



CHILD WITCH ACCUSATIONS

an increasingly prevalent form of
child abuse in an unstable world

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Child Witch Accusations

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Fay and Martin's story [1]

Siblings Fay (10) and Martin (11) were sleeping top to tail in their bed. Suddenly, the children woke in terror to a living nightmare when their visiting aunt and uncle doused them with petrol, struck a match, and set them alight. The aunt and uncle believed that the children must be 'witches' who had put a curse on their own mother. The truth is she was not cursed; she was dying of AIDS. As their nightwear blazed, the children ran outside like human torches into the yard of their home in Kinshasa and flung themselves into a water barrel. Someone called the police. Thanks to the energetic advocacy of a local Christian agency, the uncle was imprisoned, although the aunt escaped. Because of the severity of their burns, the children were in hospital for a long time. Fay was unable to walk for nearly a year or to speak properly for months because of the extremity of her physical injuries and psychological pain and distress. [2]

This is just one of the countless stories of children in many nations whose childhood is brutally and abruptly ended when they become branded as witches.

How widespread are child witch accusations?

The issue of child witch accusations (CWA) is a hidden one, shrouded by fear and secrecy. There has been very little systematic reporting on the number of children accused of being witches. Neither has the issue been on the radar of most agencies working in regions where CWA is prevalent, leading to a lack of related research.

In 2009, Philip Alston (who at the time was Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions for the United Nations) wrote: *'Reports from the Democratic Republic of the Congo suggest that most of the 25,000 to 50,000 children living on the streets of the capital Kinshasa are there because they have been accused of witchcraft and rejected by their families. In 2009 The Committee on the Rights of the Child noted that in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), violence against children accused of witchcraft is increasing, and that children are being kept as prisoners in religious buildings where they are exposed to torture and ill-treatment or even killed under the pretext of exorcism.'* [3]

In its key report on CWA, [4] UNICEF notes that *'a large number of children accused of witchcraft have also been documented in Akwa Ibom State in south-eastern Nigeria.'* [5] In an independent piece of anthropological research, Robert Priest et al. note that *'against earlier predictions, witch accusations are proliferating and flourishing in many modern, urban, and*

[1] Names given for all children in this paper are pseudonyms to protect their identity.

[2] Stop Child Witch Accusations, 2014.

[3] Alston P. Report to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. 2009. — « digitallibrary.un.org/record/668783 »

[4] Cimpric A. Children Accused of Witchcraft: an anthropological study of contemporary practices in Africa, UNICEF 2010.

Christian environments. And they are taking new forms. One dramatic change involves who is accused, with children now often the prime suspects when misfortunes occur.' [6]

Priest goes on to say that this development has been observed in the DRC, Angola, Benin, the Central African Republic, Gabon, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and among immigrant communities in Europe. [7] Other researchers have observed instances of child witchcraft allegations around the world, including in Bolivia, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran, Mexico, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. [8] It is prevalent among many nations, peoples, and cultures.

In the United Kingdom, from 2017 to 2018, there were 1,630 reported cases of child survivors of abuse related to faith and belief and accusations of witchcraft. That number was an increase of 11 per cent from the previous year. [9] In the UK, accusations of witchcraft mainly occur among members of diaspora communities who come from regions where such accusations are prevalent. In the past couple of decades, there have been several high-profile cases in the UK of children accused of being witches by relatives who consequently tortured them to their deaths, such as those of Victoria Climbié (2000) [10] and Kristy Bamu (2010). [11] However, these cases are believed to be just the tip of the iceberg because of the hidden nature of this abuse. [12] Project Violet was established by the Metropolitan Police Service in 2005 to investigate and raise awareness of this form of abuse. In November 2021, the Amber Project was launched — a multi-agency partnership that seeks to enhance the response to child abuse linked to accusations of witchcraft accusations and spirit possession. [13]

[5] The Causes and Prevalence of Accusations of Witchcraft among Children in Akwa Ibom State, UNICEF, 2008.
— « cdn.modernghana.com/images/content/report_content/unicef_nigeria_child_witch_report_and_crarn_work.pdf »

[6] Priest R, Ngolo A, Stabell T. Christian Pastors and Alleged Child Witches in Kinshasa, DRC. On Knowing Humanity Journal 4(1) January 2020. — « www.researchgate.net/publication/338958125_Christian_Pastors_and_Alleged_Child_Witches_in_Kinshasa_DRC »

[7] Priest et al. 2020.

[8] Hanson K, Ruggerio R. Child Witchcraft Allegations and Human Rights, briefing paper for the Directorate-General for External Policies of the European Parliament, July 2013. — « data.europa.eu/doi/10.2861/31515 »

[9] The Victoria Climbié Foundation UK, 2019. — « vcf-uk.org/census-suggests-11-increase-in-cases-of-child-abuse-linked-to-faith-or-belief/ »

[10] Lord Laming, The Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report, January 2003.
— « gov.uk/government/publications/the-victoria-climbié-inquiry-report-of-an-inquiry-by-lord-laming »

[11] Witchcraft murder: Couple guilty of Kristy Bamu killing. BBC News Online. 5 March 2012.

[12] In a communication to SCWA (February 2022), Inspector Allen Davis of the Metropolitan Police Service stated, *'Under reporting and lack of identification of this form of abuse is very common across all professional sectors and the abuse is often a taboo subject within affected communities. As such we are well aware that the abuse is hidden and under reported. Covid may also have had an impact on the recognition of abuse and (the associated information sharing) declining due to services operating differently. This does not necessarily correlate with the risk of harm or abuse taking place.'*

[13] Met Police to get training in spotting child abuse linked to witchcraft. BBC News Online. 23 November 2021.
— « bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-59384546 »

Is it always children who are accused?

In research undertaken in 2020 by Ikponwosa Ero (former United Nations Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of Human Rights for Persons with Albinism) and the Witchcraft and Human Rights Information Network, over 20,000 cases of accusations of witchcraft and ritual attacks had been reported in the prior decade, across 60 countries. [14] The true numbers of cases will be vastly higher than this because of under-reporting. These numbers included adults and children because multiple thousands of adults globally — often elderly and vulnerable men and women — are also branded as witches.

Until recently, it was primarily adults who were accused of being witches, and in nations like Papua New Guinea, Nigeria, Ghana, and Zimbabwe, this is still the case. [15] In a 2021 report on the situation in Papua New Guinea, it was estimated that between 2000 and June 2020, there were 6,000 violent incidents related to accusations of witchcraft (or sorcery) against adults, resulting in an estimated 3,000 deaths nationally. [16] However, in many nations like the DRC, children are now the prime targets of witch accusations. In its report on CWA in DRC, [17] Save the Children notes that the phenomenon began to emerge in the 1990s in the large towns of the nation. [18] It suggests that it is closely related to children's changing image and role in the family and societal structure and dynamics. The prevalence of street-living children and unwanted children in societies blighted by poverty, war, and social upheaval means that many perceive children as a burden rather than a blessing.

What do people believe about witches?

The definition of a witch varies from culture to culture, but it generally refers to a person believed to use occult powers in secret, typically at night, to harm others. *'The witch operates at night, invisible and transformed, metamorphosed, or unfolded from its physical "envelope", in order to harm victims by devouring their life essence.'* [19]

In some cultures, it is believed that a witch's occult powers and entity can be acquired at birth or inherited through family lines or transmitted through food given to another by a person of ill intent. Some cultures believe that children may be apprenticed and initiated as a witch by an adult witch. [20]

[14] Ero I. Concept note and Preliminary Data in Support of Advocacy for the Elimination of Harmful Practices: Accusations of Witchcraft and Ritual Attacks, Witchcraft & Human Rights Information Network (WHRIN), November 2020.

— « whrin.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Concept-Note-23-November-2020.pdf »

[15] For instance, it is reported that more than 2,586 older women were killed between 2004 and 2009 in Tanzania as a consequence of witchcraft accusations. In a five-year period, in northern Ghana, more than 1,000 older women accused of being witches were banished to live in 'witch' camps in intolerable conditions and there are many other documented cases in other nations. See: Eboiyehi F. A. Convicted without evidence: Elderly women and witchcraft accusations in contemporary Nigeria. *Journal of International Women Studies* 2017: 247.

[16] Submission on Ending Sorcery Accusation Related Violence (SARV) for PNG Special Parliamentary Committee on Gender-Based Violence, 2021.

[17] Molina A. The Invention of Child Witches in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Save the Children, 2005.
— « resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/author/aguiar-molina-javier/ »

[18] Molina: 2005, 18.

[19] Cimpric: 2010, 8.

In cultures where an overriding 'fear versus power' dynamic [21] is pervasive, such as those found on the African continent and Latin America, a worldview can prevail in which an invisible, unseen world of malevolent spirits is believed to intimately interconnect with the seen, physical world, causing harm. In such cultures, there is a common belief that witches or ancestral spirits can curse and (for example) cause sickness, death, loss of crops, or unemployment. [22] Often people in 'fear versus power' cultures live in constant fear of these invisible, occult powers, and go to great lengths to appease them and protect themselves from their influence. The fear of witches causes family and community members to act to expel the 'witch' from among them and to render the 'witch' powerless. This, in part, sheds light on the violent 'deliverance' rites that often follow accusations of witchcraft and the banishment of so many children (and adults) perceived to be witches. [23]

When something goes wrong in these contexts, the response is not, 'What has caused this?' but rather, 'Who has caused this?'. In looking for a person responsible, suspicion tends to fall on the most vulnerable members of the community — that is, those least able to defend themselves, such as orphans and widows — the very ones that the Bible exhorts us to nurture and protect. [24]

Which children are vulnerable to being accused?

Children who are 'different' in some way are particularly vulnerable to accusations of witchcraft. As part of the research for the Save the Children report, [25] religious leaders and community members compiled a list of 'signs' that a child was a witch. These included: children who are thin and pot-bellied; those with scabies, unclean clothes, and dirty bodies; those with epilepsy, deafness, or other disability; aggression, disobedience, sadness; children perceived to be too wise, too clever, too courageous, too nice, quiet, rude, inattentive, full of initiative, or fearful; those who sleep badly, wet the bed, defecate in their clothes, and sleepwalk.

It is supposed that such children are able to eat human flesh, cast spells over their family, be dangerous murderers and assassins at night, have the power to go out (even if they are shut in), and be the cause behind misfortune such as unemployment, road traffic accidents, and epidemics. [26]

[20] Molina: 2005, 14.

[21] Note: there are at least four common dynamics present in cultures worldwide (fear versus power, shame versus honour, guilt versus innocence, and taint versus purity), with different dynamics more predominant in different cultures and subcultures.

[22] Georges J. The 3D Gospel: Ministry in Guilt, Shame, and Fear Cultures, London: Time Press, 2017. Note: Georges only distinguishes three of the four common cultural dynamics.

[23] De Boeck F. 'Le deuxième monde' et les 'enfants sorciers'. Politique Africaine. 2000: 34.

[24] Exodus 22:22; Deuteronomy 24:17; Psalm 68:5; Psalm 82:3-4; Isaiah 1:17; James 1:27; etc.

[25] Molina 2005: 12.

[26] During the coronavirus pandemic, SCWA received anecdotal reports of increased accusations of witchcraft against children.

As can be seen, many of these so-called 'signs' are common in children as part of normal child development or else in those who are living in poverty, neglected, traumatised, or experiencing health conditions and disabilities. Hence, in contexts where CWA is a 'norm', children of all ages and stages are at risk of being accused. [27]

Do we know the roots of child witch accusations?

According to Hanson and Ruggiero, CWA can be understood as the result of a crisis of multiple societal factors, and needs to be understood within the broad cultural, historical, economic, and political contexts in which they occur. [28] CWA may occur more in blended families following divorce or the death of a parent. Stepparents may be more likely to accuse a child of being a witch in an effort to banish unwanted stepchildren from the home. [29] Jealousy, rivalry, and the struggle for survival may be at the root of accusations. [30] Changes in family circumstances resulting from sickness or loss of a job, for example, may also trigger accusations. Children may be blamed for societal ills and the consequences of human sin, essentially becoming scapegoats. [31]

In nations like Nigeria, the 'Nollywood' film industry and films commissioned and bankrolled by certain individuals also encourage accusations of witchcraft. In many of the films screened and widely available on DVDs across the African continent, children are portrayed as flesh-eating witches, and many who watch these films believe them to portray reality. [32]

What do sickness and ill health have to do with this issue?

When a child or adult falls ill in these contexts, poor mental or physical health frequently triggers accusations of witchcraft. [33] In many regions of Africa, India, and Papua New Guinea, the press is full of reports of adults who have suffered violence or been killed after having been accused of causing sickness and death through witchcraft. [34] Medical staff may try to explain that an illness has been caused by a virus, parasite, bacteria, or an unhealthy lifestyle or environment. But family members of the afflicted individual will claim to 'know' that witchcraft is the cause of the illness, and that such spiritual matters can only

[27] Cimpric 2010: 16.

[28] Hanson and Ruggiero 2013: 5.

[29] Hanson and Ruggiero 2013: 8–9.

[30] Molina 2005: 22.

[31] Hanson and Ruggiero 2013: 9.

[32] Cookey P. An Exegesis of Exodus 22:18 in Light of 'Child Witch' Accusation, Stigmatization and Abuses in Akwa Ibom State; conference paper for Theological College of Nigeria Academic Day, 2019.

[33] Cimpric 2010: 18.

[34] For instance: Namibian man gets 18-year sentence for killing neighbour over witchcraft. Timeslive, South Africa, March 2016. — « timeslive.co.za/news/africa/2016-03-07-namibian-man-gets-18-year-sentence-for-killing-neighbour-over-witchcraft/ »; Bloodlust hysteria': sorcery accusations a brutal death sentence in Papua New Guinea.' The Guardian, January 2018. — « theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/05/bloodlust-hysteria-sorcery-accusations-a-brutal-death-sentence-in-png »; In Jharkhand poor healthcare drives 'witch-hunting' killings.' IndiaSpend, March 2020. — « indiaspend.com/in-jharkhand-witchcraft-thrives-because-of-poor-healthcare/ »

be dealt with by a local religious leader or a 'witchdoctor' who has proven authority and power over the spirit realm. [35] Such beliefs may transcend educational backgrounds and social status. [36] Rather than take 'Western medicine', family members will take their loved ones to the traditional healer for potions perceived to be more powerful in combatting the work of the witch. [37] And at the same time they will seek to discern who may be the witch among them.

What role do church leaders play in this issue?

In parts of Sub-Saharan Africa and other regions, there may be little difference in beliefs about witchcraft between those inside and outside the church. Many church leaders preach that children can be witches who are the source of misfortune. Parents and community members are encouraged to bring those believed to be witches to the church to be 'delivered'. In the past, communities would have looked to 'diviners' and so-called 'witchdoctors' to 'diagnose' the cause of their problems and seek solutions. But now, church leaders appear to have taken on this role of a diviner. This is despite the fact that Scripture is clear that divination is abhorrent to God. [38] 'Deliverance ministry' has now become an industry — particularly in certain Pentecostal streams and so-called 'Reveille' (Revivalist) churches, many of which are unregulated. [39] It is also a lucrative business. Church leaders advertise their ability to 'deliver' children and adults of the 'spirit of the witch', supposedly 'in the name of Jesus'. For a significant fee, they will perform deliverance rites that are often brutal, deeply traumatic, and even life-threatening to the children involved. Prayer rooms have sprung up in which children and adults perceived as being witches or demonised are kept for weeks — many of them chained up and forced to fast. [40]

Church leaders who brand children as witches and subject them to violent 'deliverance' rites quote Exodus 22:18 (King James Version) as a justification for their actions: 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.' However, the word 'witch' in English ('sorcière' in French) is a poor translation of the original Hebrew word, [41] which refers to a diviner — a public figure who practices divination — and NOT a witch as commonly understood. This misunderstanding is further compounded when translated into the indigenous language context. [42] In reality, it is the church leaders using methods of divination to discern whether or not a child is a 'witch' who are the ones who are acting as diviners.

[35] O'Neil S et al. Foul Winds, Spirits and Witchcraft: illness conceptions and health-seeking behaviours for malaria in the Gambia. *Malaria Journal*. 2015 14:167.

[36] Hanson and Ruggerio 2013: 9.

[37] Priest R. Blog Conversation About Witchcraft Accusations and the Church: Aula, A Baby Disease 'Caused' by a Witch – Contribution by Dr Andy A. Alo, Henry Carter Center, 2015.

[38] Priest, Ngolo, and Stabell 2020: 2.

[39] Cookey 2019: 5.

[40] Onyinah Opoku, *Spiritual Powers*, theological paper for the SCWA Coalition, 2014.

[41] kâshaph, kaw-shaf; a primitive root; properly, to whisper a spell, to enchant or practise magic: — sorcerer, (use) witch(-craft). Strong's Definitions. — « studybible.info/strongs/H3784 »

Thankfully there are also many church leaders in these contexts who realise that this is serious child abuse that denies children their human rights and basic needs. Some may be fearful of speaking out in case they too are targeted. However, the advocacy and training resources that Stop Witch Accusations (SCWA) has developed are empowering more church leaders to courageously speak out and intervene to protect children.

What happens to children accused of being witches?

Remy's story

At ten years of age, Remy has already lived on the streets of Masisi, in DRC, for two years. When his mum died, his dad took another wife. One day, Remy's stepmother's pastor came to the house while Remy was playing in the garden with friends. The pastor and stepmother began screaming at Remy, accusing him of being a witch who had 'eaten his mother's flesh and caused her to die'. The terrified boy was taken to the church for a 'deliverance' ritual. There, his hands and feet were bound so that he could not move. Two days later, the pastor brought in a stove, took Remy's hands, and pressed them into burning hot coals. Remy's screams of pain caused the pastor to run away for fear of being discovered. Remy freed himself and ran to the streets, where he joined a gang in their precarious struggle for survival. [43]

Tragically, Remy's story is a common one in nations where the phenomenon of CWA is deeply entrenched. Children branded as witches are often tortured and even killed. The majority are expelled from their homes and forced to live a dangerous existence on the streets. The damage caused to children who are the victims of such stigmatisation and abuse is both immediate and enduring. The children are robbed of their true identity, and lose out on access to education, opportunities for socialisation, play and recreation. This abuse may cause severe physical disabilities and disfigurement. Emotional traumas inhibit their normal healthy childhood development, and the stigma robs them of their sense of belonging and self-esteem. All these will continue to affect children through adolescence and into adult life. [44]

What are some potential signs of child abuse linked to witchcraft beliefs?

While we all receive training to look out for signs of abuse and neglect, there are some extra signs to be aware of which might indicate that child abuse is linked to faith or belief.

The Metropolitan Police Service in the UK cites the following indicators of child abuse related to accusations of spirit possession or witchcraft: [45]

[42] Cookey discusses this issue extensively in his paper, *An Exegesis of Exodus 22:18 in Light of 'Child Witch' Accusation, Stigmatization and Abuses in Akwa Ibom State*; conference paper for Theological College of Nigeria Academic Day 2019.

[43] Rev Aruna J.P. *Description of the Phenomenon of Accusations of Witchcraft Made Against Children in Masisi, Goma, D.R.Congo*, May 2019.

[44] Howe S. & Stockley P. *A Call to Action: Responding to Beliefs that Harm Children*, SCWA Coalition, 2013 & 2017.

[45] Advice and information on child abuse linked to faith or belief. Metropolitan Police. — « met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/caa/child-abuse/faith-based-abuse/ »

- physical injuries, such as bruises or burns (including historical injuries or scarring);
- a child reporting that they are or have been accused of being 'evil', or that they are having the 'devil beaten out of them';
- the child or family may use words such as 'kindoki', 'djin', 'juju', or 'voodoo' — all of which refer to spiritual beliefs;
- a child becoming noticeably confused, withdrawn, disorientated, or isolated, and appearing alone among other children;
- a deterioration in child's personal care (for example, rapid loss of weight, being consistently hungry, turning up to school without food or lunch money, being unkempt with dirty clothes);
- it may be evident that the child's parent or carer does not have a close bond with the child;
- a child's attendance at school or college becomes irregular or there is a deterioration in a child's performance;
- a child is taken out of a school altogether without another school place having been arranged;
- wearing unusual jewellery or items, or in possession of strange ornaments or scripts.

A child may appear afraid of their parent, carer, or guardian or show signs of psychological trauma. They may have new or historical cuts on their body or signs of having ingested poisonous or noxious substances, including bleach or acid. Injuries may not be consistent with an explanation, and injuries to unexposed parts of the body are cause for concern, as are signs of neglect.

What should you do if you suspect a child is accused of being a witch?

Whether in the UK or overseas, it is vital that you act swiftly to protect any children subject to any abuse or neglect linked to faith and belief. They may be in immediate danger, or at risk of serious and significant harm.

Act in the best interests of the child at all times and according to your organisation's safeguarding and child protection protocols. Inform your designated Safeguarding Lead (or Child Protection Officer or equivalent) immediately that you are concerned the child may be a victim of abuse linked to witch accusations and give the reasons why you are concerned. As soon as possible, document any disclosure made by the child and your own observations and findings. If appropriate, this may include photographic evidence of physical injuries. However, do not be tempted to investigate the case yourself; rather, leave it to the police, social services, or other relevant authorities operating in your context.

Pass all your concerns and copies of your documentation to your Safeguarding Lead, who will liaise with the police and other agencies (education, health, social services). In the UK this will be handled by the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub for your location.

What support is available?

In the UK, Project Violet is the Metropolitan Police response to abuse linked to faith or belief and accusations of spirit possession or witchcraft. They can be contacted for advice, support, and guidance for referrals and investigations on the non-emergency, 24-hour number: **101**.

If you are concerned that the child is in immediate danger, contact the police by calling **999**.

thirtyone:eight « thirtyoneeight.org » can also give support and advice in cases of abuse linked to witch accusations or any case of child abuse. It is an independent Christian charity which helps individuals, organisations, charities, faith, and community groups to protect vulnerable people from abuse. They have a helpline number: 0303 003 11 11, which also provides an out-of-hours service for urgent cases.

Is there any hope? Yes, there's good news!

United Nations resolution

The United Nations Human Rights Council has passed the first-ever resolution on Harmful Practices: Accusations of Witchcraft and Ritual Attacks. The resolution, which passed unanimously on 13 July 2021, calls on UN member states to condemn harmful practices related to accusations of witchcraft and ritual attacks that result in human rights violations. Member states are also urged to ensure these practices are eliminated within their own borders. This is a significant step as it adds international weight to national legislation (which may exist but not be enforced). It further emphasises that this abuse is not acceptable and holds governments accountable for taking action against it. [46]

SCWA's Model of Change and its impact

The SCWA Coalition has been addressing CWA since we formed in 2012. We have developed an effective and unique five-phase 'Model of Change', the aim of which is to end accusations of witchcraft against children and the consequent stigma and abuse. [47] This model has been proven to bring about long-term changes in communities where the abuse of children branded as witches is prevalent. Training church leaders how to address CWA, in a way that is Bible-based, participatory, and contextualised has been key in bringing about change in understanding, attitudes, and practices. To this end, SCWA has produced Heart of the Matter, a five-day, seven-module training course [48] that has had a powerful impact in several regions. We have also produced two key resources: Sickness, Health, and Healing, [50] and Mental Health Matters, [51] to help reframe thinking and understanding around health issues and to stop harmful responses to the everyday realities of sickness, disease, and death in the family or community.

Through our awareness-raising activities, forums, training, and collaborations with other agencies working with churches and communities, we are helping to bring this hidden

[46] Human Rights Council 47th session: Resolution on the Elimination of harmful practices related to accusations of witchcraft and ritual attacks, UNHRC, July 2021. — « <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/G21/171/26/PDF/G2117126.pdf?OpenElement> »

[47] Model of Change. SCWA Coalition. — « stop-cwa.org/resources/59 »

[48] The Heart of the Matter training course. SCWA Coalition. 2018. — « stop-cwa.org/resources/45 »

[49] See the One Year On impact measurement report. SCWA Coalition. 2019. — « stop-cwa.org/resources/57 »

[50] Sickness, Health and Healing training workshop. SCWA Coalition. 2020. — « stop-cwa.org/resources/60 »

[51] Mental Health Matters training workshop. SCWA Coalition. 2020. — « stop-cwa.org/resources/61 »

issue into the light and building a movement for change. Church leaders are passing on what they have learned to their congregation members and to their wider communities. As they speak out, intervening and advocating for children branded as witches, the result is that children are being kept safer, being valued for who they are, and finding opportunities to flourish rather than being marginalised. This shows that change is possible as we all play our part.

Recommendations

- **Be vigilant** to this form of abuse and ensure members of the teams you work with are alert to it too.
- **Be aware** of the cultural context in which you are living and working, and of the cultural norms, beliefs, and worldviews of those who use your services.
- **Find out more.** Go to SCWA's website and resource hub: « stop-cwa.org »

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those being crushed. Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless, and see that they get justice.

— Proverbs 31:8–9, NLT

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Further Resources

The SCWA Coalition has resources accessible via its online resource hub:

— « stop-cwa.org/resources/ »

These can be used and adapted for different contexts.

Practical resources: — « https://stop-cwa.org/search/resources?theme_id=10 »

Theological papers: — « https://stop-cwa.org/search/resources?theme_id=1 »

We host a topical Multi-Agency Forum, usually twice a year, where professionals can share their learning and explore insights into this issue. If you would like to sign up to receive news of this you can contact us via « forum@stop-cwa.org »

We also have a more frequent News & Prayer circular you can sign up for via « news@stop-cwa.org »

Contact us with any queries via our website: « stop-cwa.org/contact »

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