
Healing Communities

— contextualizing responses to witch accusations

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with Hannah Rasmussen, M.Div.

Christians Addressing Witchcraft
and Witchcraft Accusations

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“Yet let no one contend, and let none accuse. ... My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.” — Hosea 4:4, 6.

When I returned to the church I had attended for a decade in Tanzania, I preached on witchcraft. I knew that Deborah, the woman sitting next to me, had ministered as a pastor’s wife for forty-nine years. I did not know she was suspected of being a witch.

Just two months earlier outside Deborah’s home, a crowd of young men with clubs, machetes, and stones surrounded her, shouting, “We have come to finish you and your witchcraft!”

A young neighbor woman, Ellen, crawled in the dust toward her, begging, “Stop strangling me!”

Deborah raised her hand to God and said, “If I am a witch, may I die.”¹

A Fatal Epidemic

Witchcraft accusations are a fatal epidemic in Tanzania, leading to an average of ten murders per week.² Among the Sukuma people of northwest Tanzania, a witch (*mchawi* in Swahili) is someone people accuse of using witchcraft (*uchawi*) to harm others through secret, evil means. Sick neighbors and family members readily voice suspicion that someone has harmed or bewitched them. Accusations turn to threats to “treat” the problem. If a suspected witch is fortunate, he or she is beaten, is chased from the village, or pays a fine of money or a cow. But not every suspect is

¹ During June and July, 2013, I (Steven) conducted multiple interviews with “Deborah” (a pseudonym), with her son, and with pastors who have known the family for decades. The pastors also visited the village to investigate this incident and bring reconciliation. Other accounts referred to below (also pseudonymous) are drawn from my doctoral dissertation and the data collected for it. See Steven D. H. Rasmussen, “Illness and Death Experiences in Northwestern Tanzania: An Investigation of Discourses, Practices, Beliefs, and Social Outcomes, Especially Related to Witchcraft, Used in a Critical Contextualization and Education Process with Pentecostal Ministers” (Ph.D. dissertation, Trinity International University, 2008).

² According to *Tanzania Human Rights Report*, 2009 (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Legal and Human Rights Centre, 2010), 21, during the five-year period 2005–2009, a total of 2,585 people were murdered because they were believed to be witches. « source accessed online at: humanrights.or.tz/downloads/tanzania-human-rights-report-2009.pdf »

so lucky. More than once a day someone, usually, like Deborah, a woman, is murdered for her or his “crime.” It often happens before the evening meal, usually just outside the person’s home.

Pastors should be bringing healing to their communities, but their lack of context-specific understanding can be disastrous. If someone is ill, misdiagnosis leads to the wrong treatment. A diagnosis that blames another person for someone’s illness can be deadly for the accused — the supposed witch. When I researched witchcraft accusations in northwestern Tanzania, I discovered that local pastors had had no training on how to address witchcraft accusations in their congregations. In the “Search *IBMR*” database «omsc.org/searchibmr/index.php», an important resource in missions and world Christianity, I located no articles on sorcery or witchcraft in sixty years. According to Andrew Walls, “Witchcraft is beyond the reach of Western theology. [Westerners said and say,] “It doesn’t exist. It is an imaginary crime.” ... I have seen no pastoral theology book that tells you what to do if someone comes to you and says, “I am a witch. I kill people.”³ Yet African theologian Laurenti Magesa writes, “Witchcraft and polygamy ... are the most prevalent and intractable challenges to the Church today. Of the two, witchcraft is obviously the most widespread even in African Christian communities and at various levels of the Church’s structure.”⁴ Samuel Kunhiyop, general secretary of a Nigerian church of six million, agrees that “there is an urgent need for the culturally postulated reality of witchcraft to be addressed pastorally with seriousness, sensitivity, and respect.”⁵ Witchcraft accusations and uncertainty about a Christian response to them are not solely African issues. Persecution and killing of people suspected of being witches happens not only in Tanzania, Ghana, South Africa, and Nigeria, but also in Amazonia, Papua New Guinea, and London.

Discovering Relational Pathology

During our first three years in Tanzania, my family was sick forty times — and then we stopped counting. Along with culture shock, I had hepatitis A, malaria, and panic attacks. We buried a stillborn daughter. I thought God had called me here to serve as principal of a Pentecostal Bible school — then why the pain? I taught on Job. I discovered that virtually all the ministers I taught had lost children. John Mwanzalima, a pastor and school administrator and my next-door neighbor, supported me through this time. At yet another funeral for a friend’s child, he said, “This is normal trouble. We have all experienced this.”

Whereas Western people tend to underemphasize the relational facets of life, northwestern Tanzanians in general see relationships as the key to everything. They therefore seek relational explanations and cures also for their suffering. In May 1996, nine hundred people drowned when a ferry sank in Lake Victoria. Tanzanians accused the president of having sacrificed people for political power. I did not understand this mentality. In growing up, I thought of witches as just neighborhood kids in Halloween costumes. My Scandinavian American parents preached in

³ Andrew F. Walls, “A Consultation on Faculty Development and Doctoral Training for Theological Institutions in Africa” (author’s notes, Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, Nairobi, Kenya, August 8, 2007)

⁴ Laurenti Magesa, “Witchcraft: A Pastoral Guide,” *African Ecclesial Review* 48, no. 3 (2006): 174.

⁵ Samuel Waje Kunhiyop, “Witchcraft,” in *Africa Bible Commentary*, ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo (Nairobi: WordAlive Publishers; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 374.

Pentecostal churches, but they did not blame witches or cast out demons. As I learned a new culture and language, taught in Swahili, and developed friendships with Tanzanian church leaders such as John Mwanzalima, I increasingly wanted to know how these people explained sickness and death. When I was a student at Trinity International University in Illinois, Paul Hiebert, Tite Tiénou, and Robert Priest taught me to analyze worldviews. I read a study of 752 illness episodes in 68 cultures. In 15 percent of the cases, people believed that biomedical causes were involved. In another 15 percent they blamed the sick person for a moral failure. But 42 percent blamed someone else's envy or anger. I learned that "for most peoples of the world, there are no faultless deaths."⁶

What did Tanzanians believe? In the classes I taught at Lake Victoria Christian College, I changed from a lecturer to a listener. For three years I interviewed people in Swahili about their experience of sickness and death. I participated in daily life, church services, exorcisms, and funerals, recording over 100,000 words of field notes. The stories from my research consistently showed that both life's successes and its serious suffering depended on relationships. The people assumed that cases of malaria, for instance, happened for a reason; they would ask, "Who sent the mosquito?" While sometimes people blamed demons or ancestor spirits, usually they accused a relative or neighbor of bewitching them through invisible means. Mwanzalima told me that *every time* someone is seriously sick or dies, the relatives ask who caused it, speculating about the identity of the witch.

Healers Who Harm

While I was conducting my research, Mwanzalima's own sister-in-law was hacked to death with a machete after her husband died. People believed that she was a witch and had caused his death, because she had argued with him before he died. In addition, people knew that she had had three previous husbands, each of whom had died. To avenge her latest husband's death, his relatives hired machete assassins.

Most likely, these relatives consulted a neotraditional healer (*mganga wa kinyezi*, literally local healer), who identified Mwanzalima's sister-in-law as the witch (*mchawi*) who had caused this death. The distinction between and the relationship tying together these two roles are key for understanding witch accusations. A healer is a public figure who claims to be able to discover the causes of misfortunes through divination and to treat them. The divination often identifies some other person, a witch, as the cause. Healers' treatments include herbs, charms, and rituals understood to have social, spiritual, and physical effects. Neotraditional healers are available and popular. In fact, a Tanzanian scholar estimates that Tanzania has between 50 and 125 times more traditional healers than biomedical doctors (for the continent as a whole, he writes that "about 80 percent of the population ... relies on traditional medicine as their primary health care").⁷

⁶ Richard A. Shweder, *Why Do Men Barbecue? Recipes for Cultural Psychology* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003), 84, 87.

⁷ Menan Hungwe Jangu, "Healing Environmental Harms: Social Change and Sukuma Traditional Medicine on Tanzania's Extractive Frontier" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 2012), 33–35 « source accessed online at: deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/2027.42/93827/1/mjangu_1.pdf »

Koen Stroeken, a medical anthropologist, tries to explain the social and psychological process in neotraditional healing: Sick people among the Sukuma of northwest Tanzania assume serious illness has a relational root. Perhaps the ancestors or the community are inflicting disease upon them as punishment for an unknown offense. They worry that perhaps people think they are proud or have not shared — two of the worst possible offenses in Sukuma culture. For instance, if someone puts a tin roof on his house when everyone else in the village has only a thatch roof, he might fear that envious neighbors will bewitch him. Sick people feel shame for their misdeeds, but are not sure what they did wrong or how to fix the problem.⁸

In order to understand the divination process — in effect, their “medical examination” — Stroeken became a Sukuma healer. He says that during the patient–healer consultation it is the ancestors who speak through the mouth of the healer or communicate through the healer’s analysis of a sacrificed chicken. Healers identify with the patient’s anxiety that the whole community is condemning them. Next, the healer tries to identify incidents that connect this sense of shame to one offended ancestor or an individual, a witch.⁹ In half the cases, Stroeken found that “the oracles identify a witch.”¹⁰ Usually the person named as a witch is a relative of the patient, but it could be a neighbor, a lover, or anyone else in a significant relationship with the patient. The healer minimizes the patient’s offense by emphasizing how evil it is for the witch to inflict illness on another person. By transferring the patient’s shame to someone else and trading uncertainty for a specific cause, healers are able to make the patient feel better. But in doing so they have seriously hurt someone else by labeling her or him as a witch. As the patient tells others of the diagnosis and treatment, the accusation against the newfound witch spreads throughout the community.¹¹

Deborah’s Case

Deborah’s relational problems began when her daughter-in-law, Neema, moved in with Deborah’s son, Marko, before they married. Deborah and her husband, a pastor, initially did not approve. It did not help that Neema was from a different country and tribe. The family eventually accepted Neema when she became pregnant and married Marko. The couple moved next door to Deborah and her husband, and Deborah and Neema became close. Later, however, Neema began consulting neotraditional healers, angering her religious in-laws, and their relationship disintegrated. Marko was unable to reconcile his wife and his parents. Neema reacted with anger at his interference, and the two stopped sleeping together. Eventually she moved back to her own family in her native country, and Marko, taking a second wife, moved away.

After some time, Neema came back to live with her in-laws. Her eleven-year-old son was frequently sick. He sometimes lost consciousness, and local pastors thought he was demon possessed. Neema began to visit healers again, seeking a solution and an explanation for her suffering. Deborah told her not to bring these spiritual influences upon their household, recommending prayer or hospital treatment instead.

⁸ Koen Stroeken, *Moral Power: The Magic of Witchcraft* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 166–74.

⁹ K. Stroeken, *Moral Power*, 166–74.

¹⁰ K. Stroeken, *Moral Power*, 194.

¹¹ K. Stroeken, *Moral Power*, 166–74.

The healer undoubtedly knew that the two women did not get along and probably suggested that Deborah was the cause of Neema's suffering, because Neema soon began telling the neighbors that Deborah was a witch.

At a wedding they both attended, Neema warned the bride not to open Deborah's gift, saying, "It has a python inside." Neema told neighbors that Deborah kept a python in a cupboard but refused to let anyone see it or kill it. Then Ellen, one of Neema's friends, became sick, and she began wailing, "Deborah, Deborah, why are you trying to kill me?" Ellen's husband, frantic for a cure, called his relatives and hired young men to kill the witch — Deborah.

As the young men with machetes surrounded Deborah, a village leader intervened, crying out, "Don't touch that woman!" The police grabbed her and put her in jail to protect her from vigilante "justice." Early the next morning her other son arrived to take her from the village to safety in the city. The village relaxed, having treated the problem, though with costly side effects.

Treatment Options

As I sat next to Deborah, I knew nothing of her story. But I did know that many Tanzanians feared and blamed witches. When I began preaching about witchcraft, I wonder what Deborah expected me to say.

For my part, I had several options available. I could have approached witchcraft as a Western anthropologist, using my research just to describe the situation or to write an ethnography. Then I could have gotten a position teaching at an American university rather than intervening locally. Or I could have argued for an American worldview, that sickness is not caused by the envy people see but by germs invisible to the naked eye. I could have compared this incident to witch trials in Salem, Massachusetts, and throughout Europe. I could even have claimed that during the Enlightenment Westerners progressed beyond believing in "superstitions" and "magic."

But claiming superiority over Africans is not only self-serving, it also immediately breaks any relational credibility. For instance, after the 2007 election violence in Kenya, the International Criminal Court of the Hague called Uhuru Kenyatta to trial — and unwittingly helped him win the 2013 election. According to the *New York Times*, "Uhuru and Ruto were skillful at mobilizing their communities by capitalizing on Kenya's painful colonial history and the universal human tendency to dislike being lectured."¹² Likewise, when an outsider labels East Africans as criminals who violate a witch's human rights, their efforts may backfire or at least make locals hesitant to work with them. At a seminar I facilitated in Tanzania, one of my students, now a radio announcer, quoted God's law from Exodus 22:18: "The UN has its constitution, and Tanzania has its constitution, which talk about human rights. But we have ours, which we must obey. It says, 'you shall not permit a female sorcerer to live.'"

I could have ignored the issue, as do many missionary-founded churches in northwestern Tanzania. Catholic, mainline, and standard evangelical churches such as the Africa Inland Church

¹² Michela Wrong, "Indictee for President!," *Latitude*, March 11, 2013 «source accessed online at: latitude.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/03/11/being-prosecuted-by-the-i-c-c-helped-uhuru-kenyattas-chances-in-kenyas-election »

have tended to tell people that belief in witchcraft is superstition: “Do not believe it, talk about it, or seek treatment from healers.” Implicit in some of these statements is an imported cessationist theology, a claim that we have progressed beyond miracles to rational examination of Scripture. People who attend these churches nevertheless talk about witchcraft every day; they just avoid the subject when in church. Many interpret the silence to mean that Christ cannot handle their sicknesses, spirits, or witches. Therefore, they continue to address them using non-Christian methods. In these churches, even pastors or their families usually call a neotraditional healer when they are deathly sick.

A Tanzanian scholar has estimated that Tanzania has between 50 and 125 times more traditional healers than biomedical doctors.

On the opposite extreme, I could have preached within the local worldview, telling amazing stories about witches and spirits from the pulpit that would make people suspect their neighbors and fear their family. Some spiritual leaders do exacerbate the problem in this way. A retired pastor friend in his seventies was suffering from diabetes, high blood pressure, and amputation ulcers. A visiting prophet told the pastor that these health problems had been caused by the pastor who succeeded him as a means to get his position. The old pastor dismissed this. After all, he had disciplined this younger pastor like a son since his salvation as a child. Later, however, the pastor died. When I went to comfort his widow, she secretly told me not to trust the new pastor because he had caused her husband’s death. Other church members use Christian language like a charm to ward off witchcraft. Instead of using a chicken’s blood for protection, they pray for the blood of Jesus to cover them.¹³

I could have preached, as many African Pentecostals do, that witchcraft exists, but that Jesus the healer is more powerful than witches, healers, and spirits. In every worship service Pentecostals in our Tanzanian church sing, “There is no God like you,” to affirm that God’s power conquers all powers of darkness, specifically including Satan, evil spirits, and witches. Pentecostal pastors attribute the power of neotraditional healers to demons, not ancestors. Compared with other denominations, Pentecostals are more likely to pray fervently for healing and to share testimonies of supernatural healing and victory over witchcraft as a result.

For instance, a very sick young woman came to Mwanzalima’s house. She sometimes lost consciousness and a strange voice spoke out of her, claiming to be Makata, a genie-spirit (*jinn* in Swahili from Arabic *djinn*). Makata said that the lover of the woman’s boyfriend had purchased it during a visit to a neotraditional healer and had sent it to afflict her. To the leaders of the church, this was a spiritual problem with a spiritual solution: they prayed over her for months, inviting me to join in telling the demon to leave. I also reminded her of her identity in Christ. This combined treatment gave her confidence to refuse the demonic voice and freed her from her sickness. It did not harm the boyfriend’s lover, which probably disappointed the demon. The church healed the woman’s physical, psychological, and spiritual problem. But the social epidemic of envy and witchcraft accusations in the community remained unchecked.

¹³ S. Kunhiyop, “Witchcraft”, 374

A Contextualized Diagnosis

None of these treatment options deals with the side effect of vulnerable community members being persecuted. Paul Hiebert, Daniel Shaw, and Tite Tiénou say that simply saying either Yes or No to local realities results in a “split-level Christianity.” Rather, they urge that we should respond using “critical contextualization.” This group process begins with careful study of the local reality, then moves to biblical and empirical evaluation, and finally seeks to initiate a transformative response.¹⁴

We began by discussing the reality of persecution. We gave a voice to those accused of witchcraft by listening to them tell their stories.

I have found this approach to be helpful in my research and in seminars. I have progressively narrowed the focus of my research (and critical contextualization discussions) from how people understand causes of sickness to witchcraft and now to how we should respond to witchcraft accusations and to persecution of those suspected to be witches. Christians can act to protect widows and orphans even as we continue to debate the effectiveness accorded to witchcraft by our different worldviews. I followed these steps from local reality to transformative response in my Swahili sermon that Sunday with Deborah present.

We believe our problems are caused by witches. How do we know witches cause harm? We have heard thousands of stories. But is this biblical? In Scripture I see cases where spirits and demons cause suffering, but no example of an evil person causing harm through invisible means — which is what we mean by witch (*mchawi*). The word “witch” (*mchawi*) is used in some Bible translations, but the stories show them to be public figures like a neotraditional healer (*mganga*).¹⁵ This mistranslation even applies to the verse we sometimes use to justify killing suspected witches, Exodus 22:18, which says “you shall not permit a female sorcerer (*mchawi*) to live.”

But let’s keep reading. Exodus 22:21–24 says, “You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. You shall not abuse any widow or orphan. If you do abuse them, when they cry out to me, I will surely heed their cry; my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children orphans.” God will judge us and even kill us with the machete if we mistreat widows, orphans, or outsiders. These are the people most often persecuted as suspected

¹⁴ Paul Hiebert, R. Daniel Shaw, and Tite Tiénou, *Understanding Folk Religion: A Christian Response to Popular Beliefs and Practices* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 15–29. The critical contextualization process has similarities to “the pastoral circle.” The pastoral circle steps include (1) insertion to listen to local voices, (2) social analysis, (3) theological reflection, and (4) pastoral action. It becomes a circle because, as with critical contextualization, the process is meant to be repeated, working toward increasing truth and transformation. See, for example, Frans Jozef Servaas Wijsen, Peter J. Henriot, and Rodrigo Mejia, eds., *The Pastoral Circle Revisited: A Critical Quest for Truth and Transformation* (Nairobi: Paulines, 2005).

¹⁵ A similar argument is made in Robert J. Priest, “Witches and the Problem of Evil,” *Books and Culture*, November / December, 2009, pp. 30–32. « source accessed online at: www.booksandculture.com/articles/2009/novdec/witchesandtheproblemofevil.html »

witches — accused, banished, beaten, and killed. While Scripture does not teach that witches cause harm, it clearly teaches that we should defend the vulnerable. When we accuse such people we aren't battling Satan. We're serving the interests of the ultimate Accuser (the meaning of "Satan"). Is it possible that our problems are not caused by witches, but by God's judgment for mistreating widows?¹⁶

The day after this sermon we began a four-day critical contextualization discussion on how to respond to those suspected of being witches. Deborah joined others giving their stories of accusation and persecution as suspected witches. Listening to such unheard stories is one way to shift people's perspectives. Normally, no one believes a woman suspected of being a witch — unless she is giving a forced confession! If she denies being a witch, the village ignores her denial and chases her out of town or kills her without appeal. We then examined the Bible and Tanzanian law. The conference brought together pastors from the region who were from Catholic, Mennonite, Church of Christ, Africa Inland Church, and Pentecostal backgrounds. Every one of these pastors believed that witches cause harm, and originally many of them believed that killing witches was biblical. They left the conference with an understanding that God loves everyone and commands the church to love them, too. They discovered that God especially loves widows, the poor, orphans and outsiders — the people who are usually persecuted as witches. Participants in this seminar in turn taught four similar seminars in various regions of northwest Tanzania at the end of 2013. They plan to teach more in 2015.

Grassroots conversations must be complemented by global discussions. Christians of various worldviews need to challenge and sharpen one another. My 2008 dissertation sparked an interest in the people evaluating it, Tite Tiénou and Robert Priest. A conference that we organized, held in March 2013, brought together fifty Christian scholars from Africa and North America who have written about witchcraft or want to learn more. To avoid getting bogged down in metaphysical discussions about the existence of witchcraft, we began by discussing the reality of persecution. We gave a voice to those accused of witchcraft by listening to them tell their stories in the documentary *Im The Witches of Gambaga*.¹⁷ Drawing on the many disciplinary perspectives represented within the group, we examined real cases in small and large group discussions. The participants left with plans to conduct research and present the results during a second conference, to be held at Africa International University in 2016. Samuel Kunhiyop and I are also writing a book, "What about Witches?", intended for African pastors.

Hope for Healing

Our experiences and the stories we tell ourselves shape how we interpret the world. Understandably, persons who have heard thousands of stories of witchcraft will likely suspect

¹⁶ My argument from Exodus 22:21–24 is adapted from a sermon preached in 1649 at the end of an earlier epidemic of witch hunting (quoted in Alan Macfarlane, "Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart Essex," in *Witchcraft, Confessions and Accusations*, ed. Mary Douglas (London: Tavistock, 1970), 92, 94. «source accessed online at: alanmacfarlane.com/FILES/witch_asa_1.htm » Did the shift in seventeenth-century preaching contribute to the shift in actions toward suspected witches, or did it result from the shift? My hope is that a change in pastors' preaching, counseling, and praying today could improve the situations in their communities.

¹⁷ Yaba Badoe, *The Witches of Gambaga*, documentary film (Fadoa Films, 2010). « see online at: witchesofgambaga.com »

that a witch is the source of their problems.¹⁸ To them, disciplining or removing witches will seem the best treatment plan, despite its cruel side effects. To address the root cause, we must change the diagnosis. New experiences and stories can change people's understanding of what causes specific illnesses or at least help them to respond differently to accusations and persecution of vulnerable people. A student of mine, Joshua Lusato, states, "When I used to talk with Dr. Rasmussen about witchcraft in Tanzania, I thought he was too skeptical. I was sure that at least 90 percent of those accused of being witches really had harmed someone through witchcraft." I challenged him to return to Tanzania to research the social consequences of witchcraft beliefs.

Lusato's research provided new experiences and stories that changed his perspective. He found that during the years 2004 to 2011, Mwanza Region police records show an average of sixty-four murders per year in which the motive on record is that the victim was suspected of witchcraft. Eighty percent of the victims were women and most were older people. A suspected killer of the witch was identified in only 10 percent of the cases. Lusato's wife did a similar study, and found that only 1 percent of the cases had gone to trial. Beyond these statistics are the many more killings that are unreported or do not specifically state "suspected witch" as the motive. In one village he visited Lusato discovered that six older people had been killed as suspected witches in the past eighteen months. Only one of them was listed in the police records. At the conference in Kenya and the seminar in Tanzania, Lusato said, "After doing my own research, I believe that if there is such a thing as witchcraft, 99 percent of these people are falsely accused."

Within the churches, when the local spiritual-relational explanation for congregants' suffering causes others to suffer, pastors need to act as the true healers, developing a new spiritual answer, but also treating the community's relational tensions. John Jusu, a colleague at Africa International University, has taken this insight to heart. He had observed and participated in the ostracism, persecution, and even killing of accused widows and old women in his home village. After studying deeply what Scripture says about the poor and then talking to the suspected witches, he does not believe they really were witches. He now cares for and defends sixteen widows and over 100 orphans in that village. The level of suspicion of witchcraft against some of these has now diminished simply because they are cared for and accepted as part of a family. He also wisely confronts accusations of witchcraft.

After my sermon, Deborah told me why she had appreciated it. I asked if I could hear her story over lunch. Since this was her first visit to this church since being forced from her village, it seemed God had sent her. She agreed to share her story the next day in our seminar. Pastors who were part of the seminar counseled Deborah, Neema, and neighbors of the family. But a year and a half later Deborah's accusers have not been brought to justice. Deborah's children helped her and her husband move to another village because they fear that someone in the village could attack her again at any time.

Through research, in seminars, and even by reading this issue of the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, more and more people are beginning to listen to the stories of the accused. I find hope in that fact. Perhaps we are God's answer to Deborah's cry.

¹⁸ Samuel Waje Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics* (Nairobi: WordAlive / Hippo Books, 2008), 378–80

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