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Palin once blessed to be free from 'witchcraft'

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By GARANCE BURKE

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ANCHORAGE, Alaska -- A video on her hometown church Web site shows Sarah Palin being blessed three years ago by a Kenyan pastor who prayed for her protection from "witchcraft" as she prepared to seek higher office.

The video, which made the rounds Wednesday on the Internet, shows Palin standing before Bishop Thomas Muthee in the pulpit of the Wasilla Assembly of God church, holding her hands open as he asked Jesus Christ to keep her safe from "every form of witchcraft."

"Come on, talk to God about this woman. We declare, save her from Satan," Muthee said as two attendants placed their hands on Palin's shoulders. "Make her way my God. Bring finances her way even for the campaign in the name of Jesus. ... Use her to turn this nation the other way around."

The date of the sermon listed on the church Web site is Oct. 16, 2005. Palin formally announced her gubernatorial bid two days later and was elected the next year.

Palin does not say anything on the video and keeps her head bowed throughout the blessing. The Republican vice presidential candidate was baptized at the church but stopped attending regularly in 2002.

A spokesman for the McCain campaign declined to comment late Wednesday. A person who answered the phone at the Wasilla church confirmed the video was from May 2005 but declined further comment.

Palin was baptized Roman Catholic as a newborn.

Pentecostals are conservative in their reading of the Bible. Unlike most other Christians _ including most evangelicals _ Pentecostals believe in "baptism in the Holy Spirit." That can manifest itself through speaking in tongues, modern-day prophesy and faith healing, which includes the laying on of hands.

Maria Comella, a spokeswoman for the McCain-Palin campaign, has said Palin attends different churches and does not consider herself Pentecostal.

On a visit to the church in June 2008, Palin spoke fondly of the Kenyan pastor and told a group of young missionaries that Muthee's prayers had helped her to

become governor.

"Pastor Muthee was here and he was praying over me, and you know how he speaks and he's so bold," she said. "And he was praying 'Lord make a way, Lord make a way' ... He said, 'Lord make a way and let her do this next step.' And that's exactly what happened."

Muthee returned to the Wasilla church last weekend, where he gave a series of sermons over three days. Palin was campaigning in Florida.

The Rev. Zipporah Ndiritu, who studied under Muthee in the Kiambu, Kenya-based Word of Faith Church, said the bishop is revered among evangelicals there. In a phone interview from Mombasa, Kenya, she said church doctrine focuses on ridding the world of demons _ and witches.

"Even in the days of Jesus Christ, according to the Bible there were witches who were manifesting through demonic forces," she said. "You can seek from the Lord, and if you find demonic forces you cast them out."

Ndiritu said she did not know Palin.

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On the Net:

Palin-Muthee video: <http://www.wasillaag.net/topical.html>

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