gods in the mission field (WTBTS, 2005:217).

This raises the question of why the name “Jehovah”, or for that matter JHWH, is not used in the New Testament? Not even the earliest fragment of the New Testament that was found contains the word “JHWH.” This name was not omitted by the early church (there would have been no reason for it). Even Paul distinguished the true God from all the idols in Athens by using the name “God” and not “Jehovah” (Acts 17:15-31). Moreover, Jesus did not teach his disciples to address God as JHWH, but more intimately as “Our Father.” The name “Father” seems to express the intimacy in the relationship between the Father and Son. They teach presently in Kolwezi that “Jesus is godly but not the Almighty God. He is a creature of God, is also the archangel Michael (Manika Radio and Television, 5 January 2016). Openly they teach that “Jesus is not God Almighty.” The JW teach that, “Reasonably then, the archangel Michael is Jesus Christ.” In parentheses, they say that “interestingly, the expression ‘archangel’ is never found in the plural in the Scriptures, thus implying that there is only one.” Harris (1998:57) refutes their argument by referring to Daniel 10 and Daniel 8:25. Daniel 10:13 says that Michael is one of the princes. Daniel 8:25 describes Jesus as the Prince. It seems clear here like in many other places in the Scriptures, that Jesus is unique and Michael not. How can they be same person? Also in Jude 9, Michael says, “May the Lord rebuke you” reminding us that when Jesus was on earth he rebuked Satan and the demons directly and they fled before him (Matt 4:1-11). How can this be the same person? Stoker (2016) refutes their
argument by using the Scripture of Hebrews 1:7-8 to show beyond a doubt that Jesus is not an angel. Jesus is the Son, and he cannot be the angel or archangel by his nature.

4.5.3 Trinity

Witnesses contend: “We do not believe in the Holy Trinity, but that only the Father is truly God” (WTBTS, 1985:425). This raises another question: “Why would the very same book of Isaiah that explicitly states that there are only one God, call Jesus the Mighty God and everlasting Father (Isa. :6; 10:21) refers to God as Mighty God?” Isaiah teaches that the Father and Son are both called truly God. In other words, there is only one true God. This means that these two divine Persons are, in their true being, one God. The concept is not inconceivable, because two persons in marriage are also seen as one (Gen 2:24). Matthew 28:19 also refers to one God. This one God consists of three Persons: “…baptizing them in the name … [singular].” These three Persons, according to Stoker (2016:10), can therefore be taken to be one God: The Father (cf. Ephes1:3; John 1:1,18; John 20:28); the Son (cf. John1:1,18; John20:28; 1 John 5:20; 2 Pet 1:1); and the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 5:3, 4; 2 Cor3:17-18).

In Kolwezi the JW repeat the same argument without providing evidence from Scripture during debates (Radio Tele-Manika, 3 Sept. 2015). When confronted with parts of Scripture that support the three persons in the Godhead such as Matthew 3:16-17, 2 Corinthians 13 and some others, they lack a clear argument.

4.5.4 Jesus as Creature, “a god”

The Witnesses teach that “Jesus is the first creature of God, and He is actually the Archangel Michael (WTBTS, 1985: 209, 218; What the Bibles teaches (Harris, 1998:41; 218-219). The New World Translation is the JW official Bible, which all Witnesses are implored to read. However, reading it is the same as reading Russell’s thoughts. It will be difficult to get a true sense of God by reading this book. However, when reading other versions without any guide, the Holy Spirit speaks naturally. When Jesus depicted as a creature, a question should be posed. Does this mean that Jesus created himself? If John 1:3 testifies that all things were made through Jesus, would this be possible? Is Paul mistaken when repeating that without Him (Jesus) nothing was made that has been made? Is the Biblical testimony emphasising here that Jesus is the Creator of all things false (Col1:16-17)?

In Kolwezi, they go door-to-door with pamphlets, magazines and books teaching that Jesus is “a god” according to their New World Translation. They ignore the divinity of Jesus according the dogma which they receive from the headquarters in the USA.
An additional question emerges: Where does the Bible mention that Jesus and Michael is one and the same person? Stoker (2016) refutes their argument on the subject of Jesus; He is the Creator of all things and no creature. He is eternally God, was also born as human being for our sake, almost 2 000 years ago. Because Jesus is confessed as the most important human being ever born, he can be called the “First born of the whole of creation.” Jesus is not a creature as Michael is. Michael is but one of the most important princes (Dan10:13), whereas Jesus is “Lord and God” (John 20:28). All the angels (thus also Michael) worship Jesus (Hebrews 1:6).

4.5.5 The Holy Spirit as a Force

The JW teaches that the Holy Spirit is not a person, but merely a working force like the forces of gravity or electricity (WTBTS, 1985:407). Stoker and Van Wyk (2014) in their article on JW raised questions that should be posed in this regard: “How does one grieve an impersonal force? (Ephes4:30; Isa 63:10). How does one lie to a force? (Acts 5:3-4). How can the only unforgivable sin be against an impersonal force? (Mark 3:28-29; Hebrews 6:4-6). How can a force be deemed holy? How can a force talk, teach (Rom8:26-27), hear, have a will of its own, let decisions be taken” (Acts 15:28; John 14-16; 1 Cor12:11). According to the Biblical testimony, the Holy Spirit is worshipped as a divine Person and equally as part of the holy Trinity (cf. Acts 5:3-4; 2 Cor3:17-18; Matt28:19).

In Kolwezi the JW call the Holy Spirit “God’s active force” (WTBTS, 1985:380). Using their book, they deny the personality of the Holy Spirit. They teach that “it is not a person but is a powerful force that God causes to emanate from himself to accomplish his holy will.” They support this with misquoted Scriptures Psalm 104:30;2 Peter 1:21; Acts 4:31 (WTBTS, 1985:381). Harris (1998:71) refutes their argument by showing logically the personality of the Holy Spirit. He uses a historical argument from the Old Testament in the book of Job where it is said that God spoke to the devil. Harris quotes one the JW arguments to show what they believe about the devil. They ask a question: “Is the devil a personification or a person?” Talking on the conversation between the Devil and God in Job 1:1-10, and also between the Devil and Jesus Christ he shows clearly that both the Jehovah God and Jesus Christ are persons. Can an unintelligent “force” carry on a conversation with a person? Also the JW teach the devil is an unintelligent force or spiritual person. The Bible calls Satan a man slaver, a liar, a father (in Spiritual sense) and ruler (WTBTS, 1973:27). According to Harris (1998:72), the characteristic used in the Bible description shows that the devil also has a personality since he is liar, etcetera. It seems important to apply the same rules used for the devil to be a person as God and Jesus, to apply to the Holy Spirit. The Book of John is full of ingredients showing the personality of the Holy Spirit (John 16:16-28; 15:24-27; 16:8-28). In fact, the Holy Spirit
has the characteristic of a person: intelligence (John 14:26 - the ability to teach); he has a mind (Rom. 8:27); he has a will (1 Cor. 12:11); he has affections (Eph. 4:30-31) he feels, but an active force cannot feel grief. The JW miss a great blessing in the work and blessings of the Holy Spirit by rejecting is personality and divinity (White, 1998:13) and by rejecting the Trinity, a source of great blessings to believers.

4.5.6  The Cross or Pole

Many Congolese believed that Christ died on the cross many years ago, even before independence. However, since the Watch Tower Movement began their mission in the Belgian Congo (1908-1960) people began to reject the teaching of the cross everywhere they spread their message. The JW emphasized: Jesus did not die on a cross, but on an upright pole (WTBTS, 1985:90). Some deep-set questions should be asked, as Stoker asserts: “Would the Romans have crucified Jesus on an upright pole, with his hands nailed above his head, if they crucified their criminals on a cross with a cross-beam? Would the first Christians have made signs of the cross in tombs and on prison-walls if Christ was crucified on an upright pole? Would John 20:25 have referred to the nails in his hands, if his two hands were nailed onto pole with one nail, one over the other, as they sketch it?” The researcher concurs with Stoker and Wyk’s assessment: “The cross is not a pagan symbol. The pagans (Romans) used it as a means of punishment. It is the cursed tree on which our Lord Jesus was crucified.”

The JWs say that “it was not a cross but a pole or stake” (RT Manika, 12 Dec.2015). They use their pamphlet to emphasize the opinions of organization (WTBTS, 1985:90-92), and it creates confusion in the believers’ minds as well. History shows that it was not the first position of the Watchtower (Rutherford, 1921:114). In the beginning they pictured Christ dying on the traditional cross. Even several WT magazines in the early 1900s pictured a cross on the front cover (ZWTR, 15 April 1913:5221). In 1936 with the name change they stated that Christ was not crucified on the cross, but on a tree. Rutherford wrote a book, Enemies, where he attacked the belief of the cross (Harris 1998:214). The New International Dictionary of New TestamentVol.1. (2000:391) reads: “Finally it could be an instrument of execution in the form of vertical stake and a cross-beam of the same length forming a cross in the narrower sense of the term.”

Harris (1998:216) argues on the cross using historical and archaeological evidence. In Harris’ opinion, the society ignores the fact that the Romans executed prisoners on crosses. The horizontal bar of such crosses was called the “patibulum”, and slaves to be executed were customarily made to carry the patibulum to the place of execution (1998:216). The Apostle Paul’s testimony concerning the cross is very eloquent. Paul uses the cross as a symbol of
Christianity, as well as the death of the old nature (Phil 3:18; Col2:14; Gal 2:20; 5:24) Moreover, Paul considers the cross as a sign of victory, not defeat. Christians do not worship the cross itself as the JW think. It represents a great expression of the love of Christ to us (Rom5:5-8).

4.5.7 The Resurrection of Jesus

The Watchtower summarizes their opinion in their book Reasoning from the Scripture (WTBTS, 1985:334-335). They teach therein that, “1 Peter 3:18Christ died once for all time concerning sins, a righteous person for unrighteous ones, that he might led alive in the spirit” (WTBTS, 1985:334). They add that “Jesus rose as a spirit or gas, invisible to everyone only to the witnesses appointed before the creation.” They even use 1 Corinthians 15:45: “It is even so written: ‘the first man became a living soul.’ The last Adam [Jesus Christ, who was perfect as was Adam when created] became a life-giving spirit.” (p.334). In other words, they simply deny the bodily resurrection of Jesus as written in the Scriptures like Luke 24:36-39, which reads “a spirit does not have flesh and bones as u see as I have.” The JWs seem to ignore that Christ rose with a heavenly body, which is a new spiritual body, not as they present their Christ.

The Witnesses teach in Kolwezi: “Jesus did not rise from the dead himself, because he did not live or exist between his death and resurrection” (WTBTS, 1985:423). They further contend that Jesus did not physically rise from the dead. His body was destroyed by God and He was resurrected only as a spiritual being (WTBTS, 1985:333-334).

Many students involved in atheism easily accept this philosophy in Kolwezi. However, Stoker and Van Wyk (2014:7-9), in their guidelines for responding to JW, pose the following counter questions: If this was so, Jesus would surely not have said at his death: “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit” (Luke 23:46)? Then He would not have anything to give to the Father! This also raises another question from Scripture: why does Jesus assert before his death that he Himself would raise his body from the dead? This position can be possible if his spirit continued to exist after death. According to John2:19-27: “Jesus answered them, ‘destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days’…the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said.”

The Apostle Paul emphasizes the resurrection of Jesus, “because if Christ did not rise from the dead our faith is simply vain” (1 Cor15:14-19). Apart from the above-mentioned verse that states that Jesus was resurrected, other passages also testify that the Father (1 Cor15:15) and the Holy Spirit (1 Pet3:18) raised Him from the dead. After his death and resurrection,
when Jesus appeared to his disciples, they thought they saw a ghost (Luke 24:37). However, Jesus promptly refutes this view and shows that He has a physical body (v. 39). Jesus proves to them that He is not a spiritual being by inviting them to look at him, touch Him and He even ate in front of them (vv. 39-43). The disciple reacted with joy because of the fact that it indeed was the physical Jesus (verse 4) who has risen. Even Thomas finally believed once he could really see the wounds and Jesus invited him to touch these marks (John 20:20-29). Also, the angels at the open tomb emphasized this fact (Luke 24:4-6): “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!”

These testimonies from the Scriptures refute the JW position that Jesus was merely raised from the dead as a spiritual being. In light of this, the researcher agrees with Stoker (2014:10-14): “This rendition of the JW reminds strongly of the story that was circulated among the Jews (Matt 28:11-15) that Jesus did not really raise from the dead, but that the disciples stole his body. The same position has been seen in Gnosticism and Arianism, which reduce Jesus to simply a creature who did not rise from the dead. This is evidently an attitude of unbelief contrary to the Biblical testimony on this matter.”

4.5.8 The Second Coming

The JW teaches that the Second Coming of Jesus (His “being present”) already took place in 1914 in terms of an invisible coming (Russell,1886:9-25;1891:79-102). Here obvious questions arise: Where do the Scriptures testify that Jesus has returned “invisibly”? In contrast, the Biblical testimony makes it clear that the Second Coming will be such that every eye will see Him.

In Kolwezi, the JW emphasizes Russell’s calculation of the Second Coming. He said: “the times of the Gentiles extend to 1914, and the heavenly Kingdom will not have full sway till then” (WT, 1 July1979:5). Russell was the first to calculate dates or to suggest a chronology. Before him, there were John Aquila Brown, the first to use the figure of 2520 years. For Brown, the end for gentiles was to be in 1844. William Miller, his disciple prophesied that the end would be between 21 March 1843 and 21 March 1844. Bowen corrected the dates to 1874, but it failed again (Harris 1998:221-222). The JW assert that what Russell predicted is the “invisible return of Christ.” This is different to what the Scripture teaches on the subject.

The researcher agrees with Stoker and Van Wyk on the following response: If Jesus did come in 1914 as the JW allege, the question is, why were they themselves not aware of this coming, or of the place where it was supposed to have taken place? In this regard, one should ask whether this Christ of the JW is not one of the false Christs, false messiahs? The Biblical
testimony is clear on this matter. In Acts1:11, the angels report: “Jesus will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.” Revelations testifies: “He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him” (Rev1:7). Paul asserts: “The Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command … and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air…” (1 Thess4:16-17).

The Biblical evidence above shows that Jesus is coming again – physically visible to everyone, also to “those who pierced him.” The issue in this case is the JW’s New World Translation, in which the Bible is mistranslated and misquoted according to their founders’ creed. When the Biblical message is read with these “glasses”, the Biblical truth will be misconstrued. Instead of “invisible” (according to the JW), Jesus lives in each true Christian (Gal2:20) since He rose from the dead. In Matthew 24:23-37 Jesus himself warns his disciples: “At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it” (v.23). When Christ really comes He will be visible from east to west (v.27).

4.5.9 Continued Existence after Death

At the burial of a relative, a JW preacher emphasizes the fact that man does not continue to exist after death. This statement was made in August 2014 in Kolwezi. The preacher contradicted the Christian teaching on “heavenly life” (John 11:25-26). This depicts the situation in Kolwezi, where JW challenges Christians by denying life after death, refuting the physical resurrection.

Stoker (2014:14-15) refutes the JW view by analysing Biblical passages and showing that the Scriptures teaches a conscious and continued existence after death:

- Stephen prays to Jesus to receive his spirit (Acts 7:56, 59).
- Paul desires to depart and be with Christ (Phil 1:23).
- When we leave this earth, we will live with God (2 Cor5:6-9).
- At the transfiguration, Moses and Elijah appear to Jesus [after their deaths] (Matt17:1-13).
- The souls of people talk and wear clothes (Rev6:9-11).
- Who believe in Jesus will live, even though he dies (John 11:25-26).
- Death is without sting and has been conquered by Christ (1Cor 15:55-57).
- Death cannot separate the believer from God (Rom 8:38-39).
4.5.10 Hell

The issue of hell was the genesis of Russell’s rebellion against the Christian doctrine (Bowman, 1995:12-14). He refuted the Christian interpretation of “hell” as “God’s punishment in ‘fire’.” But, the Bible does not support his point of view. Jesus refers to the “torment” of suffering for those who go to hell (Luke 16:19-31; Mark 9:43-45; Matt 5:22; 18:19; Matt 21:31-32). The story of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19:23-28 is vivid evidence of God’s punishment of wicked people, even though those persons were created in his own image. He is also a God of justice.

In JW translations of the Bible, the verse about “hell” is translated by “grave” so that it means “the world of dead.” (WTBTS,1985:168-182). Their teaching is found resumed in their book, *Reasoning from the Scripture*. They seem to confess what Christianity believes indirectly. If we look at the broader definition in their book, they see hell as follows: “The Hebrew word She’ohl’ and its Greek equivalent hai’des, which refer, not to an individual burial place(grave), but to the common grave of dead mankind; also thege’enna, which is used as a symbol of eternal destruction.” They subsequently say: “both in Christendom and in many non-Christian religions it is taught that hell is a place inhabited by demons and where the wicked (persons) after death are punished.” They put in parentheses that some believe that this is with torment (WTBTS, 1985:169).

The JW in Kolwezi holds a certain view: “The Hell is merely a resting-place for the dead and not a place of punishment” (WTBTS,1888:126; WTBTS, 1901:342) wrote this statement as a form of self-consolation to escape the Day of Judgement (WTBTS, 1905:1-10). According to Harris (1998:118-119), Russell argued that the Babylonians and other heathen empires believed in hell. Harris answers this by saying: “If this statement of JW were true, God would not punish those who did badly against his law, name, and his servants. Yet: the enemies of God are consumed by a raging fire (Hebrews 10:26-31).” Harris (1998) denounces the position of JW by pointing out that they believe in eternal life only, but deny its opposite, which Jesus terms the eternal punishment (Matt 25:46).

Several Scripture passages describe hell as a terrible place of punishment for the unbelievers (Dan 12:2; Matt 5:22; 8:12; Mark 9:42-49; John10:31-32; Rev 19:20-21; 20:12-15; 21:8). In these passages the Biblical message is clear: as opposed to eternal life (in the glory of God), there is eternal death, which will be terrible and will burn day and night over all the wicked (those who do not believe in Him and disobey him). Thus, to emphasize the opposite of eternal punishment, their statement on “Hell” seems a misrepresentation of the Scripture by the JW
Though child deaths are still prevalent among the JW, they continue to preach in Kolwezi that God forbids blood transfusions in the Bible (WTBTS, 1985:72-73). The major reason of this statement is because they feel that life, which is found in the blood, is not considered to be transfused with the blood.

The question would be: What exactly does the Bible prohibit? Biblical guidelines on this matter does forbid drinking of blood because the idea existed among the nations of old that blood contains special powers. This raises another question, whether this ‘drinking’ was meant literally or allegorically? In Acts 15 believers from the heathendom are asked to respect the Jewish believers if they do not drink blood (nor eat sacrificial meat of animals that have been strangled to death). However, Paul stated that the new believers from the heathens may participate in these activities as long as it does not cause those who are weak in the faith to stumble (1 Cor 10:25-30). It is Researcher’s view that “Blood transfusion as a medical intervention is not drinking blood ceremonially and, therefore, not breaking the commandment against consuming blood.” Moreover, according to Stoker (2014:5-6) and other scholars, “if one refuses a blood transfusion, and someone dies in the process, the sixth commandment is broken ‘Do not kill’ – which evidently is more serious than a law prohibiting the consuming of blood.”

Gruss (1970:104) says that “Most of the major doctrines and denials of the Witnesses are found in the standpoint of orthodoxy their doctrinal system which is one chiefly of denials.” Gruss continue to say, “these include a denial of (1) the Trinity, of the deity of Christ, the personality of the personality of the Holy Spirit, the inherent immortality of the soul, the total depravity of man, the bodily resurrection of Christ, the atonement, the finished work of Christ and the need of the new birth for all, the second coming of Christ, eternal punishment.” In concluding, Gruss goes on to say “there is an almost agreement on the foregoing denials by both Russell and Rutherford. Russell and Rutherford and the Watchtower Society of today form an unbroken ‘apostolic succession’ - Apostles of Denials.”

4.6 The JW in Relation to Heretical Teachings such as Gnosticism, Docetism and Arianism

4.6.1 Apostles of Denial

The Watchtower, like other cults, denies several doctrines of Christianity. Gruss (1970:82-90) calls them “Apostles of denials.” It is true that the JW deny various teachings of Christianity, but only those that are prevalent in Kolwezi are examined. Gruss mentions a few major doctrines concerned: 1) Trinity; 2) Personality of the Holy Spirit; 3) Doctrine of Christ: His
person (nature). Those denials are also parts of the doctrines of other groups such as Gnosticism, Docetism and Arianism. Regarding the case of JW, since they are based on Arian theology, they take the same position on systematic theology. Docetism and Gnosticism are previous heresies that possibly influenced Arianism as well.

4.6.2 Denial of the Trinity

Gruss (1970:82) points out the JW’s teaching: “There was a time when Jehovah was all alone in Universal space. God was not the father until His first creation. God was sonless… by the creation he became a father” (WTBTS, 1946b:25). By this they basically deny the Trinity as doctrine or rather, they view it as a “false doctrine” (WTBTS, 1946a:386). According to the JW, the origin of the Trinity is found in ancient Babylonian paganism of around 2200 B.C. It was brought into the Christian Church approximately in the second century, and entrenched in the Nicene Creed of 325 AD (WTBTS, 1946b:100-110). However, this is not correct in view of the historical evidences (Gruss, 1970:108; Duggar, 1985). Gruss disagrees with their position showing that “After starting with no evidence, misrepresenting orthodoxy, using Scripture out of context, not understanding the meaning of a word, misrepresenting the source of the Trinity doctrine, bringing in irrelevant material and changing the events of church history, the JW make a monstrous conclusion that Satan is the originator of the Trinity doctrine” (WTBTS, 1946b:101).

This denial confirms the fact that JW is a cult and not a Christian religious institution, seeing that the latter accepts in faith decisions made by the early church under guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is true that the word Trinity is not found in Scripture. However, the content and theme of this doctrine underlies the Biblical message: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

4.6.3 Denial of the Personality of the Holy Spirit

According to Gruss (1970:82), the JW assumes that “the Holy Spirit is not a person as Christians claims, but an impersonal force.” In their book Let God Be True (WTBTS, 1946b:108), They state on this case, saying “So the Holy Spirit is the invisible active force of the Almighty God which moves his servants to do his will.” This conception has been incorporated into the New World Translation, where the word “spirit”, when applied to the Holy Spirit, is not capitalized. Jesus is referred to as “a god, or a God” and Holy Spirit is named “spirit”, which implies that the JW strongly deny the divinity of the Holy Spirit as it is taught by the mainstream Christian tradition.
4.6.4 Denial of Doctrine of Christ: His Person

Gruss (1970:86) describes how the JW teach that Christ in the person of the archangel Michael was “a god.” The JW honours Christ as a mighty one, but not God. Furthermore, Gruss (1970:86) points out how the incarnation and the two natures of Christ are denied and the JW teaches “that Jesus (while on earth) was a perfect man, and nothing less.” Gruss concurs with Dencher that the JW teaching in this case is heretical; it is a heresy compared to what the Bible teaches of the personality of Christ and regarding his two natures. According to Ryrie (2005b:28, 40-45), “Christ was 100% human, and 100% divine.”

4.7 Influence of Arianism

The obvious question is, from where does the JW and their predecessors derive these heretical teachings? The Church Fathers’ history recorded major heretical teachings such as Gnosticism, Arianism, and many others aimed against the person of Christ. However, for the purpose of the present study the focus is on the background of the JW teachings regarding the nature of Christ. Before investigating the influence of Gnosticism, it should be noted that the teaching of Arius impacted Russell’s view.

Arius (ca.250-336 AD) was a Christian presbyter in Alexandria, Egypt (Rusch, 1980:30-40). Arianism is the theological teaching attributed to Arius regarding the relationship of God to the Son of God (Jesus of Nazareth) (Schaff, 1879:24-26). According Rusch (1980:17-24) Arius contended that “the Son of God was a subordinate entity to God the Father.” He disagreed with the concept of omoousias from the Greek, which means that there was the “same substance between the Father and the Son.” It seems Arius opted for a different understanding of omoiousias (Rusch, 1980:31-32). After intense strife in the church, Arius was declared a heretic by the first Council of Nicaea of 325.

Hall (2002:35-36) Highlights Arius’ Position towards Bishop Alexander:

We do not agree with him [Alexander, the bishop of Alexandria] when he says publicly, “always Father, always Son,” “Father and Son together,” “The Son exists unbegotten with God,” “The eternal begotten,” “Unbegotten-only-one,” “Neither in thought nor by a single instant is God before the Son,” “Always God, always Son,” “The Son is of God himself.”

Arius refused to accept Alexander’s formulations. Alexander’s position raised a number of issues that appeared insurmountable to Arius. According to Hall (2002:36), as much as Arius struggled to maintain the unique status of the Son, he is still left with a mere creature, however exalted such a one may be. Arius discussed his view with Eusebius his friend: “Can such a
creature save humanity from the awful reality of sin? Can such creature be worshipped?” This leaves the question: If the Son does share a divine nature with the Father and the Spirit, how can Arius find confusion there?

4.7.1 Arian Philosophy

The Arian concept of Christ is “that the Son of God did not always exist, but was created by – and is therefore distinct from God the Father.” According to Rowan (2002:98), this belief of the JW is grounded in the passage from the Gospel of John where Christ asserts: “You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the father, for the Father is Greater than I” (John14:28). The Watchtower adheres to the Arian concept of Christ. Therefore, Rowan (2002:102-105) explains further:

“Arianism can be defined as those teachings attributed to Arius. These teachings are in opposition to the traditional Trinitarian Christological doctrine, as testified in the New Testament, and determined by the first Council of Nicaea, and which are maintained by the mainstream churches of Christ throughout. Visibly, Arianism denies the following vital doctrines:

- the deity of Christ;
- his equality with and of a similar substance as the Father;
- the structure of the Trinity;
- all Trinitarian sacraments such as baptism, ordination, and the commissioning of evangelists and apostles.

It is also evident that Arianism denies the personality of the Holy Spirit, whom Arianist followers believe to be ‘A powerful force of God’ and not a person as Christian teaches.”

The JW make use of key Scriptures of the Arianists: John1:1-2; 14:28; Proverbs 8:22 and various others. However, a thorough Bible study indicates that the Arians’ and JW’s application differs radically from the Biblical testimony and how it is interpreted. Arius did refute his condemnation and that has led to various disagreements within the Christian Church. With the possible exception of the Protestant Reformation, the Arian controversy is said to have ignited the most forceful and powerful theological and political conflict (Schaff; et al., 2007:100-109). It seems that the conflict between Arianism and Trinitarian beliefs was the first major doctrinal confrontation in the Church after the legalization of Christianity by the Roman Emperors Constantine I and Licinius (Schaff et al., 2007:100-109).
4.7.2 Arius’ Doctrine

Liichow (2004) describes the central heresy of Arianism as the view that “Jesus was not fully divine although still related to God as a son to a father.” Therefore, the exact nature of this relation between Jesus and the Father was widely discussed in the early church from 318 to 381 AD, and required 18 councils for the matter to be settled, beginning with the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD and ending with the Council of Constantinople in 381. In his presentations, Arius summarized his viewpoints about this relation in the following four statements:

(a) The Son or the Word of God must be a creature, *ktisma* or *poiema*.

(b) As a creature, the Son or Word of God must have a beginning.

(c) The Son can have no communion with, and indeed no direct knowledge of, his father.

(d) The Son should be liable to change (*treptos*; *alloiotes*).

According Liichow (2004) and confirmed by various scholars, e.g., Grudem (1992); Ryrie (2005); Walter (1992) the result of this summarized teaching of Arius was that it reduced the “Word of God (Jesus of Nazareth) to a demigod. Even if Jesus infinitely transcended all other creatures, He himself was no more than a creature in relation to God, the Father.” The controversy came to be expressed by two Greek words:

- *Homo-ousias*, meaning the Son is of the same essence as the Father.
- *Homoi-ousias* meaning “The son is of similar essence as the Father”, likened to the Father. (Arian view)

Even though it appears to be the same Greek words, the focus is on the meaning or interpretation, where the doctrinal beliefs differ strictly. The Nicene Creedal formula that the “Son is ‘homo-ousias’ with the Father”, also became the orthodox view and Arianism was condemned. As a result, all those who embrace the Arian view are considered heretics. This applies to cults such as the JW and many other adherents of Anti-Trinitarianism.

4.8 The Influence of the JW in the Christian Church

Before mentioning the influence that heresy exerted on the doctrinal aspect of the church, it should be noted that Arianism is not the oldest recorded heresy. Church historians mention other Christological heresies, namely those of Ebionitism, Gnosticism and adoptionism. However, the study focuses on those heresies that have comprised the Christian doctrines among the JW.
Schaff et al (2007:24-26) points out that “Ebionitism is a Jewish heretical movement based on a wrong view on the nature of Jesus.” Thus, this heresy entails the view that Jesus was in nature merely a man, which denies his divinity altogether. The Ebionites were an offshoot of the specifically Jewish form of Christianity, which was a potent force in the apostolic age (Liichow, 2004). The church fathers Hippolytus and Tertullian link this movement to a certain Ebion, presumably the apocryphal founder of the sect (Judaizers) (Tertullian, s.a.).

Another major heresy that influenced Arianism is Gnosticism. Pienaar (2014:205) mentions that it is difficult to pinpoint the origin of this movement due to the lack of historical data. Traditionally, Gnosticism was considered to be a Christian phenomenon, led by a desire to understand the ontology of divinity. For Pienaar (2014:205 citing Harnack 1958:229; Hill, 2013:24-25) Gnosticism entails the synthesis of Oriental religions and Greek philosophy and the simple Gospel. The promoters of Gnosticism were Simon Magus, Marcion, Saturninus, Cerinthus and Basilides. This view comes from the Greek word gnosis which means knowledge. Liichow points out: “The Gnosticists emphasized the verb ‘to know’. They taught that ‘matter is evil and the Spirit is good’. This led to Docetism, which advocated a clear separation between the material and spiritual world” (Schaff, 2002:34-42).

According to Christian Gnostics (Lossl, 2010:98-217), matter is evil and God could not actually be incarnated in a human body. God only appeared in human form and only appeared to suffer; it was an illusion. Thereby Gnosticism denies the incarnation of Christ and his humanity. For them, Jesus could operate as a pure spiritual being in an evil world without being contaminated by it (Norris,1980:103-112; Rusch,1980:63-129). Their main focus is that a soul should possess the correct ‘gnosis’ to be saved. In this sense, salvation is achieved by knowledge and experience. Tertullian and Irenaeus in time replied to adherents of this movement and defended Christianity (Norris,1980:61-72).

4.9 The Modern Influence of Arianism

Frassetto (2003:128) relates how in the 8th century, the north European kingdoms were conquered by Nicene neighbours (Ostrogoths, Vandals, Burgundians). However, much of south-eastern and central Europe, including many of the Goths and Vandals, had embraced Arianism. Thus, Arianism gained popularity in the Roman Empire, north of Africa, especially in Germany. According to Kuiper (1964:38-900), the church was divided in two parts, the West being under the orthodox or Nicean influence, believing in Trinity, and the East under the Arian influence, which are anti-Trinitarians believers. The Encyclopaedia Britannica furthers the discussion as follows: “In modern times some Unitarians are virtually Arians in that they are unwilling either to reduce Christ to a mere human being or to attribute to him a divine nature
identical with that of the Father” (Lossl, 2010:172-188). However, it is interesting that their doctrine was called Macedonians and the adherents were called pneumatomachi (Greek for “fighters of the spirit”).

The Christology of JW is also generally regarded as Arian in origin, given their views on the development of the Trinity (WTBTS, 2001:17-21). In connection with this view, the JW also believe that the Holy Spirit is not an actual person, but rather God’s divine breath, God’s power in action. This view is related to the ancient doctrine of Macedonians.

The JWs’ beliefs reveal certain common features that they share with the Arianists’ view:

We believe in one true God who is the creator of all. He is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. He sent his Son to earth to be sacrifice for our sins. He is a separate being from his son, Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the power of God and not a separate being with a separate consciousness. We do not believe in the teaching of the Trinity, in which the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three parts of a single being who is God. We believe the Father and the Son are separate beings with separate consciousness’s and that the Holy Spirit is not a consciousness being but instead the power of God.

4.10 The Elements of Freemasonry Imbedded in the Doctrines of the JW

John Salza (2006:217), a former Freemason and Catholic apologist, stresses the following regarding this movement: “As Christians, it is important that we educate the public (Mason and non-Masons alike) about the errors of Freemasonry and how Masonry is harmful to the Christian faith.” He continues by urging Christians: “But we must do more than educate. We must also win the spiritual battle for Christ. To that end, we must constantly pray for the conversion of Freemasons” (Salza, 2006:217; Schmidt, 1980). A number of common beliefs can be pointed out that link the JW to the Freemasons (FM).

4.10.1 The JW Belief Concerning God

Both the JW and FM believe in Jehovah as “a crucial word and name “, and thus provide the dogmatic basis to understand their God. Russell states in this regard: “Jehovah is identified as a personal name of God” (WTBTS, 1985:31, Salza, 2006:71). In addition, Jehovah is a very significant word in Freemasonry. It is also an extremely important name for both Russell (JW) and Mackey (FM). They use the term “Great Builders” (G). Both Russell and Mackey believe that “Jehovah gave his power unto someone which is inferior, ‘a god’” (Mackey. 1871, Vol.4).
4.10.2 Belief Concerning Jesus Christ

Both movements of the JW and the FM believe that Jesus was only a good man, and also a created man, but not God almighty. Russell, (1889:209-218) states: “Jesus is the first creature of God, and he is actually the archangel Michael.

Salza explains the historical viewpoint: “Masonry’s idea of equality of religions is based on the supposed equality of their founders. So, Jesus is thus viewed by the Freemasonry lodge as no more than a particular, finite, historical figure, who reveals the divine not in an exclusive way, but in a way complementary with other revelatory figures.” For the FM, all books are equal to the Bible (Masonic Bible:44). However, this view becomes problematic and dogmatic. In the Biblical narrative, for example, the Roman centurion testifies: “Truly this Man (Jesus) was a son of God!” (Mark 15:39). According to the Biblical testimony, the view of the JW and FM are not from the Spirit of God, it may even be the spirit opposed to Christ, or antichrist (1 John 4:1-13; 2:20-27).

4.10.3 Belief Concerning the Future

Both the JW and FM believe that there is a future of a golden age for humankind. Both Russell and Mackey deny ‘hell’ “as a doctrine which is repugnant” (Mackey, 1887:336). It should be queried why these movements see the judgement of God as repugnant. This indicates a distorted and reductionist image of God. God is Love, but God is also Justice. God cannot be expected to reward the innocent saints and the guilty perpetrators similarly. The Biblical testimony rightly deals with the themes of hell and heaven in the New Testament.

4.10.4 Belief Concerning the Church

The FM’s view on the Church is as follows: “The church is a mysterious body which is invisible and secret, destined only to those who are initiated according to their efforts and progress” (Mackey, 1869:270).

Mackey also explains that the name of Jesus Christ is deliberately left out of Masonic prayers. According to him, these omissions are slight but necessary modifications (Mackey, 1869:272). Both movements view the church and its steeple as a pyramid. In 1910, Russell travelled to Egypt, where he visited and studied the ancient pyramids. After his visit he stated the assumption that pyramids are and have a secret message from God (WTBTS, 1910:70-73). A change can be seen in the Russell’s books and on the cover of different volumes of Studies in the Scriptures after this event. There he placed signs and symbols of primordial times such
as the winged sun disk. This particular representation depicts the higher degree, namely the 33rd degree of the FM (Mackey, 1871:24-29).

Salza (2006:52-56) points out that Russell replied to some letters that “there is no problems between Freemasonry and Christian faith.” However, Salza refutes this statement by asserting: “Syncretism is a logical consequence of indifferentism” (Salza, 2006:54). This becomes clear when an overview of Masonic syncretism reveals that Masonry draws from many religions. A Masonic writer, Manly P. Hall, explains “Hundreds of religions have brought their gifts of wisdom to its altars” (Hall, 2002:176). It is a known fact that Freemasonry incorporates much from the world’s three largest religions. This means that Freemasonry draws from Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and also from deism, Gnosticism and the accompanying pagan religions. How can a Christian believer remain true to his/her faith within such a structure of polytheism?

Church warden asserts that the symbols of the winged sun disk are used only by the initiates of the 33rd level of Masonry, who know the interpretation. This statement is supported by Robert (1896:4-7, 24-29), who points out that the craft and its symbols opens the door to Masonic symbolism. Someone who is not initiated would be unable to use these symbols.

Wagner (1912:4-5) concurs with Roberts’ statement and indicates that Freemasonry requires interpretation. Russell was possibly able to interpret the symbols of winged sun disk. It is, however, a known fact that Freemasonry was interested in some leaders or presidents of organizations such as Russell to underline their philosophy. Russell died on 31 October 1916, and as he requested himself, he was dressed in the clothes of a Roman priest, with the Pyramid as model for his tombstone of 9 x 7 feet (Salza, 2006:106-132).

4.10.5 Symbols of the Pyramid on Russell’s Tombstone

The tombstone is an object of remembrance of the life of the deceased person. His family and friends should come commemorate his contribution to the community. It is also a place to read his last wishes or a summary of his work among his people. Designs are put on tombstones to represent the body to which the deceased belonged. Pyramids are very significant in Egyptian culture and science. Egyptian occultism is also represented by pyramids. Many great leaders went to visit and learn about Egyptian mysticism to know about the Egyptian dynasty and power. Russell requested a pyramid as symbol on the tombstone instead of the cross. This pyramid is an Egyptian link and it has nothing to do with Christianity.
4.10.6 The Graphic Symbols of the Commander

In Freemasonry, the Commander (or Preceptor in Canada), is one of the concordant bodies of Freemasonry commandeers of the Knight Templars (hereafter abbreviated as KT). The Knight Templar can be considered as FM who have achieved the degree of Royal Arch-Mason and also Royal and Select Master-mason. The Latin inscription in hoc signo vinces literally means “In this sign you will conquer.” Freemasonry is one of the largest fraternities in the world. The symbol of pyramids and temples do have a particular place in Freemasonry and (as mentioned), some ancient legend has it that the Stone Masons built the temple of King Solomon (Robert, 1896:17-24).

The tombstone of Russell has a pyramid on the right next to the entrance to the great Masonic centre in Pittsburgh. This tombstone belongs to the JWs, Watchtower Bible Society, and is not Masonic in nature (WTBTS, 1946a:25-27; Albert, C.W., 1913).

The question remains whether one can conclude without reservations that Russell was a part of (or secret member) of the Freemasonry? This should be an appropriate subject for future research. This leads to a particular question whether it is possible that an organization such as the Freemasons has been involved in establishing cults that syncretizes the Christian belief. Moreover, has such a movement been existing over several centuries? There are various examples that suggest an antagonism between the FM and mainstream Christianity. One such example is the FM’s direct omission of the name of Christ from their prayers (Salza, 2006:56).

4.10.7 Evidence Suggesting an Affinity between Russell and Freemasonry

The above-mentioned facts point to a certain relationship between Russell and the FM.

- Russell organized meetings and conventions in the Hall of Freemasonry (WTBTS, 1916:96) instead of neutral centres such private or a Christian centres. For instance, on 8 March 1903, they held a meeting at Fort Wayne Hall Maceab. There was the General Convention in Atlanta in the Hall of Knight of Pythias in 1904. The Convention of Washington took place in the Hall of ‘Odd fellows’.

- Russell was buried in a Masonic cemetery. It seems there was no place in a public cemetery. In every town or city, the public cemetery is opened to everyone. Some communities such Muslims, Hindus, Jews and the Masons have special places for their members.
• His tombstone was in the form of a massive pyramid and contained Masonic signs and symbols. These are indications of a higher level within the FM.

• It was obvious that he placed Masonic symbols on the cover of many of his publications. For instance, from 1891-1933 the symbols of the Knights Templar were placed on the cover of the *Watchtower*. On the cover of the WTBTS of 1 December 1916 there was a Masonic symbol as well (WTBTS, 1 Dec 1916).

• Russell’s funeral was filled with rites and symbols of Freemasonry, even though the Watchtower supervised the ceremony (Robert, 1896).

• Russell’s family also seemed to be involved. Russell was not the only family member who belonged to the Knights Templar (KT) and the FM. According to various sources, the family has several members who held high levels in the FM. Some references can serve as guides (Low, 1963:45).

4.11 Testimonies of Those Who Left the JW

The testimonies are important to show that the aim of this study may be realized if the mainstream Christian church became involved in missionary activities in Kolwezi. To be precise, the testimonies that have been selected and reproduced below provide a picture of weakness within the JW.

4.11.1 In the USA

This section examines the testimonies of Edmond C. Gruss, Ted Dencher, William Jr. Schnell, James M. Aiken, William C. Stevenson cited by Gruss (1974), and Franz (2005).

Another reason for placing the testimonies is to examine the reasons why they left the heretical organization, and what problems they experienced in their faith after living within the society of JW

4.11.1.1 Edmond C. Gruss

Gruss was baptized at approximately the age of ten. When he was seventeen, in his last year of high school, a friend invited him to attend a Bible study at a Scripture bound and soul-loving Baptist pastor. The pastor presented Christ differently than what he was used to among the JW. Gruss relates: “He presented Christ to me and then he got down on his knees and he prayed for me.” Gruss (1970:309-314) continued: "I left his home that night a bit shaken, but amused that he should try to change that which I believed that I had the ‘truth’." A short while
later Gruss learned that “the Truth was Jesus Christ (John 14:6).” Finally, one a night in his own room, Gruss accepted Christ as his personal Saviour. Gruss testified that he knew from “that time onward that a change came into my life” (1970:312). Even though he was saved, Gruss (1972) still had to face many doubts about the orthodox doctrines while reading the New World Translation of the JW. However, he decided to quit reading any WTBTS publications and began studying the Christian Bible and commentaries. He experienced constant spiritual growth with the encouragement of Christian friends.

4.11.1.2 Ted Dencher

Dencher’s (1961:5-6) testimony is simple and deep in the sense that he goes straight to the point. He was involved in the Watchtower society from 1946 up to 1957. He qualified that time as “slavery”, because he used the word “deliverance” when he left the society.

Dencher testifies about his conversion: “It was then that I was invited to present Watchtower beliefs against the gospel of Christ. A series of meetings were held, totalling many hours of discussion.” Dencher emphasizes: “One Biblical fact was impressed upon my mind: The Bible seemed to teach that Jesus Christ is God! But I believed it had to be proved or disproved one way or the other.” Dencher was obliged to scrutinize the Scriptures for over three years. This involved a study of the New Testament’s Greek text. The evidence was overwhelming. His conclusion was simply that “Jesus is Almighty God” (Dencher, 1961:5). Not only did Dencher find that Jesus is God; Jesus also accomplished atonement for humanity’s sins on Calvary.

The problem that Dencher had to face was to deal with the conflicting testimonies between the Watchtower and the Bible. Dencher indicates: “I had to choose one and reject the other. Which should it be?” After days of inner struggle, Dencher expressed his decision by answering to a letter from an elder of the society. Dencher replied: “As you want me to say what I think of Jesus Christ, Is He man, angel, or God? I am not sure about anything else, but this one thing I know: Jesus was God and He had died for me. God had saved this sinner’s soul” (Dencher, 1961:5-6).

Dencher stated his problem: he underwent indoctrination by the Watchtower, as is the case with numerous others. They have been told never to read other literature on this topic because it was deemed ‘ungodly’. The implication was that the truth was only to be found in the Watchtower society. However, Dencher expressed the opposite view. He called the teachings of JW ‘heresy’ (Dencher, 1961).
4.11.1.3 William Jr. Schnell

William Schnell presented his testimony to show why he and others like him have left the Society. He also underwent indoctrination for an extended period. He termed it as that he was a Watchtower slave for 30 years. His testimony is similar to many others, but in his case the ‘slavery’ was persistent. He never thought that he would one day leave the society. That was the day when he and his family received a former Witness member at home. He left the Society and became a Christian. They shared the Scriptures, especially John19:33-37 ff. about the body of Christ. This led to a heated debate and their visitor’s answers had touched them. She showed them how the WTBTS of 15 January (1956:49) was wrong and false compared to the Bible’s testimony. When she left, they began searching the Scripture and comparing it to publications of the Society. In the process they found that the Scripture’s “true theology does not need correction” (Schnell, 1956:198-199). They began to ask why the Society reverts to changing their theology each time they face criticism. In light of this William testifies: “I was amazing to find that orthodox Christianity was really true.” He discovered that the Bible taught such doctrines as: Trinity, deity of Christ, the personality of the Holy spirit, the immortality of the soul, and the visible return of Christ – all the doctrines the Watchtower society had brainwashed us into rejecting” (Schnell, 1959:199-201).

The main point was that the salvation taught by the Society was meaningless compared to the testimony of their visiting friend. The majority of Witnesses realized that they were still ‘unsaved’ and needed to experience true salvation. After a few months of resisting, they decided one night to believe in Christ as their personal Saviour, in a simple prayer in which they surrendered their life to Christ. They were not allowed to leave the Society, but since they stood firm on their reading of the Scripture, they were finally ‘disfellowshipped’ from the Society. Their fellow members were made aware of them and they were isolated completely from the community. However, they had a new community and a new family to which they belonged (Schnell, 1956:49).

4.11.1.4 Raymond Franz

Raymond Franz worked for the Watchtower Society for 40 years. He was a member of the fourth President of the Society. Franz had fulfilled a higher function in the organization, as the higher director and member of the Society’s Body of Governance. However, after the debacle of 1975 when the prophecy had failed to realize and the world did not end, doubts raised within his mind. He began questioning the organization on issues such as the different prophecies
that presidents of the Society declared in 1914, 1925 and 1975. He queried: Was the prophesized times God’s time? Are the WT following God’s timetable or man’s schedule?

Franz wrote various articles and books, including the *Crisis of conscience*, in which he criticized the moral conduct that bordered on “injustice.” It seemed to him that the measures of suspending members were arbitrary and the conduct of the leaders went unpunished (Franz, 2005:237-255). As a result, Franz was suspended or ‘disfellowshipped’.

### 4.11.2 Other Testimonies of Conversions

The following testimonies of converted JW are provided by Gruss.

#### 4.11.2.1 James M. Aiken

James M. Aiken, a former JW, wrote an article titled, *I was brainwashed by the Jehovah’s Witnesses*. According to Gruss (1970:261), Aiken too found peace and security in accepting Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

#### 4.11.2.2 Common Friend to Dencher and Aiken

A former JW and a common friend to Dencher and Aiken anonymously wrote his testimony:

“I was drawn into the W.T. [Watchtower] organization in the fall of 1958, and was soon brainwashed to the extent of undergoing JW baptism in 1960 … But I did not longer remain in W.T. truth, for by 1961, I was entertaining serious doubts concerning the movement. Firstly, doubts concerning the literature. Of course after doing a bit of background reading I found to see the utter temporal relativism of W.T. truth. Conflicting doctrines were held at various times, all with the infallible authority of Jehovah behind them. This led to serious doubts in my mind” (cited by Gruss, 1970:261).

From this testimony it is evident that, should the JW read the Bible with Christian commentaries, they may see the light of the true gospel.

#### 4.11.2.3 William C. Stevenson

Stevenson (1967:10), a former JW, recounts his experience after leaving the Witnesses:

“One has been brainwashed so thoroughly that one has to take a definite stand against the “Big Brother” complex which one has developed… But I have been so thoroughly brainwashed into thinking that all religion, apart from the Witnesses, originates with the Devil, that as yet I have been unable to bring myself to attend a church service (cited by Gruss, 1970:262).
Stevenson (as cited by Gruss, 1970:262) concludes: “The study methods of JW are in fact a subtle form of indoctrination or brain-washing.”

4.11.3 Testimonies from within Kolwezi

The testimonies from the former Witnesses are needed to demonstrate that the research can fulfil its goals: Bring back Christians who were influenced by both the Watchtower Society and Branhamism in the world, and particularly in the city of Kolwezi, to the Biblical Jesus.

It stands to reason that the testimonies from Kolwezi will differ extensively according to the context and social environment of Africa. It was also difficult to acquire these testimonies because of the lack of literature on the subject. Therefore, personal interviews were the main way to collect data on this topic.

During 2013, the researcher spent the holidays in the DRC, particularly in Kolwezi, and Lubumbashi, in the Katanga Province. Among the interviewed people, samples of the people were selected who left the Watchtower Society and joined Christianity. Some had joined the Christian congregations in Kolwezi. The following participants were selected: Brother Germain, Sister Jolie, Sergeant Ilunga, Mama Lumbu and Brother Placid.

4.11.3.1 Brother Germain

Brother Germain was 30 years old and resided at Avenue de L’ecole II, Commune Manika in Kolwezi. He was interviewed (6 June 2014) separately from his wife for personal reasons in the office. The brother also needed some security measures, for instance he did not provide his address and cell phone numbers for fear of reprisal from the JW. Most of the time the JW recommend hate and total disagreement with the recipient of ‘disfellowship’ in their constitution (WTBTS, 1952:703; 1952:599; 1961:420; 1972:175; 1981:28-30).

This brother was a member of the WT Society from early childhood as his parents already were members of the Society. The interview reads as follows:

Q: What did cause you to leave the organization?

A: We lived most of the time impossible life, such sickness, witchcraft, sorcery, death in the family.

Q: Do you pray often, and regularly?

A: Not at all.
Q: How do you explain your presence out of the society?
A: We need a real solution into our life, a real Jesus for our life.

Q: What does the WTBTS teaches about Jesus, Holy Spirit, and salvation?
A: They teach us that Jesus is the firstborn of the creation; the son of God; but not Almighty God. He is god … But the Holy Spirit is the force by which God has created the Universe (Gen1:1-3; John1:1-2). Meanwhile, salvation is only the result to be a fervent member of God’s organization which is WTBTS.

From the responses above, it is evident that the brother still lacks true knowledge of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit to live a genuine life salvation when facing dangers in life. The interview concluded as follows.

Q: Who brought you in this Mirevint Church (church led by Rev. Mufika) of Kolwezi?
A: Brother Symphorian Kazadi, the church secretary. He has invited me to come for prayers and fasting. After hesitations, we came to church and found that the teachings of Christ were very different than that we used in the society. After listening the teaching, we were comforted in our mind, and we decided to continue with that church. Finally, we decided to register for the Christian baptism because I decided to become a ‘Christian’ as I believed in “Christ as my personal Saviour.

4.11.3.2 Sister Jolie Tshilombo

Sister Tshilombo is 28 years old, married to Brother Germaine and a mother of three children. She was a Witness since her childhood. Her parents are pioneers, preachers for many years in Kolwezi. She was interviewed on 17 June 2014 at Good Seed School where she teaches.

Q: What kind of Baptism have you got in the society?
A: The JW baptize in Jehovah’s name. So, I have been baptized in water in the name of Jehovah, to be welcomed in the Kingdom.

Q: What kind of teachings did you receive before the baptism?
A: The JW teaches that the baptism is synonym of new birth; you need to confess sins. They teach also about the Holy Spirit, which is a ‘special force of God’. It is an energy like to help you succeed in life (John 14:16-17); but they teach with emphasis that ‘Trinity is a false doctrine of Christendom’. It is Unbiblical. That there is not ‘three persons of God’ (Matt 28:18-19).

Q: What is a real motivation to leave the Society?
A: A friend of mine shared a revelation concerning my family: ‘something dangerous was in preparation “a death among the children.”’ Some days after, I had a series of dreams in which I was in danger; I shared with my husband and my father: ‘It was like we were in the kingdom hall, and around everyone were dead... we started crying loudly.’ My father encouraged saying: ‘Seek always Jehovah who will grant the solution; if it persists the dreams and sickness, you can seek somewhere else. Among the Witnesses there many problems such witchcraft, sorcery, occultism, evilness. Also, we lack prayers at the Witnesses Kingdom at all.

Q: What change did you expect here in Mirevint Church?

A: We have found first of all prayer. Then, we believed in ‘Christ as personal saviour and Lord’ of our life. We know now that the Holy Spirit as a divine person living within our life everyday’ (John 14:16-17). Almost, my testimony has reached my sister and brother they have followed us here at Mirevint Church of Kolwezi, this year 2014 (Mufika,2005).

Q: What is the reaction from other Witnesses?

A: They very angry and menaces sometimes. But one thing for sure, we have found a real Christ of the Bible (John 1:30-45).

4.11.3.3 Sergeant Ilunga

Sergeant Ilunga is 48 years old and was interviewed on 28 June, 2014 in a restaurant in Kolwezi’s city-centre, New Quo Vadis. The Sergeant was a member of the society for almost 15 years; but he left only the year before the interview. He was a preacher within the WT Society, baptized 14 years ago. His only problem was that he never fathered a child. He had married once, but unfortunately the couple divorced after a few years. Then, after he married sister Lumbu, they lived together 7 years. With Lumbu, the problem was that she suffered two miscarriages and eventually bore one child through God’s grace and by caesarean section.

Q: What caused you to leave the Society?

A: It was the last abortion: My wife was pregnant, and needed some blood, but as JW we cannot do blood transfusion, and effectively, the child passed away. The doctor explained it clearly. Consequently, we decided to resign from the Society because we need a real solution to see the children that God is giving alive. The most cause was the position of the Society’s leadership, which is impassionate dictatorship, inhuman.”

Q: Who brought you here in Mirevint Church?
A: It was a friend of my wife who is a member of this church. While she was at the hospital, she advised my wife to see a pastor of Mirevint. The latter will pray for her and a solution will be found to their problem. Weeks later, we attended the church services, and we’ve been impressed by love, their doctrine which is sound and different of the JW concerning Jesus Christ. Mirevint Church has taught us that Jesus is God, with many testimonies. Finally, we have decided to register for baptism because we believed for sure in Christ as our Saviour and Lord.

Q: Did you receive what you expected?

A: Yes, indeed, since, when we congregated with Mirevint Church, believing in a Trinitarian God, Baptism, we found peace, stability of marriage, and a baby boy called Isaac.

4.11.3.4 Sister Lumbu

Sister Lumbu is a 40-year-old policewoman and she was interviewed on 4 July, 2014 at the researcher’s office in Kolwezi. She is a former Witness, but left the Society after losing a child through a miscarriage in a hospital.

Q: What motivated you to leave the Society?

A: I know death is always there, in and out the Society, but the Rules of WTBTS are inhumane and ungodly. I have escaped death as well. As a Witness, I was powerless to resist against the Devil, and death (Eph 6:10-18).

Q: What do you mean by “powerless” sister Lumbu?

A: If I read in the Bible, the Biblical Jesus was powerful, his disciples were powerful. Now, before sickness, pregnancy, delivery, I fear too much. Then, I needed a Biblical Jesus to believe. When my friend advised me to seek the pastors of Mirevint Church, I just said, I need a real Jesus of the Bible and not like one of the Society.

Q: Do you have what you expected?

A: Yes, of Course. I heard about Jesus, and believed in him as my personal ‘Saviour, Lord, Master, and God’. I believed in his bodily resurrection, and I am not fearing before ‘Hell’ anymore. I found clear the Bible when reading without the Society’s guide literature.
4.12 Arguments of Those who Remained Part of JW in Kolwezi

Among the population of Kolwezi, there are those who are not familiar with the Jesus of the Bible, including his deity, the salvation, and assurance of “hell.” The population also include a large number of Witnesses who would remain faithful to the WT Society in any situation. From these Witnesses the following were selected for interviews: Mama Chantal Maloba, Baba Raphael Kanyeba, Amedeyo Mwelwa, Placid Kayiva and Jephte Kishimba. For the sake of security, the names are not real.

4.12.1 Mama Chantal Maloba

Mama Maloba is 44 years old. She was a Roman Catholic before she became a member of the WTBTS. After many teachings she became a Witness in 1995. She was baptized in the name of Jehovah in 1996. Together with her husband, they have acted as preachers in Kolwezi for many years. She was interviewed on 18 July 2014 at the researcher’s office in Kolwezi.

Q: Why don’t you leave the Society as others?

A: We have been taught in Roman Catholic if someone is dead we can pray for him and he can be saved. But the JW teaches us that if someone is dead, it is finished for him. No hope. What Roman Catholics has taught us lies.

Q: What convinced you to continue with JW?

A: What the Society teaches is all true. That the name of God is only “Jehovah” (Isa 43; 1-10); Jesus is the Son and not Almighty God; The Holy Spirit is an energy force and not a divine person as Roman Catholics used to teach us; That Jesus was risen as a spiritual man and not with his body. The New World Translation is a better version.

Q: What about “sin”, and what saves you from sin?

A: What can save me from sin is Jehovah. Whoever belongs to him, His organization will be saved like Lot in every society there is sin. Salvation belongs to Jehovah.

Q: What is your last word?

A: I will never forsake JW as a Society of God.
4.12.2 Raphael Kanyepa

Raphael Kanyepa is 56 years old and has been a Witness since 1997. Raphael was also baptized in 1997 in the Kabongo artificial lake in Kolwezi with many others. He was interviewed on 20 July, 2014 at his home.

Q: Why did you become a Jehovah’s Witness?

A: The JW have showed much love to God, and the Scripture.

Q: Is Jesus, a god or God?

A: The JW teaches that ‘Jesus is a Son of God, and not Almighty God’. There is three persons in Godhead as Christianity teaches. To my understanding, the truth is on JW’s side.

4.12.3 Amedeyo Mwewa

Amedeyo Mwewa is 58 years old and became a Witness in 1995. Before that he was a member of the Roman Catholic Church. He followed different teachings to become a preacher in the district of Kolwezi. Amedeyo was interviewed on 24 July, 2014 at his home.

Q: What difference is there between other churches and the Society of WTBTS?

A: The other churches are considered to be false because of their teachings, which are false. They believe in three persons of God. But there is no Trinity in the Bible. The Bible teaches clearly about God, his true name is Jehovah; Jesus is the Begotten Son of God; The Holy Spirit is a force, and not a person (WTBTS,1946b:109)

Q: Are you saved, Brother Amedeyo?

A: Still living on earth, it’s impossible ... but I belong to God's organization, and Jehovah will save me obviously the last day.

4.12.4 Placid Kayiva

Placid Kayiva is 59 years old and an engineer by profession. He works in one of the mining companies in Kolwezi. Placid became a Witness in 2000. He was baptized in 2001 and attended various workshops and seminars to become “Preacher.” He was interviewed on 27 July, 2014 at the researcher’s office.

Q: Why do you remain a Witness?
A: With the JW it is easy to study and understand the Scripture.

Q: Are you safe and peaceful before hell and God’s punishment?

A: God is Love. So, He cannot do something bad to his creature. Hell is completely Unbiblical.

4.12.5 Jephte Kisimba

Kisimba is 26 years old and has been a Witness since his childhood; his parents were Witnesses, preachers. He was baptized in 2003, and thereafter, attended different courses to qualify as preacher.

Q: Do you think one day you can be in Christianity?

A: I never know another true and Godly organization other than JW Society. Christianity according the JW teachings is a false religion. Their Trinity is from Satan.

This respondent offered an invitation for the researcher and other Christians to attend their annual convention in Kolwezi. After the convention he made the annual reports available to the researcher.

The determination and enthusiasm of the remaining members of the WTBTS in Kolwezi is evident. Mission work will need high input. This would entail visiting these people and building a friendship to open their mind for the truth that the Bible teaches. It is also obvious that they are under the impression that they are serving God, but this is not the case. Some of these Witnesses do persecute Christians and reject Christ, akin to Saul on the Damascus road (Acts 9:1-16). It is also significant to take note of the large number of Witnesses in Kolwezi – as many as 15 208 (RTMA, 2014).

4.13 The Statistics of the JW’s Growth in the DRC, and Particularly in Kolwezi

4.13.1 The Statistics within the DRC 1960-2014

It is difficult to provide accurate statistics of the JW in the DRC because of the problem with their identity mentioned in a previous sub-section (WTBTS, 2014:3-5) above. Before 1960, the society was not recognized as is the case currently. As was mentioned, there was two parallel groups of JW called Watchtower or Kitawala. There are no clear statistical reports that are viable for analysis. The statistics that are considered below, are taken from after the independence (1960).
The only source of data is the JW yearbooks. The research focused on the following elements: the national population, publishers and attendance of the convention. It is clear that their membership has grown steadily over time, more so than older churches. This represents a growing menace to which we are losing Christian members. The publishers represent qualified believers who are baptized, trained and are preaching in the field. The convention population include both adherents and engaged believers. The statistics in terms of these elements are presented in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 below. First, the statistics of the broader DRC is provided in Table 4.1.

Table 4-1:  Statistics of the DRC 1960-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>National population</th>
<th>Publishers</th>
<th>Convention population</th>
<th>% increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>15 368 000</td>
<td>1 417</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>17 543 000</td>
<td>3 373</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>20 267 000</td>
<td>14 000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>23 317 000</td>
<td>15 468</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>27 019 000</td>
<td>25 753</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>31 044 000</td>
<td>34 208</td>
<td>139 856</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>36 406 000</td>
<td>40 707</td>
<td>115 803</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>44 067 000</td>
<td>83 679</td>
<td>300 000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>49 626 000</td>
<td>110 800</td>
<td>500 000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>57 421 000</td>
<td>128 120</td>
<td>700 000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>65 966 000</td>
<td>156 035</td>
<td>951 867</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>67 514 000</td>
<td>173 556</td>
<td>1 001 518</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>69 900 000</td>
<td>188 872</td>
<td>1 051 310</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s own calculations.

From the data in Table 4.1 above, the following inferences can be made:

- In 1960 the DRC had a population of 15 368 000 with 1 417 publishers.
- In 1965, from a population of 17 543 000 there were 3 373 publishers, which means the numbers increased by 1 956 publishers.
- From 1960 to 2014 the number increased from 1 417 publishers to 188 872, which entails an increase of 187 455 (Publishers are similar to disciples in terms of mission).
- A total of 187 455 publishers have accumulated in 54 years of service. This amounts to 3 471 additional publishers per annum.
4.13.2 Statistics of Kolwezi district: 1960-2014

Table 4.2 below presents the statistics of the Kolwezi district in particular (as evaluated every five years since 1960).

**Table 4-2: Statistics of the Kolwezi district**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Kolwezi population</th>
<th>Publishers</th>
<th>Annual Convention population</th>
<th>Increase in numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>180 000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7 pers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>260 000</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20 pers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>350 000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20 pers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>380 000</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>58 pers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>460 000</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>92 pers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>485 000</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>300 pers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>490 000</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>3 000</td>
<td>2 500 pers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>460 000</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>5 000</td>
<td>2 000 pers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>470 000</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>6 000</td>
<td>1 000 pers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>480 000</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>7 000</td>
<td>1 000 pers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>600 000</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>10 000</td>
<td>3 000 pers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>890 000</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>12 600</td>
<td>2 600 pers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1 000 000</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>15 208</td>
<td>2 608 pers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s own calculation

From the data in Table 4.2, the following evaluations can be made regarding the Kolwezi district.

- In 1960 there were 3 publishers (from Zambia).
- In 1965 they increased to 7 publishers.
- From 1960 to 2014 the number of publishers grew from 3 to 710 publishers, which meant an increase of 707 publishers.
- A total of 707 publishers have accumulated in 54 years, which amounts to 13 publishers per annum.

4.13.3 Statistics of the Annual Convention

From 1985-2014, the attendance of the Convention increased from 500 to 15 208 people.

This means an increase of 14 708 people and 707 more publishers. When the followers (14 708:707) are divided by the publishers, it means 20 people for each publisher.
4.14 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the history of the JW in the DRC. In addition, it considered the views of the JW in relation to Christian views. This was followed by an examination of the testimonies of people who have left the JW and people who are steadfast in their JW views. The chapter concluded with a look into the current presence of the JW in the DRC in terms of numbers. The next chapter considers the history, views and presence of the Branhamites in the DRC.
CHAPTER FIVE: INFLUENCE OF BRANHAMISM IN KOLWEZI

5.1 Introduction

Branhamism came to Kolwezi later than the others. The Movement was founded in USA by William Marrion Branham\(^2\), but it did not have any presence in Kolwezi during the colonial time (1908-1960) or even for some time after the independence of the country (1960-1980). In Kolwezi the movement started in 1984 with sermons that were critical on Christian churches for their baptism and their doctrines. The spark for this movement was Frank, E. from Germany who organized a debate conference.

Right from the beginning the movement frequently criticized the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches concerning their baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19-20). As a result, on the first day of their public meeting, about 300 people joined the movement by signing adhesion cards. At that time the movement was called “Message Believers.” People left their churches to seek the so-called “true baptism”. The group preach that the true baptism is only in Jesus’ name according to Acts 4:10-12, and the true message is the one preached by William Branham (Frank, 1985a)\(^3\).

As will be explained later on, this view of baptism is not in accordance with Biblical doctrines in both Old and New Testament. The early church led by the Apostles, apostolic fathers and church fathers show that the Baptismal formulae in the name of the Triune God and used by Christian churches are based on the Bible (1 Clement 8, 19, 20; Shepherd of Hermas; 1 Clement 46 and 58; Ignatius’s letter to the Magnesia’s 13, Ephes 9).

The statistics of the local Branhamites movement shows an excessive growth in 30 years. For instance, in 1985 there were 300 followers, but in 1990 there were 3 000; then in 2010 there were 9 000, and by 2014 they numbered 12 000 (Palmier TV, Kolwezi, August 2014). This chapter explores the meaning of this growth in the context of Kolwezi? Why do the people abandon their congregations to go to a ministry that teaches doctrine that differs on crucial points with basic doctrines of Christian through the ages? Which practices and strategies do

\(^2\) William Marrion Branham (1959) is the promoter and founder of the movement called Branhamism. They are known for baptism in Jesus’ name only. They are opposed to Trinitarian Godhead.

\(^3\) Ewald Frank is a missionary and co-worker of Branhamism in Europe and Africa. He came to the DRC in 1985 to plant the movement by presenting the message of William as the true revelation from God. Also, he came to Kolwezi the same year to plant the movement.
they use to attract people? Do they know the true story about the founder, William Branham, his teachings, his healing ministry, his prophetic ministry compared to the Bible?

The exploration of this matter shows that the majority who joined the movement were immature believers and lacked a solid and true basic teaching of Christian doctrines (Ryrie, 2004). Because they lacked a solid teaching of the person of Christ or Christology, there was an open door. A mature believer respects and obeys God’s Scripture so that he shall not leave his congregation because of miracles or prophetic declarations (Matt 24:24), without investigating the difference in basic doctrines.

Part of the findings of the investigation would be that the Branhamist views are not new doctrines as the group claims. It is essentially a revival of the old ideas of Sabellius (AD250) which sees the Trinity as the manifestation of Christ in three offices – at the same time as “Father”, “Son”, “and “Holy Spirit.” This doctrine was condemned by the Christian churches at the Nicaean Council in AD325 as heresy.

In an effort to examine this heresy, the chapter addresses the following points:

(1) The historical background of the Branhamist movement in the USA and in Kolwezi.

(2) Their structure, strategies and methods of organization in Kolwezi.

(3) The major doctrines of William Branham.

(4) Common doctrines with the Oneness Pentecostalism movement based on Sabellius: the modalistic view or modalism and monarchicalism.

(5) Disavowal of main Christian doctrines: the book of Genesis, Malachi, the Trinity, Trinitarian formulae in baptism and all form of prayers and the direct and indirect consequences of this.

(6) The principal teachings of Branham in Kolwezi: the particularity of Kolwezi and the DRC.

(7) The importance of the angel in Branham’s life and ministry: its consequences.

(8) The death of William M. Branham, and Free Masonry signs and rites.

(9) Testimonies of those who left the movement in Kolwezi.

(10) The findings of the research in Kolwezi.
The statistical evaluation of their growth and the meaning of their proliferation in Kolwezi since 1985-2014.

5.2 The Historical Background of the Movement in the USA and in Kolwezi (DRC)

5.2.1 Historical Background in the USA

Branhamism is known as a twentieth-century Pentecostal movement founded by William Marrion Branham (Wilson, 1988:441). Branham was born in April 1906 in the hill of Kentucky not far from the place where Abraham Lincoln was born exactly a hundred years before (Lindsay, 1950:29). Branham claimed to have received revelations, supernatural signs, angelic visitations and even a halo over his crib at birth (Lindsay, 1950:75) that afforded this movement with a "unique prophet" that inspired a significant following.

Branham claims he received yet another angelic visitation in May 1946. This time he was told that if he would be sincere and persuade the people to believe in him, nothing would be able to stand before his prayers, not even cancer (Lindsay, 1950:76-77). It was after this proclaimed event that his ministry changed, that his healing and deliverance ministry grew into a worldwide movement that touched thousands of lives (Harrell, 1978:27-40,159-164).

Anderson (2004:58; 1990:182; Anderson, W.B. 1986:372) describes Branham as a Christian minister, credited with founding the post-World War II faith healing movement. According to him many Pentecostal Christians welcomed his evangelistic and healing ministry. Hollenweger (1972:229) also emphasizes Branham’s importance as part of the Pentecostal movement. Among those that did not become his followers, some still considered him to be a prophet of God, while a minority even gave him a higher status, believing that his ministry and teachings were supernaturally vindicated by God (Hollenweger, 1997:229). Weaver (1985:70-85), Harrell (1978:27-40) and Lindsay (1950:76-78) are among those who speak about William Branham as a man sent by God.

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4 Wilson wrote on Branham to describe how his ministry was something new in modern history: a worldwide healing and deliverance ministry.
5 Gordon Lindsay was Branham’s co-worker for many years. He started a magazine called Healing voice to publish different testimonies from crusades led by Branham.
6 Hollenweger, was Branham’s interpreter during his campaign in Germany. He is the one to whom Branham said: “Don’t stand on my right hand, it is the place of my angel…” He stopped working for Branham after discovering that Branham’s power was not from God, but from the angel (Koch, 1970:46-49).
7 Weaver, C.D. 1985. He wrote a dissertation on the prophetic ministry of William Branham.
During the late 1950s, the healing and deliverance rallies of the famous Pentecostals of that time began to decline. According to Weaver (2000:215), as a deliverance evangelist, the respect that Branham struck among devotees of healing revivalism was unparalleled. Still some friends distanced themselves from Branham because they disapproved his methods of healing through an angel and not through God.

When Branham began to espouse prophetic doctrinal teachings, he was criticized by fellow penatcostiles. His views against culture became increasingly unpopular and his fierce anti-denominationalism was naturally offensive to Pentecostal hierarchies. In addition, many of Branham’s theological emphases were ridiculed. The acceptance of “Jesus only” views on the Godhead and baptism eventuated in the loss of the support. Moreover, the denial of an eternal hell and the repugnant Serpent’s seed branded Branham’s theology as bizarre.

5.2.1.1 Did Branham see himself as the only true prophet of the final age?

Dr Koch asserts that Branham personally saw himself as a prophet sent by God (Koch, 1970:50-52). Lindsay (1950:1-7) testifies that “not only the audience believed that Branham was a prophet sent by God, himself confessed it frequently in his speeches.” Harrell (1978:164) certifies that Branham died in 1965 on Christmas day after a car accident on the 18th December. However, Branham’s followers were convinced that he would rise from the dead because he had previously announced a great miracle evangelization campaign to begin on 25 January the next year. His body was reportedly embalmed and refrigerated in anticipation of his resurrection (Hollenweger, 1972:354). When the expected resurrection did not happen, the burial was delayed until April in the hope of an Easter resurrection. Easter passed, and when it was clear that he would not come back to life he was finally buried (Harrell, 1978:164). 8

Even with the failure of this and other prophecies, Branham’s followers are still convinced that he was a prophet invested with the power and spirit of Elijah, raised by God to minister to the Church in modern times. Branhamites refer to such times as the “Laodicean Age,” based on a dispensational interpretation of the seven Churches in Revelation 2-3.

Branham frequently claims that he received a revelation to explain the seven Churches of Revelation 2-3(Branham, 1948; 1963; 1965:98). He claimed that he was the Elijah to come and that he was the messenger of the Laodicean age (Branham, 1960). The movement multiplied those sermons. Meanwhile other groups claimed the same declarations. For

8 Harrell (1978) confirms the death of Branham in a car accident.
instance, Russell of the WTBTS (1914) claimed that he was the messenger of the Laodicean age.

Branham’s influence was not limited to the Branhamites. The number of invitations he received from abroad can testify to this. In Kolwezi, the Branhamite position on the Trinity with Jesus only as God is now confessed in most of the independent churches (Palmier TV, March 2015). It means that in Kolwezi, the majority of the members of Pentecostal and independent Churches believe like Branham that Jesus is the only God in the Bible. If someone is asked about God and who God is, the answer is simply that God is Jesus: He is Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit.

5.2.2 Branham’s Life Story

According to his autobiography *My life story* (Branham, 1959) William Branham⁹ was born in a log cabin in near Burkesville, Cumberland County, Kentucky, in the USA. He grew up in Jeffersonville, Indiana, as the oldest of the nine children of Charles and Ella Branham. William Branham’s family was nominally Roman Catholic. He had minimal contact with organized religion during his childhood. His father was a logger and alcoholic, and William often talked about how his upbringing was difficult and impoverished.

Figure 5-1: Branham’s Family

According to his autobiography *My life story* (Branham, 1959) William Branham⁹ was born in a log cabin in near Burkesville, Cumberland County, Kentucky, in the USA. He grew up in Jeffersonville, Indiana, as the oldest of the nine children of Charles and Ella Branham. William Branham’s family was nominally Roman Catholic. He had minimal contact with organized religion during his childhood. His father was a logger and alcoholic, and William often talked about how his upbringing was difficult and impoverished.

⁹ Branham wrote about his life story by narrating his life in accordance with Biblical stories. The hagiographer amplified many of the details, perhaps out of sympathy or simple support for Branham.
In his study on the prophetic in American Pentecostalism, Weaver (2000:22) says the following about Branham’s young adult life: Leaving home at 19, William Branham worked on a ranch in Arizona and also had a short career as a boxer, reportedly winning 15 fights. At the age of 22 he had a conversion experience and was later ordained as an assistant pastor at a Missionary Baptist Church in Jeffersonville.

Branham (1948:8) claimed that from his early childhood he had supernatural experiences, including prophetic visions. He said that in his early childhood, while walking home from getting water from the creek, he heard the voice of the Angel of the Lord who told him to never drink, smoke, or defile his body, for there is work for him when he gets older that cannot be done if he does these things. On one occasion during his teenage years, he remembered being approached by an astrologer who told him that he was born under a special sign and that they predicted an important religious calling for him. Later he compared the incident to Paul’s experience with the damsel with a spirit of divination in Acts 16.

Based on the testimony of some authors, including Branham himself, the visions throughout his life came from angels and was not the result of the Holy Spirit or Biblical conversion. Branham even testified to having visions and hearing the voice of an angel between the age of three and seven. Even while he was led by angels from very young, it must be remembered that Branham was according to his own testimony not a Christian at that time. This bring one to the question what angelic being was involved in Branham’s life, if he did not bring him to Christ or conversion. According to 2 Corinthians 5:17, a person has to relate with Christ to be a Christian. If the capacity to have visions and perform miracles come from something outside of Christ, it is a strange and mediumistic power (Koch, 1970:29-42).

Branham’s conversion to Christianity came later through the preaching of a Baptist minister (Harrell, 1978:25). Shortly after his conversion he left the Baptist church, believing he was called to do an outreach. He therefore made plans to conduct his first own church service. The reason why Branham left the Baptist church is according to Weaver (2000:34,51-52) the prophetic element in Pentecostalism, the exercise of gifts and the influence of the oneness movement that made it impossible for him to work along Baptist theological lines. Also, Branham used his condemnation of the woman’s ministry in the Baptist church as a reason to

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10 According to 1 Corinthians 12:1-12 such visions are not from God. If the visions are not from God, they may be from himself for example or from the angel of Satan (2 Cor 11:11-15). When a person more concerned with an angel than with the person of Christ, is that person a Christian

11 If one compares Simon Magus (Acts 8) and Branham, there is a common point, they both worked based on the power of another spirit.
leave (Branham, 1948). However, one true reason may have been to escape the ministerial control or the hierarchy of the church.

5.2.3 The Beginning of Branham’s Ministry

In 1933, under a tent in Jeffersonville, Indiana, after he left the Baptist Church, Branham preached approximately to three thousand people who attended the campaign (Branham, 1934:20-22; Lindsay, 1950:20-22).

Harrell (1978:29) further says that Branham considered the death of his wife, Hope Brumback, and his baby daughter, both in 1937, to be God’s judgement for not heeding a call to minister to Oneness Pentecostals, with whom he had become acquainted during a revival near the Mishawaka River in Indiana. Branham started his ministry as independent because he wanted total freedom. He initiated his evangelistic career with impressive results. In 11 June 1933 he organized a baptism and about 130 people were immersed (Weaver, 2000:62-63).

Anderson (2004:58) says that: “In May 1946, William Branham received an angelic visitation, commissioning his worldwide ministry of evangelism and faith healing.” Branham, B.P., (1983:23) himself confirmed the event. This visitation was very important in Branham’s ministerial life, for it marked a turning point. The manifestation of God’s presence at the baptismal service attests that God revealed him that day as the one and true prophet of the last days (Weaver, 2000:64).

In his book, Footprint, Branham describes the supernatural import of this event. There was a light on Branham and a voice from Heaven that informed Branham that he and his message alone would function as the forerunner of the Second Coming of Christ. Thus, the message could not be separated from the messenger (Weaver, 2000:64). When looking at the events as explained by Branham himself, there is no scriptural support, though Branham liked to align his story with that of Moses and Jesus in Exodus and the Synoptic Gospels.

Anderson writes that “Branham’s sensational healing services, which began in 1946, are well documented and he was the pacesetter for those who followed.” Referring to the St. Louis meetings, Krapohl and Lippy (1999:69) assert that: “Historians generally mark this turn in Branham’s ministry as inaugurating the modern revival.” After a famous beginning with the healing ministry campaign in 1946-1948, the Pentecostals churches came to support Branham

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12 This is no surprise for those who read the Scriptures, for the Bible says that in the last days the false Christs will perform signs, wonders, miracles and that could even seduce the elected ones (Matt 24:24-26).
totally and they wanted the healing revival to be documented by the media. That is why they called Gordon Lindsay, an expert in Christian media. Lindsay had a principal role to report all the miracles and healings during Branham’s the evangelistic campaign (Lindsay, 1950:43, 71, 105).13

Lindsay reports that “During the mid-1940s William Branham (1954) was conducting healing campaigns almost exclusively with Oneness Pentecostal groups. The Broadening of Branham’s ministry to wider Pentecostal community came as a result of his introduction to Gordon Lindsay in 1947, who soon became his primary manager and promoter." Since then, Gordon Lindsay proved to be an able publicist for Branham, founding The Voice of Healing magazine in 1948, which was originally aimed at reporting on Branham's healing campaigns.

Stadsklev (1952:131)14 reports with excitement” From October-December 1951, Branham (1955) travelled to South Africa and conducted what has been dubbed the ‘Greatest religious meeting ever.’ All manner of miracles and healings were reported to have taken place at these meetings, attended by hundreds of thousands. Services were held in Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Durban." Stadsklev documents various healings in his book.

5.2.4 Branham’s Deviation

Modalism

From the mid-1950s onwards, William Branham (1964a)15 in The unveiling of God sermon taught that neither Oneness theology nor Trinitarians were correct, but that God was the same person in three different offices in the same way that a husband can also be a father and a grandfather. As he began to speak more openly about his doctrine such as the Godhead and serpent seed, the popularity of his ministry began to decline.

Branham espoused a position that was against basic Christian doctrine. He claimed that the Trinity is demonic and not from God. Also, he taught that Cain was from the serpent’s seed and not a son of Adam. Therefore, the majority of the mainline churches stopped their support

13 Lindsay (1950) notices an important fact that Branham was conducting his campaign of healing with Oneness Pentecostal groups. The Oneness Pentecostals are opposed to the Trinity as doctrine.
14 Stadsklev (1952) wrote a report of Branham’s tour in South Africa. Different miracles, signs and wonders accompanied the evangelist.
15 Branham, W.M. 1964a. The unveiling of God. Branham officially distanced himself from the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. He embraced the view of Oneness Pentecostalism, although he separated his movement from the control of the Oneness Pentecostals.
(Weaver, 2000:71-76). Branham continued to give extra-Biblical revelations and interpretations that are common to self-proclaimed prophets.

His popularity declined because the declarations he made showed to Christians his ignorance of the Word and lack of education and training. Branham simply proclaimed the modalism of Sabellius or Sabellianism with a dynamic monarchianism. Since some Pentecostal leaders were trained in theology, they distanced themselves from William Branham because of the heresies they noticed within his teachings.

Grudem (1994:241-246) speaks on errors that have come by denying any of the statements that summarize the Biblical teaching. Those three statements are:

(1) God is three persons

(2) Each person is fully God

(3) There is one God

In his historical survey, Grudem shows that the major Trinitarian errors all arose due to a denial of one or another of these three primary statements.

Grudem (1994:242) mentions modalism as one error. According to Grudem, modalism claims that there is one person who appears to us in three different forms or modes. That is exactly what Branham claimed as revelation from God. However, it is not truly a revelation, but rather a plagiarism.  

The error that the Godhead are merely modes or manifestations of God (Sabellianism, after Sabellius, AD250, or modalism) is spread more and more in the speeches, prayers and debates among the members, leaders, and some Pastors of different churches in Kolwezi. The popularity of Branham is growing in Kolwezi, while it has declined in the USA and Europe.

Rusch (1980:8-16) defines monarchianism as “a movement based largely on a fear that the logos theology endangered the unity of God. Because this reaction wished to put accent on

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16 Grudem (1994:242-250)- explained how God can exist in three. He took time to explicate the importance of Trinity as doctrine. He mentions modalism, monarchianism, adoptianism and many other heresies).

17 Ryrie (1972:33) asks: “….can the Trinity be illustrated? Not perfectly, nor probably very well, because most illustrations cannot include the idea that the three persons fully possess all the qualities of the one equally and without separation.”

18 Rusch (1980) describes the historical background of the church heresies. The main issues were the two persons of Christ: divinity and humanity, and the Trinity as doctrine of the Godhead.
the fact that God was an absolute monad without distinction within the unity, it became known as monarchianism."

Dynamic monarchianism is another name for adoptianism. It is a view that Christ was a mere man upon whom the Spirit descended the day of his baptism. This is a Christological deviation (Rusch, 1980:8).

Rusch defines modalist Monarchianism as “the teaching that there is one Godhead which could be designated indifferently as either the Father or the Son.” On a more astute and philosophical level, Rusch assumes that this form of monarchianism was expounded by Sabellius, who was in Rome during the early years of the third century. Sabellianism taught that God was a monad, expressing itself in three operations. Apparently, the Father projected himself first as Father, then as Son and as Spirit (Epiphanius, Ref. 62.1.4ff). This is the main view of the Branhamites in Kolwezi. After reading the Bible, such a teaching does not correspond with the story of the baptism of Christ in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt 3:1-16).

Dispensationalism

Branham claimed to receive the revelation of seven church ages (Branham, 1965:98; 321-322). Branhamites in Kolwezi consider the exposition of seven churches preached by Branham in 1960s as a main revelation given by God to Branham (Pastor Mwamba, Palmier TV, Kolwezi, December 2014). A proper analysis of the sermon by Branham raises many concerns about this view. Mupekadio (2003:11, 35) also criticizes Branham’s sermons by saying that Branham erroneously see the seven churches as seven periods of the church in general.

Branham has divided the history of the church into the following seven periods:

(1) Ephesians Church; 53 -170 AD. Messenger: Paul.
(2) Smyrna Church: 170-312 AD. Messenger: Irenaus.
(3) Pergamum Church: 312-606 AD Messenger: Martin.
(4) Thyatira Church: 606-1520 AD. Messenger: Colombian.
(5) Sardis Church: 1520-1750 AD. Messenger: Luther.
Looking at the Johannine context, chapters 2 and 3 do not speak about seven periods in church history, but seven local churches in Minor Asia.

**Baptism and the Lord’s Supper**

During his last message, Branham preached his doctrine concerning the Lord’s Supper and water baptism on December 12, 1965. Reckart shares his thoughts concerning the death by accident of the so-called end-time prophet of God (Times, 27 Dec 1965) in this way:

“Branham departed from Tucson to Jeffersonville on December 18, 1965. At 7:30pm the accident occurred. And at 5:49pm on December 24, 1965 Branham died!” Reckart saw Branham’s death as judgement on his last message. Pastor Reckart said: “Twelve days after his last message William Marrion Branham was dead! His last message contained false doctrine on the Lord’s Supper. It contained false doctrine concerning the blood of Jesus in water baptism.”

According to Reckhart, because Branham criticized the importance of the blood of Christ as memory, those elements in the Lord’s Supper had no significance. He also criticized the symbol of water in baptism (Rom 6:1-7) as something that it is only theoretical, but that can change nothing in concrete life.

**5.3 Historical Background in Kolwezi**

**5.3.1 The Beginning in Kolwezi**

According to Palmier TV of Kolwezi (2014): “The ‘Message believers’ called ‘Branhamites’ is celebrating their 30th anniversary in the DRC, and precisely in Kinshasa, the capital city.” The absence of literature concerning Branhamism in the DRC and specific Kolwezi, requires consideration of other available sources such as broadcasting interviews, oral interviews, sermons and statements made by their local leaders in Kolwezi. The Branhamite leadership in Kolwezi has contracts with some broadcasting media houses. In this way they have huge influence in Kolwezi.

In 1983-1984, some brethren came from Europe and America with the end-time message of William Branham. They invited Ewald Frank from Germany to present the message of William Branham in Zaire (today called the DRC). Some people from Kolwezi were on holiday in Kinshasa and they attended the conference and heard the message. One of those individuals

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19. Did the law of reaping what you sow come to pass in judgement on William Branham? That is Reckart’s reflection on the burial of William Branham. The same view is also shared by many apologetists on Branham’s unexpected death (Arnn, 2014b).
was Dr. Mbiye. At that time, Dr. Mbiye was attending the United Methodist Church, a French-speaking church in Kolwezi.

In April 1984, Dr. Mbiye and others in Kolwezi invited Ewald Frank and some brothers of Kinshasa to come and present the message of William Branham to people of Kolwezi. They organized a public conference at ‘Cercle Manika’ where pastors, elders, deacons and believers of all denominations in Kolwezi were present. The title was The mystery of Christ revealed. Frank persuaded many participants of a modalistic doctrine of Christ: Christ is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit at the same time.

This means the Trinitarian formula found in Matthew 28:19 is wrongly taught and misunderstood in churches according to Ewald Frank. There are not three persons and true baptism is done only in Jesus’ name. He urged the audience to leave their denominations and join the true church of Branham. The result was very positive and about 300 peoples joined the movement.20

Presently there are about 12 000 members in the movement in Kolwezi alone, who gather in the Tabernacle of Kolwezi. The community is led by Pastor Mwamba and a group of elders and deacons (Palmier TV, August 2014).

5.3.2 The Structure, of Organization of the Branhamites in the United States

In the USA Branham’s followers tended to distance themselves and maintain their tradition to use “home cells or home churches as in the early Church. There is no headquarters. These churches have no membership or members who have title. William Branham summarized this by saying: ‘we’re no denomination. We have no law but love, no creed but Christ, no book but Bible: no membership; just fellowship through the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses us from all unbelief’” (Branham, 1962b).21

Although Branham died in 1965, his followers avidly believe in the truth of his cause. His son, Billy Paul Branham, assumes the position of President of the William Branham Evangelistic Association (WBEA). The Voice of God Recordings is a website that followers maintain. Branham’s sermons are published in many languages, about 64 languages and are sent out

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20 When the author was appointed as assistant pastor in Manika parish in 1984 (United Methodist Church, Kolwezi, DRC), many influential members had left the church to join the Branhamites (+20 members). It affected the flock, and we needed strategies to see them come back to the flock.

21 Branham, W. 1962b. Conduct codes. Branham wanted to distinguish his movement from other groups by giving a moral code of conduct in which he makes statements considering female inferiority and the cause of sin. The code of conduct is his treatise on his dogma Weaver (2000:240-270).
to 174 countries. They are available on the website. Branham’s sermons and publications constitute Scriptural guidance. The Bible is a secondary guide in Branhamism generally, and particularly in Kolwezi. That is because Branham lacked education and good training. Whether he criticizes without any logic reason, or he misinterprets the Scripture. Since Branham denies the Apostles’ Creed and all other creeds, he professes a different Jesus. He speaks less of the humanity and historicity of Christ.

5.3.3 The Structure of Organization of the Branhamites in Kolwezi

In Kolwezi, the Branhamites follow the USA model of using home churches in communities. There are more than 500 home churches in Kolwezi. A home church can accommodate about 25 persons. But it also differs from the US in the sense that there are pastors who work together with elders and deacons. There is also a place of Sunday service for all the Branhamites in Kolwezi. Their annual meeting of last August 2014 report about 12 000 persons (Palmier TV, Kolwezi, 2014).

5.3.4 Their Strategies

The movement organizes annual general meetings in August of every year, open to public. Here they focus on winning souls for Branham’s message. They make propaganda for their view of Branham, as “prophet for the last days.” At the very occasion they distribute thousands of sermons, cassettes, books and photos of William Branham.

They also organize special funeral and burial services where they publically assist the one who has lost their loved one. All the community is invited to attend the burial and thousands of people attend. It attracts people to open their hearts to Branhamism.

They organize campaigns at different universities, among students and professors. They even go to secondary schools to preach the end-time message of William Branham. They have different offices so that they send different teams to share the message of William Branham.

They use Radios and Television to emphasize the message of William Branham. What is surprising in Kolwezi is that the majority of listeners believes their message even though they know it is wrong.22

22 When someone refutes their fallacies, he becomes person non grata. It is therefore urgent to stand up and show the truth. These followers also need love to welcome them and teach them what Jesus really taught in the New Testament.
5.4 Major Doctrines of William Branham

Walter (1989:632) says that, “essentially, Branham’s theology is Oneness in Character, denying the Trinity of traditional Christian theology.” He furthermore states that, “At the Nicene Council, the Apostles’ teachings were traded for much newer and more accepted doctrine called the Trinity” (Branham, 1979:2).

Moreau (2010:1-18) says: “There are several significant areas of doctrinal teaching in which the followers of Branham differ significantly from the rest of Christendom.” This work provides about seven areas where the Branhamites teach and establish their branches. Moreau selected about the same items, as did Piette (1985a:67-78). Here they are applied to the city of Kolwezi.

The selected teachings are the following: 1) The person and role of William Branham 2) Denial of the Trinity 3) Baptism only in Jesus’ name 4) The seed of the serpent in the Garden of Eden 5) Hell is not eternal 6) The denominations and the Church 7) The rapture for only those who are baptized with the Holy Spirit.

5.4.1 The Person and Role of William Branham

Moreau (1988:8-9) says: “The first area of doctrinal difference involves the person and role of William Branham who is held to be a prophet who came in the Spirit of Elijah.” Though the Branhamites do teach that the Bible is inerrant, they add that we need “prophetic revelation” in order to fully understand it. Branham was supposedly the prophet with God’s message and it is the revelation that God gave to him that clearly explain the truths of the Bible.

Moreau explains further that, “the Branhamites teach that the letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3 are to be interpreted as seven ages of the Church.” According to this framework we are in the last of these seven ages, called the Laodicean age. It is an age of apostasy and spiritual coldness. In addition, “This age has both a Messenger and message before it expires” (Branham, 1965:35).

The followers of Branham say that the proof that this age has a messenger is to be found in Revelations 10:7, which says: “but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished as he preached to his servants the prophets.” They teach that this seventh angel is not one of the angels who sound the trumpets (Rev8:1-11:19), but a man speaking (“the voice of the seventh angel”) to the Laodicean age and who speaks the word of God. This is the cornerstone of their claims of Branham’s authority and place in the scheme of God. It is therefore understandable that the Branhamites do not
refer to Scriptures but to sermons, prophecies and declarations of Branham as the authority of their belief.

According to Mupekadio\textsuperscript{23} (2003:11-12,15-17): “Branham misunderstood three ways of interpretations. First, the letter to seven churches was a message addressed to local churches of the Apostle’s time when he was in Patmos. Second, it is a message of warning to the Universal Church. Third, it is a personal interpellation to any Christian wherever he is.”

Mupekadio further says: “In his sermon on ‘An Exposition of Seven Church Age’ Branham went wrong in interpreting the Scripture: ‘Elijah of the Laodicean Age’.” Matthew 17:10ff does refer too Elijah’s return to restore and bring back hearts to God. However, Jesus said that Elijah has already come in the person of John the Baptist. Branham and his followers simply took Scripture out of their context when they attempt exegesis.

\subsection{5.4.2 The Denial of the Trinity}

Moreau (1988:9-10) asserts that: “the sound major doctrinal difference of the Branhamites from the mainstream Christianity is the denial of the Trinity.” The Branhamites maintain that “Jesus is the only God, but not that He is a separate person from God.” Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit are thought to be the same person in three different forms(Branham,1963b).

Arnn (2014a:14) speaks about Branham’s views as follows: “Trinity: Like the Jesus-only Pentecostals, Branham denied the Trinity doctrine, teaching a form of modalism. Instead of three Persons in the Godhead, Branham taught that there was only one person (Jesus) going under different titles or modes at various times in history.”

Branham’s teaching is a variation of a second century heresy taught by Sabellius, known as modalistic monarchianism or patripassionism.\textsuperscript{24} Branham explained, “…not one place in the Bible is found Trinity mentioned…. It’s Catholic error and you Protestants bow to it” (Branham, 1962b:182). “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is offices or three dispensations…” This view of the Godhead is called modalism and is viewed as heretical by the early church (Council of Nicaea, 325 AD) and by both the Catholic and Protestant churches.

Walter (1989:640) says: “Oneness theology teaches that God is one person or one essence.” The ancient church encountered this idea in modalistic monarchianism or Sabellianism. At

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{24} See monarchianism, Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, pp. 727-28.
\end{flushright}
creation, God was the eternal father. When Jesus was born, it was God himself (formerly the father), who took on a human form as the redeeming Son. After Jesus’ ascension, God then manifested himself as Holy Spirit, in which form he now moves in and through the church.

Modalism was originally an attempt to preserve the unity of the Godhead. However, in so doing the independent existence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to which the Bible refers on several occasions, was lost. Walter explains that, “modalism was challenged by leading theologians in the early church, such as Dionysius of Alexandria.” The Trinitarian theology that emerged out of the Council of Nicaea (AD325) bears testimony to the fact that the church recognized the distinctive subsistence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as being clearly attested to in the apostolic writings of the New Testament (Schaff, 1890:35-40; 109-111).

5.4.3 Baptism only in Jesus’ Name

Branham (1962a) claimed that “proper baptism is needed to avoid the ‘Mark of the Beast’ of denominational churches and escape the danger of missing the rapture and entering the tribulation.” Proper baptism according to him, must be in the name of Jesus only.

Baptism with the Trinitarian formula of Matthew 28:18-18 (“in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”) is unacceptable to God according to Branhamites in Kolwezi (Palmier TV, August 2014).

Piette (1985a:61) points out that Branham claimed that “in those times, until the Nicaea council the truth was that all baptism was done only in Jesus’ name.”

However, history clearly shows church fathers baptizing with the Trinitarian formula, as Jesus Himself taught them to do (Mat.28), long before Nicaea (Didache, Chapter VII.v.1-3). Kuiper (1964:15-18) describes the key roles of church fathers in church growth. He cites different names that supported the Trinitarian formula, such as Justin Martyr (165 AD), Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Cyprian (200AD). There is nothing in the Bible that prohibits the mention of the Father or the Holy Spirit. On the contrary the Bible clearly points to them as three Persons.

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25 Schaff (1890) describes how the confessions of different persons with regard to Christ have influenced the formation of different creeds. For instance, when Peter confessed before Jesus, that “you are the Son of the Living God” (Matt 16:18).

26 Kuiper contradicts those who say only the baptism in Jesus’ name is acceptable. According to Kuiper, church fathers played a key role in early church. Some of them baptized people in the Trinitarian formula. Such Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, Irenaeus, Cyprian and Polycarp.
Moreau (1988:11) posits that: "Branhamites teach that because Matthew 28:18-19 uses the singular name and not the plural names, ‘Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit’ is simply another way to say ‘Baptize them in Jesus’ name’.” In addition, they support their view with the fact that in Acts the Trinitarian formulary is not used.

Arnn (2014b) supports Branham’s view and quotes Branham as follows: “There never was a person baptized in the name of Father, Son and Holy Ghost’ until early Catholic church.” Arnn demonstrates his support in his book of Conduct, Order, Doctrine Q and A, and on 182 he says: “Look down on your Bible and see if that says ‘in the name of…’ Does it? No, sir…it said ‘in the Name…”

5.4.4 Serpent Seed

Arnn (2014a) explains that “Branham taught that ‘Eve’s sin in the garden (Gen 3) was sexual in nature.” According to Branham, Eve was seduced into sexual relationship with the serpent and became pregnant with Cain. He explained, “Here is what actually happened in the Garden of Eden. The word says that Eve was beguiled by the serpent. She was actually seduced by the serpent. He was as close to being a human, that it’s seed could mingle with that of the woman and cause her to conceive” (Branham, 1962b).27

According to Branham, the serpent’s seed was Cain and all his descendants. They are predestined for hell. The Godly seed is Seth and his descendants, who have been revealed by answering the call to Branham’s ministry. This does not make sense, because Branhamites are born from non Branhamite parents and vice versa.

Branham went as far as to say that “the Godly seed are the Bride of Christ and will be raptured before tribulation. But, denominations are or eventually will be the mark of the Beast and those who remain therein will go through the Tribulation” (Burguess & McGee, 1996:96).

Moreau (2010:8, 11-12) adds: “Branham has long preached rigid Pentecostal moral code which became increasingly unpopular. He had no patience with bobbed hair, slacks, and other fads and was rigidly opposed to women preachers. On the other hand, he received a prophetic message allowing divorce, which offended some strict Pentecostals.”

27 Branham. (1962b:182). Serpent seed. This is a flagrant heresy in Branham’s theology. According to him, Eve had sexual relations with the serpent. Branham used a zodiac Bible according to which he had imported such false information. The Scripture declares clearly that Adam knew Eve, and through this intercourse she conceived and bore a boy child (Gen 4:1-2).
The controversy centres on his distinctive theology that progressively alienated all the organized Pentecostal churches. First, he began to push his conviction that denominationalism was the mark of the Beast. During his early years, Branham, according to some reports, was equivocal on this divisive question. He reportedly told some Trinitarians that he agreed with them, but that he felt obligated to the Jesus Only Pentecostals because they had supported him early in the revival, but by the 1960s he was teaching the oneness position with much force (Harrell, 1978:163).

In Kinshasa, Kasai and Kolwezi some Branhamites marry two wives, which clashes with Branham’s view, but in conforms with the African culture practiced in many countries, including the Democratic Republic of Congo (Zairian Law).

Applying Branham’s view in the DRC, especially in Kolwezi and Mbuji-Mayi, some Branhamites espoused that position with regard to divorce. They say: “If the wife refuses to be rebaptized in Jesus’ name, she is of a Serpent’s seed, better divorce and marry one who shall obey the message” (Pastor Jean Kasamba of Kinshasa, Branhamites /RTNC. October 2014, Kinshasa).

5.4.5 Hell is not Eternal

Continues: “Branham taught that ‘hell is not eternal, though it lasts for ‘eons” (Moreau, 1988:12). Those who go to hell will suffer for a period of time and then cease to exist. Here, Branham views hell much like other cults such as the JW who also believe differently than orthodox churches on the issue. For instance, for the JW “hell” is simply a “grave.” It is not a place of torment by fire, because God is love. (Russell,1886). They forget that the same God is justice as well.

5.4.6 Church and the Bride

Piette (1985a:29-35) shows how Branham accuses evangelical, protestant and catholic churches of being hybrid churches. He (Branham, 1963b) preached as follows in Jeffersonville: “I accuse this generation. I predict that the two denominational and the Evangelical groups will work together in a denomination, will unite themselves together, and will become a member (all of them) of the federation of the Council of Churches or The World

Rites for noted Evangelist Held, Eresmo Bee Republican,1966-04-14
Russell declares in his book Scriptures studies I that hell is not eternal. It is simply a grave where a person will live for a period and after that he will cease to exist. He denies the fact of suffering, because God is love. However, he finds the flood and fire in Sodom and Gomorrah inexplicable. He ignores that the God who is love, is also righteousness or ‘Theodicy’.
Council of Churches." To Branham, all denomination churches are “hybrids” (crosses between the godly and the satanic) and are therefore sterile and doomed to eventual death. The Roman Catholic is regarded as the “mark of the Beast” and the Protestants church as the “image of the Beast.”

Branhamism rejects other denominations. According to Branhamites in Kolwezi such as Pastor Ngonga, and Mwamba, “According to Branham, all denominations within Christendom are apostates and of the devil. People from different denominational churches may be saved, but they must undergo suffering in a future period of time known as the Grande Tribulation.”

The Branhamites in Kolwezi argue that “True Christians must be re-baptized in the name of Jesus Only” and follow the doctrine taught by God’s apostle to the seventh and final age of church history. They of course refer to Branham(Palmier TV, Kolwezi, August,2014). To be part of a denominational church is to have the mark of the Beast (Rev 13:6-18). In contrast, Arnn (2014a:28-32) asserts: “the marks of sects or cults are fitted within Branhainism.” All these fallacies are simply non-sense.

5.4.7 Last Days or End Time Prophet

Branham believed himself to be the promised Elijah of Malachi 4:5; sent as herald to usher in the end times (Branham, 1959). Lindsay (1950) also emphasizes that “Branham is the Prophet from God”, and Branham never denied it. Branham’s followers claim that he had a special role as God’s uniquely empowered end-time prophet. Branham himself said: “Now, I’m just your brother, by the grace of God. But when the Angel of the Lord moves down, it becomes then a Voice of God to you…But I am God’s Voice to you …. Now, see, I can say nothing in myself. But what He shows me” (Branham, 1948).

Branham’s followers identified him as the prophetic Elijah of Malachi 4 and the Seventh angel of Revelations 10. Speaking of himself, Branham said: “We reprised a return of that Spirit (Elijah) just before the end-time. He won’t start another church, because there is no more church age to come because the Laodicean Church Age is the last age, and the messenger of the Seventh Angel…is the fellow that is going to reveal, by the Holy Spirit, all of these mysterious things…Notice: This last messenger of the last church age is not a reformer, he is a prophet!” (Branham, B.P.,1967).
5.5 Doctrines Held in Common with the Oneness Pentecostalism Movement

Arnn (2014a)\(^{30}\) asserts that Branham’s doctrine is like the Jesus-Only Pentecostals. Branham’s teachings are based on Sabellius’ modalistic view, modalism, monarchianism and patripassionism. Like the Oneness Pentecostals, Branham denied the Trinity by teaching a form of modalism.

According to Arnn, Branham came into contact with Jesus-only Pentecostals early on in his ministry. This sect broke away from the traditional Pentecostal movement because they deny the doctrine of the Trinity. He attended one of their national conventions and was invited to preach. Branham testified later to his wife (Branham, 1961b:39): “Oh I met the cream of the crop. It’s the best you have ever seen. These people aren’t ashamed of their religion.”

Arnn explains further: “Although he was persuaded not to continue the association by his family and fellow ministers, Branham was greatly influenced by the Jesus-only Pentecostal Movement. He later adopted a number of their doctrinal views.”

Ankerberg and Weldon (1991:366-386) reveal that Oneness Pentecostalism or Jesus-only Pentecostalism was possibly founded by McAllister during a 1913 Pentecostal camp near Los Angeles, California. Its aim was to defend true (Unitarian) Christianity before the world. They claimed to be the only true Christian church. However, occult dynamics are noticeable in their Spiritism practices. The leaders often claimed to have had occult visions or “angel” contacts and guidance.

5.5.1 Summary of Branhamite Doctrine

This Oneness church influenced William Branham after he left the Baptist Church. There are similarities between the Branhamism and Oneness Pentecostalism.

Both these groups believe as follows:

(1) God is one person only (Unitarian).

(2) Jesus is the one true God who exists as the modes of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

(3) Trinity is a Satanic “doctrine of demons.”

\(^{30}\) Arnn (2014a) describes how Branhamism originated in a mediumistic era of visions, angelic visitations, signs and wonders. He also mentions major errors made by the founder of Branhamism.
(4) Salvation is the result of faith and works (baptism, speaking in tongues and often personal righteousness).

According to Ankerberg (1991), the Oneness Movement had much debate about the Trinity and a division resulted at the end. A group kept to the Trinitarian view, such as the Assemblies of God in 1916. The other side remained in the Oneness Movement with the Unitarian view (anti-Trinity).

Arnn tells how Branham distanced himself from Oneness Pentecostalism after having some doubts about ministering with them in accordance with their system. They requested that he works alongside their church organization. However, Branham distanced himself from their control while maintaining some of their major beliefs.

5.5.2 Common Foundation: Monarchianism, Modalism, and Sabellianism

(1) Monarchianism: Ankerberg (2004:368) defines it as “the absolute unity of the Godhead.”

(2) Modalism: Ankerberg (2004:20-22) defines it as the most popular form of monarchianism (where the persons of the Godhead are merely transitory and temporal “modes” or “expressions”, of the one true God. This is the view of the Oneness Pentecostal Movement).

(3) Sabellianism: The same author defines this as a movement after Sabellius. It is a third century proponent of modalism.


Modalism

Dynamic modalism either believes that Christ is subordinate to the father in nature or that the Father adopted the Son as a divinely empowered man at the baptism service. The Trinitarian heresy holds that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are only modes or functions, they are not independent, eternal persons.

31 Ankerberg (1991). God of the Cults. Ankerberg emphasizes the dogmatic influence of the Oneness Movement, which remains part of Branham’s theology even though he separated with them.

32 Kelly (1960) points to Theodosius as the originator of dynamic Monarchianism, which he brought to Rome around 190 AD. Sabellius learned from Theodosius the same doctrine and amplified it in modalism.
Modalism can be divided into Sabellianism, named after Sabellius, a principal proponent and patripassionism, which teaches that the Father, as the Son, suffered on the cross.

The Oneness Movement teaches that “Sabellius believed that it was the Father who was the one true Person of the Godhead and who also expressed himself in the modes of Father, Son, and Spirit.” Theodosius taught that “Jesus was a mere man begotten of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit. He became the Christ at his baptism and as adopted by the Father after his death.”

Pienaar (2014:213-214) in his thesis claims that the main point of deviation from orthodoxy seems to be modalism’s ontological conception of divinity. Modalism is basically a strict monotheism in the sense that it does not make any distinction between the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, but it considers them to be modes of the same divinity at different stages of redemptive history (Brown, 2003:99).

Therefore, modalists only affirm unity when rejecting diversity. Tertullian argues that modalists opt for a simple unity (Ad versus Praxean, 12), as opposed by Pre-Socratic monism, the Platonic Supreme Being and Aristote’s “nous.”

5.5.3 Sabellianism (Modalism, Patr iP assionism)

Sabellius, Praxeus, Noetus, Epigonus are four modalists of old who held that the one God reveals himself in three modes of being. Sabellius lived in Rome in the third century. He claimed, “the existence of a divine monad (which he named the huipater) which by a process of expansion projected itself successively in revelation as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” (Elwell, 1984:727). This means that each person of the Godhead appeared in different periods, instead of existing simultaneously. He further said that the Father was the Creator and Lawgiver in the Old Testament, the Son was the Redeemer and the Holy Spirit was the giver of grace and the Regenerator.

Epiphanius reacted by writing that “Their doctrine is, that Father, Son, Holy Spirit are one and the same being, in the sense that three names are attached to the one substance.” (Epiphanius, 375 AD: Adv. Haereses IX.II.). Grudem (1994:242) continues this work by

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33 Pienaar (2014) emphasizes the fact that modalism is a point of deviation from orthodoxy in its ontological conception. modalism does not distinguish between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

34 Brown (2003) explains that modalism considers the three persons of the Godhead to be “modes of the divinity at different functions or stages of redemptive history.”

35 Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis. He wrote about modalism, qualifying it as heresy.
pointing out the errors that have resulted from denying any of the three statements summarizing the Biblical teaching of Trinity.

5.6 Major Teachings of Branhamites in Kolwezi

5.6.1 The Beginning (Ewald Frank; Dr Mbiye; Manika; Mwamba; Ngonga; Tshilunjika)

5.6.1.1 Introduction

The Branhamite movement started in 1984 and several names appear as pillars of the Branhamites in Kolwezi.

Ewald Frank (1985a) is the pioneer missionary of the branch in Kolwezi. He mainly preached on Jesus as the only God to have. He often quoted Branham, especially his sermons from the series “Christ, the Mystery of God, revealed.” (Branham, 1963a). Frank established all the major teachings of Branhamism (see major doctrines of Branham) in Kolwezi. Dr. Mbiye focused on the centrality of Christ, saying that Jesus is the Jehovah of the Old Testament, the Christ of Gospels, and the Holy Spirit of the Pentecostal day (sermon preached in 1984 in Kolwezi, Tabernacle). Later on, Dr Mbiye36 adopted the polygamist view as part of his Branhamist views as mentioned above (Sermon preached in Mbuji-Mayi, 1997 and in Kolwezi, 1998). This view has been refuted by the majority of the believers in Kolwezi, but was accepted by those who relate to the African tradition of polygamist marriage.

Pastor Manika37 emphasized the baptismal formula, saying that “Those who were baptized in the Trinitarian formula are not Christians at all” (sermon preached in 1989-90). The true baptism, according to Branham, is “only in Jesus name.”

What is very common to these preachers mentioned above is their oratory verve when speaking to attract and convince the crowds. The result is that masses of people join them and listen to their preaching. In 1984, they were about 350 persons, but today they are about 12 000 persons.

36 Dr Mbiye. 1985, 2014. Interviews /RTNC/Kinshasa, October 2014. He is one of the prime importers of Branhamism to Kolwezi. Before he heard Branham’s message he was a Presbyterian by origin, but when he was transferred in Kolwezi as medical doctor, he was attracted to the Methodist Church, where he played an important role. In 1992 during the conflict between the Kasaïans and the Katangese, he went to Mbuji-Mayi, where he was exposed to a polygamist view of marriage. He now condones it by saying that Abraham and Jacob had many wives. This view is popular in the Kasaï region.

37 Pastor Manika was among the first believers of Branham’s message in Kolwezi. He condemned the Trinitarian formula of baptism. His eloquence persuaded more people to join the movement in 1984-1986. Presently he is in France preaching Branham’s controversial message.
5.6.2 Principal Preaching in Kolwezi

5.6.2.1 Pastor Mwamba

Pastor Mwamba is one of the first team of pioneers of Branham’s message in Kolwezi. He initially worked with Dr Mbiye (1984-1992), Pastor Manika (1984-1994) and Pastor Ngonga (1984-2002). He remains the leader who coordinates the activities of the congregation in the city of Kolwezi (Interviewed by Palmier TV, Kolwezi, August 2014-). Like Branham, Mwamba adheres to controversial views. His major teachings are as follows:

1. The true God is Jesus (Hebrews 13:5-8).
2. The only God is Jesus (Matt 28:19-20; Acts 4:10-12).
3. The true baptism is only done in Jesus’ name. Pastor Mwamba urges believers to undergo a re-baptism if they were baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
4. The Trinity is not found in Bible (Acts 4:12; John 14:9).
5. Pastor Mwamba adheres to the view of the seven ages of the church. He encourages believers to keep to what Branham said on this issue because this age we live in is called “Laodicean.”

The truth comes only from the prophet of this age, which is Branham. Mwamba adheres to this even though Branham’s prophecies did not come true.

When this Pastor was interviewed on Palmier TV in August 2014 and confronted with different contradictions in Branham’s life, he lacked clear arguments to answer on the relationship between God, the Father and his Son as in John 14:1-2. In addition, Pastor Mwamba was asked how many times a believer should be baptized. He replied without hesitation that a believer can be re-baptized at any time when he is convinced of the presence of sins in his life. The pastor said that he was re-baptized when he visited Israel in 2013. This fact has been a subject of controversy in the congregation after his baptism. Some members were confused by this and wondered if the pastor is honest with God? Some unhappy members left the

Pastor Mwamba was among the first believers of the massage of Branham in Kolwezi in 1984. He remained within the congregation until he became senior pastor in 1993-1994. He supports rebaptism and views it as something that can be done several times as the heart is convinced.
movement and started another Branhamite branch (Palmier TV, August 2013), because the Bible does not teach re-baptism at all (Rom 6:1-9).

5.6.2.2 Elder Tshilunjika

Elder Tshilunjika is one of major preachers of Branham’s teachings in Kolwezi. His favourite topic is that of the Serpent seed (Branham, 1963a). According to Branham, the father of Cain is the Devil, which is why John declared: “Do not be like Cain, who is from the Devil…” (1 John 3:12), an exegesis that is clearly taken out of context. The Bible states that Adam knew Eve and she conceived a son (Gen 4:1), and she declared: “I have had this son with God’s help” (Gen 4:1-2,25). Elder Tshilunjika also lacked clear arguments on his views when interviewed on Palmier TV in December 2014.

It is interesting to note that none of the key players in the Branhamite movement has any theological training. In fact, they strongly oppose theological education. They prefer a kind of auto-education in the works of Branham.

5.6.2.3 Pastor Ngonga

Pastor Ngonga was one of the first companions of Pastor Mwamba. He quickly became a famous preacher of the Branhamite message. He was sent as missionary to the central region of Africa to reinforce Branham’s end-time message among the Congolese and others (2002-2013). However, lacking managerial skills, leadership and training, Ngonga and his followers quarrelled with Pastor Mwamba on doctrinal issues and finance. He left with a fraction of the members to open another Branhamite branch not far from the main Branham Tabernacle of Kolwezi.

Ngonga’s main topics are that the true Baptism is only in Jesus name and the true God and only God is Jesus. This pastor preaches every Sunday on Palmier TV and thousands of listeners follow his teaching because of his oratory verve.

Tshilunjika is an engineer and has never had any theological training. He teaches Branham’s views with much added drama. People applaud without judging if the message is Scriptural.

Pastor Ngonga Gedeon was among the first believers of the message of Branham in Kolwezi. He is a fervent believer, but very controversial with his statement. He is against theological training, saying that Spiritual things such the Bible do not need to be trained. It is a matter of revelation. However, the Bible is full of examples where revelations needed explanation. King Nebuchadnezzar’s needed Daniel to explain his dreams. Daniel was educated and very intellectual.
His sermons are filled with criticism, diabolization, brain-washing and manipulation (Palmier TV, 11 January 2015). He usually quotes Branham’s *Seven Ages of the Church*. He quotes Ewald Frank (1988:366-386; 1985:1-46). During interviews, he usually replies that the Holy Spirit is a force, an energy of God, like the JW and Oneness Pentecostal who Ankerberg considers cults.

5.6.2.4 Ewald Frank

Ewald Frank originally came from Germany and has been a strong Branhamite believer for many years. He is the missionary who brought the message of Branham to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC-Zaire) in 1984. In 2014 the movement celebrated 30 years of ministry in the DRC. Frank was invited as the guest of honour.

Frank’s Messages Comprise Four Elements:

1. Branham is the prophet sent by God to the 20th century. According to Frank, God revealed to Branham the seven ages of the church and its meaning in 1933 (Frank, 1985a: 17-21).

2. Christ is the mystery of God revealed! Frank underlines Branham’s sermon by saying “Jesus is the only God. Jesus played the three offices of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit found in the New Testament” (Branham, 1960; Frank, 1985a: 17-20).

3. True baptism is done in Jesus’ name. Frank emphasizes that the whole assembly should attend. It is at this sacrament where they attract people and where he openly preaches Branham’s criticism of the Trinity and baptism in the name of the Trinity.

4. Frank preaches the concept of Serpent seed (Frank, 1985b:26.). He supports the position of his master Branham that Eve had sexual relations with the devil. He gives a mythological argument saying the serpent was like a man.

Since 2012, Frank have failed to reconcile the different fractions that left the main assembly led by Pastor Mwamba. Actually, the city of Kolwezi numbers about seven tabernacles out of the main assembly led by Mwamba. Frank is a very controversial and fanatic believer or disciple of Branhamism. For instance, talking on the cross, Frank asserts that the one who died on the cross was not Jesus. Jesus is God and therefore he cannot die. Frank ignores the Biblical truth about the two natures of Christ and denies the incarnation of Christ.
5.7 The Importance of the Angel in Branham Life’s Ministry

After reading different reports on Branham (1906-1965), it seems that the angel’s presence in his life is cited more often than God and Christ. Weaver (1985:131-136) asserts: “The presence of the Angel was one of the more essential ingredients of Branham’s gift of healing.” Throughout the peak years of his success, Branham manifested an extreme dependence on the angel’s presence.

5.7.1 His Childhood (0-7 years)

Weaver (1985:55-57) reveals: “William Branham’s early life is a tale of the supernatural preparation of God’s chosen vessel for his prophetic ministry.” The visible manifestation of this preparation began at birth. Indeed, he was born around dawn and delivered by his grandmother. Weaver quoted Branham’s life story as embellished by the hagiographers. Branham told the story, “a light come(sic) whirling through the window, about the size of a pillow, and circled around where I was, and went down on the bed” (Branham, 1948). Therefore, Branham constantly affirmed that this mystical quality was always with him. Not surprisingly, his earliest childhood memory was a vision he had at the age of three. Branham recalled that a “voice” spoke to him from a tree, informing him that “you will live near a city called New Albany” (Branham, 1948: 22-23). According to Weaver (1985:56), Branham noted that his family left Kentucky that same year and moved to Jeffersonville, Indiana, a city within three miles of New Albany.

Moreau (2010:2-3) reports: “The supernatural in Branham’s life are reported to have begun immediately after his birth.” In his own testimony, Branham mentions the presence of his grandmother, who originated from the Indian race. It is therefore not strange that she would assist with a very mystical birth and an initiation mediumic and supernatural life. Branham asserts: “Just after my birth when I was starting to cry, my father opened up a window, and while a robin was there singing that light that you see in the picture come whirling in the window says my mother, and hung over the bed “(Branham, 1948:21).

This kind of event is frequent in Indian mythology and Hinduism. It is important to note that the supernatural event in Branham’s life happened before his conversion to Christianity at the age of 21. There are thousands of accounts of such encounters of a voice from a bird or an angel in his life story. The hagiographer embellishes his life’s ministry by comparing his life to that of Jesus and other heroes of the Bible. The next significant encounter came when he was seven, asserts Weaver (2010:2). Branham was carrying water to his house (which had plumbing) when a small whirling appeared. He stopped to look at it and then started back
toward his house, when an audible human voice said, “Don’t you never drink, smoke, or defile your body in any way. There’ll be work for you to do when you get older.” Branham says about this event: “Why, it liked to scare me to death! You could imagine how a little fellow felt. I dropped those buckets, home I went just as hard as I could go, screaming the top of my voice” (Branham, 1948:24).

5.7.2 Before His Conversion

Branham related one other significant incident that intensified ridicule and misunderstanding among his peers. Weaver relates that as a teenager, Branham visited a carnival with some friends. One of the carnival fortune tellers approached him with the question, “Say, do you know that you were born under a sign (Zodiac), and there is a star following you? You were born with a gift” (Weaver, 1985:59). Later on, Branham described his youth in this way: “It was a terrible life. There was always that peculiar feeling, like someone standing near me, trying to say something to me, and especially when I was alone. No one seemed to understand me at all…. I was just a black sheep, knowing no one who understood me, and not even understanding myself” (Branham, 1948:7).

Branham came to know the Lord Jesus in his twenties through a missionary Baptist church. Around the same time, he married his first wife, Hope, who died in the Ohio River flood. About six months later he felt called to preach and was ordained as an independent Baptist minister. According to Moreau (2010:2), at his first revival campaign in June of 1933, an estimated three thousand attended a single service, and he reports that 130 were baptized.

5.7.3 Branham’s Ministry of Healing

Branham often testified how the gift of healing came into his life. Moreau (2010:3-5) recounts as follows:

“It was while praying that he received his commission from the angel which was to guide him the rest of life. Branham reports thus: ‘I see the light flickers in the room… and there it was, right in front of me…I looked and I knew that was him (angel). He said: Do not fear…I am sent from the presence of almighty God, to tell you that your peculiar birth….and a misunderstood life has been to indicate that you are to go to all the world and pray for the sick people…and regardless of what they have… and he designated…Cancer.’"

Branham equates this experience to Moses’ calling. He believed himself to be the prophet of God. He often described the importance of the angel, not Christ, nor the Holy Spirit or the Father. Moreau (2010:3-5) continues: “Angel said, nothing if you get the people to believe you,
and be sincere when you pray, nothing shall stand before your prayers, not even cancers…”

Analysing the statement of the famous angel, it would mean that Branham was requiring people to believe in him and not in God. That is very confusing because the angel is promoting the man Branham and not Jesus or God.

Branham’s ministry of healing comes from angel and not from the person of Christ. Branham (1948) reports elsewhere how the gift came into his life:

“The angel said, as the prophet Moses was given two signs to vindicate his ministry, so are you given two gifts to a vindicate your ministry. One of them will be that you will take the person that you are praying for by the hand, with your left hand and their right and stand quiet, … there will be a physical effect that will happen on your body when you pray.”

The angel furthermore said: “It will come to pass that you will know the very secret of their heart.” He said: “This they will hear you.” Here one can ask: is the capacity to know the very secret of their heart a gift of revelation or discernment according to 1 Corinthians 12:3-9?

Branham describes his story with many embellishments so that people of the world may believe in him as the new prophet – a new Moses. To Branham, if the people believe in Moses’ story, they have to believe his story like other Biblical stories where an angel is mentioned (Branham, 1948). Moreau41 reports (2010:5) that when Branham began to heal people, disease caused his hand to vibrate and swell (a typical occultist form of healing that is not seen in the Bible as method God uses to discern diseases and heal).

Bosworth42 describes that the vibrations in his hand were germ diseases that indicated that the presence and working of an oppressing (Acts10:38) spirit of affliction can be distinctly felt. “When the afflicting spirit comes into contact with the gift it sets up such a physical commotion that it becomes visible on brother Branham’s hand, and so real that it will stop a wrist watch instantly. This feels to brother Branham like taking hold of a live wire with too much electric current in it. When the oppressing spirit is cast out in Jesus name, you can see Brother Branham’s red and swollen hand return to its normal condition” (Harrell, 1975:29-32).

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41 Moreau (2010) wrote an interesting article on Branhamism in Uganda. He describes their structure, teachings, methods of healing, prophecies, and shows how different the teachings of Branham are when compared to the Scriptures.

42 Bosworth, F.F. He comments on Branham’s ministry of healing with vibration.
5.7.4 Branham's Ministry of Prophecy

Branham proclaimed to be “the prophet sent by God” for this century (Branham, 1963:11). Piette (1985a:11-21)\(^43\) asks: “Branham true prophet? He is believed by his members as a ‘Prophet of God’. They believed that Branham is the seventh prophet of the book of Revelations 3, since 1906 according to Branham declaration.”

According to Branham, each period of the church had its own messenger:

- Ephesus: Paul (53-170)
- Smyrna: Irenaeus (170-312)
- Pergamum: Martin de tours (312-600)
- Thyatira: Colombian (606-1520)
- Sardis: Luther (1520-1750)
- Philadelphia: Wesley (1750-1906)
- Laodicea: Branham (1906-2015)

However, the WTBTS (1884) also have an own interpretation of the ages of the church:

- Ephesus: Paul
- Smyrna: John
- Pergamum: Arius
- Thyatira: Valdo
- Sardis: Wycliffe
- Philadelphia: Luther
- Laodicea: Russell

Lindsay (1950:72-78) for his part considers Branham, “a man sent by God.” He remarks the presence of the angels visiting Branham several times. He also says,

“…the most usual supernatual visitation in Biblical times was by an angelic visitor. Thus angels appeared to Abraham, to Moses, to Joshua, to Gideon, to David, to the prophet, to Zachariah, to Mary, to the Shepherds, to the apostles, and others. In most cases supernatural

\(^43\) Piette, C. 1985. *Branhamism a la Lumiere de la Bible*. Piette is a French author who reveals Branham’s twisted and erroneous message as compared to the Bible. Although a small volume, his book is rich in information about Branham. The French-speaking nations lack information concerning the heresy that is Branhamism, with the result that there is more support for Branhamism in Africa than in America.
visitation were not mere visions, but were an actual appearing of an angelic being. Thus the story of the angel's appearance to William Branham is not without full Bible precedent.”

If we examine the gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:4-10, it includes the gift of healing and the gift of discernment. The Bible does not prescribe a procedure for using those gifts or anything similar to vibrations on the healer’s hands during the miracle healing.

Billy Paul Branham (1963:33) asserts that “…the word of the Lord promised that the Lord will send to the world once more the spirit of Elijah in the form of the messenger of the last days, who was the angel of the seventh church.” Branham Jr. firmly believes that this promise had been fulfilled.

Frank (1985b:31) maintains that “God had used his prophet William Branham by the same way He used Noah and Abraham…” Later on Frank (1985b:37) says: “All prophetic declarations done by W.M. Branham: someone, all have been 100% revealed exact. None has failed…” This assertion is strongly opposed by Piette and many others. Piette (1985a:10-14) argues: “The Bible says: if someone among you pretends to be spiritual or to be a prophet, if what he says does not happen, then do not listen to him. Do not fear him.” Piette shows how Branham gave false prophecies that never happened and says that this demonstrates the lack of credibility in this movement. First, in June 1933, Branham saw in a vision the end-time events. He saw an open calendar and time and again it stopped at the year 1977. At this time Branham’s preoccupation was to fix the millennial time. He was excited by this dream and declared that the Lord had showed him the end time (year).

Branham said: “I predict according to the way time is going, and I can confirm the end to be between 1933 and 1977. And the events will be as faster that I will be done in the laps of that time of years. Thus says the Lord” (Branham, 1960:39).

Sometimes, Branham was conscious of the gravity of declaring certain things. He once declared that: “Lord, I am conscious of what sort is going to happen the day of judgment if I lead these people in error…” (Branham, 1963:48).

Some false prophecies under Branham are as follows:

- The prediction of 1977 (Branham, 1963).
- The prediction of 1983 (Branham, 1963:34).
- The prediction of 1999 (Branham, 1963).
In summary, Branham declared himself “a prophet from God” because of many deeds, signs and wonders like Moses, Elijah, and Christ. An angel required him to convince people to follow him, so that no one could doubt about him. Meanwhile, many readers of the Scripture notice that Branham misquotes Scriptures to prove his prophet hood, for instance, when Branham declared that he was the Elijah to come in Revelation 10:7 (Branham, 1963:317). That declaration compares with Matthew 17:10-13 where disciples ask about the coming of Elijah and Jesus answers that Elijah has already come. The disciples understood that Jesus was speaking of John the Baptist.

What is surprising is the ignorance of the Scriptures, its context, exegesis etcetera. Branham does not distinguish between the promises to Israel and the church. Mupekadio\(^{44}\) focuses on three aspects regarding Elijah. First, Elijah the \textit{tischbith}, is about to restore the true worship in Israel (1 Kings 18:37). The purpose was to bring back his people to God. Second, the spirit of Elijah worked within John the Baptist. Jesus said about John the Baptist:

> "Truly, Elijah is supposed to come and restore all things. But I tell you that Elijah has come, and that they have not recognized, and they have mistreated him according to their will … the disciples understood that he was speaking on the person of John the Baptist" (Matt 17 11-12).

John the Baptist was a messenger of God, sent to prepare the way to receive Christ. He served God in Israel to fulfil the promise given to Israel as a nation. John the Baptist is not a part of the New Testamentical church. He may be considered the last prophet of the Old Testament.

5.8 The Use of Zodiac Signs, Freemasonry and Demonic Power in Branham’s Life

Branham’s account of being recognized by an astrologer as born under a zodiac sign makes it important to understand the meaning of “zodiac.” According to Fowler H.W. and Fowler, F.G.1976:1680), the word “zodiac” refers to “a belt of the heavens within or about 8° of the ecliptic, including all apparent positions of the sun, moon, and planet. It is divided by astrologers into twelve’s equal divisions or signs.”

Astrology believes that a person has the power of their zodiac sign. An individual may draw their power from their own sign or a compilation of signs. If the latter is true, the individual

\(^{44}\) Mupekadio, Christpain. 2003. Les Erreurs de William Branham. The English translation would be \textit{The Errors of William Branham}. He describes the different errors in Branham’s thinking. For instance, Branham considers the seven churches as seven ages of church history. It is a strange interpretation since the apostles John wrote his letter to seven local churches in Asia Minor and not to different periods of history.
would be able to combine his or her zodiac abilities to generate stronger effects. Zodiac abilities are at their strongest during the month that they are active. Astrology is not our direct study, but is shortly examined for a deeper understanding of the relation between Branham and astrology.

Branham was born on 6 April 1906. According to Western Astrology, March–April puts a person in the star sign Aries. Aries allows strength-based abilities, such as horn protrusion, enhanced strength, fire manipulation, strength manipulation and/or caprine physiology.

Other sources put Branham under Virgo. Virgo allows purity-based abilities, such as purification, healing or enhanced regeneration. Individuals may master holy fire manipulation and earth manipulation. According to the Chinese Zodiac system (Talismans) March-April is a horse, which provides the power of healing.

5.8.1 Branham's Declarations

Branham made a number of significant statements, such as:

“And then one night, I was coming out of Seattle, and there was a man standing over there. And he had a book under his arm. He kept telling me, ‘Brother Branham, you are in the wrong church’.”

Branham further said,

“And I didn’t know what he was talking of. And he put the book under my arm. It was called the Mormon Word of God. I don’t know what it was. It is a – it’s one of their prophet of the Latter Day Saints, some bunch of them, that they claim they see the neophytes. And… in their book hundreds years ago, it prophesied and said, that ‘in the last days that Germany would have a-ism called Nazis’. And I went ahead and said, ‘in that day, let William Branham be called and set aside in humility for the service that I have called him to.’ That is right” (Arnn, 2014a).

This same account was recorded a bit differently in the biography on his life.

5.8.2 Branham's Pantheistic View of God

Branham made several comments that indicates that he had a pantheistic view of God:

“And I’m a great lover of art. I believe God is in art, real art. God is in music. God is in nature. God is in his church. God is just all around” (58-0302. Door to the Heart, Memorial Auditorium, Chattanooga, TN).
“I Believe God is in nature. God is everywhere” (64-0705, The Masterpiece, Branham Tabernacle, Jeffersonville, IN).

“God is in his creation. Do you believe it? All that believes that God is in nature, let’s see your hands. Now, thank you” (55-0625, Show Us the Father, Unknown, Zurich, Switzerland).

Branham explains creation as follows:

“After hundreds and billions of years a clinker flew off of it, it was a star. And we watch it falling. It fell for several millions of years, and He stopped it. Another one fell; He stopped it. What is He doing? He is writing his Bible. We have had three Bibles written. One of them is in the heavens above, the Zodiac. It starts off with the virgin, ends up with Leo the Lion, the first coming and second coming of the Lord Jesus, down through the different ages. Then we find it, till Enoch wrote one and put it in the pyramid. The third is put on paper” (54-0808A, I Will Restore Unto You, Saith The Lord, Shrine Temple, Los Angeles, CA).

Branham believed that God wrote three Bibles. He urged his followers to follow the Zodiac as the first Bible, even to study it in order to understand different ages and figures of the Zodiac (Branham, 1960). The seven ages of the church are a combination of Zodiac ideas and the book of Revelations.

He combines astrology and Christianity further by saying:

“It was in the days of the coming of Jesus. Those astrologers went right on up there and worshipped Him, the three wise men” (47-1123, The Children Of Israel, Shrine Temple, Phoenix, AZ).

“We are taught in another phase that the three wise men that came to worship Jesus, consulting one another, found out one was from the- the lineage of Ham, one from Shem, and Japheth’s people. Then the end shall come…” (54-0306, The Unconditional Covenant That God made With His People, Madison Square Garden, Phoenix, AZ).

Further, Branham said: “These three wise men were ‘the astronomers of India, magi’s...’” (62-0319, The End-Time Sign Seed, Tifton Junior High School, Tifton, GA).

Branham believed that “the three wise men were led by the angel called the morning star.” He addressed prayers unto the same angel: “O Morning Star, guide us and direct us. Forgive us of our sin and help us to be your servants. Lord.” (53-0327, Israel And The Church #3. Branham Tabernacle, Jeffersonville).
Another example of such a prayer is as follows:

“Angel of God, I do not see you. But I know you are standing near. Please, thou know my heart, and know how I love these people. Stand by me tonight….and I know that your Words have been true. I have taken you at your word, for you said you were sent from God. I believed you. And you have stuck by me….now again tonight, in this March the fifth, this memorial night, may you stand now and heal every one. Grant it.” (Branham, 1948).

5.8.3 Different Comments on Branham’s Theology

5.8.3.1 Kurt Koch (1970:150)

Kurt Koch comments as follows in Branham’s background:

“It should be noted (and keep this in your mind at all times) that Branham’s parents both believed in fortune telling (so they were not Christian) and this of course means that William Branham was raised in an occult environment.”

Koch (1970:48-52) speaks on mediumistic healing, saying these forces are equally dangerous when they are being used for humanitarian or social reasons, as is the case with the so-called spiritual healers of today. These healers are found in almost every country and their powers, almost without exception, are of a mediumistic nature. Branham possessed exceptional mediumistic abilities. Branham said to his interpreter one evening just before a meeting, “Don’t stand in the right of me because my angel stands here.” The interpreter asked him quite innocently, “What does your angel look like?” Branham went on to describe a well-built man with dark hair who stood with folded arms next to him. He had to obey whatever the angel said to him (Koch, 1970:49).

Koch (1970:50) continues:

“On occasions Branham would arrive late at a meeting. When the interpreter encouraged him to try and arrive earlier, Branham replied, ‘I can only do what my angel tells me to do. He is with me day and night and if I don’t do what he says, I have no authority in my preaching. I can’t even decide things in my own private life, and can only go out or see people if the angel allows me to’.”

The interpreter was Rev. Hollenweger. Koch relates that Rev. Hollenweger told him: “…that Branham would sometimes fall into a trance when he spoke and that later when he had finished preaching, he would be completely exhausted. In fact, Branham was merely a slave of his angel.”
The interpreter asked Branham, “Do you think your power to heal people comes from the Holy Spirit?” “No,” Branham replied, “my angel does it.” When the interpreter discovered this, he stopped working for Branham. He later said: “If I had known previously what had been going on, I would never have accepted the job in the first place.” (Koch, 1970:50).

On the same line if the majority among his believers would know the true nature of Branham that he was a mediumistic healer, an occultist preacher may be, they will like Rev Hollenweger, the interpreter, stop following a witch preacher (Koch, 1970:50).

5.8.3.2 A Report from Piette (1985a:41-55)

Piette (1985a:24-25) wrote in his book, *Lumiere sur le Branhamism*, (Light on Branhamism). In the chapter entitled, “Occultism and Branham”, Piette starts his analysis of the angel’s message to Branham. He quotes from Branham’s biography: “The angel said: ‘Don’t be afraid… if you would like to be sincere and if you will convince people to believe in you, nothing shall resist to your prayers, even cancer.’” This raises the question: Is it a man’s or the Holy Spirit’s job to lead people to believe in God (John16:8)?

Piette shares Koch’s sentiment that Branham’s healing powers were demonic and mediumistic. He quotes Koch’s account of an incident that convinced him of an occult influence in Branham’s work. Koch said:

“I had often occasion to speak in different churches in Los Angeles. After a meeting, a doctor’s wife came to me and reported the following story: her brother-in-law, though a pastor, was involved in occultism. This pastor played an active part in groups of the spirit of spirits, in magic and witchcraft actions. That pastor was in good relation with some Pentecostal extremist and by then he was introduced to William Branham. Something happened when they met and were presented to one another the first time. When Branham saw him, he shouted instantly: ‘You are exactly like the angel who appear to me every day!’.” (Koch, 1970:46)

This example sheds light on the fact that the angel who appeared to Branham was an occult spirit and was not from God (Koch, 1970:46-48). Also, the Bible says: “Dear friends do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the World” (1 John4:1).

Piette (1985a:44-45) raises another point by referring to a testimony concerning Branham’s son, Billy Paul Branham. Piette asserts:

“One evening, his son Billy Paul had made a remarkable reproach concerning the wig of his father. And the following conversation between Branham and his son occurred: Branham said
to his son: ‘William please sit’. Billy Paul expected to hear something very spiritual, but Branham continued saying: ‘Do you believe that you can grieve dad?’ Billy Paul responded: ‘But, I did that an hour ago concerning the wig!’ Branham said: ‘No, no, you cannot grieve dad, but you are still my beloved boy, though something happened.’ The only problem is ‘that thing which is inside of me, which I cannot control, it does not appreciate what you have said’” (Branham, B.P.,1967:307).

Piette (1985a:41-55), Koch (1970:44-52) and many others suspect that Branham was not filled with the Spirit of God, but by another strange power.

Billy Paul Branham also describes an angel in a testimony included in William Branham’s biography. Billy Paul said: “….when I removed the pillow from my face, I saw a man dressed in white, with a dark complexion, his arms crossed and looking at me… That caused a great fear in me … Then I ran toward my dad. He did not speak a word… And after that he changed into another form, and he became a light and went out of the room” (Piette, 1985a:46).

Piette, quoting the pastor J-L Simonet de Jumet in his study on sects or cults, comments:

“The dictatorial attitude of Branham’s angel; the tiredness which are frequent are very strange Biblically speaking. The angels in the Scriptures are to serve the saints (Hebrews 2:14). Also, the angels are sent by God to comfort saints (Luke 22:43), and not to weaken a prophet. The answers of Branham to his interpreter, gives us cause to think” (Piette, 1985a:46).

5.8.4 Friends and Other Ministry Reports

Though millions of people still believe in Branham as a prophet sent by God, some Christians search his life, teachings and practices to find evidence that Branham was God’s prophet. Among his friends’ writings there are those who expressed criticism of Branham’s ministry.

5.8.4.1 Report by Gordon Lindsay (1950:79-89)

Lindsay was one of the key persons beside Branham. He promoted Branham’s healing ministry. Lindsay wrote: “The remarkable angelic visit received by Brother Branham has caused no little wonder among many of the people of God as well as the unsaved” (1950:72). Lindsay continued to say: “While a few reject the ministry of the supernatural, even as some did in the days of Christ, the overwhelming majority of those who attend Branham’s meetings are fully convinced of the reality of the visitation” (1950:72).

Lindsay wanted to promote Branham’s ministry by convincing the ignorant and fanatic to attend the meetings. Lindsay compared Branham to Moses in that they both received two
signs from God. In Branham’s case, the first sign was a gift of healing in his left hand. By the power of God, with this he would discern or detect a person’s disease. This supernatural sign would result in the building up of the faith of the entire congregation. Then there was a second sign, so that if they did not believe the first, they would believe the second. According to Lindsay (1950), this second sign, according the angel, would be a gift that would allow brother Branham to discern the thoughts and deeds in the past life of the individual.

5.8.4.2 A.S. Moreau’s Doubts Concerning the Angel

Moreau reports a conversation between Branham and the angel as follows:

“Branham said: ‘Well sir, I am here tonight, I have been told by my clergymen that that thing that’s been coming to me was wrong’. He said, ‘you were born in this world for that purpose… and I said, my clergymen told me it, that it was the evil spirit…’ Branham was under strong pressure concerning the origin of his power… He explains to the angel examples of how mediums, spiritists, and astrologers always seemed to recognize that he was born under a special sign and that it was from God, while the ministers always told him that it was Satanic.”

“The angel then said: ‘Listen, as it was then, so it is now. When the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ begin to take place, the ministers said, he was Beelzebub, the Devil, but the devils said, he was the Son of God, the Holy one of Israel…’ Consequently, Branham realized that it was just like those Pharisees in the days gone by, they had misinterpreted the Scripture to me. So from then on I took my own interpretation of it, what the Holy Spirit said” (Moreau, 2010:5).

Branham, instead employing the gift of discernment from God, signed an agreement with the angel for life. Before his birth, it was unconscious, perhaps a grandmother had made a pact and agreement with the spirits to offer the baby born. But later on, he himself made a personal agreement with the angel (Branham, 1955:71). Who was that person, an angel? Jesus? I agree with Moreau that it was not Jesus, nor an angel of God like in the Bible. It was simply a mediumistic spirit.

Weaver (1985:107-108) reports in his dissertation on Branham’s ministry that the reasons for Branham’s success related to this,

“Branham’s personality, effective leadership from Lindsay and Moore, guidance from Bosworth, and the craving for miracles by the Pentecostal masses, were all elements that contributed to success. Nevertheless, Branham’s magnetic appeal lay in his unique healing gift.”
The hordes of candidates for healing were drawn to Branham because they believed that the ministry of healing had burst forth in this man through his angelic commissioned signs. As pacesetter of the healing revival, the evangelist had ignited a significant movement in religious America that remains on the scene today (Weaver, 1985: 108).

According to Weaver (1985:132):

“One element of curiosity aroused by Branham’s supernatural experience was the identity of the angel. When asked to name the angel, Branham retorted, ‘You are so scared you don’t know what to say. He is talking you listen’. But the evangelist, Branham disagreed with the suggestion that the arrival of the Holy Spirit in the early church obviated the need for angels. He responded that a ministry of angels was still present after the Holy Spirit had come at Pentecost” (Acts 12:7).

Weaver (1985:134) furthermore said, “on a few occasions, witnesses affirmed that they had actually seen the angel standing beside the deliverance evangelist. F.F. Bosworth, reporting on a meeting of the 1951 South African campaign, wrote that the angel appeared throughout the crowd. A supernatural light rested over the head of each person whose faith had reached the level necessary for healing. Branham most of time referred to the angelic light as the Biblical pillar of fire (Branham,1953); he averred that Jesus Christ had always appeared in the form of a light/pillar of fore.’

5.8.4.3 The Forgotten Word Ministries

These ministries reveal that Branham believed he was the prophet of the last days. Branham said, “Now, I’m just your brother, by the grace of the Lord. But when the Angel of the Lord moves down, it becomes a Voice of God to you... But I am God’s Voice to you. Now, see, I can say nothing in myself. But what he shows me.” (Footprints on the sands of time, (Branham, 1963b: 214). His followers believed him to be the spirit of Elijah based on Malachi 4 and the seventh angel in Revelations 10.

The Forgotten Word Ministries replied that William Branham has to be labelled a False Prophet in no uncertain terms, for a lot of things he prophesied did not come to pass, for example:

He prophesied that Jesus would return in 1977 along with the destruction of America. Branham said,

“Jesus did not say no man could know the year, month or week in which his coming would be completed. I sincerely believe and maintain as a private student of the word along with divine
inspiration that 1977 ought to terminate the world systems and usher in the millennium" (Branham, 1963a:322).

As we can see, Jesus Christ has not come back, America is still standing and it is some decades later. There are two options here: 1) William Branham received this information from a lying demonic source, his angel whose father is Satan; or, 2) God lied. According to Deuteronomy 18v20-22 “when a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follows not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shall not be afraid of him.”

5.8.4.4 Branham’s “Serpent Seed” Teaching

The Serpent seed teaching is a belief that Cain was produced as a result of sexual intercourse between Eve and the serpent in the garden. Branham believed that the curse of the serpent’s seed is the cause of all mankind’s problems and women are to blame, as is evident in their temptation of men. Hitler also believed in the serpent seed teaching and this was the main reason why the Jews had to be eliminated, for the Jewish nation was of Satan. Branham (1948:27) despised women and on one occasion stated, “…I hated women. That is right.” He so adamantly preached this serpent seed teaching because he had an immense animosity towards women. This would also explain why he preached a rigid ‘moral code’ for women with regard to dress, hair, etc. Branham had also a revelation that allowed for divorce (Branham, 1962b:162).

In addition, Branham believed that the Zodiac and the Egyptian pyramids are equal to Scripture (Branham, 1962b:31, 104). This might be added as one of Franklin Hall’s strange belief that was passed on to Branham. After Branham’s death a tombstone was raised in the shape of a pyramid on his grave. The Forgotten Word Ministries point out that the Zodiac and the pyramids played a huge part in the occult. Witchcraft, astrology and New Age all use the pyramids and the zodiac for divination and for predicting the future. The pyramids are an essential holiday spot for occultists, witches, magicians, necromancers and many a demon/spirit. The narrow passages through-out the pyramids allowed for occult soul travel were mummified kings and other notables were buried with gold, food and other worldly possessions in the belief that their soul would need these things in the after-life.
5.8.5 Freemasonry Influence in Branham’s Life

Freemasonry, according to John Salza (2006), a former mason, begins to exhibit its indifference towards Christ from the moment a candidate first enters the lodge room. Salza (2006:43) says: “Thus, one Mason’s belief is a pantheistic god.” Also Masonry’s ideas of equality of religions is based on the supposed equality of their founders.

The Lodge views Jesus as more than a “particular, finite, historical figure, who reveals the divine not in exclusive way, but in a way complementary with other revelatory and salvific figures” (Salza, 2006:44). Pike cited by Salza (2006:46), a freemason, states that Moses, the lawgiver of the Jews, and Confucius and Zoroaster, and Jesus of Nazareth, and the Arabian Iconoclast, the Great Teachers of morality, and the eminent Reformers, are all equal. The Freemasonry expresses indifference towards the Holy Bible also.

That means all other books are considered equal on their altar. The Bible is no more sacred than the Koran, for instance (Salza, 2006: 46-47). All gods are viewed as equal to Christ. Syncretism is a logical consequence of indifference. If all religions are equally valid, then there is no problem with blending them.

With this influence, it is easy to see why Branham had a pantheistic view of God, blending the Zodiac and pyramids with the Bible with the view that there are three Bibles. The Lodges see God as the syncretistic Great Architect of the Universe(GAOTU) who is worshipped in all religions. He is not the Triune God the father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The origin of the name GAOTU is Freemasonry’s rationalistic belief that God definitively reveals himself only through the geometrical perfection of the universe (Salza, 2006:55). Again, Salza asserts: “Because geometry is masonry’s best evidence of God’s existence, God is symbolized in American and other English-speaking lodges by the capital letter “G”, standing, by Masonic tradition, for God, geometry, and Gnosis. In fact, the Masonic Bible says that the letter “G” represents” the great God of all Freemasonry” (Salza, 2006:56).

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John Salza (2006) is a former mason, but a Roman Catholic priest. He focuses on the different opinions that diversify the Freemasonry and Christianity. Freemasonry considers Jesus Christ as equal with other leaders such Moses for Jewish religion, Mohamed for Muslims, Buddha for Buddhism. He wants to show how Christianity is different with monotheism, whereas freemasonry is pantheistic and occultist. Freemasonry denies the divinity of Christ.
5.8.6 Branham’s Death: a Curse or the Glory of God?

There are two opinions regarding Branham’s death in a road accident between Tucson and Jeffersonville. The accident occurred on December 18, 1965 at 19h30. He was transported to the hospital for care, but he died at 05h49 on December 24, 1965.

On the one hand, his believers refused to believe that the prophet of God had died. It seems they conserved his body for a while for they had a revelation that William Branham would come back to life on the day of his birth, 6 April 1909.

Philip Arnn’s eulogy read as follows:

“Branham’s life ended abruptly. While on a trip to Arizona, his car was hit head-on by one car driven by a drunken driver. For six days he lay in a coma and, on Christmas Eve, 1965, he passed away. The entire Pentecostal world was shaken by the tragedy. A number of old friends - Oral Roberts, Demos Shakarian, T.L. Osborn - telephoned their concern.”

According to Arnn, when Branham died, Demos Shakarian wrote,

“Rev Branham often made the statement that the only fellowship to which he belonged was FGBMFI. Often, when called upon to speak at various conventions and chapter meetings, he has travelled long distances to keep those engagements, His spirit of service was an inspiration.”

Many Branham’s followers believed that he had truly become in the spirit of Elijah; some believed him to be God, born of a virgin. The majority of his believers minimize his accidental death and focus on his healing and deliverance ministry recognized world-wide. Branham deserves respect, honour, and glory as “prophet of the last days” (Lindsay, 1950; Harrel 1978). They fully expected him to rise from dead and come back to them after three days. After five days, William Branham was buried, and his grave was soon marked by the pyramid-shaped tombstone.

On the other hand, there was a group of people who did not regard his death as normal or accidental.

Pastor G. Reckart commented as follows on Branham’s funeral:

“William Branham tore Apostolic churches in half with his false doctrines. He was on his way to Jeffersonville, Indiana to preach on the ‘Trail of the serpent.’ Perhaps to understand why God allowed this tragic accident to take place, a person should read carefully the last message
he preached on his false teaching about the Lord’s Supper, and Acts 2:38 on the remission of sins. It would be important to read in Branham’s own words about the Lord’s Supper and the washing away of sins in baptism by the blood of Jesus. His misrepresentation of these very important doctrines I believe was crucial to his death!”

Is it possible God had enough of Branham’s perversions, of His Word; and that his statements against the Lord’s Supper and his precious blood in water baptism was the last insult? Branham pronounced his own condemnation when he said: “If we or an angel from heaven preaches any other Gospel unto you (than his) let him be accursed.” He then spewed out a gospel that was not the Gospel of the Apostles concerning the Lord’s Supper and washing away of sin by the blood of Jesus in water baptism.

Pastor Reckart concludes: “We may never know, but we have this fact, twelve days after he preached falsehood against the Lord’s Supper and sins washed away by the blood in water Baptism, he was dead.”

5.8.7 Branham’s Burial and Tombstone with Masonic Signs

The Forgotten Word of God Ministries and Albert James Dager commented on Branham’s grave by pointing out that the Great Pyramid was the hub of a huge complex of cemeteries. Mummified kings were entombed with vast amounts of gold, food and other things to maintain an opulent lifestyle in after-life. Poor people were buried with nothing in surrounding cemeteries. Pyramids have an occultist alignment with the stars. Branham bought into these far-fetched fantasies, saying the pyramid and Zodiac are equal to Scripture to reveal God’s word. A man at Jesus’ tomb said, “He is not here for he is risen” (Mark 16:6). What revelation of God’s word would Branham get from Egyptian cemeteries? Zodiac signs are used by witches and astrologers to tell the future and to enable Branham to predict Jesus’ return in 1977. Astrologers, sorcerers and star gazes are abominable (Jer47:1, 13; Sutton, 1986:25, 82).

Branham’s grave is dominated by the Masonic occult pyramid at the top. The gold eagle at the top replaces the figure of the hex-eye on the dollar bill. Branham used the eagle as his emblem.

There is a resemblance between the graves of Russell and Branham. Is this a simple coincidence or a common belief on the pyramid’s power? What is true is that both believed in the pyramids’ power, in pantheistic god, in zodiac astrology, in Freemasonry.
5.9 Testimonies of Those who Left Branhamism in Kolwezi

After they came to the conclusion that William Branham was not led by the power of God, but a mediumistic power, some believers stopped supporting him and his ministry.

Koch (1970:50) relates how Branham’s interpreter discovered the truth from Branham’s answer: “My angel does it.” Koch wrote then,

“When he discovered this, my story-teller stopped working for Branham.” He said, “If I had known previously what had going on.” He told Koch: “I would never have accepted the job in the first place.”

This also happened in Kolwezi and give important insight in how to reach out and talk to someone still part of this cult, in order to help them search the truth, and the truth shall set them free (John 8:36-40). No one would think that a fervent believer of Branham could stop believing in this cult, but circumstances allow people to go through hard situations where they need a true Jesus, the son of the living God (Matt 16:18ff).

5.9.1 Brother N.K. Jean-Pierre (50 Years Old, Interviewed, 6th August, 2014 in Church Office – Kolwezi; full name withheld)

Brother Jean-Pierre was born a Methodist, but he joined the new Branhamite movement in 1987. Since then he’s been baptized according to Branham’s teaching, “in Jesus’ name only.” He became a strong supporter of the ministry for years. He had many successive trials: car accidents, loss of children, a haunted house, permanent sickness. He needed a breakthrough, but nothing came from the Tabernacle of Kolwezi where Branham is claimed as the prophet of last days. One day when his son was hanging between life and death, he sent friends to seek Pastor Jean Louis Nyingika of Mirevint Church in Kolwezi. The teaching of Jesus Christ through the Bible and prayer in Jesus name saved his son. The presence of Christ became a reality in his family. His last words during the interview were, “Jesus is my Saviour and Lord (Rom 10:9-10).” He rejected Branhamism in 2010.

5.9.1.1 Sister Kaswing (45 Years Old, Mother of 8 Children, Interviewed, 8th August, 2015 in Church Office - Kolwezi)

Sister Kaswing was a fervent member of the Tabernacle in Kolwezi for years. She was baptized according to the doctrine of Branham only in the name of Jesus. She rejected Branhamism when there was a problem with witchcraft in the family. Two members of her family died mysteriously one after the other. When she realized that she was next on the list, she collapsed with high blood pressure. After weeks of illness, she had lost all hope. Her sister
took her to the diviners, but to no avail. She found that there was a huge difference between Branham and the pastors, elders and deacons. They were powerless. Meanwhile, she was directed to a Biblical church where she heard about Jesus Christ and the Bible. She stopped confessing that Branham was the prophet of the last days. She confesses that Jesus has saved her from witchcraft and that her children are safe, even though sickness happens as part of life. After rejecting Branhamism, she lived a lonely life. All former friends and members severed relationships with her. She has had to start a new family in the new community among the Christians of Mirevint Church in Kolwezi, and with her family she enjoys the fellowship.

5.9.3 Brother Lumbwe and Family (48 Years Old, Interviewed at School Office, 18 August, 2014)

Brother Lumbwe was a Roman Catholic before he joined a Pentecostal church in Kolwezi. Much of his life, the brother suffered from demon possession. Initially it was only him, but later on the entire family became victims of evil spirits. When the end of month approaches, they hear someone walking or using furniture in the house. There was chronic sickness in different children. Their social life became non-existent because their small salary was swallowed by the cost of medications. They tried to use Branham’s sermons (Branhamites do not read the Bible, but they read sermons, teachings, and Branham’s books) as usual, but there was no change. Then a neighbour prayed for their dying child and she recover completely. The brother became interested in the reasons why they failed to cast out those demons. Finally, they joined our church in Kolwezi and Pastor Jean Nyingika led them to know who Jesus is according to the Bible. They realized that, “Jesus of the Bible is the true one, able to respond to any situation; He is very different to the one preached by Branhamism.”

5.9.4 Brother Remy (63 Years Old, Polygamist Marriage, Interviewed at his Office, 25 August, 2014 in Kolwezi)

Brother Remy officially joined the Branham movement around 1985. He was attracted by Branham’s teaching that allowed a divorce if the wife showed misconduct and lacked consideration towards the husband (see Weaver,1985:197-210). Branham's condemnation of women enforced his tendency to dwell in polygamy. One day, he was invited to our cell for Bible study and the subject of debate was, “Is divorce allowed? If yes, what Biblical reasons are needed? Is it a Godly recommendation or not?” During the discussion, he lacked Biblical arguments and found that God's resolution is not to allow a divorce. He found that what Branham said came not from God, but the angel. The brother said: “Brother Branham mentions much more of the ‘angel’, but less of God or Jesus!” Finally, he stopped with
Branhamism and joined a Biblical church. He still has two wives, but remains in that situation because there are children.

5.9.1.2  Brother Byandomba (59 Years Old, Married, 5 children, Interviewed at Home in Kolwezi, 3 September, 2014)

Brother Byandomba came from Kinshasa as a missionary to enforce Branhamism in the Katanga province from 1985-1990. He later went back to Kinshasa and divorced his wife. He returned to Kolwezi in 2012 to do business. He was organizing debates at the television station and the amphitheatre of the university. The brother was certain of his knowledge’s concerning the prophet’s teachings. He would challenge the public on the baptism asking a simple question, “Is all baptism formulae true before God?” During a question and answer session, a group pastors responded by confronting him with two texts, Matthew 3:16-17 and Matthew 28:19-29. The brother lacked any Biblical arguments to support the superiority of Acts 4:11-12 as a true baptism found in the Scripture. After debates the brother was convinced of some failure in Branham’s sermons and he decided to do more Bible study on Christian doctrines such as the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, and humanity as well. Finally, he stopped following Branham. He made the following statement: “Branham teaches another Christ, according to 2 Corinthians 11:1-6.”

Figure 5-2:  Pictures and Symbols of Branhamism

5.10  Statistics of Branhamism in Kolwezi

Why do the Branhamites grow more than the existent churches? How do they attract, persuade and convince people in Kolwezi and elsewhere? How come they preach that Jesus is the only God?
This study is made difficult due to the fact that, in Kolwezi where the focus of the study is, there is a lack of literature.

Table 5-1: Statistics Since 1985, the Beginning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Evaluations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kolwezi</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>300-3 000</td>
<td>3 000-300=2 700/5=540 per year?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolwezi</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>3 000-4 500</td>
<td>4 500-3 000=1 500/5=300 per year?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolwezi</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>4 500-8 000</td>
<td>8 000-4 500=3 500/5=700 per year?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolwezi</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>8 000-8 400</td>
<td>8 400-8 000=400/5=80 per year?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolwezi</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>8 400-9 000</td>
<td>9 000-8 400=600/5=120 per year?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolwezi</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>9 000-12 000</td>
<td>12 000-9 000=3 000/4=750 per year?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above statistics is a private estimation from members.

- 1985-1990: They did a good job, multiplying nine times (300x9=2 700 members)
- 1990-1995: There was tribal conflict between the Katanga and Kasai tribes. A large number of people left Kolwezi.
- 1995-2000: They reorganize their work to conquer the city by organizing more public conferences with foreign speakers.
- 2000-2005: There was a division on the headship. That division affected the flock.
- 2005-2010: They employ the strategy of winning people through the media.
- Since 1985 to 2014: 300—12 000? Such growth needs serious study.

300x40=12 000 members/30=400 per year

5.11 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter explored the history and teachings of Branhamism. The statistic reveals the urgency of finding out why they are growing so much. Chapter 6 looks at where the Branhamites err in their views, and why this attracts the masses.
CHAPTER SIX: APOLOGETIC COMPARISON OF THE TEACHINGS OF THE JW AND BRANHAM IN LIGHT OF THE TEACHINGS OF CHRIST

6.1 Introduction

Christian apologetics have been used throughout history to refute heresies and answer questions posed to the Christian community. For this reason, the teaching of apologetics to church leaders and the task of Christian apologetics are essential to withstand the heretical teachings, also in the city of Kolwezi and in Africa.

The nature and task of Christian apologetics is of vital importance, especially as seen from an overview of the historical background of the church’s dogmas. The overview provides a global map of the birth, growth, difficulties, and controversies regarding the person of Christ, conflict management by the church councils and the resolutions as church dogmas (Vermes 2012:1-240). The doctrine regarding Christ is discussed before applying it to the different groups.

The teachings of the two groups under discussion are contradictory on the matter of the Scriptures on Jesus. The major teachings and arguments of The Watchtower Society are measured against the Bible throughout the discussion to gauge if they are Biblically correct on the issues of the resurrection of Christ, the Second Coming of Christ, life after death, hell, and other doctrines of the JW. In addition, the question of the Biblical soundness of the Trinity is discussed.

The section on William Branham comprises of his major teachings, including his philosophical ideas and theology, revelations, claims and errors.

This chapter focus on the teachings regarding Christ in the Bible and the Christian doctrines in their proper context compared to Watchtower and Branham’s arguments. The discussion appeals to scholars for arguments that are theologically, historically, apologetically, and logically sound, Biblical and Christian.

In addition to that which can be called false doctrine or heresy in light of the teachings of Christ from the Bible, the aim of this chapter is to correct errors and to persuade readers to change their view of these cults because of their errors (John 8:31-47; 2 Cor 11:1-15).

This chapter therefore deals with the nature of tasks of Christians apologetics throughout the ages to refute the heresies of the JW and Branham’s teachings. The causes of the penetration
of the two movements in Kolwezi are discussed in light of church doctrine and the lack thereof, as well as a possible apologetic approach to eradicate it.

6.2 Defining Apologetics

To give a definition of apologetics is not easy, because among the many apologists in the history of the Christian church, the meaning of apologetics is defined in vastly different ways. It is therefore good to start with the New Testament records to see how Jesus and his disciples defended the reasons for their faith and statements (Matt 2:2-61; John 20:24-29; Acts 17:17-19; Acts 22; Acts 26; 1 Thess 5:21; 1 Cor 1:18-31). The Greek word apologia is founded in the New Testament and can be describe as a formal written defence of your own or somebody else’s actions or opinion. An apologist is someone who tries to explain and defend something, especially a political system or a religious idea.

Ball (2015:2-3) defines apologetics as a defence with a specific reason. He advances the reasons for apologetics as “to defend Christianity against the accusers and attackers; to answer objections from the opponents of Christianity; to use as pre-evangelism, as pre-conversion in the reaching out program; to keep the young people in the church” (Ball, 2015:10-12).

Coulter (2016:1-2) defines Christian apologetics as “the task of developing and sharing arguments for the truth and rationality, and falsehood and irrationality of alternatives, with the aim of strengthening the faith of believers and provoking non-believers to consider Christ.” This agrees with what Peter says in the Bible about the aim of apologia: “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who ask you the reason for the hope that you have…” (1 Pet 3:15). We are frequently, some even constantly, facing questions about the reason why we believe in Jesus’ death and bodily resurrection, his second coming, his deity and his nature. Silence as an answer to these questions exposes ignorance about and a need for Christian apologetics.

Geisler (2013:IX) gives his description of Christian apologetics by indicating that it is firstly a systematic attempt to defend the Christian faith. Secondly, it is comprehensive, covering all the basic areas of apologetics, including worldviews and tests for truth. Thirdly, it is logical, treating the material step-by-step in logical order. Lastly, it is classical in that it follows the order of many of the great apologists through the centuries, including Augustine, Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, B.B. Warfield, Kenneth Kantzer, and many others.
Christian apologetics should also be relevant. For this reason, this thesis specifically addresses the major issues that face the Christian leaders in Kolwezi. Relevant issues in Kolwezi include ideas like the existence of God; the validity of the Bible; the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and the claims of African Traditional Religion, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, JW and Branhamism. This study focuses on the last two movements, specifically their view of Christ. In order to address these issues in an apologetic way, we start off with some background.

6.2.1 The Nature of the Task of Christian Apologetics

Ball (2015:80-83) assumes the apologist’s task to be assessing, minimizing the objection, defending Christianity from misrepresentation and attacks, demonstrating the falsity of Judaism and Polytheism, and answering slanders against Christianity. Geisler (2013:291-292) explains the reason for his apologia as “seek[ing] a rational and factual answer to whether the central claims of Christianity are true. Also, since Christianity is a historical religion, claiming deity for a historical person (Jesus of Nazareth), examine[ing] the claims of historical subjectivism that objectivity in history cannot be achieved.” Ball gives examples of apologists who refuted slander against Christianity and indicates what these men had done to defend the Christian faith. He looks at Tertullian, Pascal, and Van Til.

Tertullian (230 AD) asked: “What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? In other words, he asks what concord there is between the Academy and Church” (Robert and Donaldson, 1994). Like Fideist, Tertullian called philosophers “those patriarchs of all heresy.” Geisler (1976:36) quoted Tertullian when he went as far as declaring about the crucifixion of Christ “by all means to be believed, because it is absurd.” He added, “and He [Christ] was buried, and rose gain, the fact is certain, because it is impossible.” Now concerning Christianity, Tertullian declared that Christianity “cannot even in this be ruled to be irrational.” He also spoke of applying “the rule of reason” as the guiding principle in the interpretation of Scripture (Tertullian, Against Hermogenes, 8; Tertullian, On the Flesh of Christ, 5; Tertullian Against Marcion, 1, 2, 3; Tertullian, The prescription against Heretics, 9).

Geisler (1976:37) mentions Blaise Pascal’s (1623-1662) famous fideism statement “the heart has its reason which reason knows nothing”. In his desire to destroy faith in reason in order to restore faith in Faith Pascal reacted to Descartes’ rationalism. To Pascal, reason is the geometric or mathematical mind, the mind of science. However, the first principles of science cannot be demonstrated. Pascal added that the Biblical doctrine of original sin informs us that man is sinful and God is hidden (no, 445). At this point, Pascal wanted to show that “Reason must submit to the heart, for submission is the use of reason in which consist true Christianity”
(No. 269). That does not mean that Christianity is opposed to reason per se. According to Geisler (1976:38), Pascal’s famous wager is perhaps the best example of his test for truth in action. He asked, "Who then will condemn Christians for being unable to give rational grounds for their belief, professing as they do a religion for which they cannot give rational grounds?" To Pascal, it is by being without proof that they show they are not without sense. Thus, Pascal’s alternative is, "Either God is, or He is not. But to which view shall we be inclined? Reason cannot decide this question." He is more of an anti-rationalist than a fideist. He is a moderate evidentialist who believes that reason and evidence are helpful, but that reason alone will never find God. To Pascal, it is the heart, and not the reason, that experiences God (Geisler, 1976:39).

Cornelius (1967) has much to say on fideism. He said, “Fideism is not limited to non-evangelicals.” He speaks from a Reformed, Biblical perspective theologically and with an absolute faith of presuppositionalism apologetically (Geisler, 1976:40). The starting point of Cornelius (1976:11) is presuppositional when he assumes, "I start more frankly from the Bible as the source from which an absolute authoritative revelation I take my whole interpretation of life." Furthermore, he added, "I take what the Bible says about God and his relation to the universe as unquestionably true on its own authority." Cornelius Van Til (1976) and other apologists think that rational and theistic apologetics have a valid place within the framework of one’s absolute presupposition of the ontological Trinity of the Bible. Indeed, it seems Van Til believed that we must presuppose the absolute certainty of God’s existence vis-a-vis the mere probable force theists give to their arguments, so there is in this sense an ‘absolute’ certain proof for the existence of God and the truth of Christian theism (Geisler, 1976:47). Therefore, some of Van Til’s followers view this absolute presupposition of the Triune God who reveals himself in the sixty-six books of Holy Scripture as transcendental argument. Surely, Van Til gets this Trinitarian belief by faith and not by a transcendental argument.

In fact, Ball (2015:76-78) and Geisler (1976, Chapters 1-9) recognize three approaches to apologetics: there is Classical, Evidential, and Presuppositional apologetics. The Classical apologetics deals with the existence of God compared to the existence of Christ. It also deals with God’s existence as seen by Christianity. Meanwhile, Evidential apologetics deals with the proof of Christ’s resurrection and God’s existence. Josch McDonald and Gary Habermas are cited as Evidentialists. There is also the Presuppositional apologetics that deals with transcendental argument, which assume God to have rational basis for reason, the names of Van Til and John Frame are cited frequently. In church history much of church development took place with the help of apologists. This can be seen throughout the history of the development of church dogma.
6.3 Historical Background of Church Dogma

Christianity has a definite historical beginning. Schaff (1879:32-88; 49-53, 60-88) emphasize the central position of Christ in world history. According to Schaff, “the entrance of the Christian religion into history is the most momentous of all events. It is the end of the old world and the beginning of the new” (1879:32). Schaff further say that “it was a great idea of Dionysius ‘the little’, to date our era from the birth of the Saviour. Jesus Christ, the God-man, the prophet, priest, and king of mankind, is in fact, the centre and turning point not only of chronology, but of all history, and the key to all its mysteries” (1879:32). He aptly argues: “As Christianity is the reconciliation and union of God and man in and through Jesus Christ, the God-Man, it must have been preceded by a twofold process of preparation, an approach of God to man, and an approach of man to God.” (1879:33). According to Schaff (1879:33), “in Judaism the true religion is prepared for man but in heathenism, man is prepared for the true religion. There the divine substance is begotten; here the human forms are moulded to receive it.” Therefore, it is of importance to review the development of the church since the death and resurrection of Christ.

6.3.1 Early Church History 0-600 AD

The church had its birth within the Judaic setting, but the Hellenistic culture had a great influence on it. Schaff (1879:53-80) states that Jesus of Nazareth, a Jew, is the founder of the Church. The day of Pentecost was its day of birth and its existence and growth centres around Jesus Christ (1879:53). The full picture of the church at its birth shows that it was born within Judaism.

Vermes (2012) defines Judaism as “a religion essentially applied to persons born into the Jewish nation.” Jesus himself addressed the Jews and ordered his disciples to turn only to ‘the lost sheep of Israel’ (Matt 10:1-10), the Jews. However, Judaism also accepted Gentile proselytes who were willing to profess the uniqueness of God and to embrace all the religious obligations of the Mosaic Law (Vermes, 2012). This made Judaism primarily a religion of actions.

The ordinary formal non-charismatic Jewish religion of the Old Testament centred on the Temple and Torah, which is the Law of Moses. After the year 70 AD, after the destruction of the Temple, the centre of activities moved to synagogues and other places of congregation. The influence of the synagogue comes actually from decades before the destruction, as can also be seen in Jesus’s ministry, as well as the mission journeys of Paul.
6.3.2 The Historicity of the Early Church

Before talking about the existence of the church, an apology for the existence of Christ should be given. According to Wells (1988:15), pagan evidence about Jesus is a clue to the historicity of both Jesus himself and his church. Wells quotes John Whale when reviewing the question of Christ’s existence. Whale thinks that in denying Jesus’ historicity, “I have ‘more to explain away’ than if I accepted it; that for instance, my view does not account for the silence of early anti-Christians who ought to have rumbled the fraud” (1988:212). Then Wells (1988:15) further said:

Today Christianity has been so important for so long that one is apt to assume that it must have appeared important to educate pagans who lived 50-150 AD; and that if they fail to discuss Jesus’ historicity or the pretention of his worshippers, their silence must be attributed to their consciousness that they were unable to deny the truth of the Christians case.

Subsequently, Wells supports his statement by citing various pagan authors. The first he mentions is Diocasius, 229 AD who made no mention at all of Christians or Christianity, yet he made mention once of the then great rival, Mithraism. Because Christianity remained insignificant for so long, with the exception of the lower classes, its major pagan critics - Lucian (died 303) and the Emperor Julian (died 363) - all wrote long after the gospels had become established, thereby gathering from these gospels that Jesus had been a teacher and miracle worker of a kind perfectly familiar to them. As they could assign him to a familiar category, they had no reason to doubt his historicity (Wells, 1988:16).

In addition, Wells mentions Tacitus when stating that “Tacitus wrote (about 120 AD) that Christians derived their names and origin from ‘Christ’, who was executed by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius” (Annals, 15:44). Building on that, Wells mentions a third pagan author, Bouquet, who wrote of an “undisputed record of Jesus’ execution under Pilate.” He points to the corroboration of the gospels, all of which made this execution their culminating point and adds “none, can doubt when reading them that they contain vivid pictures of a real human being” (Annals, 22:73).

Thirdly, Wells (1988:17) holds that Tacitus is here repeating what Christians had told him as mere historical truth. Tacitus, hostile to Christianity, must have been glad to accept from Christians their own view that Christianity was of recent origin, since the Roman authorities were prepared to tolerate only ancient cults. Notice should be given here that Tacitus, as governor of the province of Asia (modern Western Turkey), at about 112 AD, may well have
had the same kind of trouble with Christianity that Pliny experienced as governor or nearby Bithynia at that very time.

Wells (1988:17) emphasizes the context of Tacitus as the remarks itself suggests that he relied on Christian informants. Tacitus writes about the burning of Rome in Nero’s time and the belief that the fire had been started by order of the Emperor himself. To scotch this rumour, Tacitus states that “Nero substituted as culprit, and punished with utmost refinement of cruelty, a class of men loathed for their views, whom the crowd styled Christians.” It is here he adds that “Christ, the founder of the name,” had been executed under Pilate.

6.3.3 Factors Influencing the Growth of the Early Church

In the light of the pagan proof of Christ’s historical existence, the question that follows is that of church growth. Many factors should be taken in mind in this regard. The book of Acts and the Epistles show how Jesus left a missionary mandate to his disciples to disciple the nations (Matt 28:19-20; Acts 1:8). Throughout the Jewish-Christian communities the message was received with severe hostility, as carried by the apostle Peter, yet Paul carried it further so that it freed itself from all limitations and entered a period of rapid and wide diffusion. Churches were planted in all the great cities of Asia Minor and Macedonia. McGavran (1979:20-45) states that the spiritual factors of the rapid growth of the church in the book of Acts fulfilled the five purposes of the church, as Acts 2 indicates: worship, teaching, discipleship, ministry, and evangelism and mission. In addition to these factors, the Holy Spirit helped the church to grow in spite of persecution and hard times. Beside these spiritual factors, there were other factors. These included the influence of Judaism, the Greek culture and the Roman Empire, the mixing of nations and the universal language, tolerance of Christianity, as well as the persecution of the Christians.

The Christians were first known as ‘the sect of the Nazarenes’ (Acts 24:5, 14), which was regarded as a rivalled from the mainstream of Judaism.” In fact, Christianity spread among the Jews because they were the first target in Jerusalem, Judea and the Diaspora. Synagogues were often the place where Paul and others started preaching the good news. It seems that McGavran (1979:40-45) agree that Judaism had a relatively small influence on church growth. Judaism had a social climax, from where the church could grow throughout the Diaspora. Because of their religion, the Jews were the first challenged with the gospel by the apostle Paul and others, who spread the Gospel after coming to faith. The Jews and Gentiles who came to faith formed the first church in Rome.
The problem the church had to confront was its relationship to Judaism, the “Judaizing Christianity” problem. Judaism had a big impact on the theology, thought and doctrinal issues of Christianity as discussed in the epistles to the Romans, Galatians, and Acts. These books all address the Christian life and the Law. The greatest issues of the new-born church were whether the believers should follow the Law of the Old Testament or not. The progressive solution to this problem may be seen in the book of Acts and in the Epistles of Paul.

In addition to Judaism, the Greek culture plays an important role in church growth. McGavran (1979:45-60) states that Greek culture contributed to church growth, as it supported the spreading of the Gospel. Early Christian missionaries did not learn the language or patois of the Roman Empire, but confined themselves to centres of Greek culture. In addition, in order to become a world religion, the gospels were translated into Greek as Greek was the most popular and most commercial language. Furthermore, Paul wrote in Greek to the church in Rome, of which Greek was the official language.

Now, the historical flow of political power by the time of the first church is most interesting in relation to the growth of the church. The founding of the Roman Empire was the grandest political achievement ever accomplished (Schaff, 1983:90-117). Kuiper (1964:23-28) summarizes the key role of the Roman Empire in this way:

The conquest of Alexander the Great, Charlemagne and Napoleon seem small compared with the durable structure reared by Julius and his successor Augustus. About the middle of the reign of Augustus a Jewish child was born who was destined to rule an empire more extensive and lasting than that of the Caesars.

Kuiper (1964:23) mentions a sign of victory in the testimony of Constantine. In the year 306 the Roman militia proclaimed Constantine emperor in Britain. He received authority over Britain, Gaul and Spain. However, Maxentius challenged him in war. Constantine found himself in an extremely dangerous situation, according to Kuiper. He felt the need for supernatural help. Therefore, he appealed to his god, Mithra, the Persian sun god, who at that time had many followers in the Roman Empire and who was said to be a great fighter and champion of truth and justice (Kuiper, 1964:24). According to Kuiper (1964:23-28), on the evening before the battle, Constantine saw a cross above the sun as it was setting in the west. In letters of light, the cross bore the words: Hoc Signo Vinces, which means, “In this sign, conquer.” The following day, October 28 in the year 312, the battle transpired. The army of Maxentius was completely defeated. The battle of the Milvian Bridge was one of the great decisive battles in the history of the world. This made Constantine the master of the entire western part of the Roman Empire.
Constantine felt that he had won the battle because he had received help from the God of the Christians and he became a Christian (Kuiper, 1964:24). He who had been a worshipper of the sun-god Mithra now embraced the religion of Him who is the light of the world (John 8:13). In the city of Milan, in the year 313, Constantine issued an edict concerning religion. The edict of Milan put a stop to the persecution of Christians and proclaimed absolute freedom of conscience. It placed Christianity equally, in the sight of the Law, with the other religions in the Empire. The edict of Milan marks the victory of the church over heathenism, according to Kuiper, one of the most marvellous things in all history (Kuiper, 1964:25).

Lica cited by Kuiper (1964:27) gives a brief account of some of the services that the Roman Empire rendered to humanity, especially to the kingdom of God. Under the Roman Empire, there was a unification of the Greeks, Romans and Jews under one government. Thus, Rome blended the nations and prepared them for Christianity. For the first time the world was seen as a universal humanity. Nothing could have been more favourable to Christianity than the mixture of races and mutual exchange of thought. People discovered how much they had in common. Men exchanged not only the material, but also the spiritual. Many of these early traders and artisans were Christians, and while they bought and sold perishable goods, they invested in the everlasting, the opportunity to spread the Gospel. In addition to the mixing of races, the spread of Christianity was supported by the Empire’s language preference, Greek. Moreover, to add to this, the road system that knit the then civilized world together served not only the legions and imperial escorts, but were of equal service to the early missionaries. When churches began to emerge throughout the empire these roads greatly facilitated the church organization and brotherhood, strengthening it to overcome heathenism.

Despite the obvious positive factors mentioned, the reality of the persecution of the early church should be taken into account, yet not only as a negative, but as a positive factor influencing church growth. McGavran (1979:20-32) points out that persecution is not considered as a negative factor to the spreading of the Gospel. It had injected a vivid desire to leave the capital city of Israel and spread to other parts of the world. Before the persecution, not one apostle or disciple had the intention to start with the great commission. Tertullian, who lived in the midst of persecution, expressed its philosophy best with the words: “The blood of Christians is the seed of the Church.” Persecution shaped the Christian zeal.

6.3.4 Genesis of the Early Church Dogma 0-600 AD

Despite the persecution of the church, the zeal of believers increased, for it was fulfilling the words of Christ (John 16:33-34). Men researched the Scriptures to find the truth about God, to defend it against the contemporary false teachings and answer the accusations made
during persecution. Kuiper (1964:14-22) said that the church grew inwardly from 33-325 AD. According to Kuiper, the inward growth of the church relates to its doctrine, beliefs and organization (Kuiper, 1964:14). This section is essential to the church in Kolwezi, as it reveals the ignorance or lack of interest to acquire knowledge and information about the genesis of doctrines and dogma. The aim of this section is to narrate, in general terms, the significant developments prior to the year 300 AD and to provide a context for the documents in this chapter so that they may speak for themselves with greater clarity.

At the centre of the debate between those men who searched the Scriptures to present doctrines, was the issue of the relation of the divine in Christ to the divine in the Father (Rusch, 1980:1-2). To put the matter somewhat differently, one would ask how the church would integrate the doctrine of one God with the revelation that God had sent his Son Jesus and had given the Holy Spirit to the Church. Monotheism was deeply rooted in the Biblical tradition, yet the distinctiveness and divinity of the Son was obvious. To protect both aspects of the tension it seems no quick or easy answers were accessible. Throughout history, different actors addressed the tension. Both Kuiper (1964:15-24) and Rusch (1980:1-23) divide church history in periods of actors. There are church and apostolic fathers, apologists, false ideas or teachings, the creeds and the canon, and the development of the episcopate.

6.3.4.1 The Apostolic Fathers

Those taught by the apostles were called the apostolic fathers. They lived in the first half of the second century. The work of the apostolic fathers refers to a collection of doctrinal works, including the writings of Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Hermas, Polycarp, and Papias, as well as the letter of Barnabas, the Letter to Diognetus, 2 Clement, and the Didache (Rusch, 1980:3). These works do not offer a systematic theology and focussed mainly on Christ. Their doctrines were Christocentric and they describe Christ as the revealer of the knowledge of the true God (Kuiper, 1964:15).

The understanding of the doctrine of Christ was initially important to these apostolic fathers and remain so even today. Because many congregations receive very little doctrine, it results in a great ignorance regarding Christian truths. "The theory that doctrine is not important is not only shallow and foolish, it is also crafty. It is one of the devil's best tricks" (Kuiper 1964:13). Today many people in Kolwezi dislike doctrine and claim that opposing opinions cause only controversy and divisions. The International Convention of the Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International (FGBMFI) in Costa Mesa, USA, indicated that the FGBMFI has no room for any debates or doctrinal discussion as they are an inter-denominational movement (Shakarian, 1990). The result of this position of the FGBMFI in Kolwezi, is confusion about the
Father and Son in light of the Godhead and an openness to confess the modalistic Christology taught by Branham (1963:10-15), meaning that Jesus is the only God of the Bible (Branham, 1963:12).

This is but one reason why it is important to investigate the development of doctrine. Rusch in particular reveals detail about the apostolic fathers. He says that there are passages in these collections that refer to viewing God as one, the Creator (1 Clement 8, 19, 20; Didache 10; Shepherd of Hermas, Visions 1. 1. 3). In addition, while not yet using the name Trinity, there is evidence of the triadic scheme (1 Clement, 46 & 58; Ignatius Letter to the Magnesia’s 13, Ephes 9) (Rusch. 1980:3).

### 6.3.4.2 Apologists of the Second Century

Following the apostolic fathers, the next generation of church leaders are called the church fathers, who can be described as influential Christian theologians of that time. Mentions The church fathers were forced to address issues raised by their protagonists regarding the person of Christ (Kuiper, 1964:17-18). Among the succeeding church fathers were Irenaeus and Tertullian in the Western part of the Roman Empire, and Clement of Alexandria and Origen in the Eastern part (Kuiper, 1964:17).

Irenaeus (AD 115-199) heard Polycarp (a student from John the disciple, among others) preach in Smyrna about Christ. From Smyrna he went to Lyons in Gaul (now France), where he became a Bishop and suffered a martyr’s death in 200. He wrote his book against heresy as an apologist for the Christian faith (Hartman II,2013:74). To Irenaeus, the triunity of God is the foundation of the redemption of man. That means, according to Irenaeus, that salvation comes from the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit (Dem, 2010:7 as cited by Hartman II, 2013:74). In his apology against heresy he states that “Jesus is not a lesser being than the Father.” Irenaeus contends that the Son is co-eternal with the Father, as a distinct person, prior to the incarnation (Haer, 3.18.1). 46

The second century apologists made the first attempt at providing a detailed explanation of the relation between the Father and the Son in distinction from the pagan concept of divine beings (McGrath, 2001:172). Their contribution therefore serves as important contributions when answering both the JW and Branham’s believers of today. Among these apologists were

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46 Teachings opposing the apostles were from groups including the Judaizers, Gnostics, Docetists and other pagans. These included teachings that Jesus was not God; nor the Son of God (1 Apology 32.8; 2 Apology 8.1; 10.2).
those who became martyrs because of their work, including Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, and Irenaeus of Lyons.

6.3.4.2.1 Justin Martyr

Justin Martyr (AD 100-165) was born in Samaria, Palestine. He may have been a student of Polycarp’s teachings before he studied Greek philosophy in Rome (Kuiper, 1964:15-18). He is the apologist who most frequently utilized the logos concept (Hartman II, 2013:72-73). He believed that Greek philosophy is rooted in the works and theology of Moses (1 Apoly 59; (NF (1):182). Justin preferred to use the logos concept to explain the eternity of Jesus. Moreover, Justin uses this logos Christology to show the importance of the logos as not only the first-begotten of God, but God Himself (1 Apol. 63; ANF (1):184).

To answer the Jewish objections to the claimed relationship between Christ and God and his deity, Justin Martyr used his dialogue with Trypho to declare that the logos is in fact God. Justin explains that the logos is one with God the Father, but remains distinct in the same manner that a ray of light is distinct from the sun (Dial 61; ANF (1):227). To Justin, the reason behind the multiplicity of the divine seems elementary. Because the Father conversed before the creation with another divine person, there must be another divine person or multiplicity of divine persons while there is one God (Dial 61; ANF (1):227; Gen 1:26). Justin illustrates his theological views on the relationship between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: one flame brings forth another flame by ignition, but the first flame is not decreased in its nature as a true flame. The same is true for the second flame being distinct and independent, but its existence is well grounded in the first flame (Dial. 61).

Kelly (1960:96-98) shows that, for Justin, this distinction in numbers does not mean that there is a division of essence. There is a need for a Justin Martyr in Kolwezi, for one could interpret the silence regarding challenges as a need for apologists to defend Jesus’ teachings against the heresies of the JW and Branhamites.

6.3.4.2.2 Athenagoras

Athenagoras lived in Athens as a Greek philosopher between 133-190. Displeased with the Roman Empire’s policies against Christianity, he wrote a letter to Emperor Marcus Aurelius Anthonius to defend the church against the charge of atheism. The title of his letter, A Plea for the Christians, is apologetic in nature (Hartman II, 2013:73-74). His letter represents a formal defence of Christian theism before the pagan Roman Empire. In his letter, Athenagoras shows that the early Christians were not atheists because they were worshiping a God who is in heaven, that is to say that they knew one divine being who is God, the Father. Furthermore,
Athenagoras asserted that Christians recognize and worship the Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth.

Athenagoras specify that the Son of God, as spoken of by the early Christians, is not the same as the Romans definition of the “sons of gods.” Athenagoras emphasized the main statement of Christian belief: The Son of God is the logos of the Father, eternal and uncreated, because the Father and Son are one (Plea, 10; ANF (2):133). Moreover, Athenagoras spoke against the claim that Christians believe Christ to be the biological Son of God. He developed a Trinitarian language which avoided the subordinationism pitfall. In addition, in speaking of the Holy Spirit, he showed that the Spirit is the Person who maintains the absolute unity in the Godhead, thereby stating the absolute unity of the Godhead, not diminishing the plural persons.

6.3.4.2.3 Irenaeus of Lyon

Irenaeus of Lyon in Gaul (now France) studied under Polycarp of Smyrna who was a student of the disciple John, among others where he learned much about Christ (Kuiper, 1964:17). He also studied in Rome and became the Bishop of Lyon around the end of second century (Rusch, 1980:6-7). Irenaeus was mainly concerned with the heresy of the second century, the denial of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Concerning the relationship between the creator and the logos (1 John 2:15-29; 1 John 4:1-10), Irenaeus’ theology formed a bridge between the eastern and western churches surrounding the person of Christ.

To build upon the accomplishments of the other apologists, Irenaeus provided a climax in theological thinking (Rusch, 1980:6). To Irenaeus, God alone is the only Lord, Creator and Father, containing all things and causing them to exist (Against heresies 2.1.1). In this manner, Irenaeus demonstrated how God is uncreated and is the first cause. According to Irenaeus, man’s redemption is founded in the triunity of God. He argues that salvation comes from the Father, through the Son, and is achieved by the Holy Spirit (Dem, 2007:7; Hartman II, 2013:74), showing thereby that salvation is impossible without the work of the Triune God.

According to Irenaeus, there is a clear distinction among the persons of God, but this distinction does not necessitate three individual deities (Haer 2:1, 2; ANF (1):359-360). With regard to the JW’s heresy (WTBTS, 1989b:3-7), Irenaeus’ theology may be an answer in showing that it is necessary to believe in the Trinity for redemption and salvation of humanity. Through his theology, modalistic heresies (Branham, 1965:300-365) are also clarified and explained by means of the distinction of the persons in the Godhead. The methods of Irenaeus
and other apologists may be useful in Kolwezi to teach the church about Christ, his relationship with the Father and the Holy Spirit (Haer. 3. 18. 1; ANF (1):444-445).

The second century presented apologists in reaction to Gnosticism, Docetism and Montanism as heresies. The church needed a theological contribution to clarify the false teachings in order to defend Christian doctrines. The support of theologians never ceases to be needed, as the truth is often muddled by even subtle inaccuracies. Throughout history, the role of the theologians can be traced as they apologetically defended the truth.

6.3.4.3 Apologists in the Third Century

In the third century a teaching called monarchianism was taught in the church to defend monotheism. This movement emphasized the fact that God was an absolute monad without distinction within the Godhead (Rusch 1980:8). This teaching experienced a rapid development with support from many Judeo-Christian groups. It is known as modalist monarchianism or dynamic monarchianism.

When measured against the New Testament Monarchianism was a Christological deviation. Its motivation was in conservation of the divine unity. The most important champion of this view was Paul of Samosata, the Bishop of Antioch, who was condemned at a synod in Rome in 268. Paul of Samosata felt that there is only one God (Father) and that Christ and the Spirit were names of the inspired Jesus. He held a strict Unitarian view of God. The three persons of the Godhead were only abstractions, except that they were used as traditional terms as Son and Spirit with reference to the person of Jesus, a man (Schaff, 2002).

Sabellius, who lived in Rome at that time, espoused this confused view and produced what is now known as Sabellianism. This doctrine teaches that God is a monad who expresses Himself in three operations or modes. For Sabellius, the Father projects himself in three functions: as Son and then as Spirit (Epiphanius ref. 62; 1. 4 ff). This teaching assumes that God reveals himself in three modes of being. While dynamic modalism said that the deity was limited to the Father alone, modalistic monarchianism describe the Son also as God.

This teaching met some of the problems of the modalism taught by Noetus and his disciples. They attempted to use features of economic tritarianism to correct these difficulties. Unfortunately, they failed and were condemned by the church synod of Rome in 268. The difficulty with their view was how to reconcile the person on the cross and the nature of God in heaven. Was he the same person? They argued that the person on the cross was another man and not Jesus.
It becomes visible here that Branham used Sibellius’ views in his Christology (Branham, 1963). The Trinity of Christianity is disfigured and forgotten (White, 1998:13-15). In Kolwezi for instance, the Trinity seems a taboo in Pentecostal circles because of the poisonous teachings of Branhamites and JW, who deny it in their books and pamphlets (WTBTS, 1989a.).

6.3.4.3.1 Clement of Alexandria (Around AD 200)

Clement of Alexandria was responsible for the catechetical school in Alexandria around the year 200 and should not be confused with the apostolic father, Clement of Rome, who lived in Rome a hundred years earlier (Kuiper, 1964:18). As one of the important figures involved in the trinitarian controversy of the third century (Rusch, 1980:12), he made taught that God is transcendent, ineffable and incomprehensible. He is a unity beyond unity and a monad who embraces all reality (the Tutor 1. 71; the Stromata 2. 6. 1; 5. 65. 2; 5. 78. 3; 5. 81. 3). Only through his Son or Word can this God be known. Therefore, the Son is the image of the Father. He is the only mediator between man and the transcendent God (Rusch, 1980:12).

Concerning the Word or Son, he comes from the Father (Stromata 4.162.5; 7.22) and has no beginning. The Word is essentially one with the Father. Regarding the Spirit, Clement explains him as the light from the Word, which enlightens the faith. Moreover, he explains that the Spirit is also the power of the Word, which permeates creation and attracts individuals to God (Stromata 6.138-139; 7.9.4). In general, Clement presents an image of the Trinity, which is linked with the Christian triad of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

6.3.4.3.2 Origen

Origen lived in Alexandria (Egypt) between 184 and 254 and seems to be a pupil of Clement of Alexandria and of Plato. During that time, Alexandria was considered as the big school of Christianity and many scholars came from Africa to learn. He used an allegorical style to explain his ideas regarding the Scriptures. In his theology, Origen described the appearance of three divine persons by using the terms hypnotases (Lohse 1999:2-6). Origen explains that the three hypnostases or persons sprang eternally from the same source of deity (Lohse, 1999:46). Nevertheless, Origen notices both their distinction and unity (princ, 1. 3. 7; ANF (4):254-255).

In Origen’s dialogue with Hieraclides (1-4), he indicated that it is not only an economic relationship among the persons of the Trinity, but also a genuine ontology as expressed in his designation of the three persons as homoousios. Consequently, this ontology does not show any separation. However, it does necessitate a distinction among the persons of the Trinity. For Origen, the Son and Spirit are co-eternal (Pelican, 1978:191-192). Therefore, it appears
that the Son and Spirit, for Origen, are subordinate to the Father (Fairbairn, 2009:45). His theology lacks clarity regarding the Holy Spirit, ascribed to his linguistic shortcoming (Haykin, 2011:73-74).

6.3.4.3.3 Tertullian and the Trinity (AD 160-225).

Tertullian was also from Africa, born in Carthage. Some view his many works as polemical due to its Trinitarian doctrine, these include the Unitarian groups like the JW (WTBTS, 1989a) and the Branhamites. He defends the Godhead in three distinct persons. Historically, his teachings can be comprehended against the backdrop of the rise of monarchianism (an absolute monotheism without any communication with Jesus and the Holy Spirit – Rusch, 1980:9). Tertullian asserts that God the Creator is One (Testimony of Soul 1; 2).

Concerning Christology, Tertullian describes the doctrine of Christ even more clear and precise than anyone before him (Kuiper, 1964:18). Hartman II (2013:73) sees Tertullian as the most prolific ante-Nicene Trinitarian developer. He was the first person to use the Latin word Trinitas to describe the Godhead. Tertullian’s focus was on defending the personhood of the Trinity without dividing its essence or substance (Apology. 21; ANF (3):33-36; Prax. 225).

The Trinity is functionally distinct as the divine nature is wholly shared, implying one divine substance (Osborn, 2003:131). In writing against Praxaes, Tertullian’s goal was to fight the heresy of patripassionism, which teaches that the Father, or ‘Pater’ in Latin, suffered on the cross and died. It is also a view taught by Sabellius and allies. However, Tertullian did so in order to demonstrate that this doctrine is a form of modalism and heretical compared to the Biblical context of the crucifixion (1 Cor 15:1-15; Adverse Judaeos. http://www.tertullian.org/works/adversus_judaeos.htm).
Tertulians view of the Trinity can be outlined as follows:

![Diagram showing the Trinity: Father, Son, Holy Spirit, and One God]

**Figure 6-1:** Three Persons – One God: Common and Orthodox Concept of the Trinity

6.3.5 The Apologetic Nature of the Nicene Creed

The council of Nicaea is an apology in answers to the many heresies and erroneous ideas regarding God. During the period between 268 and 325, the church faced different heresies or controversies about the person of Christ, with Arianism seeming to be the most poisonous controversy. Arianism, according to Grudem (1994:242-247), denies the full deity of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the church needed to address this in a council and creed.

6.3.5.1 Major Issues at the Nicene Council: Arianism

The teaching of Arianism influenced the discussion at the Council of Nicea. Arius thought that God the Son was at one point created by God the Father, and that God the Son did not exist eternally, nor did the God the Holy Spirit, but only the Father. According to Arius, Christ was begotten by God the Father, arguing that he was brought to being by God the Father, referring to John 3:16. Furthermore, Arius argued from Col 1:15 (similar as the Jehovah’s Witnesses of our day), “He is the image of invisible God, He is first born of all creation”, that the Son was at some point brought into existence by God the Father. Grudem shows the error of this view by referring Col. 1:15, which calls Christ the first born of all creation (and in Col. 1:18 the first born from the dead). It can better be understood to mean that Christ has the right or privilege of the first born of the whole creation, leadership or the authority to rule in the family of the whole creation. Therefore, the Nicene Creed in 325 affirmed that Christ was “begotten” but not made or created.
6.3.5.2 The Nicene Creed (Schaff, 2002:123)

Concerning the council of Nicaea, Kuiper (1964, 30-31) comments as follows:

The great question which occupied the mind of the church for some three hundred years was whether Christ the Son was truly and fully the God as the Father. Two tendencies dominated the Nicene council. The side of Arius and another side for Athanasius. Both of two were presbyters in the church in Alexandria. It seems important to notice that Arius was far advanced in age and pious, even blameless, and good preacher. But Athanasius was younger and standing on the Apostles’ Creed (Kuiper, 1964:31).

The above statement is concerned with asserting the full deity of the Son in answer to Arianism. Therefore, it seems clear that in order to defend the Gospel against unbiblical perversions, the church fathers wrestled with these problems. These perversions contradict the basic Christian experience and became a cause of concern of Nicaea and Chalcedonia (325 and 451 CE). In addition, the heathen belief in many gods urged them to formulate the creeds, for the belief that the Son is God and the Father may lead to the misconception that there are two gods and that therefore Christianity would lead back to heathenism. Therefore, the Nicene Creed reads as follows:

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ the only Son of God,

Eternally begotten of the Father,

God from God, Light from Light,

True God from True God,

Begotten not made,

Of one being (homousious) with the Father

Through him all things were made

For us and our Salvation,

He came down from heaven

By the power of the Holy Spirit

He became incarnate from the Virgin Mary and was made Man
According to Arius, Christ is the first and the highest of all created beings. He does not exist from eternity and is not of the same substance or essence as the Father (Kuiper, 1964:31). On the other hand, Athanasius taught that Christ is the very God. Following the spirit of the Apostles’ Creed, Athanasius considered many factors. The first was the vital question of man’s salvation. To Athanasius and the apostles, Christ’s work and his person are inseparably connected. As the angel announced, “thou shall call his name Jesus for it is he that shall save his people from their sins” (Matt 1:21). Man’s condition is so utterly hopeless that he cannot save himself. If Jesus Christ is truly and only man as was claimed by Arius then and the Jehovah’s Witnesses now, he cannot save his people. Only God can save them. If Jesus Christ is not God, he cannot be our salvation, therefore, Athanasius said “Jesus whom I know as my redeemer cannot be less than God.”

6.3.5.3 Resolution at the Council of Nicea

Kuiper (1964:31) reports that the outcome of the Council of Nicea caused Arius’ views to be condemned as heresy. A statement of the true doctrine of the person of Christ was adopted as the faith of the church. That statement, elaborated and refined at a later council, is known as the Nicene Creed. In this creed the church confesses that Christ is truly God; begotten not created; co-substantial with the Father (of the same substance or essence as the Father).

A somewhat surprising phenomenon is the position of the JW and the Branhamites on the Nicene Council. Both groups condemn it as a deviation from the truth preached by the apostles and Jesus (WTBTS, 1989b:1-15; Branham, 1961a: No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6). In the JW’s magazine, Should you Believe in the Trinity? Is Jesus Christ the Almighty God?, The Watchtower organisation accuses Tertullian of inserting the “Triad” from a Babylonian religion. Their arguments are not substantiated. No mention is ever made of the trust or belief in a Babylonian religion they accuse him of. Tertullian recognized the divine attributes of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Apology, 21:12) – not one Babylonian god with three heads, but three Persons in one God.

Similarly, the Believers of Branham’s message condemned the Nicene Creed and its contents. They qualified it as demonic insertion, claiming the devil as its genitor (Branham, 1961b:27), while their doctrine goes against the Biblical explanation of different Persons in the Trinity.

6.3.6 Councils of Nicea and Chalcedon

Kuiper (1964:32-33) expresses his position with the specific mention of the weakness of the Nicene Creed regarding the absence of something credible on the Holy Spirit. In fact, the Nicene Creed says nothing concerning the deity of the Holy Spirit. At the Council of
Constantinople in 451, the synod reaffirmed the belief in Christ as formulated in the Nicene Creed, but also declared the deity of the Holy Spirit.

Constantinople presented a fundamental article on the Christian faith (Kuiper, 1964:32). There the belief of the church in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as the Triune God was fully established (Kuiper, 1964:31).

With the Nicean creed the Apostles’ Creed was also confirmed. The Apostles’ Creed (Third and Fourth century AD):

I believe in God the Father (Gen 1:1) (Isa 44:24)

Almighty; Maker of heaven and earth (Rev 15:3)

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord (Matt 14:33, John 3:16, John 1:18, Acts 8:37, Heb 1:5, 1 Pet 1:3, 1 John 4:14)

Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matt 1:18)

born of the virgin Mary (Matt 1:20, 23)

suffered under Pontius Pilate (Matt 27:13)

was crucified, died and buried (Matt 27:35, 50, 60)

the third he rose from the dead (1 Pet 3:19, Ephes 4:9, Matt 28:6)

He ascended into heaven (Acts 1:2)

and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty (Acts 7:56)

From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead (2 Tim 4:1, Rev20:12)

I believe in the Holy Spirit (Rom 15:13, I Cor 6:19)

the Holy catholic church; (Catholic is not the Roman catholic church but, it means universal (Ephes 1:22, Matt 16:18, 1 Tim 3:15)

The communion of saints; (Saints=Christian) (Ephes 4:2-4, 1 Cor 10-16, I John 1:7)


The resurrection of the body (1 Cor 15:35-37, Phil 3:21, Col 2:11)

After viewing both creeds, it seems clear why Christians throughout the world see the content as rooted in Scripture, begging the question of whether it is the Scripture that is condemnable or the position of the opponents of the Apostles’ Creed. This is the Christology that the members of Kolwezi have to know, especially to answer the claim of the Branhamites and the JW’s, who say that these creeds are demonic.

6.3.6.1 Major Issues of the Apostles’ Creed

Josef Lossl (2010:223-224) requests that the preamble of the creeds of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381), be renewed. Lossl regards the Chalcedon Council as the fourth ecumenical council. Schaff (1889:430-437) indicates the importance of the Apostles’ Creed and others as follows: “the Apostles’ Creed expresses in general the teachings of the founder of Christianity (Jesus of Nazareth).” All articles are supported by Scripture to prove how scriptural it is. It is not a humanistic tentative to cause the church to deviate from the vision of Jesus (Matt 16:16-20) as viewed by the JW (WTBTS, 1989a:1-14) and Branham (1963).

The major issues of Chalcedon were the two natures of Christ: man and God in the person of Christ (Kuiper, 1964:33). It seems that at Nicaea the church defined its Christology clearly: ‘Christ is God’ (325AD), and at Constantinople (381), the church completed its doctrine by adding of the Holy Spirit: ‘The Holy Spirit is God’ (Kuiper, 1964:33). Therefore, at Chalcedon, it was necessary to review different creeds in order to be relevant in its beliefs.

Kuiper describes the four issues. The first issue was to assert the belief in Christ’s full and complete deity, since it was poorly understood in the west part of the empire (the Arian region in Europe). The second issue was to confess the belief of the church in Christ’s equally full and complete humanity. Third, the church had to confess the existence of the two natures of Christ: the human and the divine (Kuiper, 1964:33). Regarding the relationship of these two natures, the church had to confess that they exist in Christ without confusion, change, division or separation. Finally, the Apostles’ Creed was simply a confession that while Christ had two natures, he is one person (Kuiper, 1964:33).

6.3.6.2 The Impact of the Apostles’ Creed on the Church

The confessions regarding the person of Christ have enjoyed undisputed authority in the east and the west and among the Catholic Orthodox and Protestant churches until the enlightenment (Fuller and Perkins, 1983:124, 125). Fuller describes the advantage that Chalcedon recognized the uniqueness of Christ: that there is only one Jesus Christ of
Nazareth and that Jesus of Nazareth is one person (he is not a mere man as Arius and many
other have said before). Nevertheless, among the Alexandrian scholars, the criticism of the
two natures of Christ persisted, yet not as before the Chalcedonian Creed (451).

6.3.6.3 Resolution

The creeds at Nicaea and Chalcedonia explained indirectly the affirmation that the Son of God
went through the incarnation to achieve his mandate as Ebed Yahweh (Isa 53) and as the
redeemer by means of the redemptive action on the cross. He had to enter into the full
condition of human life to save humans, instead of being and remaining God. Since God
cannot die, he could not die on the cross (Fuller and Perkins, 1983:125). Therefore, Christ had
two natures in one person. According to Fuller, the doctrine of the two natures assisted in the
development of the notion that Christ suffered in his human nature only and that his divine
nature somehow remained immune.

The Apostles’ Creed together with the Nicean Creed preserved the twofold nature of the
Christian experience of Jesus, the fully human person in which God’s definitive revelation and
redemption were embodied (Fuller and Perkins, 1983:131). There should be a Christology in
Kolwezi that starts anew with its foundation on the divinity and the full humanity of Jesus. In
the city of Kolwezi there is a need to demonstrate the two natures of the person of Jesus of
Nazareth. He was fully human and fully God according to what the Scriptures teach (John 1:1-
18, John 17:3-5).

6.3.7 Christological Controversies Regarding the Nature of Christ

Controversial issues in the early church, its origin and its development up until today are now
addressed to answer to the criticism of the Christian orthodox doctrines of the known
opponents in Kolwezi, the JW and Branhamites. Moreau (2010:1) feels that the two groups
also challenge the eastern and Sub-Saharan region.

Controversial teachings are causing confusion concerning the nature of Christ in some groups.
One questions centres on the number of natures that Christ had when he lived on earth
(Liichow (2004).

Christ’s very person and nature became the subject of many attacks through the Christological
controversy. Liichow (2004) lists several examples of these attacks, some of which are being
taught in Kolwezi. The researcher has selected some of these heresies, which deal with the
nature of Christ and that have been embraced within the teachings of the JW and Branhamism
in Kolwezi. These controversies are as follows: Docetism and Gnosticism; Ebionism; Arianism; Monarchianism and Sabellianism.

6.3.7.1 Gnosticism and Docetism

The church is no stranger to false representations of Christian doctrine. It started from the time of the apostles and continues until this day. Gnosticism transpired during the pre- and early-Christian era. It was a heretical movement of the second century Christian church, teaching that esoteric knowledge (gnosis) of the Supreme divine being enables the redemption of the human spirit (Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 2011:608). Scholer (1993: XI) defines it etymologically in that the word Gnosticism is derived from the Greek word ‘gnosis’, which means knowledge. It refers to a religious movement in the Hellenistic world. Scholer describes Gnosticism as a syncretic religion, clearly showing elements derived from the Hellenistic philosophy (Platonic), Judaism, some traditional Egyptian religious motifs, and in its best known and predominant forms, early Christian theology. In addition, Oppenheimer (2013) assumes that the Gnostic movement was a philosophical system built on Greek philosophy that taught that matter is evil and spirit is good.

Gnosticism promotes a clear separation between the material and spiritual world. The Gnostics assumed that since matter is evil, God could not really be incarnated in a human form and only appear in order to suffer. It was an illusion. Concerning Jesus, the Gnostics claimed that if Jesus walked on the sand, you could know it by seeing that there are no footprints. In this view, Jesus was a pure spiritual being in an evil world (Scholer, 1993).

Simon Magus was the most prominent early teacher of Gnosticism. He reportedly wrote the Gnostic work entitled The Great Revelation, in which Simon himself is presented as the messiah and not Jesus (Lossl, 2010:98-102). Menander, one of Simon’s disciples, preached that those who followed Simon would not die. Since Jesus was crucified, Simon Magus was the messiah (Oppenheimer, 2013). Cerinthus, in the late 100’s taught the Gnostic teaching of the existence of aeons and emanation from the eternal God. Of Jesus, he taught that he was the natural Son of Joseph and Mary. Only at his baptism did the Christ come upon his body for a short time. It left him at the crucifixion. This teaching or view is espoused by many cults (including the Oneness Pentecostal Church). As a result, they say that it was merely a man who was crucified and not Jesus, for Christ left him at the cross. As God, he could not suffer and die. Therefore, they consider Jesus as merely material, who received the divine Spirit upon him at the baptism (Liichow, 2004). Branham espoused this view.
The other problem with Gnosticism centres on salvation. Gnosticism teaches that salvation depends on knowledge and experience. Those who do not have this knowledge are ignorant and unless they receive a direct revelation from the Spirit, they would be lost. Through this teaching, they deny salvation by faith, which the apostle Paul preached, as well as the incarnation of Christ, the atonement, and the resurrection of his body. They indirectly deny the key role of faith in every encounter between man and Christ for salvation, redemption, and eternal life (John 3:16; Rom 3:24-25; Rom 6:9-14; 1 Cor 15:1-15). Their message completely opposes the New Testament teachings. Irenaeus (against heresy1:26:2.3.11) said about the Gnostics: “These men falsify the oracles of God and prove themselves evil interpreters of the good Word of revelation. They also overthrow the faith of many, by drawing them away, under a pretence of superior knowledge, from him who rounded and adorned the universe”.

The word Docetism is derived from the Greek word dokesis, which means to seem. It is a belief that Christ was wholly God and his humanity and suffering seemed unreal (Lossl, 2010:87, 113). Polycarp and Justin Martyr considered this view heretical. As heresy, Docetism states that Jesus was in nature divine, eliminating humanity. The partakers of this view considered Christ’s suffering as unreal or phantasmal, appearing only to be human. In another way, this view clearly shows the Greco-oriental assumption of divine impassability and the inherent evil nature of the matter (Liichow, 2004). The first person to mention this view was Serapion of Antioch (200 AD). Initially it was an attitude that informed a number of heresies, such as Marcionism and Gnosticism. Justin Martyr mentioned these heresies when he said, “there are some who declare that Jesus Christ did not come in flesh, but only as a spirit, and exhibited an appearance (phantasm) of flesh” (Lossl, 2010:103-106). Some Docetists claimed that someone else was crucified in the place of Christ. Polycarp anathematized those who refused to confess that Jesus Christ came in the flesh (compare 1 John 4:13). In accordance with Justin Martyr, demons can lead people to misinterpret the prophecies in Scriptures and develop all kinds of false and immoral religions. Consequently, deviations are generated throughout the centuries, continuing now in the modern argumentation of Oneness Pentecostalism and Branhamism in the city of Kolwezi as well as the Jehovah’s Witnesses view that Jesus was not divine.

6.3.7.2 Ebionites and Ebionism

Ebionism teaches that Jesus had only a human nature, denying his divinity altogether (Liichow, 2004:Vol. 9; The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 1998:523). Ebionites, from the Hebrew, means poor man. It is a Jewish sect that flourished in the early centuries. It was an offshoot of a specifically Jewish form of Christianity, which was a potent force in the apostolic age (The Oxford Dictionary, 1998:523), at the time when Christianity spread among
the Gentiles due to the work the apostles Peter and Paul (Acts 10:13-28). However, its influence diminished with the dispersal of the Christian community from Jerusalem to the Trans-Jordan after the outbreak of the Jewish war (AD 66) and isolated it completely. Ebionism had two tenets, the first was to reduce the doctrine of the person of Christ, that Jesus was merely the human son of Joseph and Mary, rejecting the virgin birth, and that the Holy Spirit enlightened him at his baptism in the form of a dove. Second, it emphasized the binding character of the Law of Moses.

Hypolytus (170-236) and Tertullian connect the Ebionites with Ebion, who was presumably the apocryphal founder of the sect. Ebionites lived ascetic lives, isolated from any luxuries in life, appearing as a poor community of Jewish-Christian believers (Rusch, 1980:12-20). Lossl (2010:96) describes the Ebionites as those who drew erroneous conclusions regarding the nature of Christ and who reject everything else in favour of it, in particular the letters of Paul, who were regarded an apostate. They only considered one Gospel as true, that of Matthew. Consequently, they lived separate from the mainstream Christianity (Oxford Dictionary, 1998:523). It seems that Ebionism sounds much more like the Jewish rejection of Jesus and therefore lacks evidence to truly be part of Christianity. Irenaeus, in his teachings, fought this heresy (Against Heresy 1. 26. 2; 3. 11. 7).

6.3.7.3 Arianism

Arius (260-336) was probably born in Libya and was a pupil of Lucian of Antioch. After his ordination as deacon in Alexandria in 311, he espoused a subordination teaching about the person of Christ, which is contrary to the orthodox church’s teaching. The controversy of Arius is a Christological heresy and as it spread out of Alexandria it found support in the eastern region of the church. However, the Bishop of Alexandria strongly denied it and consequently excommunicated him. After his excommunication and exile, his teachings find acceptance by some parts of the eastern church. There Arius taught that God the Father alone is eternal and unoriginated. The Christ is a creature, created out of nothing, but had a beginning. To Arius, there was a time when Christ was not, and therefore he was created by God (Rusch, 1980:17; Williams, 2001). The Bishop of Alexandria believed in the eternity of Christ, unoriginated. Consequently, a local dispute between Arius and the bishop arose, culminating in a global and disruptive argument within the church.

For Arius, Jesus is a demi-god, neither fully God, nor fully human. Jesus became God only in the way that every saint may be deified (Liichow, 2004; Rusch 1980:18). Some historians connect his views with Origen’s thought. However, he eliminated Origen’s view of eternal generation. Arius pushed the idea of subordination to extremes. Consequently, Arius did not
clarify the difference between Christianity and Paganism, for according to his almost Jewish view of Christ, Jesus is subordinate to the Father as a Son, created by the Father and therefore dependent on Him. This teaching denies the divinity of Christ, and was followed by groups such as the JW.

6.3.7.4 Sabellianism, Modalism and Sabellius

The present thesis centres on the person of Christ, whether Jesus is God, the only God, or not God at all. With the mention of Sabellianism and modalism, their influence on the ministers and believers of some churches in Kolwezi becomes important. Sabellianism and modalism are simply the views taught by Sabellius and allies in the third century. It seems important to explore them for a deeper understanding of their meanings as well as making an analogy between such teaching and the Christian view.

In Kolwezi, the most prevalent heresy is the modalistic view of Christ and of the Trinity. During interviews, many ministers and church members seemed confused about the person of Christ, and when speaking about Jesus, the people of Kolwezi generally means the Father. Certain categories of believers, for instance Branhamites, claim that Jesus is the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. They claim that Jesus is the only God in the Bible. Consequently, the importance and necessity of this section lies in demonstrating how Sabellianism and modalism are heresies compared to the Christian doctrine.

Grudem (1994:242-247) presents the two teachings of modalism and Sabellianism as developed by the one genitor, Sabellius, who lived in Rome about AD 260. Sabellianism teaches the same teachings as modalism, even modalistic monarchianism, for the teaching claims that: “not only did God reveal himself in three modes, but also that there is only one supreme Ruler or monad (monarch) in the Universe and that is God himself, who consist of only one person” (Grudem, 1994:243). Therefore, the people who promote this view taught regarding God, “he is not really three distinct persons, but only one person who appears to his people in different modes at different times.” In Kolwezi, the Branhamites teach that God had appeared in the Old Testament as “Father” but, throughout the Gospels, the same God appeared as “Son.” Now, after Pentecost, the same God reveals himself as the “Holy Spirit”, which is active in the church (Grudem, 1994:242-247).

In Kolwezi, large contingent of Pentecostals, independents and some evangelicals adopted this view. Over 30 years the silence of the Christian church to answer it, has caused this doctrine to become mixed with Christianity. The number of the population believing this view
is growing daily and it is becoming a dormant volcano with the potential to one day erupt and swallow Christianity in Kolwezi.

The Branhamites argue this position by citing misinterpreted Scriptures, for instance, John 10:30 “I and the Father are one” and John 14:9 “He who has seen me has seen the Father.” Accordingly, they strongly maintain the unity of the person of God, which is Jesus only. They are influenced by the view of the Holiness Pentecostal Church where Branham was taught modalism and Sabellianism. Nevertheless, this position is a heresy as shown in chapter 5 (see also Rusch, 1980:8-15, 49-51).

Grudem (1994:242) denies the modalistic view by also saying that “modalism denies the personal relationship within the Godhead that appears in so many places in the Scriptures.” Modalism denies the three separate persons; for example, at the baptism of Jesus the three persons are clearly separate. The Father speaks from heaven and the Spirit descends on Jesus like a dove while Jesus stands in the water (Matt 3:16-17). Grudem reasons that modalism lost the heart of the doctrine of the Atonement, that is, the idea that God sent the Son as a substitutionary sacrifice (Isa 53:11) to calm His wrath and to bring the salvation to the universe. Likewise, modalism ignores the central passage of the Gospel of John 3:16, which reads “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” This Scripture cannot fit into the modalistic view for if only Jesus is God, he does not have a Son to send into the world. It seems simply contradictory to the Scripture.

Rusch (1980:8-9) also opposes modalism by revealing it as an expression for adoptionism, meaning that Jesus lived as an ordinary man until his baptism. Only after the baptism according to this adoptionists view, God adopted Jesus as his “Son” and conferred supernatural powers on him. Rusch considers modalism a Christological deviation. Theodotus and Artemas taught it, but more importantly Paul of Samosata, the Bishop of Antioch, who was condemned at the synod of Antioch in 268 for this view. Hypolytus and Tertullian also refused the doctrine of modalism and insisted on the idea of the actual Trinity (Apology 21:12; Prax. 25). Tertullian claimed the distinctiveness of the three persons and that they are of one substance. This became an important element in the Nicene formulation (Rusch, 1980:49-50).

6.4 Biblical Doctrines on Christ

It is important to look at the Biblical doctrines regarding Jesus as the Christ. It is especially crucial to answer the question in this thesis of what we should believe about Christ. The Biblical teaching on Christ is the subject here with several different aims. The first aim is to identify
and explain the Biblical teaching regarding the deity of Christ. Second, the section explores Ebionism and Arianism, the two views about Jesus Christ prized by the JW in Kolwezi and the modalism and monarchianism proclaimed by Branham. The section thirdly shows how these heresies deviate from the historical and Biblical understanding of Christ's deity. It also formulates the implications concerning the deity of Christ for the purpose of developing a balanced Christology. Finally, the section compares the different views of scholars such as Grudem, Erickson, Berkhof, Ryrie, Moule, Bethune-Baker, Luther and Calvin in light of the teachings of JW and Branham (Hendrickson, W. 1954).

6.4.1 Christian Doctrines on Christ

Bethune-Baker (1962:1-2) asserts that “Christianity is not a system, but a life; and Christian doctrine is the interpretation of a life”. Grudem (1994:529) is more concerned with the person of Christ, being divine and human, yet one person. Grudem claims that the Scriptures first discusses the humanity of Christ, then his deity, and then attempts to demonstrate how Jesus’ deity and humanity are united in the one person of Christ. Scriptural references are necessary due to the timeless authority of the Scripture. The Scripture is the judge between that which is of God and what not, because it is the expression of God’s Word (Klein et al 1993:21, 83).

6.4.1.1 The Virgin Birth

Scripture asserts that Jesus was conceived in the womb of his mother, Mary, by the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit, without a human father (Grudem, 1994:529). “Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit” (Matt 1:18). The Scripture explains the mystery of Jesus’ birth. “Shortly after that, an angel of the Lord said to Joseph, who was engaged to Mary, Joseph, Son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit” (Matt 1:20, 24-25). The Bible says that Joseph “…did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a Son; he called his name Jesus.” Luke gives the details of the conversation between the angel and Mary after the angel had told her that she would bear a son. She replied “How shall this be, since I have no husband?” The angel answered “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God” (Luke 1:35; 3:23).

The importance of the doctrine of the virgin birth has three aspects according to Grudem. It firstly shows that salvation must come ultimately from the Lord (Gal 4:4-5). Secondly, the virgin
birth united full deity and full humanity in one person (John 3:16; Gal 4:4). Thirdly, the virgin birth makes possible Christ's true humanity without inherited sin (Luke 1:35).

6.4.1.2 Human Weaknesses and Limitations

The Bible describes Jesus as having a normal human body with its challenges. As every human Jesus was born and grew from childhood to adulthood (Luke 2:52). Luke informs us that during his growth, “…the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the favour of God was over him” (Luke 2:40). Grudem (1994:532-33) mentions some experiences that display the weakness and limitations brought by Christ’s humanity.

As Christ grew up and fulfilled his mandate to teach the kingdom, he did so as a human. Once Jesus became tired while he was passing the region of Samaria, and he sat down near the well (John 4:6). He became thirsty. When he was on the cross, he said: “I thirst” (John 19:28). He was hungry after he had fasted for forty days in the wilderness (Matt 4:2). He was sometimes physically weak. During the temptation and after fasting for many days, the angels came to minister to him (Matt 4:11). He fell down, very weak, when he was on his way to be crucified, the soldiers forced Simon of Cyrene to carry his cross (Luke 23:46). Jesus was so weak following the beating he received that he did not have any more strength to carry the cross himself. The climax of Jesus’ limitations with regard to his human body was the fact that he died on the cross (Luke 23:46). His body ceased to function, just as our human bodies do when we die.

Jesus rose from the dead with a physical human body (Luke 24:30-39; 40-43). Though the JW refute this fact, Jesus repeatedly physically appeared to his disciples, showing a human body and saying, “See my hands and my feet, that is myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit has no flesh and bones as you see that I have” (Luke 24:39). Therefore, Jesus teaches that he is not a spirit as the JW teach in the Watchtower (WTBTS, 1989a:1-13). As evidence, they give a piece of broiled fish and he took it and ate before them (Luke 24:42; John 20:17, 20, 27, 21:9, 13). Although Scripture explains that his renewed body, after resurrection, was not subject to weakness, disease, or death like the case of Lazarus, it was the same body with the marks of the cross. That is why his grave was empty the morning of the resurrection.

Jesus ascended into heaven with the same body (Luke 24:50-51). The ascension seems to suggest continued existence in that new body in heaven. This also teaches us that, as far as Jesus’ human body is concerned, it will be like our body when he comes again. In addition, Scripture shows that Jesus continues to exist in that renewed human body in heaven.
It is also important to note that Jesus had a human mind, soul and emotions. According to Grudem (1994:533), Jesus grew in wisdom, he learned how to eat, how to talk, how to read, write and to obey his parent (Hebrews 5:8). This process was ordinary, but part of the genuine humanity of the divine Christ. That is what the Branhamites refute in their Christology. Another fact that shows that Jesus had a mind like ours is the day he spoke of his return “…but of that day or that hour no one knows, even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father” (Mark 13:32). Scripture often shows that Jesus had a human soul and human emotions. Before the crucifixion he says: “Now is my soul troubled” (John 12:27). John 13:21 says: “When Jesus had spoken, he was troubled in spirit.” The verb used by John in both verses is the word in Greek tarasso which means anxious or surprised by danger. In Matthew 26:38 Jesus says: “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death.” Matthew 8:10 says that Jesus marvelled at the faith of the centurion. In John 11:35 we read that He wept with sorrow at the death of Lazarus.

6.4.1.3 The Divinity of Christ

Continuing from Jesus’ nature as a man, the deity of Christ is explored to provide a Christian perspective to clarify the errors of Branhamism and others. These groups recognize the divinity of Christ in the exaggerated form. Berkhof (1996:181) recognizes the widespread denial of the divinity or deity of Christ, despite what is clearly taught in Scripture. The Old Testament provides proof when mentioning the coming Messiah (Isa 9:6; Jer 23:6; Dan 7:13; Micah 5:2; Zech 13:7; Mal 3:1). In addition, Ryrie (2005b:51-54) estimates that Christ’s deity should be taught to eradicate these errors in the churches.

Regarding pre-existence, Ryrie uses a question-and-answer method. Concerning Christ’s existence before his birth in Bethlehem, Ryrie points out that this was crucial for Jesus to be the revealer of the Father. The names in the Old Testament indicate this. For instance, “…but thou Bethlehem Ephrata, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2 KJV). Micah speaks of the eternity of the Son, for the term translated as ‘from of old’ it is also used in Habakkuk 1:2. There it speaks of God’s eternal nature; what God is, implying the Son also. Jesus claimed his own pre-existence when he said: “before Abraham, I am” (John 8:58). According to Ryrie, the statement “I am” is not only a claim of existence before Abraham, but also a reference to the sacred name of God, Yahweh, claiming “To be God” (Exo 3:14-15).

Concerning his divinity, Ryrie (1972:52) observes that “many in our day deny the deity of Christ, knowing that in doing so they are undermining the central aspect of Christianity
because they have removed from it the divine Saviour." He further says that, “this denial is not new, for even in the early church there were those who did so; Ebionites, Dynamic Monarchians, and the Arians all denied that the Son possessed full deity.” Some opponents of his deity assert that Jesus Christ never claimed to be God, but that his followers made that claim. Ryrie feels that the opponents of Christ’s deity do not consider the Bible as authoritative, but they feel free to question Scripture as though they were the authority. This results in a twofold denial; that of the deity of Christ and of the accuracy of Scripture, for there is simply too much evidence in Scripture for his deity to do otherwise (Ryrie, 1972:53).

Ryrie observes four factors that support the deity of Christ. His assertions, works, character and attributes. Regarding his assertions, Jesus claimed his equality with God: “I and my Father are one” (John 5:18; 10:30). Those who heard him claiming this accused him of blasphemy. In addition, Matthew 26:63-64 tells of the interrogation before His death. “But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, thou hast said: nevertheless, I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” Answering, Jesus said in Joh 10:36 “Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?”

Jesus’ works provide further proof of his divinity. Jesus claimed to do certain things that only God can do. Ryrie (1972:54) points out that Jesus claimed to forgive sins by healing a man sick of palsy. The scribes considered this claim to be blasphemous because they recognized that only God can forgive sins (Mark 2:1-12). On another day, He claimed, that “all judgment was given into his hands” (John 5:27), and again that “he would send the holy Spirit” (John 15:26). He would be the one to raise the dead (John 5:25). All these claims were viewed as blasphemous because of the implication that He claims to be divine. Only the miracles closed their mouths. Eventually, some recognized him as coming from heaven, like Nicodemus (John 3:1-9). In addition to these, Scripture later mentions in John 1:3 and Colossians 1:16 speak of his work of creation, Colossians 1:17 and Hebrews 1:3 speak of his work of upholding all things, and in Acts 17:31 of him being the judge of all men. These all shows his equality with God.

Ryrie claims as a third piece of evidence, that Scripture describes Jesus as having characteristics that only God possesses. Christ was all-powerful (Mat 28:18; Rev 1:8); had all knowledge; was omniscient (Mark 2:8; John 1:48); and omnipresent (Matt 18:20; Ephes 1:23). These declarations reveal the deity of Christ.
Finally, Ryrie provides the last proof by pointing to the attributes Jesus had. He (Ryrie, 2005b:54-55) demonstrates how Jesus was recognized as God and worshipped. People ascribe the prerogative of deity to Christ in substantiation of his own claims. Jesus was worshipped by men and by angels (Matt 14:33; Phil 2:10; Heb 1:6). His name is mentioned equally in the Trinity relationship (Matt 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14). He is mentioned as of the same substance of the Father “in the exact likeness of his substance” (Hebrews 1:3). In addition, Paul stated that “…in him dwells all the fullness of deity in bodily form” (Col 2:9 Free transs).

Grudem (1994:552) concludes on the divinity of Christ by saying:

“The New Testament, in hundreds of explicit verses that call Jesus “God” (Matt 1:18-21; Luke 2:11; John 1:1,14-18; 5:16-23; 17:3; 20:28; Heb 1:3; Rev. 13-14) and “Lord” (Acts 4:10-12; Rom 10:9-11) and use a number of other titles of deity to refer to him, and in many passages that attribute actions or words to him that could only be true of God himself, affirms again and again the full, absolute deity of Jesus Christ. Therefore …we argued that Jesus is truly and fully man. Now we can conclude that he is truly and fully God as well, His name is rightly called Emmanuel. That is “God with us” (Matt 1:23).

6.4.1.4 The Incarnation: Divinity and Humanity in the One Person of Christ

This point is important to our study because it reveals the errors of both groups relevant here. The JW’s error is the fact that they believe the humanity of Christ only: “Jesus is not full God Almighty”, “He is a creature, but created by God…” (WTBTS, 1989b:12-20). The JW deny the divinity of Christ.

Jesus= First Born Creature. Not fully God Almighty.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 6-2: Jehovah Witnesses – Old Arianism**

The believers of Branham’s message err in their belief that the deity of Christ is singular and ultimate: “Jesus is the only God of the Bible” (Branham, 1963:302). They deny or bypass his humanity and change it to a modalistic view of God.
Grudem (1994:553-555) provides a good statement on the incarnation:

The Biblical teaching about the full deity and full humanity of Christ is so extensive that both have been believed from the earliest times in the history of the church. But a precise understanding of how full deity and full humanity could be combined together in one person was formulated only gradually in the church and did not reach the final form until the Chalcedonian definition in A.D. 451.

White (1998:159), supporting Grudem, says: “Thankfully, the Scripture safeguards this unique and special act of incarnation and do not bow to our inordinate desire to know things God has not chosen to reveal.” He further says, “…we can say that the early church was correct in coming to the conclusion (at the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451) that Jesus Christ is one person with two natures, divine and human.” He is not two persons, nor are His natures somehow mixed together so that He is not truly divine or truly man. He is both, simultaneously, because He has both natures. White regards the incarnation as the one act of revelation where the Trinity is the most clearly revealed. It indicates how the incarnation defies our attempts to wrap our limited minds around the full meaning.

Grudem (1994:156) points out the Chalcedonian definition as the solution to the controversy. It is important for the churches of Kolwezi to learn about the Council of Chalcedon. The resulting statement guards against Apollinarianism, Nestorianism and Eutychianism. These were heresies regarding the person and nature of Christ (Grudem, 1994:554-555). This truth was not accepted by Arians, Neo-Sabellians or modalists like Branham.

Grudem summarizes his viewpoints as follows: “The creeds actually did a great deal to help us understand the Biblical teaching correctly. First, it taught that Christ had two natures
definitely, a human nature, and a divine nature. Second, it taught that his divine nature is exactly the same as that of the Father (consubstantial with the Father according to Godhead). Third, it maintains that the human nature is exactly like our human nature, yet without of sin (consubstantial with us according to the Manhood).” Briefly, Grudem (2000) concludes by saying: “when the Chalcedonian definition says that the two natures of Christ occur together” in one person and one subsistence, “the Greek word translated as subsistence is the word ‘hypostasis’, ‘being’.” Hence, the union of Christ’s human and divine natures in one person is sometimes called the ‘hypostatic union’. This phrase signifies simply the union of Christ’s human and divine natures in one being.

The pastors and elders in Kolwezi who blindly embrace the ideology of the JW, have to know that their Christology is incomplete and contrary to the Christology of Chalcedon. It lacks the important aspect of the divine nature of Christ. It becomes difficult to understand Christ’s miracles, wonders and resurrections of people in the Scripture. One who wants to refute Christ’s divinity has to step away from the truth of Scripture. By the same token, servants of God who have espoused the Branham’s views must notice that their Christology is also incomplete, lacking the important aspect of the human nature of Christ. By removing the humanity of Christ, they remove the redemption, crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Christ.

The Christian doctrine of the incarnation asserts that Jesus is God with two natures: human nature and divine nature. His name is more significant, “Jesus, means saving God. For he will save his people…” (Matt 1:18-25); “Emmanuel means ‘God with us’” (Matt 2:23). In viewing the teaching of the JW on Jesus Christ, it is clear that they teach that Christ is not fully God. However, the Biblical doctrine affirms the deity of Christ. In viewing Branhamism, it is clear that the view Jesus Christ as the only God found in the Bible. Therefore, the Biblical description of God does not agree with their doctrinal positions.

6.4.2 Jesus’ Teachings in Light of the JW Teachings

Before any apology can be offered, it is important to underline that this section is a response to the presuppositions of the two groups in this case study, the teachings of Jesus in light of the JW and the Branhamites.

A JW may refuse to salute the flag or bear arms, contending that the tyranny of the government is one of the three allies of Satan (WTBTS, 1925). The two others are “false teachings of the churches and the oppressions of business.” The JW over the years altered some of Russell’s teachings. However, the JW doctrine as it is today still conflicts with the historic Christian
doctrines (WTBTS, 1904). Kuiper (1964:369) apologetically addresses the doctrine of the JW. They deny the Trinity, the deity of Christ, his physical resurrection and physical second coming. They teach a second trail for all in the coming millennium and the annihilation of the wicked. Their doctrine on the sufficiency of Christ's atonement, on human government, and on the existence of the soul are not Biblical (Kuiper, 1964:369). Since doctrines differ according to context, the Kolwezi context is considered specifically in order to identify the relevant apology.

6.4.2.1 The Triune God and the JW

The JW in Kolwezi teach that the idea of the Trinity is a pagan doctrine (WTBTS, 1989b:3-11); a pagan idea supposedly not found in the Scriptures. However, Christianity teaches that the Trinity is well revealed in the Scriptures (Matt 28:19). The JW teach that God alone is God. Consequently, there cannot be a Trinity, resulting in the impossibility of justification by faith (Grudem, 1994:247).

Martin (1992:57) clusters different teachings together to reflect on how the issue developed during the Russell’s life and later on. Russell’s views are as unscriptural as they are unreasonable. He says: “If it were not for the fact that this Trinitarian nonsense was drilled into us from earliest infancy and the fact that it is so soberly taught in theological seminaries by gray haired professors…nobody would give it a moment’s serious consideration. How the great adversary [Satan] ever succeeded in foisting it upon the Lord’s people…."

Later, the doctrines of JW speak of John1:1-3, indicating that according to trinitarians Jehovah God and the Son are two person, but the same time one God and members of the so-called Trinity or TriuneGod. The Watchtower society say about this: “When religion is taught in this way it violates the word of God, wrests the Scriptures to the destruction of those who are misled, and insults God – given intelligence and reason” (Martin, 1992:45). According to them the confusion is caused by the improper translation of John 1:1-3…. Their obvious conclusion is that Satan is the originator of the ‘Trinity doctrine’ (Martin, 1992:45-46, 101).

Harris (1998:45, 54) refutes the JW statement by saying this: “The Triune God is revealed in the Scripture." He refers to Mat 28:19 and Joh 17:6, 26 to indicate that Jesus was born on earth and he manifested his Father’s name to his disciples. Although having earlier known that name and being familiar with God’s activities as recorded in the Scriptures, the disciples came to know Jehovah in a better way as a Father. Jesus did not use the name ‘Jehovah’ but ‘Father’ several times in John 17. If Jesus was who the Watchtower says he was, then He should have used ‘Jehovah’ hundreds of times, but He never did. Stoker (2014:6-7) emphasizes this when
he underlines the fact that Jesus never used the name ‘Jehovah’ when talking about God, but he often used the name ‘Father’. Because different creeds in Christianity teach the three persons as one, the people of Kolwezi should benefit greatly from these creeds. If they come to know that the Father is a member of Godhead, the heresies of the JW would become known for what it is.

6.4.2.2 Jesus Christ and the Watchtower

Harris (1998:56-58) summarizes the JW belief about Jesus by saying that according to them Jesus only became God’s spiritual Son during his baptism and he had to be born again to see God’s Kingdom. They claimed that Jesus is a created being, an angel, and not God Almighty (WTBTS, 1989b:12-17). Consequently, the JW have emphasized Jesus’ created nature for several years (WTBTS, 1989a:12-160). They have published this in several languages in Kolwezi (including Kiswahili, French, Kisanga, Lunda, Chokwe, Kiluba and Lingala). In Kolwezi they currently teach that Jesus is a created being; he is a god, but not the almighty God (WTBTS, 1985:209-219). Christianity answers this already in the early creeds (Grudem, 1994:1190-91), believing that Jesus was not created, but is eternal, Jesus cannot be an angel, but is truly God (Hebrews 7:3; Hebrews 1:7-8; John 1:1; Harris, 1998:45).

The JW in Kolwezi also teach that only Jehovah is God and his personal name must be used (WTBTS, 1985:191-198; WTBTS, 1989a:16-20). Jehovah is his personal name and those who use other names do not know him. Christianity answers this by saying that the Father is one member of the Godhead. Nevertheless, the personal name mentioned by the JW is not recorded in the New Testament and Jesus never used it in his teachings (Matt 6:9-13; John 17:2-23). Stoker (2014) supports the Christian view in stating that Jesus preferred the word Abba, meaning Father, rather than Jehovah.

At the birth of Jesus, the Scripture says, "...for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11). Another Scripture to consider is John 5:16-23. In verse 16 Jesus is persecuted for healing on the Sabbath. In verse 17, Jesus makes a statement regarding “his Father”, which the Jews understood as Jesus claiming to be equal to God (v. 18). The JW teach that only the unbelieving Jews call Jesus God and they should not be believed. Despite the clarity with which Jesus spoke to the people, JW don’t want to believe. Jesus grew up as a Jew and understood how the Jewish mind worked. He knew that when He said, “My Father” the Jews would understand that He was claiming to be of the same substance as JHVH, that is, God. (Harris, 1998:58).
John 20:28 tells of Thomas who saw Jesus for the first time after his bodily resurrection. His immediate response is to acknowledge Jesus as “my Lord and my God.” The JW teach that Thomas got excited. He blasphemed or he said “my Lord” looking at Jesus and “my God looking at to Jehovah in heaven.” However, the Scripture is clear, Thomas directed both statements to Jesus (him is singular) in verse 28. If we read from the Greek, Thomas said “ho theos mou”, which means “the God of me.” If this statement were not true, Jesus would have had to rebuke Thomas. But Jesus accepts the acclamation that He is God and emphasize that all of us have to believe it (vs. 29).

No comparison of the Jesus of the Bible with the JW teaching would be complete without mentioning John 1:1,18. These verses probably cause more problems for the JW than any other. John 1:18 says that no man has ever seen God but now God the unique Son, clothed in flesh, reveals God in a way that can be seen by men. The NWT, the JW Bible, translate both verses by preceding ‘god’ with a small letter “g”. They try to differentiate between ‘God’ and ‘god’. They claim that ‘God’ is the creator, but ‘god’ is Jesus, a created Son. This supports their Arian dogma, which denies the deity of Christ, but also the idea that there is not only one God. Scripture clearly teaches that the Father is God, and Jesus is God. Therefore, Jesus the Word was with God, but at the same time also God. This does not make him any less part of the Godhead (Kee et al., 1971:49; Harris, 1998:62).

6.4.2.3 The Holy Spirit and JW

Dencher (1961:7-15), a former Witness, reports the view of the organization on the Holy Spirit: the JW believe that the Holy Spirit is merely a force active in action, not the third person of the Trinity. Dencher quotes from the magazine Consolation (now called Awake!) of January 7, 1942, from the pen of ‘Judge’ Rutherford, then president of the Watchtower Society: “The religious clergy teach that the so-called ‘holy ghost’ is the third person of what they call ‘the Triune god’. The holy spirit is not a person or being and no Scripture authorize such a conclusion.” A president of the Watchtower society is like pope in the Roman Catholic Church. Whatever he declares should be believed without any objection. The JW in Kolwezi also carry this idea of the Holy Spirit as not being a person, nor is he God, they liken him to an electric force (WTBTS, 1989a:20-22, WTBTS, 1985:380-384).

Jesus never taught that the Holy Spirit was a force in action. But Jesus’ teaching on the Holy Spirit is that “he is called a comforter, the paraclet, which the world ignores” (John 14:15-17). The Scripture describes the role of the Holy Spirit as a Person that thinks, act, comfort, can grieve and can be lied to. The JW, in their publications, argue against the personality of the Holy Spirit they say that the word pneuma translated as ‘spirit’ in the Bible is the same word as
'wind'. That is why they call it “a force active or in action.” This is a deceptive kind of reasoning. The Bible uses several images when talking about the Holy Spirit (John 3:8). John 14:16-17 says: “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever.” Even the wind cannot dwell in us forever. Jesus was absolutely speaking about a person who can teach, lead, bear testimony, remind, speak to us (John 14:26, 15:26, 16:8, 20-26).

A difficult Scripture for the JW to argue is Acts 5:3, which indicates according to them that “Satan has filled thy heart to deceive the holy Spirit.” It is very strange because you cannot deceive a force in action. That force does not speak as the Holy Spirit did in Acts 13:2: “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” A force cannot call people for the Lord’s mission. Jesus is who we believe in as Saviour and Lord, which is why we are called Christians. He said to the Samaritan woman, “God is Spirit” (John 4:24). If Jesus recognizes the divinity of the Holy Spirit, it is true. The Holy Spirit works as God according to Scripture. Psalm 139:7 indicates that the Spirit is omnipresent and according to 1 Corinthians 2:10 He is omniscient. Both these verses indicate part of his personality. In Romans 8:27 we read of the “mind of the Spirit”, which contradicts the idea of a force or energy, for it does not have a mind of its own.

6.4.2.4 The Virgin Birth and the JW

The WTBTS teaches “Jesus’ birth on earth was not an incarnation, He emptied himself of all things heavenly and spiritual, and God’s almighty spirit transferred his Son’s life down to the womb of the Jewish virgin of David’s descent. By this miracle he was born a man... he was not a spirit-human hybrid, a man and at the same time a spirit person... he was flesh” (Martin, 1992:54). Grudem (1994:52-553) quotes Maurice Miles: “If it is possible to have Christianity without the doctrine of incarnation.” Miles and many scholars think that the incarnation was not “coherent” or “intelligible.” Of course they are unwilling to accept anything that does not appear to fit in with the "scientific" worldview in which the natural universe is a closed system not open to such divine miracles and incarnation (Grudem, 1994:553). However, the New Testament teaches Jesus’ birth in a simple way. In Luke 1:30-37 and Matthew 1:18-25 the explanation of the angel indicates how God planned this birth without sexual relations between Mary and Joseph. It is a miracle from God and, in his sovereignty, he works as he like. Our response, said Grudem, is not to reject the clear and central teaching of the Scripture about the incarnation, but simply to recognize that it will remain a paradox, that is all that God has chosen to reveal to us about it. Without the incarnation, no redemption is possible.
6.4.2.5 Atonement and the JW

The WTBTS teaches “that which is redeemed or bought back is what was lost, namely, perfect human life, with its rights and earthly prospects” (WTBTS, 1946b:116). They go further by saying “…that the human life that Jesus Christ laid down in sacrifice must be exactly equal to that life which Adam forfeited for all his offspring: it must be a perfect human life, no more, no less… This is just what Jesus gave…. for men of all kinds” (WTBTS, 1953:39).

Martin (1992:98) stated that, “…the infinite atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ is one of the most important doctrines of the Bible since it is the guarantee of eternal life through the complete forgiveness of sins to however appropriate its cleansing power.” The Scripture teaches that “…it is the blood that makes an atonement for the soul” (Lev 17:11; Hebrews 9:22). The Lord Jesus Christ became the one blood sacrifice for sin to ensure everlasting life. John says about Jesus: “behold the Lamb of God who taken away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

What is important here is Russell and the JW’s doctrine regarding the atonement. Jesus removed the effects of Adam’s sin with his sacrifice on Calvary, but the human works will not be fully completed until the survivors of Armageddon return to God. This idea of the JW is unreasonable and an illogical interpretation of Scripture, and it does away with the validity of ‘infinite atonement' unconditionally administered by God and through God for man. The atonement of the JW is only partial, but Jesus Christ is sufficient (Hebrews 9 and 10).

6.4.2.6 The JW’s View of Salvation by Grace

The WTBTS defines salvation according to their Bible as either: “(1) the preserving of one’s life from trouble or an impending life immediate disaster; or (2) the opportunity to receive everlasting life in a state of peace happiness and prosperity” (WTBTS, 1953:330-337). Dencher (1961:52), a JW background believer (1946-1957), asks a crucial question and answers it as well: “Are JW allowed salvation? The Answer is, No!” Dencher, taking from his own experience, tries to explain his response to that question, he says, “There is no room in their theology for the assurance of salvation of a born-again believer.” He quotes, Dencher (1961;53): “However, God could arrange for the price to be paid by another who was willing and able to do so. In this way those who suffered wrongly because of Adam’s sin could have An Opportunity for Life.” Dencher notices that the book does not say anything about those who suffered for our own sins, but only Adam’s. It does not speak of life, but an opportunity!

Dencher’s important contribution to this subject is the description he shared concerning the JW formula for salvation: First, if you want to receive God’s blessings you must study their
Bible. Second, you must get ready for life in the new paradise, including being part of their group, the so called “God’s organization”. Third, you must perform in order to receive God’s favour, which is to change your living from the former to God’s way. Until then, there is no salvation. Another stage is where their members start believing all this are a door-to-door routine, requiring a few things, including selling books printed by the WTBTS. They assume that “we …must also publicly declare that kingdom to others” and “Follow him by dedicating yourself.” Dencher sees this as a dedication to a career of bookselling and indoctrinating others even as you yourself have been indoctrinated (Dencher, 1961:53). Harris (1998:95) goes along with Dencher and answers the JW soteriology: “Despite the society’s attempts to say otherwise, the definition of salvation in the Scriptures is clear and final: ‘for by grace you have been saved through faith: that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast’” (Ephes 2:8-9).

Dencher rightly claims that the Biblical way to salvation is vastly different from the salvation by works of the Watchtower. Scripture has many verses showing the person of Christ, the Messiah who died for sinners who cannot save themselves in any way, for them to be saved. Isaiah 53 says that the Messiah would bear our grief and sicknesses; would be wounded for our transgressions; would become bruised for our iniquities and be chastised for us; God would lay our iniquity on him; He would bear our sin and intercede for us as transgressors. John 3:14, 15 says: “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him…. May have eternal life.” It seems plain and simple, and it is vastly different from the salvation by works taught by the JW.

In addition, salvation is supposedly reserved for those God has chosen or elected. Salvation is a reward from God to those who faithfully accomplish their duties. It is not a gift or through grace alone (WTBTS 1985:356-361). Christianity believes the contrary, as the belief is that salvation has the same basis for everyone, and all the redeemed shall be in the same place. Salvation cannot be attained through good works, but is a free gift from God (Rev 21:1-3; Ephes 2:8-10).

Because the experience that goes along with salvation seems lacking among the Witnesses, they ignore a deeper repentance and the true conversion that goes along with true salvation (John 3:16-19). This explains why they have a deep fear for the doctrine of hell and don’t want to accept it. The idea of hell causes them great trauma. However, to the Christians there is no condemnation for those who believe in Christ (Rom 8:1). The JW refute the doctrine of hell (WTBTS,1985:175), merely investing in human consolation, which contradicts the Scriptures.
The Witnesses’ teaching about hell is not explained from the Bible, but from their own literature (WTBTS, 1985:168-175). The Hebrew word *sheol* and its Greek equivalent does not refer to an unconditional burial place, but rather to the common grave, *ge’enna*, which is used as a symbol of eternal destruction. The emphasis of the organization is on the fact that Babylonian, and other heathen empires, believed in hell. The organization claims that heathenism influenced Christianity. Yet, they close their eyes to the fact that hell is a clear and serious Biblical matter. They say in conclusion that the concept of hell comes from the devil and not from God. As a result, they deny God’s character of justice and righteousness that form part of his attributes.

Harris (1998:118) refutes their argument by saying that this is simply a smoke screen as the Biblical evidence teaches that there is a hell. Many Scriptures from the NT (Matt 16:18; Luke 16:23-24; Rev 20:13; Mark 9:43; Matt 25:46) as well as the OT (Isa 14:9-10; Psalms 116:3; Prov 23:14; Psalms 55:15; Psalms 49:13-15) indicate this. The Bible also disagrees with the definition given by the Witnesses regarding the three words *sheol, hades* and *gehenna*. Harris argues that the Scriptures show that *sheol* and *hades* are places of waiting after death. The part of man that is eternal is alive there during this time. *Gehenna* is the final place of everlasting punishment to which the wicked are banished after judgment (Hebrews 27; Rev 20; 15).

6.4.2.7 The Death and Resurrection of Christ

The Witnesses claim that Jesus died on a pole (WTBTS, 1953:83-86), on a stake with his hands above his heads with only one nail. This argument has brought much confusion to the minds of many Christians in Kolwezi. Christianity adheres to Scripture (Matt 27:22, 26, 31-33) which emphasizes that Jesus was crucified in the manner of the Roman custom of crucifixion (cross of two poles one vertical and one horizontal) with an inscription above his head (not his hands), and nails (not nail) in his hands (Joh.20:25). The ideology of the Watchtower forcefully opposes the cross as was in used by the Romans. The Witnesses deny that Christ died and rose from the dead in the flesh, which is the focal point of the Christian belief.

The Scriptures report in Luke 24:13ff and in John 20:15 what happened to Jesus Christ on his resurrection. He rose from death with his body. Yet the Watchtower deceptively explains this by saying that Jesus only materialized indiffent bodies and therefore did not have his own resurrected body. According to the Witnesses, 1 Peter 3:18 and 1 Corinthians 15:45 teach that Jesus was raised as a spiritual creature. Their teaching continues (WTBTS, 1985) that the “Resurrection involves a relative life pattern; it keeps the same identity as the body had upon death. It can be a human or a spiritual body, and some will be animated and not have a
resurrection at all. Jesus was resurrected as a spirit person.” Harris (1998:107) refutes this assumption: “Jesus was not raised a spiritual creature but with a new spiritual body that did not have the limitations of his old earthly one. Scripture also describes Christians with ‘bodies’ now as ‘in the spirit’ (Rom 8:8-9). Jesus actually said to his disciples after his resurrection that He is a man of flesh and bone and not a ghost (Luke 24:39). Therefore, there is no problem with the use of a similar terms in 1 Peter 3:18.

Gruss (1970:135-137) explains what caused this position of the Watchtower:

“This view was forced by Russell's ideas on the second coming of Christ, for to him, Christ’s second presence was an invisible one [1914], and therefore his resurrection also must be a spiritual resurrection. ...the inseparable link of the resurrection and the second invisible presence is seen.”

Gruss explains that 1 Peter 3:18 is misunderstood and this leads to this unacceptable idea that “Christ rose as a spirit creature.” This idea clearly contradicts what we are told in the Gospels, as well as Paul and Peter’s message in Acts, which speaks of the empty tomb and the preservation of Jesus flesh (Gruss, 1970:136). Furthermore, Christ’s body was a glorified body of “flesh and bones” (Luke 24:39). Also, in Mark 16:6 we see the angel presenting the absence of Jesus’ body as a proof of His resurrection. Now, if the body had nothing to do with Jesus’ resurrection, as the Watchtower teaches, the absence of the body actually proves nothing! Likewise, the angel would be a liar in presenting false evidence of the resurrection. Gruss is right in saying that, “the rejection of the bodily resurrection of Christ is actually a rejection of the doctrine of resurrection. The resurrection of Christ carries with it the bodily resurrection of the believers in Christ.”

6.4.2.8 The Physical Second Coming of Christ

The Witnesses interpret 2 Peter 3:18 as saying “Christ rose from the dead as a spirit”, and they accordingly deny a physical coming. This is despite the Biblical narrative telling about the bodily resurrection that is evident from different appearances to different groups (1 Cor 15:1-20). The Scripture maintains the position of a physical coming (Acts1:11). JW deny what the Christians believe regarding the second coming of Christ (1 Thess 1:11-16). They believe that parousia hold in that the second presence of Christ the Messiah will be invisible and that the sign he gave indicated to them that Jesus Christ’s return in year 1914. Since that time, Christ supposedly turned his attention towards earthly affairs and is dividing the people and educating “true” Christians – the JW – in preparation for their survival during the Armageddon. That would be when all the unfaithful will be destroyed and eradicated from the face of the
earth (WTBTS, 1985:319-323). It seems that 1914 was a turning point in the Watchtower theology. Russell initially indicated in the early publication of WTBTS (1877:28-30) that the times of the Gentiles extend to 1914, after which the heavenly kingdom of God would be set as a stone in the days of these Kings (ZWTR, March, 1881:289).

In 1998, a circuit overseer in Lincoln (USA) posed the question as to why Jehovah allowed us, for 120 years, to misunderstand Matthew 24:34 (Harris, 1998:158). Yet, the Second Coming of Christ is still to come despite no precise date, month or year indicated by the Bible. Therefore, the act of predicting the coming is nothing less than cultic (Stoker, 2016).

6.4.2.9 The Continued Existence Directly after Death

In Kolwezi the JW believe and teach that there is no continued life directly after death. They give a controversial teaching on death, soul and hell (WTBTS, 1985:98-104; 375-380; 168-175). They contradict former arguments that explained the story of the Lazarus and the Rich man in the book of Luke (16; 19-31). In explaining this parable, they give a humanistic view of God. He is a God of love, but also a God of righteousness, for example the punishment of the cities of Sodom and Gomorra. It is not contradicting for him to punish in hades or in hell. In addition to his character, the New Testament provides examples of persons who lived after death, like the son of Jairus, Lazarus of Bethany, and Tabitha (Acts12).

6.4.2.10 The Day of Judgment

The JW developed a systematic teaching regarding the days of judgment. They explain that there will be periods during which the heavenly court will sit to render judgment. The heavenly court will consist of the supreme judge, Jehovah, and the associate judge, Jesus Christ ( Isa 33:23) (WTBTS, 1985:219-226).

They mention endemic judgment (Gen 3:8), judgment of all (Luke 17:28/30), judgment of Sodom and Gomorra (Luke 17:28; Gen19:24, 25-29). Jesus’ death of integrity brought divine condemnation to Satan and his world (John 14:30).

Another day of judgment for God’s house, his spiritual house, began in 1918 (1 Pet 4:17, 18). It seems that Russell’s ideology of the calculated chronology is still a stronghold of the organization (Harris, 1998:147). To the Witnesses there is no judgment (W.T. September 1978:21-22; WTBTS, 1953:219-228; Harris, 1998:121)

Christianity holds to the Scripture, which indicates a judgment after death (Hebrews 9:27; Rev 20:1-15). The Bible teaches that there is no second chance given as taught by the JW.
6.4.2.11 The 144 000

Attention should be given to the start and fulfilment of this number, especially from the Scriptures. In addition, it should be noted that Witnesses everywhere, also in Kolwezi, lack a response when this is mentioned. The Witnesses teach that the 144 000, or the little flock, are the heirs of Christ and will reign with Christ (WTBTS, 1985:166). This theology is rooted in Luke 12:32, which that mentions that only the Lord’s flock shall inherit the kingdom.

After analysing Revelations 7:1-8 and 14:1-5, it seems that this little flock numbers 144 000 and Revelations 5:9-10 further indicates that they shall rule as kings and priests. However, the Scriptures reveal that the 144 000 are all men and Jews from the twelve tribes of Israel. They belong to the earth and are not, as the Witnesses mention, to inherit heaven. The JW claim that there is a link between the “little flock” and the 144 000. However, the researcher doubts this because there is no link between verse 1 and verse 30 of Luke 12:1-32.

In fact, the little flock refers only to literally Israel. Therefore, the Witnesses are erring when applying this to a spiritual Israel, which consists of all believers from all nations (WTBTS, 1968:77; 1985:166). The Scriptures show that not only is there no link between the little flock and the 144 000, but also that the 144 000 cannot be what The Watchtower claim they are. While the Witnesses’ society teach that the 144 000 are in heaven and the great crowd is on earth, the Scripture teaches the opposite: that 144 000 are on earth at the final destroying of the earth, while the great crowd is already in heaven. Through this, it seems that there is a numerical problem. It is imperative to know when the numbering started and is completed (Harris, 1998:130).

According to WTBTS (1975:302), it seems that the numbering of the 144 000 started in the 1880’s and was completed in 1975, when the society proclaimed the end time of the world. Because 1975 was not the end, it seems that the chronological calculation of The Watchtower has always been wrong and is not submitted to God’s guidance. The Bible does not teach what the Watchtower organization wants it to teach.

6.4.2.12 Blood Transfusion

The Witnesses teach that “God forbids us to take blood transfusion.” According to them, a blood transfusion is the “transferring from the veins or the arteries of one person to another. Like intravenous feeding, it is the feeding on another’s blood. Therefore, it is an unscriptural practice” (WTBTS, 1953:47). They support their argument with Scripture, including Genesis 9:4, Leviticus 17:10, Acts 15:28-29 (WTBTS, 1977:17-18 on JW and the question of the blood).
Christianity answers this by indicating that blood transfusion is never dealt with in Scripture, and therefore is a matter of conscience. A matter of conscience requires the person to take responsibility to save a life or to allow suicide or to kill peacefully. All deaths will one day be called into account by the Creator on the day of judgement, deaths of children, youths, and servants who died and who could have been saved with blood.

In summary, many teachings of the JW are unbiblical and often out of context. Weather they reduce the Biblical meaning; add their own thoughts, or divide Biblical truth according to their ideology, they obviously lack the humility to follow the Scriptures with total obedience. Unfortunately, like the majority of cults, the organization controls their members (Walter, 1992:38). They create an organized, systematic confusion (Walter, 1992:125).

6.4.3 Branham and the Teachings of Jesus Christ

As a monotheistic movement, Branhamism teaches that Jesus is the only God (Piette, 1985a:5-9). Branhamism focusses more on the person of Branham as the founder of the movement, than on the person of Christ. In addition, the role of Branham and his messages seem to be the major theme of discourse. Believers are taught more of Branham than of God. Moreau (2010) supports this observation in his articles on Branhamism in Kampala when he says “the believers of the message preached by Branham emphasize more the person of Branham and his role as the Elijah or the prophet of the Laodicean age.” This is also true in Kolwezi. One would wonder whether they are Branhamites or Christians. Yet, the role of Branham is merely prophetic, not redemptive. Therefore, the issue of redemption and salvation should be apologetically addressed to save thousands of Branham’s followers. According to the Bible faith in a mere human such as Branham cannot grant salvation, as only faith in Christ as the only Lord and Saviour, can provide salvation and eternal life (Rom 10:9-10; John 3:16).

Several experiences contributed to Branham’s theological and spiritual development up until his final ideology was formulated. Before Branham became a healing and deliverance evangelist and crusaded all over the world, it is reported that he attended the Baptist Church between 1927 and 1928 (Lindsay, 1950:23-25). He served as a Baptist pastor for some years, and used the Bible and confessed the Trinitarian formula. However, between 1931 and 1932 he abandoned the Baptist Church to start his own tabernacle, although he spent time with the Oneness Pentecostal groups. Meanwhile, throughout his life, even from birth, he experienced a relationship with an angel who often visited him, had visions, and heard invisible voices (Branham, 1948:5-7). At this time, Branham experienced a mixture of concepts regarding the person of God, and he very often made short statements on his pantheistic view of God.
These early statements already indicate the development of the heresies he eventually claimed. Branham would say how he would love to meet God in nature, and how his first Bible was nature. “Who could look in the face of that flower… and say there is no God. Where did it come from…? God is in nature” (Arnn, 2014a:57-125). In one of his sermons, Branham stated that God supposedly wrote three Bibles, one of them was “the Zodiac in the sky.” Man was to look up to realize that God is from above. Branham believed that the Zodiac, with the first sign of the virgin and the last as the lion, indicated the ages. It indicated the first and second coming of Christ. The second Bible is the pyramids, for God wrote in the pyramids. If you would study them, you would study God’s revelation of ages. You would watch the ancient histories and wars, how they were built before the antediluvian destruction. The last Bible was written on paper, for the intellectual world to come. Therefore, as God had moved down through the ages, this age shows that we are at Leo, the Lion of the Zodiac. We are at the top of the pyramid. We are in the book of the Revelations at the last chapter.

In time, Branham started to believe that he was the last day prophet. To his followers Branham would say, “…I am just your brother, by the grace of God. But when the angel of the Lord moves down, it then becomes a voice of God to you…But I am God’s voice to you… Now see, I can say nothing in myself. But what He shows me…” (Branham,1963:307). Therefore, his followers believed he was the spirit of Elijah of Malachi 4 and the seventh angel in Revelations 10.

Dager (1985:11) writes as follows about Branham’s ideas

“…unfortunately for him and his followers, William Branham can in no uncertain terms be labelled a false prophet, for a lot of things he prophesied did not come to pass for example: He prophesied that Jesus would return in 1977 along with the destruction of America.”

Branham said,

“Jesus did not say no man could know the year, month or week in which his coming would be completed. I sincerely believe and maintain as a private student of the word long with divine inspiration that 1977 ought to terminate the world systems and usher in the millennium” (Branham, 1963:322).

Dager concluded saying: “as we can see, Jesus Christ has not come back, America is still standing and it is the year 2016.” There are therefore two choices if Branham did receive this information supernaturally as he claimed: either he has received this information from a lying demonic source, aka his angel whose father is Satan, or God lied.
To pin down Branham’s theology is difficulty, for only his often contradictory and misguiding sermons and claims can be evaluated. In one example, Branham lashed out against Pentecostalism. He initially declared the death of Pentecostalism as supposedly proclaimed by the Lord (Branham, 1963:37). Yet in another sermon the same year, he declared seeing Pentecostalism fully alive when they opened their doors to receive his message (Branham, 1963:10). The question of true revelation by God comes to mind, for evidence in support of Branham’s speculations are lacking. The Pentecostals have not opened their doors to receive his message. They remain strong, even denying Branham’s doctrines of the serpent seed and the angelical manifestation (Piette, 1985b:31). They maintain their belief in the Trinity and Everlasting judgment. Therefore, it is important to those in Kolwezi to know that neither the Bible, nor church councils, support Branham claims. It is especially important for them to know that he was guided by an angel to come to these false prophesies and ideas such as the revelation of the Seven Seals (Moreau, 2010:8-11).

The evaluation is further complicated by the difficulty to find his teaching, for he was not recognized as a teacher, but rather an evangelist (Branham, 1934:30) and therefore seldom penned it down. His informal life story, written by Lindsay (1950:20-35), provides some insight, yet not on a scholarly level. The biographer merely selected his favourite themes, predictions and recorded sermons. His ministry is divided into two parts. The first was between 1912 and 1957. He preached on healing in the name of Jesus, true baptism, deliverance, Jesus as the only God of the Bible, and the heresy of the doctrine of the Trinity. The second part was between 1958 and 1965, when Branham taught about Revelation and the seven trumpets, the seven seals, revelation of God’s mystery, the prophet Elijah who had to come, the end of time, and the seven ages of the church.

6.4.3.1 Branham’s Philosophy

Nevertheless, Walter (1992:632) asserts that Branham’s theology is essentially “oneness Pentecostalism which denies the Trinity of traditional Christianity.” Before 1931, he had a good relationship with the Baptist Church, confessing their doctrine. Branhamism, as the sect’s ideology, split from the Pentecostal movement’s doctrine in the late 1950s when Branham began preaching his own doctrine. Often Branham criticized the Nicene council and the Apostles’ Creed, ignorant that by denying, it he was directly denying Christ, who taught the disciples (Branham, 1979:2). Because Oneness Pentecostalism’s philosophy was based on Monarchianism, Modalism, and Sabellianism and since Branham drank their philosophical juice, it became his philosophy for his ministry between 1931 and 1950.
6.4.3.1.1 Monarchianism

In Monarchism, the doctrine centres on having one ‘Monarch’ or ruler and teaches the unity of God. However, Branham’s Monarchianism assumed that Jesus alone is the God of the Bible (Branham, 1963). Nevertheless, the Bible refutes this position in several instances, including Isaiah 7:11; 9:6; Matthew 1:18-21; Luke 1:35-39; and John 3:16. These Scriptures describe two different persons, God the Creator and Father, and the Son to be born and sent into the world. There is no Monarchism within these Scriptures. Scripture does not support Monarchianism, for if Jesus is the only the God, God would have addressed his prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 to himself. This is why Monarchianism was condemned by the church fathers. Monarchism, especially as espoused by Branham, is condemned even today (Rusch, 1980:8-10).

6.4.3.1.2 Sabellianism

As mentioned earlier, Sabellianism as a doctrine is heretical as it rejects the three persons of the Godhead, and therefore the major doctrines of Christianity. Now, if Branhamism regards itself as part of Christianity, it should agree with the Nicene formulation. Yet, Branham rejected the major Christian doctrines (Branham, 1960:178-181) and take on a heretical anti-Biblical position.

6.4.3.1.3 Modalism

Modalism refers to the doctrine of Sabellius and allies in the third century. As mentioned earlier, the doctrine teaches that God is manifested to humankind in different modes or offices, but as the same God. Therefore, Jesus would be the only God, manifested as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Branham espoused this doctrine from 1931 onwards, saying that Jesus is the Father spoken of in the Old Testament, and he is the Son in the Gospel, as well as the Holy Spirit since the day of Pentecost (Branham, 1963). Nevertheless, the Bible teaches that there are three distinct persons for instance at the baptism of Jesus in the river of Jordan, according to Matt 3:15-17. The Scriptures frequently indicate the distinction, which caused the church to formulate and include it this way at the Nicene Council (AD 325). The church viewed Modalism a heresy (Kelly, 1960:116). Consequently, Modalism was condemned by the church at Nicene and at Chalcedon (Piette, 1985a:57-60, 67-77).

6.4.3.2 Branham’s Errors

Many have written about Branham’s life, ministry and miracles, but few have written about false doctrines and errors. Dager (1985) asserts that “there are so many inconsistencies in
Branham's life and doctrine that anyone who has any honesty, using the Bible teaching and logic, must admit that he can't get his facts straight. This doctrine not only disagrees with the Bible but is internally inconsistent with itself.” Mupekadio (2003:7-8) wrote on the errors made by Branham in his interpretation of the book of Revelations. This major error found in Branham’s claims and sermons misguided thousands in Kolwezi, Brazzaville, the DRC in general, Angola, the rest of Africa, and other places in the World. These errors are analysed in light of the Bible below before Branham’s major teachings are addressed.

6.4.3.2.1 Branham and Witchcraft

Piette (1985a:41-55) is one of the first in the French-speaking world to raise an opposing voice against Branham and his occult methods. Piette’s concern regarding the Branham’s encounter with his angel and messages given by the “angel” indicates that the angel played a major role in his ministerial life (Branham, 1948:50; Lindsay, 1950:35-45). The messages given by the angel should be checked against the Scriptures, and the ones Branham received seem erroneous and anti-scriptural. In one example, Branham was told that “…if you can convince them, everyone will believe in you…”, which is not Biblical. The Bible does not mandate someone called by God to convince men to believe in another human being (John 16:8; 14:24-28). The mandate is to speak about Jesus and to convince men to believe in Jesus, not in a human, a prophet, or a pastor.

What is more, the guidance his angel gave regarding deliverance can be associated with witchcraft. The methodology differs completely from the Holy Spirit regarding healings and deliverance (Mark 16:17-18; 1 Cor 12:4-12). Dr Koch’s testimony is considered here (Koch, 1970:46-48) when he writes that

“William Branham, a man who possessed exceptional mediumistic abilities. Branham’s healing power, however, had much in common with the healing ability of Edwards, the mediumistic healer known worldwide.”

At one point Lindsay (1950:50-55) managed a magazine that reported on Branham’s healing practices during his campaigns. Julius Stadsklev (1955:5-11) mentions a series of healings reported during Branham’s crusade in South Africa. However, Dager (1992) denies the healings reported from Branham's ministry. Dager mentions about the Winnipeg crusade where newspapers reported of many healings, that later reports found all who had been ministered to and declared healed had become worse or died. It seems that Branham caused a form of mass hysteria and hypnotism, where people see what they want to see. With sleight of hand and mind, he created the mirage of healing and declared the cancers cured, often
saying that the patient would be sick for a few days until poison came out of their bodies. However, the Bible teaches that gifts of healing are from the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12). Branham said a 200-pound barefoot angel did the healings. Yet only Branham saw this barefooted angel. The apostle Paul said: “Satan disguised himself as an angel of light” (2 Cor 11:1-15). What happened in Branham’s crusades were no different from a circus manifestation of magic. It can only be fake healings, for it was not from the Holy Spirit (Koch, 1970:46-47).

Paul Billy Branham, Branham’s son, once inquired about the angel. Branham agreed and at the age of 15 his son had the experience of being invited to see the angel. The fearful experience leaves no question as to whether it is one of God’s angels. Paul Billy Branham described it as follows (Branham, B.P., 1983:307-309):

“I saw a man standing with dress, dark of skin, crossed hands, but taller, not talking, he gave me a strong fear and I ran between dad’s legs. After that, he changed into a lighting person and he left the house….”

Meanwhile, during the miracle services, deliverances, healings and revelations, Branham used a strange vibration of his left hand in his methods. Upon being asked regarding the source of all these actions, he firmly stated that all the miracles were from his angel, not Jesus or the Holy Spirit. After the services, he would remain unconscious for some time, while his left hand slowly recovered (Koch, 1970:46-47). In all this, Branham was honest that he was commissioned by the angel and not by Jesus Christ. According to him, the angel gave him the mandate to convince everyone to believe in him and not in Jesus as the saviour. Therefore, his followers speak more often about Branham instead of Jesus (Branham, 1948:35-40).

6.4.3.2.2 Legalism and Brainwashing

The sermons of Branham visibly sound of legalism regarding the Old Testament, leading to brainwashing. This is clear as Branham said: “You be sure to say just what the tape says. Don’t saying nothing else because I don’t say that of my own, it is him that says it.” Dager (1992) says: “some left the Hutterite colonies and joined Branham.” These regimented Hutterite women had long hair, wore dresses that swept the floor while listening to Branham’s sermon on the Old Testament spirit, so they easily adopted Branham’s dictatorships and suffocating style. It seems that Branham emphasized “the issue of head covering” as a command to identify a saved woman from a prostitute. Through this, Branham legalistically refuted the cultural aspects of the Roman and Hellenistic era (1 Cor 11:1-16). The Bible describes different cultures during different periods. Rome had a custom of greeting one another with a kiss that does not fit into our culture today (Rom 16:16). Muslims wear traditional
veils that has no spiritual meaning. It is only an appearance, for God looks at the heart. The Jews practice circumcision, which is in the flesh, but the Lord considered the heart’s circumcision that brings forth a changed life.

Now, the main brainwashing method Branham used was to have his followers listen to his tapes. Some believers called them tapeworms. They twist the Scripture in saying that in these last days God speaks through Branham. However, “God spoke in times past through prophets but in these last days has spoken through his Son” (Hebrews 1:1-2). Therefore, when they speak, it is simply a memorization of Branham’s preaching on different subjects as recorded on tape. Like the Mormons, United Pentecostals, Crossroads Church of Christ, JW and Moonies, they recite the sermons of their master. There is no credibility in their own comprehension of the Scripture, so they use Scripture to support their poor heretical memorized teachings of the organization.

Now in order to answer Branhamism’s heresies, Jesus’ teachings as found in the Scriptures serves as a guide to offer an apologetic answer. Here, Branham’s teachings focus on his major doctrines: (1) God and the Trinity; (2) Jesus Christ and a false salvation; (3) the Holy Spirit; (4) Baptism in the name of Jesus; (5) The serpent seed and original sin; (6) the prophet Elijah; (7) The seven Churches; (8) the messenger of Laodicea; (9) The end time.

6.4.3.3 The Triune God and Branhamism

It is important to evaluate Branham’s view of God. According to his translation he wrote that “…in the beginning God was not even God, just a thought” (Branham, 1963:210). This is a counterfeit Christianity. Dager, (1992:34) argues that “…if God did not exist but was only thought, who had the thought?” To Dager, God does not have to think, he knows all things. The Bible teaches that the Eternal Father had an Eternal Son. It seems that when you have a false God and a false Christ, it follows that everything else in the colossal hoax is false, as minds are clouded by fantasy. For instance, Branham claimed to be one of the manifestations of the sons of God and said, “God always had skin on him” which is like a human Mormon god. The Christian God is Spirit with neither skin nor bones (John 4:24; Luke 24:39). The belief of Branham that “God always had skin on him” denies the incarnation, which teaches that Jesus as “the Word became flesh” after coming down from heaven (John 1:1, 14; 6:33). Branham believed the modalistic Oneness doctrine of God that denies the Trinity. It is important for the people of Kolwezi to notice that Oneness Pentecostal people were excommunicated from The Assemblies of God, USA, in 1914.
The majority of sects have one major common position in their teachings. They strongly deny the doctrine of the Trinity. This doctrine provides the greatest blessing of all the NT blessings (White, 1998:13-18). White describes how the believer receives blessings from the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. All three Persons bless the believer and communicate blessings individually to the believer. 2 Corinthians 13:14 (KJV) reads as follows: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.” Now White (1998:26) defines Trinity from a reformed perspective: “Within the one Being that is God, there exists eternally three coequal and coeternal persons, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” Christianity believes and teaches that there is one God in three divine persons.

William Branham vigorously fought this doctrine of the Trinity since he left Christianity in 1931-1932, especially in his sermons on the revelation of Jesus Christ (Branham, 1963:24). Branham espoused the Oneness Pentecostalism’s views and used the same argument as the Watchtower, accusing the Nicene councils and its formulation as a heresy (Piette 1985a:67-68). During his sermons, Branham introduced his theology regarding the Trinity (Branham, 1961), “Trinity is not found in the Scripture. So, it is unscriptural and from the Satan…” (Branham, 1963:105). Branham clearly stated his supposedly prophetic views. He claimed that the terms Father, Son and Holy Spirit are only titles for roles, different modes of one single person, not three (Piette, 1985a:68). This is not new, but simply a neo-modalism preached by Branham.

Meanwhile, Branham’s view regarding a single Godhead should simply be rejected because of the clear distinction that the Scripture makes between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matt 3 16-17; Matt 17 4-5; John 14:15-17; John 17). John 14:16 reads “…and I will pray the Father and he shall give you another comforter that he may abide with you for ever.” Jesus speaks about his Father and the comforter, which is the Holy Spirit. John 5:32 (KJV) reads, “…there is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.” Jesus is speaking about John the Baptist. John 1:1 (KJV) reads, “In the beginning was the Word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.” It is clear that the verse is speaking of different persons, the Word and God. It also refers to the divinity of the Word. The Word is Jesus (Joh. 1:14,17). The author of the Gospel of John is willing to show the presence of the Word at the creation of the world, indicating the uncreated nature of the Word, having the same substance as God. Hebrews 1:8 (KJV) reads: “…but unto the Son he saith. Thy throne, O God is forever, and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy Kingdom.” Here the Father speaks of the Son, also called God, as a distinct person. That is not possible in a modalistic view. John 14:26 (KJV) reads, “…but the Comforter which
is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whosoever I have said unto you.” With this, Christ presents the three persons as being very distinct. Piette (1985a:67-77) elaborates on the evidence of the distinctiveness of the three persons.

Therefore, it should be an apologetic task to answer the Branhamite modalistic position on the Trinity. John 16:7 could be of use as it reads (KJV): “…nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” Within the modalistic conception, Jesus is the Holy Spirit. Yet, understanding this verse in a Trinitarian manner it is reasonable to indicate the absurdity that Christ had to go away in order to return as comforter. The different persons are indicated in this verse. Just as the clear distinctiveness of the three persons are visible at the baptism of Christ in Matthew 3:15-17, where the Father communicates from heaven and presents the Son as a distinct person, while the Holy Spirit came upon the Son in the form of a dove.

Piette (1985a:73) supports the view that William Branham’s modalistic conception is erroneous and unbiblical. While the Bible is clearly monotheistic (Isa 45:5, 18; John 17:3), it teaches that the Father is God (1 Cor 15:24), that the Son is God (John 1:1; 20:28), and that the Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4; 2 Cor 3:16). Therefore, it seems impossible and contradictory to even try to have communion with Branhamism regarding the Trinity, when they clearly reject this doctrine. It also answers the JW’s view that only the Father is truly God.

6.4.3.4 Jesus Christ and the False Branhamist Salvation

Scripture presents Jesus Christ as the Son of the living God (Matt 16:18). The Apostles’ Creed also presents Jesus Christin this way. As noted earlier, William Branham obviously refuted the Apostles’ Creed and all other creeds, opposing the Biblical evidence. In a sermon titled “The revelation of Jesus Christ”, Branham (1963:302-312) presented a modalistic Jesus: “Jesus is the only God of the Bible: he is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; he is God’s manifestation in different modes, roles or offices. His name means the saving God!” Since Branham refuses to consider the creeds due to his position against the Trinity, his beliefs are similar to Arius and the scribes in Jesus’ time (John 8:36-56).

The Bible clearly states that “…by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Ephes 2:8, KJV). The salvation is obtained by faith in Christ. However, Branham presented a different Christ. Paul warned of false Christs, gospels and spirits (2 Cor 11:4). Branham’s Christology seems contradictory, for he on the one hand said that Jesus is the creator, the Only God of the Bible (Branham, 1963, 327-330); yet on the other hand he
said that “Jesus is the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit” (Branham, 1963). In addition, Branham denied the Holy Spirit as a person and believed, like Christian Science and like the JW, that the “Holy Spirit is the force of God, and energy that enables Christians to serve God.” Later he claimed (typical of a cult leader) that salvation comes to those who believe the message of Branham, which is not centred on Christ, but on the person and role of Branham.

Biblical salvation entails believing in Jesus as Saviour and Lord (Rom 10:8-10; John 3:16) for only in Him will be found the salvation and eternal life. The full extent of salvation can only be realized through the revelation of the Father by means of the Son. To Branham, “the church is built on the rock of revelation” (Branham, 1963), yet the apostle said the rock of the church is Christ (1 Cor 10:4). The true Church states that Jesus is the rock, and the rest is shifting sand (Matt 7:24). Although Branham declared many of his revelations irrefutable, true salvation is found only in believing in the revealed Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt 16:18).

6.4.3.5 Power and Force of God, or Holy Spirit

The Scripture is the only authority in the matter of the teaching of the word of God. Calvin was correct to emphasize “Sola Scriptura”. New Testament Scripture presents the Holy Spirit, as the comforter (John 14:16-17) and the paraclet (1 John 2:2-3). Various personal characteristics is described of the Holy Spirit as can for instance be seen in Acts 13:2-3.

Branham presents the Holy Spirit as a power, force or energy that the disciples received on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38). The concept is similar to that taught by the JW (WTBTS, 1985:110). Neither Branham nor the JW believe in the personal hood of the Holy Spirit. The matter is more dogmatic than Biblical according to Branham (Branham, 1963:171). During his leadership, Branham differed from the Pentecostals on the Holy Spirit. They believe in the reception of the Spirit with the speaking in tongues (Metzger, 1971). Also, the Evangelicals believes that the Holy Spirit has been received when someone believes the words of God, through repentance and conversion (Acts 2:38). But Branham refutes this when saying that “…if someone believes he does not yet become Christian unless he may believe the end time message of the prophet ‘Branham’ then he may be baptized with the Holy Spirit; and become a Christian” (Branham, 1963:171-173). He advanced this by developing a doctrine of salvation by works similar to the JW, “the believer is to work for his sanctification to be saved totally. It is not a salvation or the sanctification by faith in Christ's works on the cross.” Branham argues similar to the teaching of Islam that Christ did not die on the cross because he was God, since God cannot die. Someone else took his place on the cross (Branham, 1963.). The Scripture
disproves this position of Branham (2 Cor 11:3-4), showing that it is “another spirit” that Branham taught in his sermons and books.

Should you believe in the Trinity? (WTBTS, 1989: 23) summarizes the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ view of the Holy Spirit as follows: "No, the Holy Spirit is not a person, and it is not a part of a Trinity. The holy spirit is God's active force that he uses to carry out his will. "Stoker (2015:8-10) argue correctly that if the Holy Spirit is a person, it can be expected that the Bible will describe things which He consciously do. If it is a mere power God uses, the Bible will describe how this unconscious / lifeless / impersonal force is being used by God. The following information is given in the Bible about the Holy Spirit showing that He is a person by his acts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He gives</td>
<td>1 Corinthians 11:7-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He glorified</td>
<td>John 16:14</td>
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<tr>
<td>He loves</td>
<td>Romans 15:30</td>
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<tr>
<td>He comforts</td>
<td>Acts 9:31</td>
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<tr>
<td>He helps</td>
<td>Romans 8:26</td>
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<tr>
<td>He pleads</td>
<td>Romans 8:26-27</td>
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<tr>
<td>He wills</td>
<td>1 Corinthians 12:11</td>
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<td>He decides</td>
<td>Acts 15:28-29</td>
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<tr>
<td>He guides</td>
<td>John 16:13 and Matthew 4:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He sends</td>
<td>Acts 10:19-20 and 13:2-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He cast out</td>
<td>Mark 1:12</td>
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<tr>
<td>He prevents</td>
<td>Acts 16:6</td>
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<tr>
<td>He convinced</td>
<td>John 16:8</td>
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<tr>
<td>He appoints</td>
<td>Acts 20:28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He investigated</td>
<td>1 Corinthians 2:10</td>
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<tr>
<td>He makes things clear</td>
<td>Hebrews 9:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He testifies to the truth</td>
<td>John 15:26, Hebrews 10:15 and 1 John</td>
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<tr>
<td>He reveals</td>
<td>Luke 2:26</td>
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<tr>
<td>He reminds</td>
<td>John 14:26</td>
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<tr>
<td>He teaches</td>
<td>Luke 12:12 and John 14:26</td>
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<tr>
<td>He preached</td>
<td>John 16:13-15</td>
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<tr>
<td>He gives instructions</td>
<td>Acts 8:29, 10:19, 11:12 and 13:2</td>
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<tr>
<td>He speaks with authority</td>
<td>1 Timothy 4:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He hears</td>
<td>John 16:13</td>
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<tr>
<td>He receives</td>
<td>John 16:14-15</td>
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<tr>
<td>He is received</td>
<td>John 14:17</td>
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</table>
6.4.3.6 Jesus or Branham’s Guidelines for Baptism

Branham (1961a), states that “…only the baptism in the name of Jesus is valid.” In Kolwezi, Frank (1985a) emphasized this teaching of Branham by persuading the members to renounce their former baptism in the name of the Father, Son and of the Holy Spirit, apparently according to Matthew 28:19. (The researcher attended the meeting in 1984 held by Ewald Frank where he made the appeal and people renounce their former baptism). Piette (1985a:61) refers to Jean Jacques Meylan who said about the Baptism in Jesus name: “Many believers have had a second baptism including myself by naivety.” The vague reasons for a second baptism, as taught by Branham, are not supported in Scripture. To the contrary, Jesus was very clear regarding his relationship with the Father and the Comforter, the Holy Spirit (John 14:15-17; 16:8-10; 14:26). Regarding the baptism, Jesus makes his wishes very clear in Matthew 28:19: “Go unto the World, make disciples of all the nations, baptize them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt 28:19). This is the supreme order from the founder of Christianity. It is a formulation accepted and used by Christian churches through centuries and all over the world respecting this recommendation.

Branham clearly ignores the fact that the church fathers were baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. It can also be assumed that Peter and the other apostles would baptize according to this formula that the Lord gave them Himself according to Matthew 28:19. Until the day of Pentecost, Peter used the formula “in the name of Jesus” for the remission of sins. In Acts 1:14-17, Peter addresses his fellow Jewish brethren from the Diaspora. The Jews had rejected Jesus in their belief ‘as the Son of God’ (his deity) and therefore it was necessary for them to repent (Acts 1:14-25) and to be baptized (believing) in the name of Jesus. Thus, “in the Name of Jesus” means taking a firm resolution to belong to Jesus Christ as his followers, believing thereafter in Jesus as the Son of God – as God.

Branham and his movement is inherently modalistic regarding the baptism and the Trinity. They took this over from the Holiness Pentecostal Church where Branham attended after he left the Baptist Church in 1933 (Weaver, 2000:29-34). Continuing the blasphemy, Ewald Frank (1988), in his book Conseil de Dieu, denounces the Trinity, stating that those names, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, were not personal names but mere modalities, titles, or functions of one person, namely Jesus. According to him, Jesus is the name of God. The comments of Frank simply continue the modalistic view of Jesus.
The Branhamites in Kolwezi have been baptizing only in Jesus' name ever since this German Branhamite missionary had preached it in 1984. They deny the first formula of Matthew, and obliges the one in Acts 2:38; 4:10-12. They teach that there is one name, “Jesus only.” They forget Jesus’ teaching and Missio Dei. Jesus sent his disciples unto the world, to different nations that were not yet Christian, the heathens. Matthew 28:19 speaks about other nations. Jesus mandates his disciples to go to all the nations, which at that time were polytheist and ignored the Father, Jesus himself, and the Holy Spirit. According to Piette and other scholars (such as Grudem, 1994:242-248), there is no conflict between Acts 2:38 and Matthew 28:19-20 because the mandate is addressed to different congregations. Consequently, it is a specific mandate that should be used everywhere by all believers. In the Christian Church, Matthew 28:19-20 is used as the baptismal formula provided and required by Jesus himself (Piette, 1985b:66).

Branham states that the waters of baptism wash away sin. However, the remission of sins comes from believing in Jesus (Acts 10:43). Scripture emphasizes the fact that one must believe “with all his heart” before baptism can take place (Acts 8:37). The Biblical command for those who does not come from a Christian house, is to first repent, then to be baptized (Acts 2:38). Our sins are washed away through the blood of Jesus, not by water (Rev 1:5). Paul had his sins washed away by calling upon the Lord, after which he became the Apostle (Acts 22:16). Consequently, the Biblical practice indicates baptizing believers, while in Branhamism the formula seems to indicate the mark of a false baptism. Therefore, the people of Kolwezi have to know that “in the name of Jesus” means “in the authority of Jesus”, which is not a magic mantra. It would be difficult to understand this when they are confused about the Trinity. Error begets errors. According to Dager, the two verses in Hebrews put the whole Branham belief system in the garbage bin. It says: “God spoke in the past through prophet, but now speaks through Jesus.” Jesus is that prophet who will restore all things (Acts 3:19-26). They need to know God as Creator, and Father of Jesus Christ. Then, they have to know Jesus Christ, God the Son, who came to bring salvation, and finally they need to know God the Holy Spirit, the comforter, sent by God to brings transformation and new life (John 14:15-17; 26).

6.4.3.7 Original Sin or Serpent Seed

The Bible clearly states the original sin as “Adam and Eve disobeyed to God's word” (Gen 3:1-15). Christianity defines ‘original sin’ as disobedience to God’s word. It always teaches ‘obedience’ to follow and serve the Great God. Genesis 1:27-28 reads:
“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, ‘be fruitful, multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”

The Bible clearly teaches that the original sin is disobedience to the Word of God (Gen 3:4). Nevertheless, among the messages of Branham, the message regarding the seed of the serpent seems to be a strong deviation from Biblical theology. It consists of his own imaginings about original sin and his interpretation on specific Scriptures. Branham gives a strange explanation: “Eve had sexual relations with the serpent” (Branham, 1961a:116).

The Bible asserts that “Adam knew Eve, and she conceived and bare Cain, and she said, ‘I have gotten a man from the Lord’.” It is a strange interpretation to say, “Cain was from the Devil…” from 1 John 3:12. 1 John 3:13 (KJV) states: “…not as Cain who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his and his brother’s righteous.” Branham interpreted this text as saying that Eve had sexual relations with the serpent. Cain was therefore the result of those relations (Frank, 1984:17-21). Branham describes his belief as mythological, claiming that the serpent was like a man and had seduced Eve to have sexual relations. To Branham, Cain belonged to the serpent through a reproductive path, because Branham also believed in evolution according to Darwin. Chimpanzee begat man, and both came from one ancestor, explaining therefore that the serpent could have sexual relations with Eve. That is, according to Branham, the original sin that the Bible teaches of (Branham, 1961a). In Genesis 3:4, there is no word that implies “knew” as in sexual relation. Cain is not the seed of serpent, but a son of Adam (Gen 4:1). The Branhamite argument is refuted by the Holy Scriptures, because God gave Adam and Eve the obligation to be fruitful and to multiply (Gen 1:26-28). The seed or posterity is more than physical, for it is also spiritual and symbolic.

The Branhamites may erroneously use John 8:44 to support their argument, “you are of your Father, the devil and it is your will to practice the lust and gratify the desire which are the characteristics of your Father” (KJV). They claim that seduction of Eve was physical. Yet Paul uses the same image in his speech in 2 Corinthians 11:3 (KJV) “…but I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is Christ.” Clearly, Paul points to doctrine or false teachings, which can beguile our minds away from Christ, the true Gospel. In John 8:58, Jesus says: “Ye are of your Father the devil, and the lust of your Father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him…” This does not mean that the devil has given birth to all of them. It is an expression that means that your attitude is like that
of the devil. Thus, Branham has been beguiled by false doctrines to arrive at baptism only in the name of Jesus and the doctrine on the seed of the Serpent.

Lindsay (1950:30) describes Branham as a humble man of simplicity and devoted to God. However, his attitude towards women was harsh. Dager (1992:28) states on this issue that: “Branham had great difficulty controlling a strident, hateful attitude toward women.” According to Dager, Branham, in his own poor English transcribed from a sermon, said:

“But I remember when my Father's still up there running, I had to be out there with water and stuff, see young ladies that wasn't over seventeen, eighteen years, up there with a man my age now, drunk. Oh, something, like that, I said: They are not worth a good clean bullet to kill them with it! That is right. And I hated women. That is right. And I just have to watch every move now, to keep from still thinking the same thing.”

Many writers think that this attitude towards women may have played a part in the development of Branham’s bizarre serpent seed teachings. It seems that this was based on a twisted interpretation of Genesis 3:13 where Eve is recorded as saying, “The Serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.” Branham interpreted the word “beguiled” as sexual seduction. According to this doctrine, the evil has passed from generation to generation through women, who keep the seed of the serpent alive. Branham thinks that women are responsible for the evil in the world because of their enticements.

The erroneous claim lies in Branham's assumption that women are especially the vehicles of evil. The Bible is full of narratives about wise women who brought victory to the battle, such as Deborah (Judges 4:1-9), Abigail (1 Sam 25:23-35), and Esther (Esther 4:15-17). The Bible also speaks about the virtuous women who were not like Eve (Prov 31:10-31). Branham’s teaching lures many people away from the Bible’s teaching about the creation of man (Gen 1:26-28) and leads many people towards an evolutionary ideology. They speak of a serpent meeting with humans and the idea that man and animals mingled. Dager (1986) quotes Bob Larson, Neil Anderson and John Hagee, who echo the same myth that demons had sex with humans.

6.4.3.8 Can Branham Really be the Prophet Elijah of Malachi 4?

Malachi 4:5-6 (NIV) reads: “See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes, he will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their Fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with curse.” Schuller (NIB, 1996:876-877), gives her interpretation: “Although v. 4 is a divine admonition, vv. 5-6 promise a final act of divine intervention.” One of the distinctive features of the
eschatological scenario as it is presented in these verses is that Elijah will come and then there will be, “the great and terrible day of the Lord.” According to Schuller, John the Baptist is identified with Elijah in the synoptic gospels, and he functions as the precursor to the Messiah (Mark 6:14-15; 9:11-13; Matt 11:13-14; 17:9-13; Luke 1:17). Schuller reflects that, “Elijah’s task is one of reconciliation. In fact, the task given to Elijah to turn the hearts of parents to their children and children to their parents is particularly poignant in today’s society, when so many families are torn apart by discord and dissent.” It seems Schuller’s view is share throughout Christianity. Ralph Smith (1984:342) follows the same interpretation as Schuller. He said concerning verse 5: “The N.T. identifies Elijah with John the Baptist” (Luke 1:16-17, 76-77; Mark 1:2-4; Matt 3:1-6), although on one occasion John the Baptist denied that he was Elijah, confessing that he was only a voice crying in the wilderness, “prepare ye the way of the Lord” (John 1:19-23).

Nevertheless, Branham, gave his own interpretation as a revelatory message to his believers by saying that he was “the Elijah of Malachi 4:5” (Branham, 1963:307-317). Branham openly declared (Branham, 1963:307), that he was the “Elijah who had to come, restore, and bring the hearts of many children back to their Father” (Mal 4:5-6). He continues by saying “we see the venue of the messenger of Revelations 10:7, not only that, but we see the fulfilment of the second coming of Elijah in the word of God, before the birth of Jesus. Matthew 17:10 says that Elijah is to come back for the work of restoration in the Church.” Branham likened his angel to John the Baptist (Weaver, 2000:27) “as John the Baptist was sent as the forerunner of the first coming of Christ, you have received a message that will forerun the second coming of Christ.” Time proved that Branham’s famous angel did not come from the Lord, because none of what he promised to Branham has happened. The second coming of Christ is yet to come. Truly, Branham was wrong to identify himself with Elijah. In 1 Kings 18:37-38, Elijah, the Tiscibith in Israel, had to restore rightful worship to God. This was because Yahweh was adored in Israel as the only God, but some also worshiped Baal. In addition, in Matthew 17:11-12 Jesus said of the Spirit of Elijah who worked in John the Baptist the following:

“His disciples asked him: saying why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them: Elijah truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you that Elijah is come already and they know him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise, shall also the Son of Man suffer of them. Then, the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.”

However, the people had to receive Jesus as the Messiah. If Branham refutes what Jesus said, he may be an anti-Christ. Finally, Elijah and John Baptist worked in Israel among the Jews, not in the church in Christendom.
It is important to understand Branham’s history (Lindsay, 1950:6-40) for a deeper comprehension of what this subject meant to Branham. During 1957-1958, after Branham noticed the loss of many supporters from his healing and deliverance campaigns, he stopped the exodus by adding a prophetic and millennial teaching. He started strange doctrines and declared himself the prophet of the last days, the Elijah of Malachi 4:5 (Weaver, 2000:62-78). “Not only had Elijah to come according to Malachi 4:5, but he also had to deliver the end time message to the Laodicean generation.” This kind of claim is no cause for concern, for Christ warned of the false prophets and false Christ that were to come. When the time shall be fulfilled, the real Christ shall come. Branham asserted that “the Scripture in Revelations 10:7 is fulfilled today in his person” (Branham, 1961a:317). Many supporters believed that he was the messenger, among them Billy Paul Branham (Branham, B.P., 1965:3-7), his son, Gordon Lindsay (1950:45-52), and Ewald Frank (1985), who is still writing about it. Despite the critical opinion of other churches regarding Branham, his believers worshipped him as the prophet and a messenger from God.

Scholars do not agree with Branham regarding his strange claims that he is the messenger of the end times. Mupekadio (2003:15-16) disagrees with Branham on this point of the end times, as if Malachi 4:5 holds the promise of a messenger to Israel who lives apostatically. If this was Branham’s ministry, he would have focused on the Jews and Israelites of the Diaspora. However, he did not mention Israel at all. Branham seemed to spiritualize Israel and consider the Church of the New Testament to be spiritual Israel. This reminds one of the same false interpretation of the JW regarding the 144 000.

A second point of disagreement with Branham is found in Matthew 17:10-12 (KJV). That states “Elijah came already, but they did not recognize him… John the Baptist was the Elijah who had to come, to bring back the hearts of many to God.”

Branham saw himself as the only person who received this revelation or who received an explanation of the Book of Revelation. Moreau (2010:8-10) emphasizes Branham’s misunderstanding of Malachi 4:5 and Revelations 10:7 by comparing the role of the messenger to his role in modern times. To Branham, the events described in Revelations 10:7 have already been fulfilled when he asserts that “it is not an angel but a human messenger.” He saw the angels of the churches mentioned in Revelations 2 and 3 of the Book of Revelation as human angels. This is another strange doctrine and interpretation by Branham because it is extra-Biblical. This shows that Branham refutes Jesus’ position in Matthew 17:12-13. Moreau and Mupekadio strongly condemn Branham from an apologetic perspective for his strange interpretation of these Scriptures by saying that it is properly sectarian and heretical.
The Bible teaches the truth spoken by Jesus and it seems different from Branham’s doctrines. As a result of his lack of education Branham manifested an ignorance of contextual exegesis of Malachi 4, which is about Israel in Old Testament and not the Church in New Testament.

6.4.3.9 Jesus or Branham’s Version of the Church and the Seven Churches

There are different interpretations regarding the Church and the bride of Christ. The Bible calls the Church the body of Christ (Ephes 1:22) and the bride (Rev 19:7; 21:9). The Biblical church accepts both names and roles, but Branham distinguishes between the two entities. What he calls church, he defines as the believers of other congregations or denominations in the world. To Branham the church will not be saved in the last days. The bride is his “tabernacle of those who have received and believed”. According to him, these persons form the bride of Christ and only they shall be saved at the last days (Branham, 1963:499). Branham emphasized this position when he preached on the seven seals in Revelations.

Mupekadio (2003:45-46) notes on this point that Branham ignores the Biblical concepts of the Church and the Bride. The Bible does not separate the two. Some cult and sect leaders assume that their personal congregations are in the Laodicean age. Around 1900 the founder of the Jehovah’s Witnesses, Russell, states that he was the Laodicean messenger and only those who believed his message of Jehovah, belonged to Jehovah’s Kingdom (WTBTS, 1900). This is also what Joseph Smith and Branham claimed for themselves.

Branham encouraged his congregation by preaching that each person who left these “other churches” to join his organization would become part of the bride (Branham, 1964a:27). Branham often accused mainstream denominations, like Presbyterians, Methodist, Baptist, Lutherans, Pentecostals and the Full Gospel Fellowship, of rejecting his message and therefore God’s revelation (Branham, 1963:33). According to Weaver (1985:70-78), Branham condemned other churches for their disagreement with his non-Biblical methods of healing and deliverance. Branham claimed that “the denominations are under the mark of the beast, according to Revelations 2:10”, while the bride does not carry this mark. In addition, Branham followed Joseph Smith and his doctrine and testimony (Branham, 1960:37-38) on the revelation of the seven seals. However, the Bible does not support Branham’s claims, for no-one knows who carries the mark of the beast. It seems that this claim is judgmental and characteristic of a cult.

By the importance of interpreting Revelations according to hermeneutical methods, Liow (2002:125), says: “The Hermeneutical method of research covers all processes of interpretation that mediate between and incorporate different cultural and historical meaning
and tradition.” With regard to the book of Revelation, Hogg thinks that, “the research will cover not only with the objective meanings of ideas or symbols, but also with what the texts have to say to people.” Court (2000:85-87; 1994:20-26) adds the messages to the seven churches “should not be interpreted apart from the Christophany of 1:9-20 to which they are integrally related. Each ‘letter’ reflects the particular geographical, cultural, and religious situation of the city to which it was written, as well as the current conditions in the congregation of that city. Yet none of the messages in Chapter 2-3 are independent letters addressed to a single church.”

Court also defines the word ‘angel’ used in Revelation 2 and 3 as referring to a human being, the Episcopal or prophetic leader of each congregation. Since the basic meaning of ‘angel’ is ‘messenger’, it can be true that the word can be used for a human being (Court, 2000:87). Court points out that,

“Each message names the city of the Church to which it is addressed. The seven churches represent a selection, for other churches existed in the area at the time, for example at Colosae. This number seven is to be taken as symbolic of completeness and strengthens the idea that the Revelation is addressed to all the churches in Asia.”

Nevertheless, Branham (1963:21, 102-110, 307), in his exposition of seven churches, stated: “seven churches represent the church ages, epochs of its history.” The angels represent a human being. This means that each epoch had a messenger to deliver God’s message to his people. Ewald Frank cited by Piette (1985a:12) supported his master strongly on this matter. Branham viewed the ages and messengers to be as follows:

Church of Ephesians AD 53-170 Messenger: Paul

Church of Smyrna AD 170-312 Messenger: Irenaeus

Church of Pergamos AD 312- 606 Messenger: Martin

Church of Thyatira AD 606-1520 Messenger: Colombian

Church of Sardis AD 1520-1750 Messenger: Luther

Church of Philadelphia AD 1750-1906 Messenger: John Wesley

Church of Laodicean AD 1906-2016 Messenger: Branham

The seven churches listed above were locations in Asia Minor, and the Bible never divides the church’s history into seven ages. The seven churches found in Revelations 2 and 3 were
active churches of that time and cannot be interpreted as seven periods or ages of the Church’s history. In his sermons on the revelation of Jesus Christ, Branham said that the bride shall be raptured by the Lord. Therefore, all must believe Branham’s message, and the role of last days (Branham, 1963:521, Revelation of seven seals). Here, again, Branham contradicts Revelations 19:7 and 21:9. The Bible does not talk about Branham, but of Jesus Christ. It is clear that the supposed angel mandated Branham to convince all people to believe in him and not in Christ (Branham, 1948.; Weaver, 1985:34-40). In the last days of his life, he likened his own name to Abraham’s, calling it divine (Piette, 1985b:33; Branham, 1964b:27).

Branham did not follow the hermeneutical method in interpreting these texts. His presentation looks different from that of Russell (Piette, 1985b:11). Both of them expose the same topic, namely the ‘seven churches’ as seven periods or ages of church history. They disregarded the context provided by chapters 1–3:21, because John was addressing the messages of the risen Christ to local churches in Asia. Russell and Branham spoke of different churches throughout history. Of course, the Witnesses deny that Branham could be the Laodicean messenger, and the Branhamites deny that Russell was the Laodicean messenger,

6.4.3.10 Branham’s Erroneous Idea of the Messenger of the Laodicean Church

The city of Laodicea was located in the Lycus Valley in Southwest Phrygia at the juncture of two important imperial routes, one leading east from the Ephesian and Aegean coast following the Maeander and then via the gentle ascent of the Lycus to the Anatolian plateau, and the other from the provincial capital at Pergamos south of the Mediterranean at Attaleia (Mounce, 1977:106-107). This wealthy city experienced an earthquake in AD 60 and was rebuilt by their own money and not that of the Roman Empire. The city became very rich in the agro-industry, commerce, and medical society (Aune, 1997:247-249). The problem was that the Christians relied on material things and lacked trust in the Lord. Lioy (2002:131) records that the Messiah’s lordship included the believers in Laodicea (Mounce, 1977:70). The Lord considered that they owed their existence to him. Because of Him, they became rich, so they belonged to him and were required to obey him. The context of this section is clear, the Risen Christ addressed this message to Laodicea. He censured them for their spiritual indifference and complacency. According to Lioy, Jesus promised to discipline its congregants, especially if they did not renew their zeal and repent. Christ promised those who were victorious that in the next age, they would take their place beside him on his throne (Rev 3:21; Lioy, 2002:131; Keener, 2003:74).

Branham had his own interpretation of the verses of Revelations 10:7 without any respect for the context rules of hermeneutical methods. He convinced many and led them in an error of
interpretation. He estimated that “he was the Messenger, Prophet of Last days,” in this age, which he called Laodicean (Branham, 1963:318-319). Often times, Branham identified his ministry with that of Elijah and John the Baptist. Branham interpreted Revelations 10:7 as before the tribulation. Scripture shows that the event here is after the rapture. Also, Scripture speaks about seven angels standing before God’s throne and of seven trumpets that were given to these angels (Rev 8:1-2). Branham identified with the seventh angel. It is a proper characteristic of cult leaders to identify with something like “the messenger of the Laodicean church” (Piette, 1985b:11).

According to Branham, he had already opened the seven seals. However, according to the Bible, the seals have not yet been opened. There is a conflict between the Bible and Branham’s interpretation of Revelations 4:1-10:7 and Revelations 10:20. By any reader’s account, Revelations 1-10 contains three parts: In Revelations 1:4-20 past things accomplished are revealed; in Revelations 2-3 present things are explained by means of the seven churches (Rev 2-3); and from Revelations 4 to 10, things to come and to be fulfilled in the future are addressed. According to Revelations 4:1, the things to come will happen after the rapture, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this” (NIV). Among the things of the future, Revelations 10:7 indicates “…there will be no more delay when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.” It seems clear that an angel shall sound the trumpet, not Branham.

The book of Revelation tells of the vision John saw. It is about an angel who had opened a scroll, and the voice of God addressed John, not Branham. Branham asserted that the messenger of Revelations 11:15 is not an angel but a man, a human messenger. He therefore often referred to his angel mandate in 1946 (Branham, 1963:314; 319; 357). What a confusing contradiction, for the text speaks to the things to come after the rapture. The problem is hermeneutic and historical. Branham considers Revelations 4:1, 10:7, and 11:25 as present things or present revelations given to Branham by God. The Bible considers these Scriptures as things to come and yet to be fulfilled.

The contents of Revelations 10:7 and 11:25 have not yet been revealed, nor written. They are hidden by God. These hidden things belong to God, and only that which is revealed can edify us. Branham views the seventh seal as opened and the rapture as something that occurred together with the sixth seal (Branham, 1961a:420-423). However, none of what Branham prophesied ever came true. The churches in Kolwezi need to know that Branham’s revelation of the seven seals is simply powder on a screen (Moreau, 2010:10-15).
6.4.3.11 Supposed Date of the End Time: 1977

Matthew 24:36 (NIV) indicates that “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father.” Jesus Christ adamantly stated this truth about the day and hour. That means it is a hidden fact known by the Father only. Jesus, who is fully God, knows the day and hour, but submitted to the pre-eminency of his Father to become human. Branham, however, adhered to an interpretation given by his angel, “that it is possible to know not the day and hour of the second coming of Christ!”

Another text that Branham used incorrectly is Acts 1:7 (NIV): “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.” It seems that Branham had a false vision, and Scripture has an answer for such visions. Ezekiel 13:6 NIV reads: “Their visions are false and their divination a lie. They say, ‘The Lord declares,’ When the Lord has not sent them; yet they expect their words to be fulfilled.”

Like many end time prophets, Branham needed to prove the validity of his prophetic words. Weaver (1985:33-34) describes a prediction made by Branham in 1933: “I can see the end of this current system around 1977… thus said the Lord.” Dager (1992) tries to explain the factors that influenced Branham in the calculations of end time dates. He mentions Branham’s history as a Baptist preacher who turned Pentecostal. He was influenced by Franklin Hall, and then gained notoriety for his teaching on what he called, “God’s Seventh Church Age.” This age is supposed to be God’s final move before the manifestation of his kingdom on earth. Another reason for Branham to teach on the end time is his belief that the word of God was given in three forms: The Zodiac, the Egyptian pyramids and the written Scriptures. He essentially believed in three Bibles. It may be that he used one of the two other forms to predict the end time. However, Branham died before the fulfilment of his prediction.

Branham erroneously predicted the year 1977 as the date of the end time and the second coming of Jesus Christ. Indeed, Branham preached in 1960 on the Revelation of Jesus Christ and age of Thyatira (Branham, 1960:39). During the sermon, he declared, “I say: I predict and prophesy, according the way time is forwarding, it seems that the end will be fulfilled between the years 1933 and 1977. The events will go faster to give a way to the fulfilment of this prediction.” Ewald Frank (1985:16) supports Branham by saying that “Branham did not prophesy, but he predicted events to take place between 1933 and 1977.” The question that apologetically Branham can be asked, is about the difference between “prediction” and “prophecy”? Both words deal with the future. What would happen if the prediction was fulfilled? Branham died in December 1965, and the logic conclusion is that the 1970s were filled by eschatological predictions by many sects and cults. In 1972 the Universal Church of God of
Herbert Armstrong’s prediction failed to be fulfilled. In 1975 the JW with Knorr’s prediction of the end of earthly time failed also. In 1977 William Branham’s prediction failed too to be fulfilled. God remains the only truth, no one knows the date and hour, nor the moments that the Father has fixed in his authority.

Like the JW, William Branham denied the eternity of hell as it is found in the Bible. In his sermon concerning the revelation of Jesus Christ and the age of Pergamos, Branham states that “…the Holy Spirit told us this: ‘an eternal hell is not existing in the Bible’” (Branham, 1963:5). Branham insisted on this on many occasions, saying that “…hell cannot be eternal.” He asserts that “…hell can only be permanent for a while.” This matter is a confusion of words, for eternal means permanent or perpetual. According to the French dictionary, Larousse, eternal means “what has not an end”, and perpetual means “that is continual or continuing.” Therefore, there is not much difference for the two words that Branham used (Branham, 1963:156).

In contrast to Branham’s teaching, the Bible clearly teaches in Daniel 12:2 (KJV) that “…many of them that keep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” In addition, the apostle John writes in Revelations 20:10 (KJV) that: “…the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.” Finally, Jesus himself states in Mark 9:45-46 (KJV) that: “…if thy foot offered thee, cut off it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, in the fire that never shall be quenched. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” In Matthew 25:46 (KJV), Jesus states that “…these shall go away into everlasting punishment but the righteous into the life eternal.”

These passages demonstrate that Branhamist doctrines oppose the Bible, the same as the views of Russel and his JW followers does. It is important to point this out to the Christians of Kolwezi who believe in the message of Branham and the JW. While Branham claims the temporary nature of hell, the JW proclaim that the hell is nothing others as not to exist in the grave. These views err on the eternal nature of hell as the Bible teaches.

6.4.4 Major Scholars’ Views: their Christology Compared to the JW's and Branham’s Teachings

It is important to put the doctrines of JW and Branham into context by looking at the different opinions of scholars. The following scholars are consulted to contextualize JW and Branhamism: Grudem, Ryrie, Berkhof, Barclay, Fuller, Kelly, Calvin, Luther.
6.4.4.1 Wayne Grudem

Grudem (1994:557) considers the Chalcedonian Christology in his summary: “the definition actually did a great deal to help us understand the Biblical teaching correctly. It taught that Christ definitely has two natures, a human nature and a divine nature. It taught that his divine nature is exactly the same as that of the Father” (consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead). He maintains that Christ’s human nature is exactly like our human nature, yet without sin (consubstantial with us according to the manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin). Based on this position, Grudem is opposed to both the teachings of the JW and Branhamism and said that, “Along with such views of Christ goes a denial of the Biblical accounts of his miraculous birth, death and resurrection. Obviously opponents of Christ’s deity do not consider the Bible as authoritative but feel perfectly free to question statements of Scripture as to their reliability.”

6.4.4.2 Charles Ryrie

Ryrie (1972:52) states regarding the deity of Christ: “Many in our day deny the deity of Christ, knowing that in doing so they are undermining the central aspect of Christianity because they have removed from it the divine Saviour. This denial is not new, for even in the early Church there were those who did so: Ebionites, dynamic Monarchians, and the Arians all denied that the Son possessed full deity.” Ryrie (1972:57) feels that, “Through the Ebionites, Arians deny the deity of Christ, Docetists claimed that he was simply a phantom like appearance of God. The Unitarians (Branhamites included) claimed that he was adopted as divine at his baptism. JW claimed that He was God’s highest created representative.” Orthodoxy has always held that Jesus Christ was fully God and perfect man, and that these two natures were united in one person without forming third nature (as Eutych said) or two separate persons (as Nestorius taught). For Ryrie (1972:62), the overwhelming evidence of the bodily resurrection of Christ in the Bible proves that Christ physically rose from the dead. His was not a resurrection of “influence” or “Spirit.”

6.4.4.3 Louis Berkhof

Berkhof (1938:92-94) gives a summary of the state of Christ. He assumes on the suffering of Christ that, “we sometimes speak as if the sufferings of Christ were limited to his final agonies, but this is not correct. His whole life was a life of suffering.” Concerning the death of Christ, Berkhof argues that, “when we speak of the death of Christ, we naturally have in mind his physical death. He did not die as the result of an accident, nor by the hand of an assassin, but under a judicial sentence, and was thus counted with transgressors” (Isa 53:12). Berkhof
(1972:92) describes the burial of Christ as a humiliation, of which He as a Son of God was also conscious. Berkhof speaks on the resurrection by pointing out that in Him, human nature, both body and soul, was restored to its original beauty and strength, and even raised to a higher level. Finally, Berkhof speaks on the physical return of Christ as the exaltation of Christ that reaches its climax when He returns to judge the living and the dead. To Berkhof, his return will be bodily and visible (see Acts 1:11; Rev 1:7). He will come for the purpose of judging the world and perfecting the salvation of his people. This will mark the complete victory of His work (see 1 Cor 4:5; Phil 3:20; Col 3:4; 1 Thess 4:13-17; 2 Thess 2:1-12; Titus 2:13; Rev 1:7).

6.4.4.4 John Calvin

Holder (2006:139-157) describes Calvin’s position as follows: “Calvin argues that the end, or Scopus (skopos) of Scripture is Christ.” This means that the interpretation of Scripture creates the possibility for hearers to know Christ and his benefits. Holder shows that Calvin’s positions Christ as the culmination of Scripture, the culmination of the gospel, the model of Christian action, and as the culmination of Christian life. Calvin interweaves these roles of Christ to emphasize his point “that Christ alone is the object of Christian faith.” Holder likes to underline the fact that “for Calvin, Christ is the goal of the Scripture, but more importantly, he is the goal of the gospel. The gospel is offered through the Scriptures.”

Calvin’s theology is centred on Christ, in other words Christocentric. For Calvin, “Christ as the end of Christian teaching” means Christ is the end of Scripture. Christ is the aim of Christian teaching, its final measure, its maximal point beyond which no teacher can go, and the final period that brings prophecy to an end. Holder (2006:157) concludes this section by saying: “The point of the Scripture, the message of salvation, cannot be found anywhere outside of Christ.” Wendell (1963:215) presents Calvin’s theology in this way: “Calvin’s Christocentrism, it cannot be said too often, is a definite and as clearly expressed as that of Luther.” For Wendell, Calvin adopts in full dogma of the two natures of Christ and the current explanations of the relation between the two natures. He writes, “that he who was to be our Mediator should be true God and man.” This point is lacking in both the JW and Branhamist theologies. It is important to teach the believers in Kolwezi about the two natures of Christ.

6.4.4.5 Martin Luther

Lohse (1999:39) explains the aim of Luther’s theology as follows: “Knowledge of God and man is divine wisdom and in the real sense theological.” This refers to knowledge of God as redeeming God and man as a lost man, sinful and in need God’s justification. Concerning the concept of sin, for Luther, “first, all men are in sin before God and commit sin, that is, they are
Luther does not accept sexual relations between Eve and the serpent. He recognizes the veracity of the Scripture that Cain is the son that God gave to Adam and Eve according to the Book of Genesis (Lohse, 1999:53-54). Lohse (1999:228-231) describes Luther's understanding of the unity of the divine and human nature with its particularly important consequences for the doctrine of the Last Supper. Luther went so far to say that “at his incarnation Christ did not leave his Godhead in heaven, but in his earthly life continually renounced it”. For our sake Christ became as one of us and took the form of a servant, that is, he subjected himself to all evils. Lohse defends Luther by saying: “In so stating, Luther did not intend to prove the ubiquity of Christ’s exalted human nature. Rather: All this I have related in order to show that there are more modes whereby an object may exist in a place than the one circumscribed, physical mode on which the fanatics insist.” Something to retain here, “the fundamental position that God’s presence is salutary only where connected with the humanity of Jesus Christ is central to Luther’s theology.”

6.4.4.6  William Barclay

Barclay (1976:54-57) shares in his study on Revelation his interpretation of chapter 10:1–11:4, which differs from that of Branham. Barclay sees a kind of interlude between the sounding of the sixth and the seventh trumpets. In fact, the sixth trumpet has already sounded, but the seventh does not sound until chapter 11:15, and in between there are terrible things that happen. Barclay takes time to describe the mighty angel because he came from the presence of God. Some texts of the Old Testament are quoted to support the angel: clouds (Psalms 104:3); rainbow on his head (Ezek 1:28); the face as the sun (Matt 17:2); his voice as the roar of the lion (Joel 3:16; Hos11:10; Amos 3:8). Barclay mentions another fact: the angel had in his hand a little roll, unrolled and unopened. Barclay (1975a) sees this as a limited revelation about a quite short period. When the angel speaks, the seven thunders sound. Barclay refers to the seven voices of God in Psalm 29. He explains as follows: “we can speculate not about what the secret revelation was. We simply know that John had experiences, which he could not communicate to others. Because God sometimes tells a man more than man can say or than his generation can understand.” In contrast it seems that Branham viewed this angel as himself.
6.4.4.7 J.N.D. Kelly

Kelly (1960:122) contributed significantly to our understanding of modalism, the Trinity, creeds, and the theology of Athanasius. When speaking about modalism, we indirectly speak of Branham and his doctrine. Kelly points to Sabellius as author of Sabellianism, how he tried to meet some of the objections to which the earlier brand was exposed. To Kelly, Sabellius regarded the Godhead as a monad (his name for it was in Greek, *uios patwr*, meaning Father-Son), which expressed itself in three operations. Sabellius used the analogy of the sun, a single object that radiates both warmth and light; the Father is, as it were, the form or essence, and the Son and the Spirit his modes of self-expression. Kelly thinks that ideas like these suggest that Sabellius was conscious of the difficulties inherent in the simple modalism of his predecessors, and was prepared to turn to features borrowed from the economic Trinitarianism of their critics.

Concerning the creeds and councils, Kelly has his particular view. To him, the theology of the council of Nicea had a more limited objective than is sometimes supposed. It outlawed Arianism negatively and unequivocally, but positively it was content to affirm the Son’s full divinity and equality with the Father, out of whose being he was derived and whose nature he consequently shared. According to Kelly, it did not attempt to tackle the closely related problem of the divine unity, although this discussion was inevitably brought nearer (Kelly, 1960:236). To support the doctrine of the Trinity, Kelly quotes Augustine: “The image of the Trinity is one person, but the supreme Trinity Itself is three persons: Which is a paradox when one reflects that nevertheless the three are more inseparably one than is the Trinity in the mind.”

Concerning the theology of Athanasius, Kelly (1960:284) open the issue by showing that, “Athanasius’ starting point is John 1:14, which he interprets as meaning that “the logos has become man, and has not entered into a man”. For him, it is only God who can save a fallen man, and the Word is of course fully divine. In another sense, Athanasius meant that the incarnation did not seem to have altered Christ’s transcendent status in any way, for “in taking flesh He does not become different, but remains the same. Indeed, in human body, He continued to exercise sovereignty over the universe” (Kelly, 1960:284). It seems that Athanasius spoke less about the relation between Word-flesh, maybe because he was the chairman at the council (Kelly, 1960:287).

6.4.4.8 Reginald H. Fuller & Perkins P.

The Easter event is a crucial point that both the JW and Branhamites deny. Fuller and Perkins (1983:28, 45) speaks about the relevance of the resurrection for Christology. There are two
groups of thought: those who believe that Jesus was not risen bodily, like Bishop Barnes. Fuller quotes his statement: “Jesus rose into the Kerugma.” This idea was supported by the late Geoffrey Lampe, who proposed a Christology of the Spirit. All this means that “it is not Jesus who personally lives after death, but the Spirit that was in Him.” Indirectly, the same idea is supported by the JW (WTBTS, 1989b:12-17; Fuller, 1983:35). The Branhamites avoid this idea by saying that Jesus, as God, cannot die (Frank, 1985:11-12).

There are also those who believe and support the Pauline view of the resurrection. Fuller and Perkins (1983:36) paraphrases the apostle Paul by saying: “For Paul, Jesus’ resurrection is closely connected with Jesus’ status as Second Adam. As such, he is the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep (1 Cor 15:20). His resurrection is not only chronologically prior to, but also Christologically determinative of all other resurrections and of a renewed cosmos.” For Fuller and Perkins (1983:37), “the Easter event is an essential part of the data for Christianity. Its nature must therefore be explored, and we chose initially to do this by an examination of four points raised by Schillebeeckx’s treatment of the resurrection in his book”. This book discusses (1) the status of the empty tomb narrative; (2) the evaluation and interpretation of the primitive kerygmatc formulas, especially 1 Corinthians 15:3-8; (3) the theory that the primary Easter experience was one of forgiveness and conversion; (4) and the final and unrepeatable character of the Easter experience. Fuller and Perkins point out the fact that Paul differentiates clearly here between his encounter with the risen Christ on the Damascus road and subsequent visions. Fuller and Perkins (1983:38) proposes that “Jesus’ resurrection is that of the second Adam, that is Christologically determinative of the resurrection of the believers and of the apocalyptic renewal of the cosmos. As such it is integral to the New Testament message and therefore to Christology.

6.5 The Causes of the Penetration of JW and Branhamites in the City of Kolwezi

In the light so many answers to the heresies of JW and Branhamism, the context of Kolwezi should be evaluated to design a plan to bring the apologetic answer to the people in a relevant way. As Christianity spread throughout the world, missionaries brought it into Africa with economic development. Therefore, there are some points of weakness that occasioned the penetration of the heretical cults as the JW and Branhamites in the Congo, and in Kolwezi precisely.

6.5.1 Weakness of Christian Missionaries

When the missionaries arrived on African soil, they ignored many aspects of African Traditional Religions (ATR). Ball (2015:85-95) in his syllabus indicates important aspects that
were neglected by the missionaries (Hesselgrave, 1978b). These include the African view; the philosophy of Ubuntu; the importance of representation associated with the idea that ‘I live because I belong’; strong family and clan relationships; and customs and manners (Hesselgrave, 1978a). Hyden (2006:20) agrees with Ball that the general holistic African approach is more holistic than the western an analytical view and more group-oriented than individualistic. This tendency can be seen in the common African practice of storytelling. It is also anthropocentric in the sense that man is the centre of the universe and God is transcendent and lives in the heavenly part of the universe (Hyden, 2006:20). They have the view that “a God who would separate the family or the clan is not a good God!” (Ball, 2015:85-95). To make things worse, countries where the missionaries came from were involved in violence and slave trading alongside their evangelistic undertakings (Ball, 2015:85-95).

Professor Mbiti (1969:15) concludes that for the African, religion is a difficult word to define and it becomes even more difficult in the context of African traditional life. For Africans, religion is an ontological phenomenon.

These weaknesses impaired the effective evangelization of the Congo, and Kolwezi in particular. Missionaries failed to convince indigenous people to stop ancestor worship and other religious rituals including animism, worship of tree and animal spirits, polytheism, occultism, witch doctors, and mediators causing them to misstep their mission (Ball, 2015:117). Church members did not stop the practice of the list mentioned above, evident from the ancestor worship shrine behind the house of most every family in the Katanga (the researcher’s experience and interviews). Syncretism is still visibly practiced among the population in Kolwezi. In addition, many people in Kolwezi and in Kinshasa are still using fetishes and witchcrafts when they are in pain or experience trouble (Ball, 2015:97; Chalwe, 2004:125). Presently, in Kolwezi, many Christians are using fetishes, magic, charms, and divination because of this world crisis (RTMa, 2016/October). Also when faced with illness, barrenness or other overwhelming situations, they resort to divination in Kolwezi. Although they attend a church service in the morning, they consult diviners, fetishes, and magicians to solve their problems in the evening.

6.5.2 Missio dei vs Colonization

Jesus mandated his followers to share the good news. Through the proclamation of this gospel message, followers are to share the love of Christ (Rom 5:5) and the message of how He died for us. This love of Christ represents Christian evangelization as seen throughout Christ's life (Mark 5:1-20; 21-6:1-10, Matt 17:11-27). However, the missionaries who carried the gospel into the Congo, came under the mandate of king Leopold II. It can be argued that they were obliged to miss the Missio dei in order to fulfil the Belgium king’s mandate and support
colonization. Chalwe (2004:112) asserts that “some missionaries were engaged in the intelligence of the colonialist, some were involved in slave trading, and in personal safety.” It seems that the missionaries were not free to proclaim the gospel because of their dependence on the Belgian King. If the Gospel was the thesis, colonization was the anti-thesis, opposing the proclamation of the Gospel. Colonization presented an obstacle to the Christianization of the Congo in general, and Kolwezi in particular. Consequently, the salvation of the society in Kolwezi was in many cases superficial and missed.

6.5.3 Resistance to Christianization Through Syncretism

Although Africa knew about God before colonization, they did not know Jesus and his Good News (Chalwe, 2004:118). God was found in a wrong way in the African Traditional Religion (ATR). Because missionaries ignored those traditional beliefs and preached a diluted gospel supporting colonization, many Africans were afraid to leave their ATRs. Africans in general are very religious (Yulu, 2005, as cited by Ball, 2015:114). Because of the collective nature of their culture “religion and culture are synonymous, one cannot be separated from the order” (Mbiti, 1969:15-16). “Africans are notoriously religious…religion permeates into all the departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible to isolate it” (Mbiti, 1969:1). The people in need of the undiluted gospel have an ATR background. Therefore, effective communication should come with the proper understanding of the traditional African beliefs and practices (Gehman, 1989:19). The failure to appreciate the African way of life made the early missionary movement concerned about possible syncretism and as a result they unfortunately denounced the local culture. Chalwe (2004:61) admits “by so doing, they built an artificial Christianity.”

Gehman (1989:19) notes that most every Christian in Africa rely on ATR in times of difficulty. He reveals that witchcraft and sorcery are great temptations. Reliance upon the ancestors is a felt need during times of emergency, even for those who became Christian. Mbiti (1969:238-239) thinks that ATR was a preparatory revelation of God’s will to the Africans. He considers it to be parallel, in intention and purpose, to the Old Testament. This idea of God revealing himself to Africans through ATR is commonly shared in liberal scholarship (Anderson, W.B. 1971:146; Anderson, W.B. 1986:171-175). O’Donovan (1995:3-4) spells out seven similarities among different African peoples. They all emphasize community life; believe in a relationship between the living and the dead, fear sickness and death, believe in a relationship between the spiritual and physical world, have the same set of priorities in life, have a holistic view of life; and emphasize life events. Because of these commonalities, the role that ATR plays would give cause to consider the risk of syncretism.
However, syncretism as resistance to the Christianization of Africa remains contextual. Kato (1985:23) describes the contextualization of Christianity in Africa as “the need to formulate theological concepts in the language of Africa.” In another place Kato (1985:83) says “…it is the making of concepts or ideas relevant in a given situation. In reference to Christian practices, it is an effort to express the never hanging word of God in ever changing modes for relevance.” On the other hand, Hesselgrave and Rommen (1986:79) say that contextualization means “to discover, the legitimate implications of the gospel in every given situation.” Since the cultural, political, and socio-economical modes keep changing, contextualization should be a concept associated with timeliness to achieve relevance (Hesselgrave, 1991). Chalwe (2004:108) says “it is the recognition that yesterday’s solutions cannot work today, and today’s solutions could not have worked yesterday.” Meanwhile, for the African situation, O’Donovan (1995) says syncretism would mean, “…to join the elements of ATR to the teachings of the Bible.” In the Congolese situation it would mean that, if the context is considered as it is and syncretism is avoided, the Bible would be reflected without adding traditional African religious elements on one hand and a disregard for the socio-economic and political life on other hand. The Christian church should consider the context of the life in Kolwezi where people need Christian apologetics to solve the challenges of the JW and Branhamites.

6.5.4 Political, Economical and Social Reasons for the Penetration of Cults

Belgians mission in the Katanga region was not easy. Alfred Stonelake (1937:314) mentions a reason for the missionary struggles: “Difficulties of travel… coupled with unfriendly attitudes of the native.” The retaliation of the natives to resist the Belgian colony caused the Belgians to overthought the coalition of tribes by means of violence.

The penetration of the JW occurred around the 1920’s. After this, the Congo Belgian state (1908-1960) faced serious resistance and hostile operations from the natives (Hodges, 1976:16-18). By employing JW believers as immigrant workers in mining, building and railway projects in the country, their message spread among the people (Hodges, 1976:20-25). During the holidays, weekend, lunch times they were sharing and distributing their publications translated in Bembas, Kiswahili, and French. Similarly, they penetrated Kolwezi around 1937–1941. It seems also that the penetration of the movement was unofficial, and the functioning was illegal. The Roman Catholic Church was the main obstacle to their penetration. The governor of the Katanga province between 1905 and 1959 was Archbishop de Hemptine (Hodges, 1976:11-15; WTBTS, 2004:201). Since 1940, the government started the massive arrest of JW believers because they refused to salute and honour the national hymn and flag.
The point at stake in this section is to demonstrate the importance of setting the framework to insert Christian apologetics and to develop Christian education of the churches in Kolwezi. The previous paragraphs dealt on the penetration of the two cults, the JW and Branhamites in Kolwezi. The truth is that the evangelism mission, by preaching a powerless gospel, missed the vital point of total salvation for the people of Kolwezi. The door was opened to these two groups to found unsaved ignorant people. Consequently, the Jesus that the two cults preach is a different Jesus than the one Paul preaches in the Bible (2 Cor 11:3-5), and the Gospel preached by these cults is a different gospel than the one is found in the Bible, and the Spirit is not the Spirit of Jesus in the New Testament (2 Cor 11:3-5). It is imperative that the following section been dedicated for the task of Christian apologetics.
CHAPTER SEVEN: THE CHRISTIAN APOLOGETIC MISSION IN KOLWEZI: METHODOLOGY, EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION

7.1 The Nature of the Task of Christian Apologetics in Kolwezi

It should be noted that there are no apologists in the local churches in Kolwezi. It is something very new there. The majority of pastors and church leaders in the Pentecostal churches of Kolwezi seem to lack training or knowledge in apologetics. Not only Kolwezi, but the entire Katanga province, and even the Democratic Congo lack apologists. Apologetics is frequently not part of the courses at theological institutions in Africa.

7.1.1 Training for Apologists

To start with the training in apologetics, the question that must be answered by church leaders who have an influence on theological education in these part of Africa, is what the purpose, the content and the methods are to be used for training in order to answer and defend the Christian faith in the face of members that are converted to cults, as well as attacks on important Christian doctrines from opponents of Christianity, such as the Jehovah Witnesses and Branhamites?

Stonelake (1937:318) insists:

“Education must necessarily have a prominent place in any mission work among backward races. Whenever a native preacher goes into villages to settle, he initiates an elementary school, in which reading, singing, memorizing and often writing play an important part.”

The missionary schools for pastors, according to Stonelake (1937:108), had the purpose of training “those actually engaged in and pledged to the work of educational evangelization.” The study schedule allowed students to take class for three hours in the morning and one hour in the evening for five days a week (Monday to Friday), nine months per year. Through educational evangelization, Willys K. Braun from The International School of Evangelism organized the programme in Kinshasa from 1985 to 1986; and the researcher completed the course between 1987 and 1988 (Braun, W.K. 1987).

Concerning apologetic training projects, there is a theological school in Kolwezi, called ISTEKOL, which the researcher founded in 2006, and it has produced almost 17 graduates at a diploma level. There is a need for a well-structured apologetic programme where the major
orientation should be to engage in apologetic conversations. Through this local pastors and other Christians can be trained to defend the Christian faith, and also to reach and win the JW and Branhamites in the immediate environment for Christ.

7.1.2 Equipping the Apologists

As the fisherman needs materials for his carrier, the evangelist and apologists need to be equipped. McGavran (1979) describes the requirement for the task as follows: knowledge of God (Prov 1:1-6; John 17:10-11); encounter with the Lord (Acts 9:16-26); indwelling of the Spirit of God (John 14:16-17); mandate and calling of the Lord (Mar 16:15-19); making disciples of Christ from every nation (Matt 28:18-20). Kane (1974:57-64) supports these characteristics and adds considerable points for the training of missionaries for mission: a missionary should be called by God for him to be relevant; he should be trained suitably in all the basics of the theology of mission; history of mission; cross-cultural mission and mission education. This position is emphasized by Ligunda (Ligunda, 2016:269). Apologists should be trained in the knowledge of God. He or she should master Biblical theology; systematic theology; historical theology; apologetics for mission and practical theology. For an apologetics on mission to reach the unreached group or unsaved persons who erroneously believe that they are Christians (such as JW and Branhamites), it should build or expand these people’s applied knowledge on the theories and principles of apologetics for God’s global and holistic mission (Ligunda, 2016:270).

Modern missionary apologists should be sent by the church to do mission work among the unsaved and unreached groups mentioned. It is important that churches provide literature if possible and help such an apologist to become orientated towards his mandate.

7.1.3 Mission Among the Selected Unreached Groups

Bringing back these unsaved and unreached brothers to the Gospel of Christ requires serious examination of how to approach them and converse with them and how behave while on mission among them. Many have given their recommendations on how to behave with towards the JW (Stoker, 2005:54-104), and how to behave towards the Branhamites (Moreau, 2010:1-20). This is a new task in Africa and this study aims to contribute to an apologetics for mission. The churches in Kolwezi neglected the massive adherence to these groups, and after a decade it has grown to be alarming. In 1984 there were 300 JW members. Today they are more than 14 000. In 1985 the Branhamites were 300, but today they are about 12 000 (Reports from RT Le Palmier, Kolwezi, 2015 at the Annual Convention of their movement).
Mission means the “sending of someone to go out and preach the Good News about Christ to all creatures” (Mark 16:15-16). It is a calling and sending by the Lord to go and share the Good News with those who don’t know or understand what Scripture says about God and especially the saving work of Jesus Christ (Acts 8:26-40).

7.1.3.1 Mission among the JW

The JW is known as devoted to the message they believe is from God. They call themselves “Jehovah’s Witnesses” and “God’s organization” (WTBTS, 1985:280). The JW criticize Christendom by saying that they are ‘idol worshippers’ (WTBTS, 1989a:1-10) because of the doctrine of the Trinity, but it is clear that they are ‘unsaved’ for having put their organization as mediator in the place of Jesus. The society speaks of salvation by deeds (selling books of God’s organization to enter his theocracy) and not by faith in Christ as the Scripture says (Eph 2:8). They are unsaved and unreached because it seems that the truth of the Scripture has not yet reached their souls and heart. Members read Watchtower publications more than the Bible. Schnell (1956:193-205) describes in his testimony three stages to reach or lead a JW to Christ: before the meeting; during the meeting, and after the meeting. The way it can be done in mid-Africa will differ from for instance the U.S., because of the level of knowledge as well as the hospitality character of the society.

7.1.3.1.1 Before meeting a Jehovah’s Witness

The apologist should consider a JW as a friend and person created by God and not as enemy. This friend ignores the real Jesus as described in the New Testament: Son of God (truly God) and Son of man (truly man). The person should take time to review the history, prophesies, doctrine, organization, and practices of the JW and know how to respond to it. People who want to work among JW can consult materials for reaching out to the JW such as videos, tapes and books. Harris (1998:243) recommends the following books:


- *An alternative view*: 14 sheets that explains the doctrine of the JW with clear Biblical explanations of how to answer them.

- *Watch the tower*: A compilation of the errors, mistakes and deliberate changes in the literature of the WTBTS.
- *The Name above all names:* A Biblical investigation into the watchtower teaching on the importance of the ‘name of Jehovah’. This publication was specifically produced to present to the JW.

- *Why should you believe in the Trinity?* This work is written to be a clear answer to the Watchtower booklet on the Trinity. It clearly shows the dishonest scholarship of the JW on the issue.

The apologist should target one or two friends to visit and open a conversation about the present mission. In addition, the apologists need time to pray for the targeted persons before meeting them; and to call upon the direction of the Holy Spirit as did Philip, the deacon and evangelist (Acts 8:26-40).

7.1.3.1.2 During the meeting with a Jehovah’s Witness

During the meeting, normally a team of two disciples should go out in mission, conversing about the good news. It is for efficiency and complementarity, as Paul and Barnabas were sent to mission among the Gentiles (Acts 13:3-5). A conversation should be started with love, wisdom, and patience. It is a dialogue in which you testify about how you met and came to believe in Jesus as saviour in your life and about what happened in your life. One could speak about Scripture, for instance Isaiah 53:1-9; Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Corinthians 15:1-15. A testimony is needed because the JW adhere to the society and they have a contract to sell and propagate the literature of Jehovah. It is imperative that Christians should share their testimonies of their relationship to God.

The conversation that should follow should be about questions that arise when reading Scripture. It is the methodology used by Philip in Acts 8:26-40. The Holy Spirit would lead the apologist in his or her approach to the friends. The Spirit will work through the apologist on mission. It is God’s will that the JW are saved by faith in Christ (Rom 10:10-12; Ephes 2:8). For example, Philip asked whether, “… you understand what you are reading?” Another question that one can use in this kind of mission is: What is the Scripture talking about? Who is the subject the passage talking about? What does it tell about God and our new life as children of God? What can we ask from God in our prayer now? The focus is to make known who Jesus is for the world. The goal is to persuade the friend with the Scripture to accept and believe in Jesus as our God and Saviour (2 Pet.1:1).

This method is proof to be effective among the people in Kolwezi, as the researcher had led many friends and relatives to know Christ as personal Saviour.
7.1.3.1.3 After the meeting with a Jehovah’s Witness

The first thing to do after meeting with a JW is to make certain of his address and to note the date and time of the meeting. On the day of the second meeting, the Christian can present a Bible and notes book as well. The basic Christian education starts with who God is, his nature, names, attributes and characteristics. At the third meeting, the apologist can speak about the person of Jesus, his birth, his life, his teaching, his nature, his death, his resurrection, his ascension and the second coming. On the fourth day, it is about salvation: what is it like? How to be saved, why to be saved, when to be saved, and who can be saved. The new believer in Christ will then know that salvation by faith in Christ is for everyone that believes in Christ and his atoning work. The passage of Romans 8:1 “No condemnation for those who are in Christ” will find the right place in the new disciple of Christ. Some literature can be provided such as *The Heart of Man* by Gospel Publications, South Africa; *To be a Christian* by Michael Cassidy, South Africa; *The Four Spiritual Laws* by Campus Crusade for Christ. The prayer time should be respected at every meeting with the person, so that he or she may become a prayerful Christian, because the JW for instance pray less or not at all. Schnell (1956:193-207) gives his testimony how God saved him from 30 years of slavery to the JW in three stages as mentioned above: before, during and after the decision to quit JW.

7.1.3.2 Mission among the Branhamites

For many it will sound absurd to speak of organizing a mission among the Branhamites, because they are considered Christian in Kolwezi and the rest of the DRC. According to Grudem, one can be called a “Christian” when one believes that Christ died on the cross to be saved as explained in Romans 10:10-12. The Branhamites don’t believe that God (Jesus) died on the cross or rose again. They believe in Branham as the ‘messenger’, but in Christ as well. They carry the name “Message Believers”, meaning they believe in the messenger with his message of the last days. However, they are not believing in Jesus Christ as the Bible portray him and they are therefore not yet saved. The mission is to rectify their modalistic view of Jesus so that it is according to the Bible (Acts, 8:35-40) and they can believe in the Triune God who saved believers through the atonement of Jesus Christ.

An apologetics for this mission requires organizing the mission in the same three stages: before, during and after the meeting. The local church should recruit disciples of Christ in the flock who are called to do mission among the Branhamites. In that way there are two teams, one for the mission among the JW and one for the believers of Branham’s message.
7.1.3.2.1 Before meeting a Branhamite

As in all mission, there should be time for preparation before reaching out to the Branhamites. Kane (1974) describes a quiet time of training for the apologist in mission. First, he should be taught Branham’s history (Branham, 1948; his birth, life, vision, angelical visitations, his doctrine, prophesies, ministry of healing and deliverance, his end time message, and his death). Second, he should be taught of the cult’s characteristics today. Thirdly he should be given some recommended books on Branhamism: like Branhamism in light of the Bible (Piette, 1985a); Branhamism (Moreau, 2010); William Branham (1909-1965) A Paradigm of the prophetic in American Pentecostalism, by Clarence Douglas Weaver (1985); William Branham: A Man Sent from God by Gordon Lindsay (1950); Deliverance and bondage by Kurt Koch (1970). Fourth, reading on cults and church history should be included: The history of creeds by Schaff (2002); The church in history by Kuiper (1964); The kingdom of cults by Walter (1992). Fifth, there should be a thorough knowledge of systematic theology, the nature of Christ and when necessary the different views of different schools: Baptist Reformed, Methodist, Lutheran, Roman Catholic. Lastly, spiritual preparation includes prayer for intercession, focusing on one or two persons to visit and share the Christ.

7.1.3.2.2 During the meeting with a Branhamite

Regarding resistance to the Gospel, it is essential to determine whether the person is resistant by nature or due to their views. It can start with simply a historical assessment of how they have responded to Branham’s message. If their resistance springs from the historical or dogmatic circumstances that they have experienced, then receptivity is contingent upon changing those circumstances or at least overcoming the effects of their occurrence. Now if their resistance is due to a more deep-seated personality characteristic, whether defined corporately or even as a part of the human condition, then other remedies are required. In this section, I examine the question of whether the Branhamites are resistant to change and the role that Branham plays in their lives. This includes why Branhamites resist change; the role of Branham’s message in resisting change; if we can introduce a neutral gospel; and ways to reach the Branhamite believers.

7.1.3.2.2.1 Are Branhamites resistant to change?

The apologist on mission should consider the Branhamite as a friend who is in need of knowing the Gospel, which can bring salvation and transforming change in his life (2 Cor 5:17). No single Branhamite will admit that the Branhamite people are resistant to change brought by the Gospel of Christ. Moreau (2010) underlines that “they are very suspicious and resistant to
other message which is not from the prophet (Branham).” Experience shows that their negativity is due to the message receive from Branham and the way in which he considered other churches as the “mark of the beast” (Branham, 1963:40). The accusation by Branham constitutes a barrier to receptivity. For a breakthrough one should avoid vain discussions and polemics. The Branhamites in Kolwezi have come to understand that other churches also have truth and that they can accept them in terms of prayer and educational programmes, which they consider most reliable for their security. In The Good Seed Global School in Kolwezi, there are a large number of Branhamite pupils. They are attracted by the quality of education, and by the godly character of the school. This can give a basis to provide them with a solid Biblical foundation. It can also open their eyes to the falsehood they were taught. It is mostly not beneficial to start with the false prophecies of Branham, because they react violently when the prophet is criticized.

7.1.3.2.2.2 Why do Branhamites resist change?

When addressing this question, several reasons can be advanced in favour of the Branhamites. Those in charge of the defence of the Branhamites in Kolwezi include Pastor Ngonga and Pastor Mwamba (see Chapter 5). They argue that the Branhamites live in a hostile situation, since they believe Branham’s message and they are the ‘bride’ or the true church of last days. This is a typical cultic claim that safeguards members from listening to others that can show them the deviation of the group. This permanent position has driven Branhamites to regard other churches as potential enemies of them. However, the message to them must be that in Christ we are not be enemies, but brethren. The members of other churches are considered by Branhamites as ‘pagan’ because they were not baptized in ‘the name of Jesus only’. Their criticism of other churches has created their own isolation. In addition, the other churches have to accept their message to receive salvation. Unfortunately, this position is powerless against demon possession and sickness.

7.1.3.2.2.3 The role of Branham’s message in resisting change?

Moreau (2010:12-22; 20-31) and Weaver (1985:78-88; 135-145) have contributed as missiologists to the general understanding of the role of Branham’s messages in resisting change. Their investigations have shown that the belief in the person of Branham borders on idol worship as certain members address their payers to Branham directly. We can affirm that certain members adore brother Branham and pray in his name (interviews accessed in 2015). Moreau (2010:17-18) states the following concerning the role of Branham's message:

“the role of Branham in the doctrine of the movement is priority because all has started by the revelation that Branham received from the angel” it is true that Branham is believed as prophet
sent from God. Only him has the explanation of the message revealed by God. ...that fact is indisputable to the Branhamites; they cannot discuss over it. Branham is considered ‘the spokesman of God’ by all the believers of his message …even his son Paul Billy Branham (Branham, B.P. 1967:10-15)."

Weaver (1985:78-88) estimates that the belief in Branham’s message has occupied the members’ minds, resulting in them not reading the Bible, but receiving it inaccurately through Branham’s sermons, tapes or videos. The Branhamites find the Biblical language and Bible study stranger than the JW. When discussing an issue, they quickly reject any argument that contradicts Branham’s work. Therefore, the role of Branham’s message is an obstacle to change in a Branhamite, unless the Holy Spirit touches the mind, reason and attention so that they are open to the truth.

7.1.3.2.2.4 Can we introduce a neutral Gospel?

There is a need to define the Gospel message that should be shared with the Branhamites. Regarding the similarity of the Branhamites with the Karamojong people in Uganda in terms of resistance to the Gospel, Rubaiza (2004:98) quotes the Archbishop Committee on Evangelism in 1918 saying:

“To evangelize is so to present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, that men shall come to put their trust in God through Him to accept Him as their saviour and serve Him as their king in the fellowship of his Church.”

Here we have the objective of evangelization: to present Christ Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. The aim is that men shall come to put their trust in God through Christ to accept Him as their saviour. Through this, we have the basis of evaluating our objectives: to serve Him as their King in the fellowship of his Church (Rubaiza, 2004:98).

Watson, (1984:25-26) says “to evangelize is to present Christ Jesus to sinful men in order that through the power of the Holy Spirit, they may come to put their trust in God through him.” Meanwhile, the International Congress for the World Evangelization defines evangelism in the following terms:

“to evangelize is to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord He now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gift of the Holy Spirit to all who repent and believe” (Winter and Hawthone, 1981)

The Lausanne Congress endorses “dialogue whose purpose is to listen sensitively in order to understand.” They assert also that “evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, Biblical Christ as saviour and Lord, with the view to persuading people to come to him personally and so to be reconciled to God” (Watson, 1984:25-26).
Evangelization of Branhamites requires (similar to JW) that we listen sensitively to understand. However, one major problem remains unsolved: how can we gain access to the Branhamites so that the Gospel can be proclaimed to them. Due to the lack of dialogue, a new method of reaching the pupils at school has been designed to get an opportunity to proclaim the Gospel. This is the first of three new ways to reach the Branhamites.

7.1.3.2.2.5 The first way of reaching the Branhamites: child evangelism and sharing personal testimonies

Wherever the Gospel has gone, there have always been people to interact with or even contend with it. The Good Seed Global School in Manika Township has almost 1000 pupils, of which 15% are Branhamites. The school teaches a course in religion from primary through to secondary levels. During the class, the Holy Spirit convinces pupils of their ignorance and sins, they remain after class to have dialogue with the teacher, a qualified pastor, who can lead the pupil to repentance and conversion through the confession regarding Jesus as Lord and personal Saviour (Rom 10:10-12). New life is observed in these previously Branhamite pupils, and parents have testified of the hand of God upon the school (Radio Communauté Libre, 14 August 2014.)

During encounters with Branhamites in Kolwezi, God has led the researcher to use the following methods. The first is sharing a personal testimony on how Jesus came into our lives, why He came, and how we were convinced of our sinful nature, as well as what had changed since He took away our sin and forgave our past and we became reborn in Christ after we professed Him as our personal Lord and Saviour (John 1:29; John 3:3-9; 1 John 3:8-9). Sharing of personal testimony has touched many pupils and teachers at the school, and many became converted Christians (researcher testimony).

7.1.3.2.2.6 The second way of reaching the Branhamites: spiritual need

Branham’s theology seems to contain a confusing dogma regarding the person of Christ, as Piette (1985a:88) describes in French: “Doctrines d’ombre, theologie nebuleuse, n’est il pas vrai que l’on reconnaît l’arbre aux fruits qu’il porte?” The translation in English is as follows: “Shadow doctrine, nebulous theology, is it not true that a tree is recognized by its fruits?” Since Branham was a product of dissidence by the fact that he left the Baptist church and started his own ministry called “Tabernacle of Jeffersonville”, the seed of dissidence is found everywhere in Kolwezi. The tabernacle in Kolwezi has divided into five churches, all claiming to be the ‘true seed’ of the prophet Branham. It brings a lot of confusion (Ewald Frank, interview at RT Le Palmier on 15 August 2015).
Characteristic of Branhamites is the lack of a personal encounter with the Lord Jesus as Saviour. In addition, they lack a prayer life. Consequently, demons have easy access. Among the new members that have joined the church in Manika, Kolwezi, many came because of a spiritual need for help. When a sickness is caused by a demonic power, the hospital fails to solve that sickness. Through prayer comes deliverance and healing and God has delivered and healed many of the Branhamites. They consequently join the church and follow the Biblical teaching on Christ: Son of God, and Son of Man.

7.1.3.2.2.7 The third way of reaching the Branhamites: relief and evangelization

One method of sharing is through Bible study on the different claims of Branham. We often invite friends to have a cup of tea and coffee at home or at a restaurant where we share Bible study. For example, when looking at Malachi 4:5, through questions and answers, we conclude that Branham was not correct in his interpretation and claims regarding this verse. Through this, the friends see that Branham is not the Elijah of Malachi 4:5. Another text that one can study is Matthew 19:10-19, where we find Jesus’ position regarding John the Baptist who had come as Elijah. Jesus points to John as Elijah, and not to Branham. One can study Revelations 10:9 where the Scripture talks about the messenger of the seventh trumpet. After searching the Biblical context, we find that John was speaking to the local churches of Minor Asia. He was not speaking to the world. In addition, we find that the messenger was an angel and a human being. In so doing, the recipient can understand that Branham was not really the messenger of Laodicea. The conclusion then becomes easy: Branham was not the prophet of the last days as he claimed. After on such session, the brother prayed a prayer for forgiveness (Acts 17:30) and finally gave his life to the Lord Jesus.

Social assistance during sickness, with funerals and in catastrophes, has helped as well. The Christian church collected clothes and food to donate to the prison and hospices and have helped with the funerals of members’ relatives who are Branhamites. In one instance the reaction has been very positive in the sense that the beneficiary was touched and changed his attitude towards our church. Surprisingly, he started visiting our church on Sundays. After a warm welcome, he remained with our church. He started learning about the Christian doctrine after we offered him a Holy Bible.

7.1.3.3 The Evaluation and Consideration of the Mission towards the JW and Branhamites

Apologetics in mission can be seen as a planned method among the churches in Kolwezi. There are traditional working groups in most churches. These include Christian education,
which deal with Sunday school and verse memorization, Bible studies and Christian literature. People involved in evangelization reach out to people in urban and rural areas. People involved in the New Life project deal with the new converts and teach them the basis of Christianity. We take time to help them in their acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord over their lives. However, one thing that is missing in every church in Kolwezi is an apologetics committee at district and local level. Apologetics are needed to preserve the Christian doctrine (Geisler, 2013: 205). Believers should be trained in apologetics, philosophy, theology, church history, social studies and many complementary fields so that they would be able to argue in a relevant way like the Apostle Paul (Acts 15, 1 Cor 15).

Christian apologetics, in practice, is vital to every church when facing challenges. It helps, for example, to defend Christianity against other world religions as well as cults. It also answers the criticisms from the opponents of Christian doctrines. The answer of a Christian apologist can rectify, deny, correct, and explain the position of Christianity, like Martin Luther before his opponents (Stoker, 2016). In Kolwezi, such an answer is needed in reaction to the criticisms the two groups have regarding the Trinity, the nature of Christ, and the resurrection of Christ (WTBTS, 1985; Branham, 1963a). Apologetics can also teach systematic and dogmatic Christian theology to church leaders. The lack of such training has caused an increase in the attacks from the opponents of the churches in Kolwezi. Apologetic practice also trains new apologists. A training centre should be created for this purpose. The Mirevint Church had a theological institution called ISTEKOL, registered by the government in 2013. It has stopped for a while, but it will re-open with a new prospectus and focus on training Christian apologetics. The members should know the truth concerning Christian doctrines, and especially the catechisms of the church. Many members are ignorant of the basics of their beliefs.

The early church considered apologetics as a crucial part of its existence (0-500 AD) when it faced controversies regarding the nature of Christ. There were defensive speeches by the apostles, church fathers and apologists to stop heresies, to preserve the truth of Christ, to defend false accusations by the heathens directed at Christians before the Roman Emperor (Rusch, 1980). Nowadays apologetics are mostly ignored. It is again time that young apologist should be trained to answer when needed.

This consideration will be achieved by equipping young apologists with the appropriate materials, for example the books of Strobel (2000a; 2000b); Piette (1985a); Geisler (1976) and Stoker (2016).
The apologetic school should also send apologists into mission two-by-two. There they should work in love and kindness. The school should also organize a day for missionaries from different branches of the community to be equipped, to pray and to raise funds.

Frequent reports should be received from the field upon return. The local church should become involved in this mission. The local church is called to create a new team of apologists, working together with the local evangelists for feedback after evangelization. Conferences and radio and television debates can also aid this cause.

7.2 Research Findings

Many people in Kolwezi and in the Congo know superficially about the history and teachings of Jesus, but differ in how they consider the nature of Jesus. There are two reasons some believe that Jesus is not God.

The first reason for some not believing in Jesus as God is due to the traditional background of Africa. Chalwe (2004:118) says about this point: “Africans knew God even before European missionaries came. It was Jesus only they did not know.” He emphasizes that the attraction of the African Traditional Religions is the perceived nearness of the ancestral spirits to the tribes. Many tribes in Africa and in Kolwezi view Jesus Christ as foreign, distant and imposing. In traditional and animistic societies, Jesus is seen as a dominating individual who wants to replace the chiefs, the medicines and the ancestral spirits. In such societies the Christian Messiah is considered irrelevant since other tribal or clan mediators are available. Some view Jesus as Arabic, while the ancestral spirits are African (Chalwe, 2004:118).

The second reason why some do not believe in Jesus as God is the influence of the JW and religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam. These religious groups emphasize that Jesus was a good man of many works and had good ethics (Buddhism, Hinduism). Others say that Jesus was a prophet used by God, but that he is not God (Islam). All of them deny his deity.

In Kolwezi, the Branhamites is strong in their influence confessing that, “Jesus is the only God in the Bible. He is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit” (Branham, 1963:307). Together with the JW they believe that the Holy Spirit is a power of God, an active force of God given to the apostles (WTBTS, 1985:110-117). Concerning the thesis: “Jesus: God, the only God, and not God”, the different findings are viewed separately. The findings can be divided into discussions of the JW, the Branhamites, missionaries and finally about pastoral leadership.
7.2.1 Findings Regarding the JW

The JW are known as very zealous and devoted to their organization. They spread their doctrine as fast as possible through a focused outreach programme. They are highly sophisticated and organized, even just with the number of their publications that has been translated into many languages and distributed worldwide (WTBTS, 1914; 1925b; 1975; 2000). Nevertheless, their teachings are not sound, contextual, hermeneutical or Biblical. The organization denies the deity of Christ. They teach that Jesus is not God.

They err against Scripture by denying passages not only of the deity, but also regarding Jesus’ two natures: human and divine (Grudem, 1994:242-247; Reed, 1990:20). The organization criticizes the Trinity as something from a pagan source (WTBTS, 1989:1-12), but the arguments given are not coherent with the records in the gospels on the baptism of Jesus for instance (Matt 3:15-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22).

The Watchtower organization change the meaning of Scripture and Scripture itself to fit their doctrine. The methods the organization uses to train its members, includes mind control, limiting reading to their publications only, control of environment as well as behavior (Stoker, 1995). Harris (1998:37-44) supports this position by mentioning that the indoctrination programme and the structure of the organization offers perfect mind control by the movement, manipulating, brainwashing, and enslaving its members. Jesus is neither the centre, nor the saviour of the organization. The Governing Board is the supreme office of the organization and under the leadership of the president they should be obeyed as “the faithful servant of God” (WTBTS, 1910).

The results of breaking ties are catastrophic for a member of this cult. If a member leaves the organization severe measures are taken against him by the organization (WTBTS, 1951:599; Trombley, 2000). The organization see all those who have left as apostates that must be avoid. To them, “to be against the organization is to be against God”, since it is ‘God’s organization’. Many of those who left the group have testified of the hate toward them. This shows that the love of God and forgiveness, is lacking in the organization. Many remain because of the fear of being expelled by the organization, that will result in no contact with family and friends still in this group. Finally, salvation by faith in Christ is completely lacking, instead they teach a salvation by works, by being devoted to the organization (Harris, 1998:42-43).

7.2.2 Findings Regarding the Branhamites

In Kolwezi, this movement from North America are a very zealous group and they are very critical of other congregations. They teach a baptism in the name of Jesus only as the true
formula for salvation. They emphasize the seven churches of Revelations 2-3 as the ages of the church, and Branham is seen as the prophet of the end time. He is the Elijah of Malachi 4:5, and they believe (typical cultic) that, “only those who believe the message of Branham can be saved and belong to the true church of Christ.” They stand on a modalistic view of Jesus (Branham, 1963b).

The Branhamites lack the many skills that the founder had to enlarge the ministry. Branham had a relationship with an angel who provided visits, visions, power of healing and deliverance, a life of prayer, and eloquence for the proclamation of the message. Instead of the tools of the founder, the believers today focus on reproducing all his sermons, books, audios and videos. In addition, they are (typical cultic) obliged to read only Branham’s message and commentaries instead of Scripture.

Branhamites lack salvation by faith in the risen Christ, who stands at the right hand of God (Acts 7:55-57) because they do not believe in the formulation of the Apostles’ Creed regarding the Trinity and they deny the humanity of Christ (Branham, 1961a; Frank, 1985:23-34). If the current leader had searched the real Jesus which the Scripture present with two natures, they could have remained in the Christendom and benefited the Trinitarian blessings (White, 1980:10-15).

Because Branhamites lack real salvation through the death of Christ, which they deny, they also deny the Holy Spirit, which they do not believe to be a person dwelling within them (John 14:15-17; 25-27; Stronstrad, 1995:45-49). Therefore, they lack personal salvation and testimony (Graham, 1954:126). Concerning brothers who denounce their faith, they react as other cults, cursing him and severing all contact (Branham, 1960:114-116). If the movement is growing in Kolwezi and the Congo, it is because of factors like their use of fear, their approval of polygamy, social assistance, and burial and funeral assistance. These strategies attract the flock (Hesselgrave, 1978b; McGavran, 1979).

7.2.3 Findings Regarding Missionary Work in the Congo

Chapters 2 and 3 examined the courage and sacrifices of believers and the context in which the Christianization of the Congo, and Kolwezi in particular, occurred. A number of aspects are important in this regard. Missionaries came with a double intent in relation to their “Missio Dei.” They were trained and instructed by the Belgian ruler on how to behave in the Belgian Congo (1885-1960). Because of their misguided actions, the Congolese developed an attitude of resistance (McGavran, 1979:111). Consequently, converts to Christianity failed to adhere to the Gospel and they merely leave their fetishes, shrines and animism at home temporarily
(Chalwe, 2004:31). The indigenous people of Kolwezi continue with their ancestor worship at home, even if in the morning they attend church (Kato, 1985:40). Syncretism is rife, because the traditional culture was not eradicated when the Gospel was initially proclaimed.

The first missionaries served the Belgian ruler’s agenda. He instated the Roman Catholic Mgr. De Hemptine as governor of the Katanga Province (Roman Catholic Media, 1905-1940) and missionaries advanced intelligence and trade (Burton, 1929:37-39). Hastings and Lambert (1909:59) relates that some Christian missionaries participated in the slave trade. This made the evangelization of the Congo and Kolwezi very superficial and practically difficult. At the time of independence, the country shifted into civil war, murder and total chaos despite the presence of the church.

The missionaries viewed Europe as Christianized and other continents as pagan. Thus, they made it their responsibility to Europeanize Africa. Africans deeply and strongly resented this and rebelled. The Europeans should have taken the time to learn about African life. For example, the Lubas and Sanga rebelled against the brutality of the Belgian missionaries during the colonization (1885-1960). If informed, the missionaries could have helped a great deal to Christianize the tribes of the Congo (Hodgson, 1946:15).

Many Congolese felt that becoming Christians would further undermine their identity. It was a disfigured Jesus that most the missionaries presented to the indigenous Congolese and Africans (Gilchrist, 2013:11). In addition, these missionaries were not helpful with the wider political issues that the Congo faced before independence in 1960. They concerned themselves only with religions and economic matters. Belgics great interest was to plunder the Congo of its mineral and natural resources to feed the growing industry of Western Europe. In working with the colonial government, missionaries were also seen as the destroyers of African cultural ideas and chieftainships. In some territories, for example at Sandoa and Kafankumba, they even usurped the roles of chiefs.

### 7.2.4 Finding Regarding Training Church Leadership

Missionary pioneers neglected to train pastors as they expected to remain in the country. Elliston (1992:4-5, 34-36) emphasizes raising leaders by providing a good and practical education through the church organization. However, in the case of the Belgian Congo the natural development of things was overturned by a political crisis before independence. The missionaries were forced to leave the country.

Religious leaders left churches and mission centres without having made preparations. Inexperienced pastors were obliged to lead the congregations. As a result, the pastoral
leadership was very poor. New leaders had inadequate education, training, skills and little wisdom. When tribal crises rose in the country, for example in Kolwezi, some pastors participated. Congregations became uncontrolled during the post-independence war and needed effective leadership. As Shawchuck (1996:45-46) argues

“...we know that the only way to understand the working of the organization is to view all its pieces as a coordinated whole to see it all one time, recognizing that change in any one component, will set in motion influence and changes in every other.”

Pastors currently need training to be more effective church leaders, especially for church growth (Shawchuck, 1983:25). Because pastors lacked training and education, they have failed to build effective systems in the congregations that would serve people and make disciples of Christ (Shawchuck, 1996:15-17, 34-36). Many members are ignorant regarding the basics of the Christian faith, leaving them vulnerable to the JW and Branhamites (Hodges, 1976:24-28).

In the 1980s the Branhamites found the church members in the Congo Kinshasa very religious and enthusiastic, but barely rooted in Scripture and very syncretistic. They took that opportunity to insert their confusing doctrines, centred on Jesus as the only God. The people of Kolwezi are confused because of the two extremities: on the one hand some believe that Jesus is not God (according to JW), while on other hand some believe that only Jesus is God (according to the Branhamites). However, both are erring, for Jesus is God, the Son of God, partaking in the Trinity (Matt 16:18; John 1:1).

7.3 Recommendations and Suggestions

In the light of an apologetics for mission, some important recommendations and suggestions flow from this research. It is imperative to give guidelines to those who will be sent to mission among the JW and the Branhamites.

7.3.1 Avoid Past Mistakes

In the past, the Christian churches in Kolwezi adopted a silence of suspicion towards the concerned cults mentioned in our thesis, the JW and Branhamites. The churches hear, read their publications, and observe the exodus of members every year, but no reaction has been sanctioned, neither within the church fellowship, nor outside the congregation. This silence is a complacency with a dangerous attempt to challenge the Christian doctrine. The statistics after 30 years of silence have become alarming. Churches should know the truth about these cults and their doctrine.
This study recommends vigilance about the actions and publication of the two cults. Of course, they cannot be treated as enemies, but they should be considered as 'lost brethren' according to their heretical teachings. They still need salvation and faith in Christ (Rom 10:10-12). There is no more time for the complacent silence towards their criticism. Pastors should prepare appropriate sermons and teachings to answer these critics apologetically.

7.3.2 Focus on Discipleship and Christian Doctrine

The study has shown the weakness of the early evangelization by the pioneering missionaries (see 6.5). They failed to emphasize discipleship as it was done in the western churches, for instance in England in John Wesley's time. McGavran (1979:131) also observes that

"effective evangelization is carried on by a joint effort by Pastor and people in it the Pastor performs a small and very important percentage of the total work. The people perform a large and important percentage. If any denomination or congregation wishes to become effective in its proclamation of the gospel, it must inspire and organize a substantial number of its men and women to become ardent and well trained lay evangelists."

It is a pity to see that women have not been discipled as it should be (Luke 10:38-41). Women are in the majority in most African churches, also in Kolwezi. Educating them in religious matters can bring about great stimulation of Gospel preaching. Chalwe (2004:132) thinks: "it is tradition, more than anything, that prevents the discipling or training of women for Christian service." This has been detrimental to the effectiveness of mission work in Kolwezi per se. It is categorically imperative to make disciples of every member in the churches in Kolwezi, as well as apologists of as many as possible.

7.3.3 Open a School for Christian Apologetics in Kolwezi

The researcher has always had a passion for educating the population of Kolwezi in God’s mission. In 1997-1998 a school was opened to train evangelists, Ecole Nationale d’Evangelisation, Croissance de l’Eglise (ENECE). It provided a diploma level course of nine months under the programme of the International School of Evangelisation (ISE) in Kinshasa where the researcher was trained for a year in evangelism and church growth. Willys K. Braun, (Braun, W.K. 1987) a missionary of the Evangelical Alliance Church in Zaire (EACZ), ran the institution. The ENECE has helped pastors and evangelist in Kolwezi to attain knowledge, skills, and an understanding of the Missio Dei. Because heresies were spread in the rural and urban areas, it became a matter of urgency to inform the people of God about apologetic issues, evangelism and mission. Between 1997 and 1999 the school produced 24 qualified evangelists to boost the outreach in the region of Kolwezi. These evangelists are currently
located in the city: David Kayombo, Paul Munuga, Jean Louis Nyingika, Frank Tshinyama, John Wendela, Mwangala Apeles, Mwaku Lunda, Kattiti Mpanga Mpevi, Luhando, and many others. Their presence resulted in the establishment, growth and development of Mirevint Church, Eben Ezer Church, Rama Church, La Main de L’éternel Church, among many others currently in the city of Kolwezi.

Because of the success, the initiative has been reproduced in other places by different pastors, but insufficiently due to insufficient skills. Unqualified people, do the reproduction – sometimes unfortunately motivated by the love of money.

Concerning a School of Christian Apologetics, there is already an institute named ISTEKOL (Institut Superieur de Theologie Evangelique de Kolwezi) that also offers a diploma. Between 2006 and 2012, 20 theologians have qualified. They are leading different churches in the city of Kolwezi. Just to name some of them: Pastors Jean Louis Nyingika, Mushid Kalend, Freddy Tshimwanga, Emmanuel Fembe, Paul Mununga, Augustin Maken. Women include Mamy Pezo Kutemba and the late Louise Kayi Mutumpa. The purpose was to increase the knowledge and skills on teaching the sound doctrine of God. This programme was identical with that of the Methodist University of Katanga at Mulungwishi and the Universite Protestant de Lubumbashi. Nevertheless, the field of apologetics remains inadequate to solve the heretical teachings of the JW and Branhamism.

Essentially, ISTEKOL should extract the riches of the field of apologetics, on the one hand training Christian apologetics and on the other hand training pastors. The school will at first make use of visiting professors. The major aim is to make disciples of Christ, qualified in theology, evangelism and apologetics so that the Missio Dei can be achieved fruitfully. For example, if 12 apologists can be trained in the first year and each of those persons go out and disciple Branhamites and JW, through God’s grace there can be 120 discipled. In the second year 12 new apologists will be doing the same. In two years 24 apologists can evangelize 240 or more Branhamites and Jehovah’s Witnesses. By training converted Branhamites and Jehovah’s Witnesses for mission to reach other Branhamites and Jehovah’s Witnesses, many of our lost brethren can be brought back from the cults.

7.3.4 Appropriate Tools for Apologetic Mission

Livingstone (as quoted by Hesselgrave, 1975:1) says: “God had only one Son and He made that Son a missionary.” Every missionary follows in the steps of the Son of God, who visited this planet two thousand years ago on a mission of redemption. According to Kane (1975:16-17), the word missionary is derived from Latin mitto, which means “to send”. It is the equivalent
of the Greek word “apostle”, which also means “to send”. In the New Testament, the word “apostle” is used more than eighty times. In addition, Hebrews 3:1 refers to Christ as an apostle sent by God (Kane, 1975:13)

Jesus chose twelve men, whom he called apostles. He trained and taught these men and endowed them with apostolic authority and after the resurrection they were sent out to make disciples of all the nations (Matt 28:18-20). There are other men in the New Testament who came to be referred to as apostles. These included a second group, men like Barnabas, Timothy, Silas and others. In Acts, men are sent out by the Holy Spirit and the church of Antioch (Acts 13:3-4). Most of the Acts of the Apostles are about the activities of the apostles, mostly Paul and allies.

Kane (1975:15) describes missionaries as fulfilling different roles. He defines a missionary as an “ambassador for Christ.” The Lord sends him into mission to preach the gospel and to proclaim the teachings of Christ. He is also regarded as “the herald of truth of the Gospel.” Where ever he goes, his creed will be “Christ is the Lord.” Kane also says that missionaries are “apostles of love.” They are called to spread the religion of love. The world is need of the love of Christ, who died for humankind (Rom 5:5). Deeds without love for others count for nothing (1 Cor 13:1-3). A missionary is regarded as “an envoy of peace.” Christ is presented in Isaiah 9:6 as the “prince of peace.” In the same way the missionary is regarded as “an envoy of peace.” In summary, the missionary is a bearer of culture, peace, love, truth, and an ambassador for Christ.

In the African context, churches do not have ample material means for mission. They have only people. Kane describes five requirements for a Biblical missionary. Physically, the missionary should be in good health for mission. Academically, he should be trained as the apostles were trained by Christ, for a relevant mission. Vocationally, God must have called him, directly or indirectly. Psychologically, he should have a settled mind ready for mission. Spiritually, the missionary should be mature, gifted and armed by God (1 Cor 12:1-10; Eph 6:12-19).

7.3.5 Organizing and Sending Teams on Mission

In the context of Kolwezi, it will be understandable to do “inland” mission in the whole province of Lualaba where the city of Kolwezi is situated. Hesselgrave (1980:85) defines inland mission as a “home mission that needs leadership and strategy.” The church is called by the Lord Jesus to know three sources of missiology (Hesselgrave, 1980:47): revelation through the Scripture, reflection and sound thinking and research meaning scientific observation. It is clear
that the churches have to think about uniting in home mission across the whole province of Lualaba. This province comprises of different districts: (1) Lubudi; (2) Mutshatsha; (3) Kasaji; (4) Dilolo; (5) Sandoa; (6) Kapanga.

In practice, the local church should recruit volunteers for home mission to reach the JW and Branhamites with their testimony and Scripture. Following recruitment, these people should be trained to practice within the areas where they live. They should be taught about the history of each movement, their doctrines, their arguments and critics, and different answers from the Bible to convince and persuade their brothers by the power of the Holy Spirit to believe in Jesus. This training should include guidelines on how to engage in a conversation with a JW or Branhamite and how to lead him to salvation by faith in Christ (Acts 8:26-40).

Hesselgrave (1980:45-65, 83-107, 135-155) and O.B. Green (1975) talk about the Pauline strategy and methodology. They compare the views of Michael Green and McGavran. To them, Michael Green (1963:174) seems to believe that Paul had little or no strategy and “the gospel spread out in an apparently haphazard way as men obeyed the leading of the Holy Spirit, and went through doors he opened.” What we can learn from Michael Green is dependence on the same Spirit. Conversely, McGavran (1955:25-35) believes that while Paul was in Antioch he devised a strategy for reaching a great part of the Mediterranean world with the Gospel. What we can learn from Paul’s strategy is “it is a matter of going where people are, preaching the Gospel, gaining the converts, gathering them into churches, instructing them in the faith, choosing leaders and commending believers to the grace of God.” Heselgrave concludes by saying: “we can conclude then, that Paul’s message was absolutely normative, and that his manner of life and missionary methodology were less normative.” But, there is room for adaptation of his life style and methodology.


The Pauline cycle can be applied to sending teams on mission within the districts of the Lualaba province from Kolwezi as our Jerusalem-in-kind (Acts 1:8). However, the expedition requires a precise chronological timetable in Hesselgrave’s design (Hesselgrave, 1980:93-116). In practice, this is how it would look: 2018: mission within the city of Kolwezi (Manika,

The brethren of JW and Branhamites are the targeted people. There should be two teams: Team A for the JW and Team B for the Branhamites. Leaders will be selected and instructed to achieve the specific mission. The task is to engage in a series of conversations with each targeted group, according to the model of Philip the Evangelist discussed earlier in this chapter. The objective is for the targeted brother to one day land at the feet of Christ to worship him (Acts 8:26-40).

7.3.6 Organize a New Life Centre for New Believers

Many questions should arise at this point in the mission. They may include how to welcome the newcomers from the home mission. Would it be in the church service only? What should we teach them after they have left their movement? Where can they feel at home? It seems that for years, churches have neglected to research the two groups. Throughout the Pauline cycle, each phase is important and meaningful. A New Life Centre will be opened in Kolwezi and in other places once missionaries go out to share the love of God through his Son Jesus Christ (John 3:16). These centres are called “New Life”, because converted believers experience something new in their lives, new peace, a forgiveness that God puts into the heart, and belief in Christ as personal saviour and Lord (Rom10:9-12). They will be taught about different subjects of Christian doctrines and Heidelberg’s catechism for example. A programme at a New Life Centre can take three to four months before the person is transferred to a more advanced class of discipleship.

7.3.7 Organize Conferences on Christian Apologetics for Mission

The subject of Christian apologetics is strange and new among the Christians in Kolwezi. Ignorance about this discipline has caused the penetration of the two groups in the city of Kolwezi. Unfortunately, many have been poisoned by the teachings of the JW or the Branhamites. Apologetics should be taught wisely with the aim of attracting the attention of all people; of persuading them of the veracity of the Christian doctrine in a simple way so that even uneducated people can see and believe Jesus as Son of God and Son of Man. Different churches should be called upon to participate. If the population understands Christian apologetics for mission, an open road shall be created for Christ in the population of Kolwezi. The sister churches of Angola, Zambia, Namibia, Botswana and South Africa should also be invited to participate.
7.4 Conclusion per Chapter

7.4.1 Chapter 1

Chapter one presented the central question of who Jesus is: God or not God? The preliminary literature review emphasizes the importance of an apologetic discussion about the two natures of Jesus: divine and human. The Gospel called Jesus “Immanuel”, which means God incarnated, or “God with us.” This position caused the early church to formulate different creeds (Apostles, Nicea, Constantinople, Chalcedonian, etc.).

The chapter makes clear that it is imperative for Christians to confess that Jesus is God incarnated, that he was born, lived on earth, died on the cross, was buried and rose from the dead. He is now in heaven at the right hand of God (Acts 7:55-59; 1 Cor 15:1-20). This response to the central question is sufficient in the eyes of Christianity.

7.4.2 Chapter 2

Chapter 2 investigated the arrival of western missionaries in the Congo. Their arrival was largely necessitated by the great need of raw materials to feed the industries of Western Europe. In addition, slavery was viewed as an answer to the increasing demand for labour in the growing industries (Cordell, D.D. et al 2014).

The first people to deal in slaves were the Portuguese, followed by the Belgians, who did so on the soil of the Belgian Congo. King Leopold II sent his people to colonialize the Congo, including Katanga.

Missionaries found the indigenous tribes worshipping their ancestors. The missionaries in general viewed the local religion as evil, needing eradication (Chalwe, 2004:138; Tshang, 2016:23, 32-35). Failure to understand African Traditional Religion in general and Katangese religious practices in particular, caused a discipleship crisis, as spiritual hypocrisy was noticed among the local people towards western missionaries. At that time, Christianization was in part a formality, but in practice not worth much, because the people did not stop worshipping the ancestors and using fetishes and sorcery.

The Gospel has not been communicated cross-culturally as described by Hesselgrave (1980:43-45) in a truly relevant way in order to persuade the audience in Kolwezi to believe in Christ. Jesus was somehow disfigured when the missionaries preached the love of God on the one hand, but on other handsome partook in slave trading, destroyed shrines and killed holy people with violence (Gilchrist, 2013:11-20; Kane, 1974:246-249). This justified the
permanent resistance from and presence of African Tradition Religion before and after Christianization (Chalwe, 2004:60-61).

7.4.3 Chapter 3

The Congo has been dominated by unending conflicts since 1960. In the context of the Congo and Katanga, the landlords (tribal chiefs) and investors from Western Europe (1885-1960) lacked agreement and trust between them. The western partners used religion to moralize the population in order to avoid resistance, but failed to Christianize them in a normative Biblical way.

The landlords (traditional chiefs) expressed strong resistance. Serious conflicts arose and is still present in certain sectors, for example in socio-economic and political spheres, because of the high mineral resources in Katanga. There is a need for sincere conflict management (Shawchuck, 1993:70-75).

The Congo has been a theatre of war since 1957. In addition, the shallow way in which Christian doctrine was taught, caused an opportunity for the penetration of cults like the JW and Branhamism. Syncretism persists despite different attempts at Christianization because of ignorance about the centrality of the person of Christ. Christ is not only disfigured, but also absent at the centre of many “Christian” hearts.

7.4.4 Chapter 4

Chapter 4 examines the JW, its machinery, historical background, doctrine and influence in the city of Kolwezi. This group denies the deity of Christ to emphasize His humanity and inferiority to God (the Father). This doctrine came from an old heresy, Arianism. Some call it neo-Arianism. JW is a millennial and eschatological group. The movement spread “another Christ” named the angel Michael if compared to the creeds (Tucker, 1989:117-129; 392-393). The creeds contain the essence of orthodoxy as enunciated by church fathers as early as 170 AD. They were used at the baptismal services as early as 215 AD. The Apostles’ Creed is and will always be regarded by Christians as the summary of the orthodoxy.

The JW deny many points of Christianity that are vital for them to be called Christians. They deny the bodily resurrection of Jesus, the cross itself, atonement, incarnation, second coming of Christ, last judgement, hell, etc.
7.4.5 Chapter 5

Chapter 5 deals with Branhamism’s major teaching: “Jesus is the only God in the Bible.” The research shows that this doctrine is a refiguring of the modalism of Sabellius. It is a neo-Sabellianism or neo-modalism in that it defines a false Trinity as follows: “Jesus is the Father—The Son—and the Holy Spirit at the same time.” This is a modalistic view because Jesus changes roles or functions.

The Branhamist Jesus should be replaced by the true Jesus in the Bible (Strobel, 2008:32-47, 62-76). They deny Jesus’ death through their view of a hyper-divinity. They argue: “as, Jesus is God, so he cannot die. Someone else died on the cross” (Branham, 1963).

This thesis sheds light on different issues raised by the Branhamites. Scripture itself is the reason to believe in the atonement, crucifixion, bodily death, burial, and bodily resurrection (1 Cor 15:1-20). The literature review of the present study furthermore shows that Branham contradicts the Scriptures regarding Jesus and John the Baptist (Matt 10:11-19; Rev 10:4-10; Mal 4:5).

Branham’s opinions and interpretations are human and should be subject to examination to find out if it is from God or not. Scripture does not prove his positions, opinions or declarations. They often refer to the Bible out of the context. Branham seldom talks of salvation. Whenever he preached, he inspired seduction, division and controversy. A divisive spirit leads his believers in Kolwezi. The Tabernacle of Kolwezi has divided into five smaller congregations that contradict one another, each one claiming to be truer than the other.

7.4.6 Chapter 6

This chapter focused on the teachings for both the JW and Branhamites and provided Christian apologetic answers. The JW statement that Jesus is not the almighty God confirms the humanity of Christ, which is something with which Christians can agree. However, he does not have only one nature.

That the Branhamite statement that Jesus is the only God in the Bible confirms the deity of Christ, which is something with which every Christian can agree. It is the second nature of Christ that is lacking. The two statements confirm the two natures of Christ when put together.

The doctrine of Trinity is the comprehensive way to relate to the Godhead in the Christian life (Matt 3:15-17; 6:1-15). The Trinity is the doctrine that brings the blessings for the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit to the believers (White, 1998:11-15).
The value of Scripture is the reason why the church proclaims: SOLA SCRIPTURA—SOLA GRATIA—SOLA FIDE—SOLI DEO GLORIA.

7.4.7 Chapter 7

The concluding chapter deals with the task of Christian apologetics for mission among the two targeted groups. The churches in Kolwezi should learn the significance of the word apologetics and its importance within church history. Through this study the believers will understand the necessity of training apologists to work in Kolwezi. Together with other disciples of Christ, apologists can do home mission in the province of Lualaba from the city of Kolwezi as their Jerusalem (Acts 1:8). Through them the criticism of the opponents can be answered, Biblical insight and Christian and doctrines can be taught, the saints can be equipped, and those that went astray can be lead back truly to Jesus of the Bible.

The chapter ends the study with an exciting practical methodology for leading back a JW or a Branhamite to Christ. This methodology may not only bear fruit in Kolwezi, but can be adapted for use other places in the world.
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WTBTS is the acronym for Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society

WTBTS, 1888. The time is at hand. Brooklyn, New York.

WTBTS, 1901. The time is at hand, Broocklyn, New York.


WTBTS, 1914, Zion’s watch tower, the end of all things. Brooklyn, New York.


WTBTS. 1918b. Millions now living will never die. Brooklyn, New York.

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