

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

by

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ABSTRACT

This research (1) secured detailed information on discourses and practices during selected episodes involving illness and/or death in Northwestern Tanzania with particular attention to the beliefs involved, and to the social outcomes of these practices and (2) used this material as the basis for a carefully documented critical contextualization and education process in which ministers inductively grappled with the theological and pastoral issues which these cases represent.

Most Northwestern Tanzanians believe “witches” cause most serious illnesses and deaths. Along with its explanatory power, witchcraft brings negative feelings like fear and negative social outcomes ranging from distrust and destroyed relationships to banishment, beatings, and death.

“Witches” may use spirits. Spirits such as ancestors, *majini* (genies or jinn), or demons may themselves cause illness or death or remove their protection. They do this because the afflicted person has broken their taboo, or they want to motivate toward a particular action. People who are not witches can also cause illness through the invisible means of poison/*dawa*, bad luck or curses.

Northwestern Tanzanians usually understand these interpersonal causal ontologies as primary; moral and biomedical causal ontologies as secondary:

- “Your failure allowed her to make you sick.” The ill person sinned, broke a taboo, or offended someone. As a result an ancestor, spirit, or

God caused his/her illness or removed his/her spiritual protection so that a “witch” or spirit could cause the illness.

- “She used it.” An object or accident may be the means, but ultimately someone is responsible. Someone may ask, “Who sent the mosquito with the malaria parasite and prevented treatment from being effective so that my child died?”

Northwestern Tanzanians choose, mix, and argue from three primary options to explain, treat, and evaluate illness and death: Local/neo-traditional, biomedical, and Christian. The local/neo-traditional explanation and treatment system focuses on relationships with “witches” (present, visible, evil people) using invisible witchcraft, and also present, invisible spirits. The biomedical system focuses on visible, physical objects such as parasites, viruses, and medicines as causal agents using a mechanical analogy. The Pentecostal Christian system says that demons, witchcraft, sin, God’s will, and/or biomedical objects can cause illnesses and deaths, but focuses on Jesus as powerfully present to heal and protect his followers. It identifies all spirits as demons, whether called ancestors, *majini* or other. Pentecostal ministers cast out these demons with the authority of Jesus, rather than negotiate with them for peace, health, wealth, or divination powers.

Sometimes, fearless trust in Jesus allows Pentecostals to restore relationships broken by witchcraft suspicion. Sometimes, fear causes them to passively follow the community in suspecting and even shunning a neighbor. When a suspected witch joins the church, church members’ opinions remain divided (“Is she fully converted or still dangerous?”).

I conducted a critical contextualization and education process with four classes of Pentecostal ministers and two church groups. Students brought interviews. Lively, open discussion primarily described the issues in the context, especially issues related to witchcraft.

As students sought a Christian response to illness, death, and witchcraft, areas of agreement and disagreement emerged. We all agreed that sin, physical entities like parasites, and spiritual beings like demons cause illness and death. We all agreed that Jesus is most powerful and does heal. Students disagreed among themselves about whether witchcraft or something else caused particular cases, whether pastors should ever use local medicines, and whether local healers divine accurately and treat effectively. Students all believed that witches cause illness and death while I remained skeptical. We all approached Scripture using our experiences and worldview, but learned from each other.

I dedicate this to my heroes/teachers/friends who strive to live like Jesus in their context
including my family, especially my parents, Virgil and Ruth Rasmussen,
and Pentecostal Ministers in Northwestern Tanzania,
especially John and Elizabeth Mwanzalima

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIC	African Independent Churches
AICT	African Inland Church Tanzania
ATR	African Traditional Religions
EAGT	Evangelical Assemblies of God Tanzania
LVCC	Lake Victoria Christian College
LTCC	Lake Tanganyika Christian College
PAG	Pentecostal Assemblies of God
PEFA	Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa
SDA	Seventh Day Adventist
TAG	Tanzania Assemblies of God

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Christian church in Africa has grown rapidly in the past century yet some claim it is like a river which is a mile-wide, but only an inch deep. They point to continued dependence upon local healers even by many Christians, violence in countries that now have a majority of Christians like Rwanda or Kenya, or syncretistic practices among various churches. One response to this been a call to increased training for Christians and especially ministers, but what kind of training should this be? Simply importing or translating more of the best curriculum, texts, and teachers from Western Christianity? Some respond that imported theological education does not scratch where African people itch (Kato 1985, 182). What itches in the context should Christianity and therefore ministers training learn to respond to?

The rapid growth of Pentecostalism raises questions. Do African Pentecostals scratch where local people itch? Is that a reason that they are growing rapidly in numbers? Do they preach properly contextualized good news or a syncretistic mix which is no longer the Biblical good news? What kind of training could help Pentecostal ministers bring good news that is appropriate to the context and faithful to the Bible? This research attempts to answer some of these questions in one area of Africa related to one area of belief and practice.

Research Concern

People in Northwestern Tanzania experience and respond to significant levels of suffering, including frequent illness and early death. They use beliefs and practices developed from local traditions as well as from more recent and distant influences (e.g., other African and Western countries, biomedical, Muslim, and Christian). Pentecostal ministers use the good news of Jesus to respond to this suffering. For example, they report many healings, but most have also buried one of their own children. This applied, ethnographic, action research aims to understand how ministers in Northwestern Tanzania respond to illness and death, and to explore a method to help them more effectively contextualize the good news of Jesus to these issues.

Research Problem

This research (1) secured detailed information on discourses and practices during selected episodes involving illness and/or death in Northwestern Tanzania with particular attention to the beliefs involved, and to the social outcomes of these practices and (2) used this material as the basis for a carefully documented critical contextualization and education process in which ministers inductively grappled with the theological and pastoral issues which these cases represent.

Sub-Research Questions:

1. What do ministers and others in Northwestern Tanzania do and say when someone becomes ill or dies?
2. What beliefs are reflected in these discourses and practices?

- 2.1. How do people define a misfortune, choose an explanation system, diagnose, apply a remedy, and evaluate the process after success or failure of the remedy?
- 2.2. How are various interpersonal, moral, and biomedical causal ontologies used?
How are relationships with visible and invisible beings (relatives, neighbors, ancestors, spirits, witches, God) and objects (germs, parasites, cells, poison, and powers) understood to relate to illness and death?
- 2.3. How are beliefs related to values and morals in these discourses and practices?
- 2.4. How are beliefs related to feelings in these discourses and practices?
- 2.5. How are beliefs changed through experiences of suffering (e.g. conversion, reversion, or spiritual growth)? How is suffering experienced differently as a result of various beliefs?
3. What social outcomes result from these practices and discourse?
 - 3.1. How do various communities (families, neighborhoods, and religious communities like churches) respond to illness and death?
 - 3.2. How do people treat those people who may be suspected of causing illness or death (especially through means such as witchcraft or curses)?
4. What happens during a formal inductive process of critical contextualization?
 - 4.1. What areas of agreement and disagreement emerge in the discourse?
 - 4.2. What characteristics of a Christian response are mentioned?
 - 4.3. Is there any evidence of influence from educational level, ethnicity, age, gender, denomination, or location (rural/urban)?
 - 4.4. What sources of authority are appealed to? How is Scripture used?

- 4.5. What evidences of change occur during the process?
- 4.6. How do ministers evaluate the process after it is completed?

Significance of the Study

All peoples experience suffering, illness, and death. All cultures and religions strive to understand and respond to these experiences, but they do so differently or with different emphases.

To talk of suffering is to talk not of an academic problem but of the sheer bloody agonies of existence, of which all men are aware and most have direct experience. All religions take account of this; some, indeed, make it the basis of all they have to say. . . . Thus what a religion has to say about suffering reveals in many ways, more than anything else, what it believes the nature and purpose of existence to be. . . . There are few better ways of coming to understand the religions of the world than by studying what response they make to the common experience of suffering. (Bowker 1970, 2)

According to Hiebert, Shaw, and Tienou (1999), high religion focuses more on explaining and giving meaning to suffering, folk religion tends to focus on alleviating suffering. Some responses are more effective than others in alleviating suffering. If a disease is misdiagnosed or treated with the wrong medicine, a person can get sicker or die from ineffective treatment or poisonous side effects. This metaphor can be used for other responses to suffering. For example, a missionary friend reported that just outside Mwanza, several women who were all sexual partners of the same man had died. He thought the cause was AIDS, but the community was mobilizing to kill a couple of older women who they said had caused it as witches. Is this effective treatment or a misdiagnosis?

Significant Suffering

Illness occurs frequently and death early in Mwanza, Tanzania. Mwanza draws world attention related to AIDS (11% of the sexually active urban population and 4% of the rural population are HIV positive), but there are many less famous diseases that kill more people. “Life expectancy at birth is 46 years for women and 50 years for men. Under-five child mortality was 137/1000 live births during the five years preceding 1996” (Changalucha et al. 2002, 92). A more recent source lists life expectancy down to 44 (vs. 78 in U.S.), under-five mortality stable at 1 in 7 and children under 14 accounting for nearly 40% of deaths (Touch Foundation 2005-2007).

Insufficient Response

Poverty and malnutrition combined with a lack of biomedical resources contribute to this. For example there is one M.D. for every 400 Americans and one for every 40,000 Tanzanians. The U.S. also has 30 to 50 times as many other types of health care personnel (Touch Foundation 2005-2007). Even when biomedical resources are available local people still often use local healers instead. We need to explore local culture and worldview better to understand why they do.

Outsiders intervening often bring negative side effects also, especially when outsiders do not have a deep understanding of local beliefs and practices. Dilger (2003) shows that for Luo young people, AIDS is seen as a symptom of modernity. These young people receive contradictory moral expectations from family, tradition, church and AIDS prevention campaigns. The resulting ambiguity creates confusion, but even the young women still assert their role as moral subjects not objects (23-25, 44-47).

Frans Wijzen and Ralph Tanner claim that outsiders have been quite unsuccessful in changing Sukuma practices, discourse, social outcomes and beliefs in core areas. Many Sukuma feel that intervention by foreigners and representatives of the national government has made things worse (2002, 109). Missionaries tended to stay longer and have deeper understandings and appreciation of Sukuma language and culture than other outsiders, including researchers (102-109). Yet in the introduction to their latest book, Laurenti Magesa feels that if the missionaries had really touched the core of Sukuma peoples lives there would have been more than minimal conversions (Wijzen and Tanner 2002, vii- viii). He suggests missionaries have not always done a good job of contextualizing the Biblical good news in ways that scratch where people in Sukumaland itch. Could events of sickness and death be an area of greater contact between Christ and the Sukuma? Possibly they could, since the great crises of faith and practice for Christians and others (including conversion, reversion, and spiritual growth) are often triggered by events of sickness and death.

I have not always understood sufficiently or responded wisely myself. I value this research because we have lived in Northwestern Tanzania for 10 of the past 13 years and built deep relationships. Especially the first few years our family suffered from many sicknesses, panic attacks, and a still-birth in addition to culture shock and being away from familiar supports. We asked God and others, “Why are we suffering?” and tried to relieve our suffering. Many of our Tanzanian friends got sick, buried children, and died. We struggled with them at bedsides and gravesides to find understanding, remedies, and comfort. In all these situations, I noticed that the causes mentioned and treatments employed by my neighbors and friends had similarities, but also many differences to mine, even when they

were fellow Christians. For example, when three major tragedies in our city killed tens to many hundreds, I blamed mechanical negligence (overloading the ship, not fixing the bus brakes, building houses too close to the stream), but others in Mwanza blamed the president for using witchcraft to gain power by sacrificing people.

I taught experienced ministers in Lake Victoria Christian College (LVCC) from 1995-2003. One of the challenges we have explored together in the Bible is how to address the suffering in our own lives and in those we are ministering to. We need a deeper understanding of Sukumaland practices, discourse, beliefs, and social outcomes in order to address suffering in a more Christian way.

Christian Response

Jesus did bring good news to the suffering, sick, demonized, and dead. Every Christian minister faces the challenge of reconciling Jesus' good news with continued experiences of suffering. In times of suffering such as hunger, illness or death people look for answers – first within their current beliefs and resource and then sometimes by turning to new answers (like a new religion/church or biomedical treatment), or returning to neo-traditional answers. This may be encouraged or discouraged by the various communities in the context. How can the church community and its ministers address people's experiences in these areas?

Central to the gospel of Jesus Christ is good news about suffering. Everyone in the world struggles with these experiences. A great deal of mission and church resources are expended to address suffering and to contextualize Christ, but are they as effective as they could be? Insight from the example of Christians and ministers in Northwestern

Tanzania can be helpful elsewhere: in missiology, theologizing, training ministers, evangelism, and ministering to sufferers.

Missiology discusses contextualization, self-theologizing, and contextualized training of ministers in general theoretical terms. Not enough study has been done of specific items in specific contexts to know how well these theories work or possibilities for improvement. Tite Tienou (1990) says that the desire for African theologies is good.

Grassroots ministers and local congregations in Africa especially need to know how to do theology, but African theological education has not been contextualized enough to do this sufficiently (76). “Africa produces what it does not consume and consumes what it does not produce” not only economically, but also theologically. In general, African theologians have tended to write for their Western professor in colonial languages, and usually what little is available in local languages has been translated from a Western author (Tienou 1993). This is true even of Swahili which is an international language with about as many speakers as German (100 million speakers). Tanzanian Pentecostal pastors I talked to usually have not read or even heard of East African theologians like Mbiti or Magesa. Andrew Walls (2007) says,

But in African visions there was an open frontier between the supernatural and natural. So they inherited a theology that didn’t fit their reality. Western theology is not incorrect, but pared down to a much smaller universe. Witchcraft was beyond the reach of Western theology. 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. I have killed three children. What can I do?” Western theology swept witch and witchdoctor and most traditional healing into one trash heap of superstition. This has been incalculably damaging.

Those who were semi-educated made the initial exploration. (The educated Africans thought if they kept studying they would find the missing key.) God in Christ should fill the world, but it had nothing to say about much of their world. They read the NT

themselves and found the areas that Western theology had bracketed out. There is evidence of creative informal theology all over Africa by people who didn't know they were being theologians.

African Christian practice recognizes that Jesus must fill the world and cope with the open frontier between the empirical and the spiritual. The AICs have been outflanked by the Charismatic movement. But there is as yet no adequate theology to cope with this - to affirm, correct, and help what is happening pastorally.

This study focuses on such Pentecostal/Charismatic pastors attempting to develop a theology big enough for the African worldview, specifically concerning witchcraft. How should they respond if someone comes and says "I am a witch," and more commonly when someone says, "She is a witch. She has killed three children"? Magesa says "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" (2006, 174). Samuel Kunhiyop (2006) says

Belief in witchcraft is approaching endemic proportions in Africa . . . it is widespread among Christians too. Christian rituals are sometimes seen as little more than a form of protection against witchcraft. . . . There is an urgent need for the culturally postulated reality of witchcraft to be addressed pastorally with seriousness, sensitivity, and respect.

Limitations

This research focuses on practices, discourses, and beliefs in Northwestern Tanzania, especially among Pentecostal ministers. I specifically focus on Sukumaland. Although some comparison will be made to literature about other places in Tanzania and East Africa, its findings will not be directly applicable to other cultures/places or even all groups in Northwestern Tanzania. However findings in this study may generate hypotheses and theories that can be used in many other contexts that have similar issues. For example, how Sukuma ministers theologize about witchcraft may help Aguaruna Christians in Peru who

struggle with witch accusations and witch-killings. More importantly, if this study gives insights to a process of teaching self-theologizing that can inform other Christian adult education settings, learning and ministry might be improved in various settings and related to various topics.

I conducted this study as an insider-outsider. I abandon the modernist claim that my research is unbiased, objective truth. With post-modernists, I freely admit that I have a subject position as a white, American, Evangelical, Pentecostal, missiologist/missionary/teacher. Living in Minnesota for 33 years and in Mwanza 10 of the past 13 years definitely shapes my perspective. With most Africans, I assume that God and other spiritual beings exist. As an insider with other Evangelicals, I believe that the Bible reliably records God's revelation into various cultures and languages in a unique way. This includes its record regarding Jesus Christ, healing, angels, and demons. With other Pentecostals I affirm that all of these remain active. God continues to speak and act in creation, history, and people's lives. The Bible's unique revelation allows us to discern his current activities and realities.

With Paul Hiebert I aim to be a post-post-modernist and critical realist. The external world is real and objective knowledge of it possible although my knowledge of it is partial and subjective. Different research traditions and sciences provide different maps that should be complementary (1994, 19-52). I do not affirm the uncritical, modernist position that science (or my understanding of theology) gives me completely accurate, objective knowledge, or its corollary that anyone who does not see the world like I do is less enlightened (but hopefully will "develop" and leave behind "superstitions" like "belief in

witchcraft”). The post-modern, secular humanist position “that all the precepts upon which I have been content to live my life in a world without witches are demonstrably as baseless as those supporting my friends as they make their way through witch-ridden worlds . . . matters of belief . . . that emerges from biochemical quirks of our brains” (Ashforth 2005, 317, 318) allows for humble appreciation of African’s point of view. But it still denies that Africans have accurate knowledge. In my opinion, if we really believed that all of our knowledge and values was no more than biochemical quirks and reactions (and therefore none was truer or more loving),¹ we would have little motivation to research and write or live ethically and lovingly. Killing or defending a suspected witch would be equally baseless and loving. We need to listen, research, and help each other move toward truer, more loving and life producing understandings. Empirical, logical and pragmatic tests can lead us toward what is truer. Comparing worldviews is possible and necessary, but it is more difficult than counting cows, because we must analyze evidence from cosmology, anthropology, ethics, religious

¹C. S. Lewis suggests that the statement that all beliefs simply come from biochemical quirks is equally produced by a biochemical quirk. Therefore the statement itself is no more true than a hiccup. Does Ashforth really believe that his well-researched 300-page book is simply a matter of belief that emerged from biochemical reactions in his brain and is no more true than a hiccup?

Ruel (1997) questions why we chose to call something belief or knowledge. Why does the literature mostly talk about “witchcraft beliefs” and anthropological understandings or knowledge? Postmodernism does allow talking about the beliefs of anthropologists and how they are socially motivated. Even though I reject Kantian dualism, there is no truly neutral terminology. English generally forces a choice between using “belief” or knowledge. If I put “witch” in quotations, I signal my disbelief and if I do not I signal that there witches really exist and cause harm. In this dissertation therefore, I am sometimes purposely inconsistent in my use of terminology and quotation marks.

Interestingly, Ruel first studied Kuria rituals and beliefs while very few of them were Christian, but he was Catholic. Now (like many others from Britain), he is happy

experience, and history. “The world view that most naturally explains wide ranges of evidence is the best” (Clark 1993, 88, 89).

This study deals with people’s experiences of illness and beliefs about its causes. It has implications for health care and health education in Northwestern Tanzania. But it is not a medical study or even medical anthropology.

This is primarily a descriptive study, not a prescriptive, theological, or Biblical study. Debates between Calvinist, Arminian, and Openness theology perspectives on causation or suffering cannot be attempted in this study. This study focuses on describing the process that these ministers go through in self-theologizing rather than answering all the theological debates about suffering, illness or death. The Bible itself gives many answers, but no simple conclusion about what causes suffering. In the book of Job where God had a perfect opportunity to answer why even blameless people suffer, He did not. But how Job responds is critical. In the end our response to God in suffering is more important than our beliefs about causation (Dau 2002; Yancey 1977).

to call himself a “pagan,” while many Kuria have become Christians.

CHAPTER 2

PRECEDENT LITERATURE

I will give a brief introduction to the more significant missiological (and sometimes related) literature related to the research problem and data. I will explore the following: location and participants; relationships between experiences, discourse, practices, beliefs, and social outcomes; contextualization theory; spiritual warfare; suffering; and witchcraft.

Location and Participants

There are many ethnic groups in Northwestern Tanzania, but I have chosen to focus my literature review on the Sukuma who are the largest group in Tanzania and who were the largest group of participants that I gathered data from. Christianity in Tanzania and Northwestern Tanzania has grown especially Pentecostal churches. I will explore some of the literature on Christianity in Northwestern Tanzania and on Pentecostal Christianity in Africa. Literature on Pentecostal Christianity in Northwestern Tanzania is very limited.

Northwestern Tanzania

I did this research in Northwestern Tanzania. In 1900, 90% of Tanzanians followed local, traditional religions, 7% Islam, and only 2.5% believed in Christianity. By 1967, these three religions each claimed about a third of the population (Barrett 2000, 730). In 2000, the Muslim numbers are unchanged, but half are Christians and only 15% claim to

follow traditional religion (Johnstone, Johnstone, and Mandryk 2001, 615).¹ Practically, the great majority would still follow local, neo-traditional religion at least some of the time.

The rectangle on the following map shows the area of Northwestern Tanzania within which the research was conducted (map downloaded from www.mapsofworld.com):



¹The Tanzania government since 1967 avoids publishing new figures on ethnic groups/tribes and religions in order to promote a united Tanzanian identity. Therefore all such figures are approximations.

A study published in 2005 by the Remaining Task Mission (RTM) using national census data (available at <http://www.tanzania.go.tz/census/>) and surveys by volunteers gives these results:² Tanzania's total population in 2004 was 36.6 million. Most live in rural areas, but continue to move to cities (18% urban in 1988; 23% in 2002). They are young: 78% under age 35, 44% under 15. Three-fourths of the Christians are nominal: 45% were Christian, but only 11% regularly attend church. Church attendance is half of that (5.2%) among the nearly 10 million in Northwestern Tanzania (Mwanza, Shinyanga, Kagera, Mara political regions) (30). Even fewer attend in rural areas. In many Tabora NW Tanzania rural districts only 1% attend church (every Kagera district outside Bukoba, Mara: Serengeti and Bunda, Mwanza: Sengerema and 2% in Geita and Ilemala) (68, 98, 123). This study claims 55,000 churches need to be planted in Tanzania by 2010 to have one church for every 500 in rural areas and one for every 1000 in urban areas. Northwestern Tanzania has a quarter of Tanzania's population but needs 35% of these new churches (approximately 6,000 in Shinyanga, 5,000 in Mwanza, 4,000 in Kagera, and 3,000 in Mara), 45% with and Kigoma regions added (3000 each) (35). Those attending church are 25% Pentecostal, 26% Evangelical, 30% Roman Catholic, 13% Mainline and 6% other. Because Pentecostals have the lowest average attendance (108) and Catholics the highest (336), 45% of the churches are

²They used indicative results of the 2002 census data. Non-census data is somewhat questionable due to using 15 surveyors with two days training supplemented by 320 assistants and less than rigorous research methods. It may give artificially low numbers. For example this survey lists only 316 churches for the whole Mara region, but PEFA alone has 100 churches there. However no other data I have seen gives current, localized data for all denominations.

Pentecostal (32, 37). The Pentecostal denominations are growing faster and planting more churches than other denominations (9, 39).

Sukumaland

I chose to focus on one ethnic group in more depth rather than provide a cursory literature survey of many. There is a significant literature related to the Sukuma. The literature argues that the Sukuma have more people, more followers of traditional religion, and more witch killings than other ethnic groups in Tanzania. The Mwanza and Shinyanga political regions of Northwestern Tanzania together approximate Sukumaland. The majority would identify themselves as Sukuma and speak Sukuma, but not everyone is Sukuma, especially in Mwanza city and other towns. The 2002 census lists 5.75 million in Mwanza and Shinyanga regions³ growing at 3.25% annually out of a total Tanzanian population nearing 35 million (<http://www.tanzania.go.tz/census/>). The Sukuma are a patrilineal, Bantu people. They speak virtually the same language as the Nyamwezi to their south (Mesaki 1993, 193).

Because the Sukuma have heterogeneous origins, have always been widely spread over a large area, and have customs that vary from place to place and time to time, it is difficult to find a unique unity in Sukuma culture or worldview. Therefore almost nothing can be called exclusively Sukuma (Wijisen and Tanner 2002, 42). “The Sukuma have always been aware that immense variations exist within their own communities, that each individual and group is in a constant process of change, and that orderliness is an illusion” (186). Therefore it is important to talk about worldviews (plural) in Sukumaland.

There is a wide variety in statistics about what percentages of Sukuma people follow which religions. This shows that no recent accurate statistics have been published. More study is needed. The RTM (2005) study says 7% of the Mwanza population and 6% of the Shinyanga population attend church regularly. The percentages are much higher in urban districts (16% in Nyamagana (Mwanza) and 26% in Shinyanga Urban) than in rural districts (123, 159). The demographic introduction of a paper on AIDS (Changalucha et al. 2002) claims, "About 70% of the population in Mwanza town are Christians, 20% are Moslems, and 10% hold other religious beliefs. In rural areas of Mwanza Region, the corresponding figures are 76%, 5%, and 29% (2002, 91). Catholic missiologist Wijzen and anthropologist Tanner say 85% of Sukuma follow indigenous religion, 10% are Catholic, 3% Protestant, and 2% Muslim (Wijzen and Tanner 2000, 9,10). This contrast may partially reflect what is actually being measured in different methods of data collection and in the definition of "Christian" (label or practice?). Demographic data like the AIDS study, asking in one question for a label of "religion" (a foreign loan word in Sukumaland generally understood to refer to Christianity or Islam) would tend to produce much higher numbers than missiological analysis (Wijzen and Tanner) that investigates if people practice Christianity or traditional practices. A survey of actual church attendance (RTM) can be expected to be even lower. There is also overlap in any statistics since even many who attend church also attend local healer's clinics. To summarize, a small percentage practice Christianity. Some of those

³Tabora region where the Nyamwezi (and others) live lists 1.7 million.

also join the vast majority who practice indigenous religious practices, especially in times of illness or death.⁴

Wijisen and Tanner say so few Sukuma are Christian because . . . In this study we wish to show that indigenous religion was functional in small-scale societies, but that it is not able to cope with the large-scale problems in this globalizing world. However, with the Sukuma this does not lead to a conversion to one of the 'world' religions, as happened among the Chagga and the Haya, but in the development of quasi-traditional activity. [By quasi-traditional we mean the cultural dynamics by which beliefs and practices are adopted within the traditional paradigm, by stating that they were Sukuma beliefs and practices 'tangu zamani' since long ago, whereas they were borrowed from other cultures or religions. As written documents are lacking, Sukuma memory is flexible.] . . . It is our contention that much modernization occurred at the level of surface structures, but that the deep structures or 'root paradigms' did not change. Root paradigms are the unquestioned assumptions about the fundamental nature of the world and humanity that underlie all social actions with a specific cultural context (Turner, 1974:33-44) . . . We do not want to romanticize their situation. However, it is our contention that the Sukuma are well equipped to resist the modernization process, from which they do not think that they have profited much in the long run. They did not become much involved in the Western-Christian 'civilization' and retained their cultural patterns much more than other Bantu peoples in Eastern Africa. (Wijisen and Tanner 2000, 8, 9)

⁴Changalucha references 1988 government census report for the city and a 1997 paper on STDs for the rural data. Demographic data would probably ask a single question about a person's "*dini*" (an Arabic word imported to Swahili and connected to the formal religions of Islam and Christianity. Sukuma did not originally have a word for "religion" (Wijisen and Tanner 2002, 58).

Wijisen and Tanner do not footnote their source. Later they quote the 1959 census, which lists 15% as Muslim or Christian leaving the rest by default as followers of traditional or neo-traditional religion. They do make more careful examination of Catholic parish records, which show little growth. Even Bukumbi with 120 years of continuous Catholic presence has only 5% Catholics (2000, 122,123). Possibly they are just using these old statistics based upon the fact that Catholic parishes they have sampled have not grown much. Neither has lived in Sukumaland for 15 years.

In other recent studies, approximations for followers of traditional religion vary, but are all high: The regional commissioner 10 years ago said Shinyanga region was 96% traditional religion (Mesaki 1993, 197). Two very small local interview samples give 58% (Kerwin quoted by Mesaki 1993, 197) and 48% (Roth 1999, 85). Barrett (2000, 730) and Johnston's (2001, 616) statistics on the Sukuma cannot be trusted because their population statistics disagree significantly with recent census data.

They believe the Sukuma have changed little at the “root paradigms” or “worldview” level despite surface level changes. They have chosen to reject conversion to foreign worldviews and rather revitalize their traditional culture by adapting it at the surface level. This includes adopting some foreign cultural aspects. In a sense, they have “contextualized” their “traditional” religion to current contexts.

Christianity is identified as Western in Sukumaland even more than among neighboring tribes.⁵ Some Catholic missiologists have struggled with the minimal conversions among the Sukuma and attempted to contextualize into Sukuma worldviews (e.g., Tanner 1969; Wijzen 1993; Wijzen and Tanner 2000; Healy and Sybertz 1996). When possible, I focused on ministers who identify themselves as Sukuma (or Sukuma speakers) in order to allow comparison with previous studies of the Sukuma.

Pentecostal Ministers

Within Northwestern Tanzania, I focused on Pentecostal ministers' experiences and perspectives. Teaching at Lake Victoria Christian College (LVCC) gave me a history of many contacts, deeper relationships, and trust with them as well as a venue for the critical contextualization class/focus group and current contact. I have visited many of their homes and churches. Most are from one of many Pentecostal denominations. Admission to LVCC requires application and a pastor's recommendation that demonstrates that a person

⁵Bakinikana (1975) claims the Sukuma reject Christianity as primarily a European religion. He contrasts this with his own mostly Christian ethnic group, the Haya. Ganda Christians who presented Christianity as a Ganda religion had reached the Haya, but there had not been the same influence from African Christians in Sukumaland (145 quoted in Roth 1996, 66).

is currently doing ministry. Their ministries range from youth or women's leaders to district overseers. Most are pastoring small churches. A major, time-consuming expectation of ministers in this context is that they be available at any time to pray for the sick and bury the dead of their congregation and others. Therefore they are much closer to these phenomena and probably have better intuition for understanding and responding pastorally to their people than any outsider. They also have the most experience dealing with the tensions and struggles in applying Biblical teaching in the local context. Discovering the tension points allows for better addressing them through theologizing, training, pastoring, and ministering.

Although anthropologists have begun to research Pentecostals in Africa (e.g., Meyer 1999), Christians, and especially Pentecostal ministers, have been under represented in anthropological research in Africa and Tanzania. This is especially true considering their current numbers. "The Pentecostal and Charismatic movements undoubtedly are fast becoming dominant forms of Christianity on the continent [of Africa]" (Anderson 2004, 103), reaching 11% of the whole continent's population according to Johnstone (2001, 21). Recent more rigorous research focused on ten nations across the world (Pew Forum 2006). It found that Pentecostals alone account for more than a third of Kenya's population. Over half of Kenyans are Renewalists (Pentecostals or Charismatics). One third of Nigerians are Renewalists. Just over a quarter of South Africans are Renewalists, while Renewalists in the United States comprise just under a quarter. In Nigeria and Kenya, the number of Renewalists exceeds the number of other Protestants, and Pentecostals alone are about half of all Protestants. In South Africa and the U.S.A., the majority of Protestants are non-Renewalists (4). When asked if they had experienced or witnessed divine healing, revelations

or exorcisms, Pentecostals in these nations were more likely to say “yes” than Charismatics who were still more likely to say “yes” than other Christians. Every type of African Christian was more likely to respond affirmatively than their American counterpart. For example 71% of Kenyan Christians say they have experienced or witnessed a divine healing and 61% an exorcism compared 29% of American Christians seeing a healing and 11% seeing an exorcism (8).

In Tanzania, focus has been on traditional religion (Millroth 1965; Mbiti 1969), traditional healers and diviners (Roth 1996), spirit possession (Erdsieck 1997, Larsen 1998, Kim 2004), witchcraft (Abrahams 1994; Mesaki 1993; Moore and Sanders 2001), Islam, or sometimes prophetic or AIC churches. Too often Christianity is represented only as a Western intrusion not an African religion (e.g., Beidelman 1982, 1986). Maia Green (2003) focuses on power relations and syncretistic Catholicism in Southern Tanzania. Wijzen and Tanner (2000, 2002) and Lupande, Healy, and Sybertz (1996) have done missiological research among the Sukuma, but have focused on contextualizing Catholicism. Others doing more missiological research in East Africa have focused more on mainline churches than Pentecostal churches (Taylor 1958, 1963; Kibor 1998; Nki 2001).

There is debate about whether Pentecostals include AICs (Anderson 2000) or not. Ogbu Kalu calls them estranged bedfellows (2000). Omenyo (2002) discussing Charismatic contextualization in Ghana says “Charismatics tend to take the African worldview seriously and respond to the issues it raises by first recognizing the fact that all primary causality is attributable to spiritual sources such as Satan, demons, and witchcraft . . . to embrace issues such as healing, deliverance, prosperity, and miracles” (266). They

completely condemn the traditional means of combating evil as demonic, but “provide alternative means of arriving at the same goals which traditional rituals seek to achieve” (269).

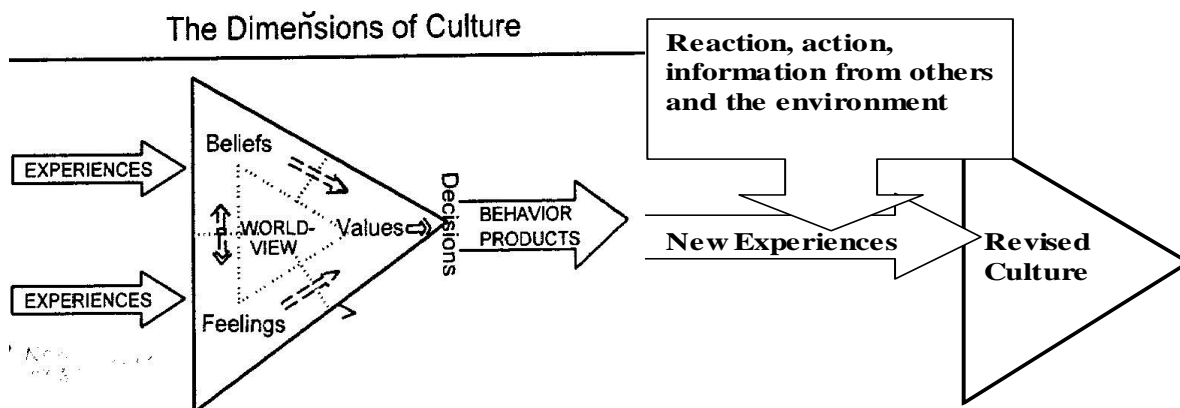
Mlahagwa (1999) records the growth of the Tanzanian revival movement. He shows how much it has influenced and been influenced by the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement. His brief history accurately portrays this as an East African phenomenon and is full of Tanzanian’s names with missionaries barely mentioned. The Mwanza ministers in LVCC are almost all in denominations independent from Western denominations, but with roots and doctrines from Western Pentecostal missionaries.

Relationship of Experiences, Discourse, Practices, and Beliefs

Various educational, philosophical, and anthropological models have attempted to define the relationship between experiences, discourse, practices, and beliefs. I have used Paul Hiebert’s model of culture as a beginning theoretical model. I have made a tentative addition to reflect culture change (using some concepts from adult education theorists like Dewey [1938] and Mezirow [2000]) (see figure 1 below Hiebert 2003, 15).

Figure 1 (from Hiebert):

My addition to show culture change:



Notice that interviews and participant observation studied some current experience and behavior (practices and discourses), not beliefs. Analysis of this data together with insights from informants explored the beliefs connecting the experiences and behavior. The beliefs provide models to understand the experiences and models for behavior.

These cognitive beliefs also have relationships with feelings and values. Hiebert calls “worldview” a deeper level of beliefs, feelings, values which are more assumed and harder to change. He is rather unique in defining worldview as more than beliefs. Worldview is “the fundamental cognitive, affective, and evaluative assumptions and frameworks a group of people make about the nature of reality which they use to order their lives. They are the people’s images or maps of the reality of all things. They are what the people think with, not what they think about” (Hiebert 2003, 15).

In my addition, culture change comes through mechanical and social interaction with beings and things in changing contexts. These beings include those within the culture and those outside of the culture (members, neighbors, foreigners, spirit beings, and God). This interaction includes social outcomes like approval, agreement, or punishment. It includes health outcomes like illness, death, and healing. All of this results in new experiences that reinforce or modify the culture. This takes into account the praxis argument that behavior (practices and discourse) produces beliefs as much as beliefs produce behavior.

Most modifications to culture are on the surface level, as new experiences are integrated with the taken-for-granted reality of the worldview. Worldview shifts less easily. So malaria tests, drug treatment, church services and Christian baptism can be added without changing the underlying belief that serious illness must be caused by someone, not just a

mosquito or parasite. This model reflects a cycle where new experiences continue to revise a given culture. Experiences of illness, death, and suffering are especially powerful at reinforcing or changing a culture's beliefs, feelings, values and therefore discourse and practices.

Hiebert also talks about the diachronic dimension of worldview imbedded in people's myths [understood technically as] – “the grand narrative that serves as the paradigm by which the ordinary stories of human life are interpreted. In other words, myths are transcendent stories believed to be true, that bring cosmic order, coherence, and sense to the seemingly senseless experiences, emotions, and ideas in the everyday world by telling people what is real, eternal and enduring” (Hiebert 2003, 16) (see Basso 1984 on discovering values in stories). The ordinary stories of human life told with interpretation teach this grand narrative. The oral emphasis in Northwestern Tanzania (stories, songs, dance, proverbs, etc.) suggests that we look for local worldviews in oral stories. Therefore I focused on hearing and analyzing ordinary stories of illness and death first and asked for help interpreting and analyzing later. The Bible also communicates much of its grand narrative through ordinary stories of human life with interpretation, including stories of suffering, illness and death. Critical contextualization gives a format for comparing local and Biblical stories, in order to create new experiences and narratives.

Following Geertz (1979), Hiebert says worldviews are both models of reality and models for action. Worldview provides cognitive systems of explanation and justification for belief in these systems, emotional security in the face of suffering and uncertainty, validation of our culture's deepest ideas of righteousness and sin, integration of ideas,

feelings, and values, and stability by sifting what new ideas are acceptable into our old paradigm (Hiebert 2003, 17, 18). These models also produce action in practices, discourses and social outcomes. This study begins to answer this call:

People's ideas about well-being, misfortune, and evil must be transformed by biblical teaching as much as their understandings of the nature of God. . . . To transform animistic worldviews, missionaries must understand the underlying beliefs in spirits, magic, divination, and witchcraft. . . . Westerners must also examine their own views of causality and test them in the light of the Scriptures. . . . Western science and its construction of reality fails to answer deeper questions of human existence. . . . The Bible offers a third alternative to modern secularism and animism. (Hiebert, Shaw, and Tienou 1999, 168,169)

Beliefs: Causes and Cures of Suffering

Understanding and dealing with misfortune usually follows five steps: define as adversity (different cultures define this differently, but with many common themes), choose a belief system to explain it, diagnose the cause using this system, select a remedy, apply it, and evaluate the results (Hiebert, Shaw, Tienou, 1999, 141 and Hiebert personal communication). I have used these steps for synchronic analysis of the stories and other data in the main body of this dissertation.

In finding meaning amidst the disorienting dilemma of suffering, illness, and death, a causal explanation helps people deal with the absurdity and purposelessness of it (Hauerwas 1990, 72). Every culture has causal explanations for suffering (frequently in similar categories), but the options and emphases differ between cultures. Schweder mentions eight causes of suffering which cultures emphasize to various degrees: Interpersonal, personal, astrophysical, moral, biomedical, socio-political, psychological, and stress/environment (Schweder 2003, 76-79). He simplifies this further into moral,

biomedical, and interpersonal causal ontologies. I use the same categories to organize and analyze the beliefs I discovered in this research. Schweder analyzes world societies:

On the basis of Park's reading of ethnographic reports from 68 cultures of the world, involving 752 illness episodes, interpersonal (42 percent), moral (15 percent), and biomedical (15 percent) causal ontologies serve as the three primary *explanations* of suffering worldwide. The most frequent *therapies* are biomedical (35 percent), interpersonal (29 percent), and moral (7 percent). (Schweder 2003, 84)

People blame the ill will of others (interpersonal causality) for suffering much more than anything else. "For most peoples of the world there are no faultless deaths" (87). This study shows this to be very true in Northwestern Tanzania (especially witchcraft). Schweder suspects that moral causes may be underreported because interpersonal causation usually has moral overtones, biomedical and interpersonal treatment in Asia includes a god, and ethnographers might miss moral gossip and morality's role in disease prevention (86, 87). Notice that the therapies (practices) do not perfectly match the causal ontologies (beliefs). A person can most easily seek biomedical therapy. Personal moral change is most difficult. People spend billions for biomedical therapies of gluttony, addictions, and STDs. It will be important to look for actual discourse and practice. Stated belief and acted practice often differ, especially during severe suffering.

Hiebert (following Berger and Luckmann) distinguishes mechanical and organic root metaphors for understanding the complexities of the world, including causes of suffering. Although both are present in all cultures, one or the other may be more dominant and different spheres of life may be dominated more by one than another (e.g. modernity emphasizes mechanistic analogies in science and organic analogies in religion). Mechanical metaphors focus on impersonal, deterministic relationship between inanimate objects as in a

machine. Organic analogies understand things as relationships between living beings or sometimes the parts of the body emphasizing life, personality, choice, health, etc. This is similar but not equivalent to Schweder's causality categories of biomedical (mechanical) and interpersonal (organic). Organic metaphors tend to perceive relationships as moral, more so than mechanical relationships (Hiebert, Shaw, and Tienou 1999, 47-49). Schweder's moral causal ontology says the actions of the sick person caused the sickness while the interpersonal causal ontology says it is the actions of another person. Both use an organic metaphor and both often see these actions which causes sickness or death as wrong (mistake/failure/sin/evil). While Schweder shows that a particular causal ontology can be very dominant in a particular culture, Hiebert says that a culture's worldview may have dominant themes and contrasting minor themes in the same culture (Hiebert 2003b).

Mechanical and Organic are also divided into low (this-worldly and visible), middle (this-worldly and invisible), and high levels (other-worldly and invisible) (Hiebert, Shaw, and Tienou 1999, 49). A distinction must be maintained between the cause and the agency or means. Poison or magic may be the mechanical/biomedical means, but who gave the poison is the organic/interpersonal cause question. These explanation systems tend to mix and change as Schweder shows in the U.S. (128). For example, AIDS may be seen in different Mwanza communities as having various mixes of moral, biomedical, and interpersonal causes. Sometimes churches focus on adultery, NGO's on condoms, and local healers on witchcraft. Every group criticizes the other and too few listen. Therefore people do not have clarity about how to avoid AIDS. The field data discussed later shows how dominant interpersonal, this-worldly and invisible causes of illness are for Northwestern

Tanzanians and to what extent they use minor themes like biomedical and moral causal ontologies.

The Sukuma paradigm of the Good Life basically . . . consists in the belief that God cannot be held responsible for medical or ecological disasters, as the Supreme Being is too far from and not interested in this world; that ultimately most evils have a human origin, caused by the ill will of somebody, an ancestor or a witch; that the evil nature of demons, devils and evil spirits is not ontological but ethical, and thus can be changed. Hence it is striking that fatalism has little place in the Sukuma paradigm of the Good Life, and that it is their tradition to seek solutions to everyday problems regardless of the costs involved. It is this cultural paradigm which makes them survive, even in severe circumstances, such as drought or epidemics. (Wijsen and Tanner 2000, 8, 9)

Wijsen and Tanner (2002) claim the belief in interpersonal causation of suffering has been maintained through a more surface level, neo-traditional adaptation to changing circumstances: Many traditional Sukuma diviners/healers in Mwanza now propitiate non-ancestor spirits more often than ancestors because urbanization makes it difficult for the diviner to know the family situation or for the client to return to his ancestor's graves (35).

Social Outcomes

In every culture the community (social system) not just the individual use the options within their culture to diagnose what is really wrong and work to remedy it (Hiebert, Shaw, and Tienou 1999, 134). In Sukumaland, the social resources and response are critical--positively and negatively.

A key social outcome is the discourse and dialogue related to beliefs in witchcraft. "All deaths except those in old age or through some malignant disease were ascribed to witchcraft, and the family of the deceased was determined to find out who had

caused the death by magical means” (Cory 1954, 13).⁶ Traditionally if the dying man himself accused someone and this was confirmed by a diviner and witnessed to by separate witnesses before the chief, the witch could be executed. The accusers also had to pay the chief two cows, and the chief received all of the property and children of the man. If the bewitched person was not already dead the accused would be tortured and could, after a confession, flee the area. The advent of European courts and law drove witchcraft accusations and punishment underground and thus made them less controlled (12-17). Tanner (1970) gives several case studies and an analysis of the traditional system and changes.

⁶**Terminology:** I have chosen to translate *uchawi* as witchcraft in keeping with most recent ethnographic literature and the way that locals who know English translate it. According to the technical definitions that Evans-Pritchard used, I should label it “sorcery,” because the Sukuma informants and most others in Northwestern Tanzania that I asked do not seem to have a category for unintentional or innate, psychic witchcraft. They understand that, even if a person inherits witchcraft from a parent or grandparent, the person must consciously agree and be taught how to use it. Of course, this understanding makes witches more evil than if it was unconscious and unlearned. In more recent anthropological literature many have questioned whether Evans-Pritchard’s distinctions are very helpful in other settings.

Modern “witchcraft” in Western countries is very different than African witchcraft since people brag about being witches. It seems to be more like revived paganism. I heard a discussion about an African law on the BBC in which Westerners and Africans were talking past each other because they meant different things by “witchcraft.”

Witch-killing here does seem to have some things in common with the witch-killing that took place in Western history such as Salem. For example, a needy person whom one has some obligation to help is refused and then suspected of envy and eventually witchcraft. Also in New England, “78% of those accused were women . . . tended to be women out of place – the poor and homeless, the childless, or alternately, women who had inherited property for lack of brothers” (Reed 2007, 216). Like Northwestern Tanzania, this time and place also had many amazing stories of magic mixed with religion circulating. “Thus the first fundamental structure of meaning in Puritan New England was coexistence and coupling of the invisible and visible worlds . . . and both were highly gendered” (220).

Witch killing seems to have increased with the rapid changes of the independence era. “Between 1970 and 1988, 3073 people were killed in the area of Sukumaland after being identified as witches” (Mesaki 1993, 189). Possible explanations given are the disruptions of society and lack of benefit from pre- and post-colonial governments and their programs (Tanner 1970); little missionary impact combined with Sukuma cosmology and the proliferation of traditional healers/diviners; the rise of *Sungusungu* vigilante groups; and tensions from oppressed women; etc. Old women’s red eyes are given as a local cause which seems to be associated with an envious evil eye. A case study involved a widow who came to live with a nephew. After a child of his died, he suspected her of witchcraft and told her to go home, but apparently she had been chased from there for suspected witchcraft. He arranged to kill her with others. (190-227). Wijzen and Tanner explain the sudden upsurge in witch-killing by the only factor exclusive to Sukumaland: the injection of large amounts of cash into men’s hands from the increased production of cotton, primarily by women (2002, 135-139). Thus some get ahead, while others are left behind to envy. Miguel demonstrates that years of extreme rainfall (drought or flood), which produced near famine in a rural Sukumaland district, led to large increases in the murder of suspected witches. He thinks relatives may kill these elderly women to keep more productive family members from starving (2003, 1). Roth says women are more suspect because they are seen as inherently evil or having access to byproducts of birth like placentas, to make medicine (1996, 167-170). None of these authors consider any spiritual cause. Because Sukuma believe strongly in witchcraft, relationships with others must be seen

to be very positive but are always suspected of possibly not being positive. Tanner (1970) thinks the Sukuma word for witchcraft derives from the word for fear.

Properly contextualized response of the Christian community can have powerful effects. In one Nigerian case the community ostracized someone as cursed by the gods due to an accident, but the Christians ministered to him despite this pressure. His conversion led to the entire community's conversion (Fritz 1995, 150).

Contextualization Theory

This research focuses on a process called critical contextualization, but how has this theory develop within the broader debate in missiology? What are contextualization's historical roots?

Historical Sketch of Contextualization

Although the term is new, contextualization has been taking place ever since God first communicated with humans. He communicated with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Job, Moses, David, and Malachi in different ways in order to communicate essentially the same message and invoke a similar response (cf. Kraft 1979). He communicated most powerfully in the incarnation when "the word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Gilliland 2005, Kraft 1979, 173-178). Helped by the Holy Spirit, Jesus' followers contextualized the good news about him first to Jews who spoke many languages, then to Gentiles from various places. Contextualization literature often refers to the question of whether Gentiles had to follow all of the Old Testament laws including circumcision, especially how this question was handled in the discussion of Acts 15 (Flemming 2005, 43-53; Hiebert and Tienou 2006). The New Testament records this contextualization process and is part of the process (Flemming 2005).

Andrew Walls (1997) claims the work of contextualization evidenced in the incarnation and apostolic witness to it continues throughout church history. He shows that Jesus translates into every culture across space and time and not only becomes indigenous and at home in any culture but also a pilgrim transforming every culture (3-15). He shows that not only is something sometimes lost in the translation of Jesus, but something is gained. Even if only the Western movement of Christianity is examined, something was lost but also gained as Jesus became Jewish, then Hellenistic-Roman, then Barbarian, then Western European, then spread with European expansion until now it is mostly outside of Europe (16-25). In the last century, cross-cultural transmission has not only enriched Christianity, but “Once again, Christianity has been saved for the world by its diffusion across cultural lines” (Walls 1997, 22).

The bewildering paradox at the heart of the Christian confession is not just the obvious one of the divine humanity; it is the twofold affirmation of the utter Jewishness of Jesus and of the boundless universality of the Divine Son. . . . the history of the Christian faith on the one hand is a seemingly infinite series of cultural specificities. On the other hand, in a historical view, their different specificities belong together. (Walls 1997, xvi)

Paul and fellow missionaries had to translate the message of Jesus (e.g. Synoptic Gospels) into Hellenistic West Asia and Southern Europe. . . . And the process was hugely enriching; it proved to be a discovery of the Christ. As Paul and his fellow missionaries explain and translate the significance of Christ in a world that is Gentile and Hellenistic, that significance is seen to be greater than anyone had realized before. It is as though Christ himself actually grows through the work of mission – and there is indeed more than a hint of this in one New Testament image (Eph. 4:13). As he enters new areas of thought and life, he fills the picture (the Pleroma dwells in him). It is surely right to see the process as being repeated in subsequent transmission of the faith across cultural lines . . . The full-grown humanity of Christ requires all the Christian generations, just as it embodies all the cultural variety that six continents can bring. (Walls 1997, xvii)

The exponential growth of the Christian faith in the African continent in the past century or so seems to me to raise the question whether this massive encounter with a new body of thought and network of relationship may not be as determinative of the

future shape of Christianity as the encounter with the Greek world. (Walls 1997, xviii)

Therefore contextualization in Africa is not only a matter for the local churches, but has huge potential for new understanding for Christians throughout the world.

Cross-cultural transmission saved and enriched Christianity. Receiving people originally see Christianity as foreign, but then accept it as their own. However successful contextualization can have an ethnocentric down side. Christians usually see their own indigenous and contextualized Christianity as universal, true, or superior Christianity. This is especially true when combined with such myths in the culture.

By 1500, Asian and African Christianity had declined due to various factors including the rise of Islam. Europe was more Christianized than ever and began to explore and then extend its people and influence around the globe. Some missionaries, like the Jesuits, made bold experiments in keeping cultural forms while being criticized by Franciscans and home churches (Hiebert 1994, 76). John Eliot, who began missions ministry in 1646, created “civilized” “praying towns” of converted Algonquin (Shenk 2005, 36-38). In the 1800s Sierra Leone and its European-African Krio Christianity produced great success for those who believed Christianity, civilization, and commerce were needed in Africa to break the slave trade. It sent over a hundred missionaries and ministers for the CMS in just 40 years, but many more traders and skilled workers who spread throughout West Africa and produced their own mission and bishop (Crowther). However, a new breed of missionary, motivated by individual conversion and self-denial that rejected nominalism, saw the marriage with commerce and civilization in Krio Christianity as worldly (Walls 1997, 102-110). They were also influenced by the times. Colonialism proved and rationalized itself

through a theory of cultural evolution. These evidenced the superiority of the Christianity and science of the West (Hiebert 1994, 76-81).

Henry Venn, Rufus Anderson, John Nevius, and later Roland Allen called for creating an indigenous church that would be self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing. From 1850–1970, indigeneity was frequently proclaimed as the ideal and very infrequently practiced. A dependent replication of the sending church was the usual mission church (Shenk 2005, 41-45). Even in places such as Nigeria and Uganda, which developed indigenous churches through the impact of the CMS and bold African missionaries, the churches often became less indigenous (Taylor 1958).

Virtually all the examples of missionaries who based their work on the indigenization model were associated with new missions rather than established ones. In this regard the outstanding example is the Pentecostal movement that emerged in the twentieth century. Pentecostals took Roland Allen seriously and developed a missionary approach based on the idea of the Holy Spirit as the primary agent of mission (McGee 1987:97; cf. Hodges 1953). (Shenk 2005, 45)

The other clear examples were churches independent of missions, like African Independent Churches or the True Jesus church, Little Flock, and Jesus Family in China. While Chinese mission churches were suspected as foreign, these churches grew rapidly. After 1949, all the churches of China were forced to become indigenous and contextualized, many with strong resemblances to these earlier indigenous churches. Explosive church growth has resulted. Lamin Sanneh (1989) has shown that translation of Scripture into vernacular languages even by ethnocentric missionaries, released a powerful dynamic that transformed cultures and Christianity.

Beginning in the 1950s, the rejection of colonialism, the rise of cultural relativism in social sciences, and even postmodern theories of paradigm shifts in hard

sciences, led to a new political and intellectual climate (Hiebert 1994, 82-84). Missionary anthropologists and linguists, like Pike and Nida, began to bring new insights. William Smalley (1979, orig. 1958) suggested that “the three ‘selfs’ are . . . projections of our American value systems . . . based upon Western ideas of individualism and power. . . . We have been Westernizing with all of our talk about indigenizing” (35). He defines an indigenous church as “a group of believers who live out their life, including their socialized Christian activity, in the patterns of the local society, and for whom any transformation of that society comes out of their felt needs under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures” (35). He goes on to say that missionaries cannot found indigenous churches by forcing independence. Usually it is non-missionaries founding separatist churches that are the most indigenous and often very effective in evangelism (40-50). The message of God reconciling the world to himself in Jesus is super cultural. “The faith it engenders is supercultural, but the medium of its communication and the outworking of its faith in individual lives is not supercultural” (38). The church itself will have to make all cultural decisions about how to apply the faith (38).

Development of Contextualization Theory

The term “contextualization” was first used in a 1972 report of the World Council of Church’s Theological Education Fund and a 1973 article by its director Shoki Coe. Theologians from around the world wrote daring attempts to contextualize Christianity in their context (e.g. Gutierrez 1973 and Song 1979).

In Africa, John Mbiti (1969, 1970, 1991) did groundbreaking work in understanding African religions and philosophy and trying to connect them with Christian

theology. He tried to help people understand and appreciate the positive aspects of African Traditional Religion (ATR) and African culture. He was influential in the West and with educated Africans. In *Theological Pitfalls in Africa* (1975), Byang Kato attacked Mbiti for accepting universalism and denying orthodox Christian beliefs in eschatology through spiritualized rather than literal interpretation of the Bible. He accuses him and others promoting “African Theology” in the early 1970s, of trying to elevate African Traditional Religions (ATR) to the same level as Biblical Christianity. Kato recognizes ATR’s belief in a Supreme Being and a spirit world as positive, but he denies any direct divine revelation or redemption in it (44). He emphasizes the need for a Christianity in Africa that is Biblical, orthodox, relevant, evangelistic, united, and discipling/training (181-184); a Christianity that expresses Biblical “theological concepts in terms of the African situation . . . scratching where it itches” (182). He desires a theology that is “truly Christian and truly African” (1985, 8). Gehman critiques Mbiti not only for his low view of Scripture, but for misrepresenting Kamba concepts of time in his bid to reinterpret eschatology (1987, 54-70).

Like Kato, many Evangelicals in the 70s and even 80s, reacted to contextualization as it was used by liberal and liberation theologians. They saw it as a replay of the liberal/evangelical debate about Scripture. They rose to defend the inerrant propositional revelation of Scripture as defined and defended by Hodges, Warfield, and Henry (Chua 2005, 9-16).⁷ However, Evangelicals began adopting and redefining the term by the end of the decade because of the inadequacy of the century-old indigeneity paradigm

⁷Chua has an excellent literature review on hermeneutical concerns in contextualization. Hesselgrave and Rommen (1989) and Kraft (2005, 15-34) also review the

in a changed world. Hesselgrave and Rommen (1989) surveyed Evangelical definitions of contextualization by Kato, Nicholls, and Peters in the 70s (33-34) and show that Conn criticized ‘his fellow evangelicals . . . for confining contextualization to matters relating to the effective communication of the gospel to peoples of other cultures. . . . Would-be contextualizers need to recognize their own culture-boundedness. . . . They must allow Scripture to judge their own enculturated interpretations and lifestyles’ (34). Hesselgrave and Rommen side with those who emphasize teaching the supracultural/divine elements in Biblical revelation (155-157) and confine contextualization to the complex task of cross-cultural communication of the Biblical truth. They consider the task of true contextualization to be getting at the Biblical authors, intent using

sound hermeneutical principles. Through this process interpretation biases occasioned by the interpreter’s own culture can be gradually overcome and, in that sense, the message can be decontextualized. Effectiveness is primarily a matter of contextualizing or shaping the gospel message to make it meaningful and compelling to the respondents in their cultural and existential situation. (211)

Like positivist, modernist science and theology this contextualization model claims to achieve decontextualized objective truth. But is it really possible for any person or message to exist or communicate without a context? Walls (2002) discusses *The Cross-cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of the Faith*. Hesselgrave and company seem to focus only on the transmission by missionaries but ignore the reception by their hearers.

Kraft’s 400-page 1979 *Christianity in Culture* challenged this view in a radical way. He used the Biblical translation ideal of dynamic equivalence (as opposed to literal formal correspondence) to suggest new models for many aspects of Christianity,

literature on contextualization from contrasting Evangelical perspectives.

including theologizing, conversion, cultural transformation, etc. (Kraft 2005, 28). He shows that even Biblical revelation is God communicating in cultural forms and that all communication must be in cultural forms. “Christianness lies primarily in ‘supracultural’ . . . functions and meanings expressed in culture rather than in the mere forms of any given culture” (118). Since meaning is in the receiver, then any form that communicates the meaning and stimulates the proper response is acceptable. Good communication is receptor-oriented and should stimulate a similar response. He argues against Evangelical, static understandings of revelation as a record of objective propositions completed in the past. God continues to disclose himself through various forms in order to stimulate to action that demands a subjective response (Kraft 1979, 179-187). The Bible is an inspired case book of how God has revealed himself in various cultures and forms that can be used to judge whether current revelation is from God (since he will not contradict himself) (187-215). Kraft rightly shows that God revealed himself in culture purposely. Any interpretation or communication of the incarnation or the Biblical record of his actions and speech is also in culture. There is no person who can step out of culture to decontextualize the Biblical kernel of truth and then recontextualize it. The emphasis on God’s continued speaking and action also fits Pentecostal theology. However, even Pentecostals understand God’s revelation in Scripture to be qualitatively different. The radical division between form and meaning also leaves revelation too subjective and relative.

Paul Hiebert managed to critique, synthesize, and go beyond both Hesselgrave and Kraft while keeping them as friends. His 1984 article (reprinted in 1987 and 1994) “Critical Contextualization” affirmed the need to contextualize to avoid foreignness and

ethnocentrism as well as the need to go beyond the relativism and syncretism of uncritical contextualization. He affirmed with Kraft that the gospel must change people's emotions, will, and actions, as well as their ideas. Every church in every culture has the right to develop its own theology. But too often the contextualization discussion focuses on individuals or individual cultures to the point of ignoring the global and historical community of the church. Answers developed in other cultures, at other times and in previous research should be learned, and discussion should bring unity. Contextualization too often affirms the good and ignores the sin in cultures and social organizations. There must be a guard against syncretism and an affirmation of Biblical truth and the uniqueness of Christ (1994, 84-86).

Interdependent, complementary theories with metacultural grids and a critical realist epistemology affirm that "we see through a glass darkly, but we do see" (87-88). We are not stuck in our opinion about whether the proverbial elephant is a rope or a wall. We can help each other feel and see what we do so that we can come up with a bigger understanding. Most helpfully, Hiebert developed a four-step model for critical contextualization that showed how to apply his theory to help people give a critical contextualized response to an issue. The Bible, the Spirit, and the church as a hermeneutical community guard against syncretism (88-92). Hiebert (1989) uses a theory of the triadic nature of signs to affirm the receptor's meaning but still keep an objective referent to signs.

When Christian missionaries did a good job of contextualizing Christianity (like Paul, Cyril and Methodius, Matteo Ricci, de Nobili, Hudson Taylor, Placide Tempels), they were often severely criticized by sending churches, other missionaries, and even earlier converts to a less-contextualized Christianity. This problem continues in practice despite

progress in contextualization theory (Whiteman 2005, 58-65). Globalization through easier travel and communication could help us listen better to each other. In practice, the richer and more powerful dominate the conversation with theological arrogance (Whiteman 2006, 65). Others are allowed to briefly contribute their exotic opinion if they do it in English according to Western rules (Tienou 2006, 45-51). On the ground in Tanzania, much of American missions may not have moved from paternalism to true partnership in reaching the least reached, but simply to “parternalism.” New visions, money, communications, technology, and short-termers pour out to the most reached with West-tested formulas to evangelize and help, not to listen and learn. Of course, Tanzanians often desire the benefits of having a patron who can give their church the buyable blessings of modernity. Churches and pastors often ask me, “Will you please be our missionary?” Ironically, my understanding of contextualization theory sometimes goes against current contexts in a globalizing world. I affirm the choir’s beautiful acapella harmony backed by local drums and rhythm instruments. Tanzanians respond that such music might be okay in the village, but not in the city now. They want me to help them get electric guitars, amplifiers and keyboards with a drum machine or a drum set with a pedal.

Several authors have tried to compare and contrast various models of contextualization. Bevans explanation of six models (2002 [1992]) is the most used. He places them on a continuum between those that emphasize fidelity to the experience of the past (Scripture and tradition) and those that emphasize fidelity to the experience of the present (context) (31-33). Moreau (2006) adapts Bevan’s continuum to compare models. Again prioritization of Scripture or setting (context) determines where models fit. Most

Evangelical models are translation models that prioritize Scripture and understandably communicating God's message for all people in Scripture. Moreau divides those which emphasize context based on their attitude toward and resulting action in the context. Some, like Donovan (2003) among the Maasai, are trying to discover the good which God is already doing in the local culture and affirm it. Others strive to join (God and) the marginalized/oppressed in their struggle for justice against an oppressive context. Moreau affirms the need to notice and use the ways God has been revealing himself as well as noticing the oppressed and where social change is needed and how the gospel can help the oppressed live Kingdom-centered lives (327-329).

Gilliland (2005) also uses six models. Four are from Bevans, but he leaves out transcendental and countercultural, while adding the initial, but outdated, adaptation model and the critical model from Hiebert (505-515). Bevans makes no reference to Hiebert while Moreau includes his model as a translation example.⁸ Gilliland says, "Critical contextualization is, perhaps, not a model in the narrower sense of the term. Rather . . . we are speaking about the intention and spirit that guides all contextualization" (509). Whiteman (2006) says that in his 20 years of teaching, Hiebert's writings are cited more than any others and his critical contextualization forms the theoretical framework for more dissertations than any other theory (55). Some using the theory forget that the local hermeneutical community is not isolated but part of a global hermeneutical community. Therefore, insights learned

⁸Hiebert himself resisted having his model put in a translation category. He felt translation focused on the surface, but he was attempting a model that would contextualize down to the worldview level (Bob Priest, personal discussion June 9, 2008).

locally through critical contextualization should be shared with other communities as well as learning from them (58).

Hiebert (2003a) summarizes stages in the development of contextualization theory: 1. “Packaged gospel approach” saw the gospel as an acultural message to be communicated with little understanding of cultural or social context. Western Christianity was the model. 2. Translation theories: A. “Formal contextualization” tried to translate the acultural (Western) message into other pagan, primitive contexts. B. “Dynamic equivalence” began to recognize the depth of differences between cultures and difficulties of translation. It led to uncritical contextualization as effective communication without concern to preserve the truth or awareness of the evil in cultures. 3. “Gospel in our culture movement” saw context as dominant and how very contextualized to its context Western Christianity is but tended toward subjectivism, instrumentalism and relativism. 4. “Gospel to all cultures” rejects relativism by recognizing the Bible as the center of God’s revelation and all cultures as both good and evil; uses critical contextualization. 5. “From Gospel in its contexts to all cultures” retains the Bible as central and rejects relativism, but affirms that God revealed himself in particular contexts in Scripture (20, 21).

Moreau (2006), Kraft (2005), and Hiebert all critique the contextualization debate for being too exclusively focused on contextualizing theology while leaving out other aspects. Hiebert says the Enlightenment produced two splits: 1. Cognitive is important, public, and separate from feeling and values, which are private. 2. Natural is important, public, studied by science, and separate from supernatural, which is private and studied by theology. Yet God is light (truth/cognitive) love (feeling), and holy (values). Pentecostals

brought back an emphasis on feeling and the close interaction of natural and supernatural (Hiebert, Personal discussion May 4, 2005). I would add that Pentecostalism inherited an emphasis on holiness from its foundation in the holiness movement.

This research examined not only beliefs but also feelings, values, discourse, and behavior among Tanzanian Pentecostals who have what Walls calls an “open frontier” between the natural and supernatural which makes Westerners uncomfortable. I am using Hiebert’s methodology of critical contextualization, but the concepts of step 5 where it is realized that even Scripture is given in context. Because of this different parts of Scripture tend to be emphasized more in similar modern contexts or those where they resonate.

Critical Contextualization

Wayne Grudem says “Systematic theology is any study that answers the question, ‘What does the whole Bible teach us today?’ about any given topic” (1994, 7). Yet according to Hiebert, systematic theology seldom focuses on the diversity and specifics of “us” and “today.” It tends to use Greek logic to attempt universal statements. Biblical theology brings in the diachronic dimension and uses historiographic methods but still misses the many “us” “today.” Missiological theology and the process of contextualization as developed by Paul Hiebert is an inductive process that begins with specific cases of “us” and “today” which are brought into dialogue with the authority of Scripture through the Spirit and the church (Hiebert et al. 1999, 20-29, Hiebert and Tienou 2006). While many have used Hiebert’s theoretical understanding of contextualization, few have examined how well it can be understood and applied by grassroots ministers with limited formal education or Western influence. This study attempts that.

Hiebert addresses the problem of people who claim conversion, but their discourse, practices, culture, and worldview are an incompatible mix of old religious belief and behavior and Biblical Christianity (Hiebert et al. 1999, 15-19). He advocates a four-step group process of critical contextualization rather than uncritically accepting or rejecting old ways, both of which result in syncretism. The first step is phenomenological analysis which begins with careful observation of discourse and practices. These are described and categorized and then understood without judgment as parts of larger systems of belief, logic, and worldview. Step two is ontological critique which focuses on belief and tests the truth of beliefs and values based on Scripture and objective reality. Third is designing a critical evaluative response to traditional beliefs and practices based on what has been learned. The goal is discourse and practices that express Biblical teaching in an indigenous way. The fourth step is the transformative ministries that help people move to the discourse, practices and beliefs which have been identified by the church as godly in this context (20-29). My research led ministers through step one by collecting and analyzing practices and discourse in specific cases of illness and death. I invited them to do two interviews and bring a case study of their personal experience. The remaining three contextualization steps were done in a class setting and were recorded and two of the four classes transcribed. Hiebert and Tienou in 2006 simplified this to a three-step process: Investigate phenomenology, evaluate ontology, and act out missiology.

Hiebert's critical contextualization is really an adult education process. The three-step version fits Jim Plueddemann's (2005) use of Ward's rail-fence model, beginning with practical reality, connecting to truth, and applying that truth again in lived reality.

Hiebert's process has many similarities to Jack Mezirow's "transformational learning" (1991, 2000), which "has moved into center stage as the most researched and written about topic in adult learning" (Merriam 2001, 344). Mezirow advocates individual critical reflection with social support to transform meaning schemes and meaning perspectives (similar to worldview). Both Hiebert and Mezirow prescribe how people's meanings and worldviews can be changed for the better, but Mezirow rejects an outside authority like Scripture deciding what is better. Some critique Mezirow for not paying enough attention to social and cross-cultural dynamics, the importance of community/relational support, and feelings (Taylor 2000; Park 2002; Temple 1999). Hiebert's model better addresses these.

Spiritual Warfare

Spiritual warfare has been a crucial sub-question for contextualization where Africa and America have influenced each other. Missionaries and missiologists have led much of the debate in recent years.

Debate in Missiology

Missionary experiences and writings reintroduced the concept of spirit possession to Enlightenment Christianity in America. John Nevius' 1894 *Demon Possession and Allied Themes* recounted many experiences of Chinese converts casting out demons. They did this not because the Protestant missionaries ever expected or taught on this, but "from an unsuggested spontaneous impulse, the natural result of reading the scriptures and applying its teachings to their actual circumstances" (1894, 14). He discusses and dismisses rival hypotheses and instead gives Biblical collaboration as well as collaboration from other countries and church history (111-313). Later Tippet's said that "power encounter" where

Christ's greater power than the old god is demonstrated was critical to people movements to Christianity in southern Polynesia (1971, 160 and 1977, 42-47).

Hiebert's article on "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle" (1982, 35-47, reprinted 1994, 189-201) highlighted how modern Western worldview emerged and "excluded the middle level of super-natural this-worldly beings and forces" (1994, 196). As a result, "Western Christian missions have been one of the greatest secularizing forces in history" (197 agreeing with Newbigin 1966). A wholistic theology is needed which provides truth encounter with other religions about the ultimate story of cosmic history, power encounter with animistic spiritism about the uncertainties and crisis of daily life and their meanings in human history, and an empirical encounter with secularism about the nature and order of humans, society and the natural world in natural history. These terms and arguments were picked up by Wagner (1996, 49-50, 76-77), Kraft (1989), Warner (1991), Anderson (1990, 27-33), and others who rightly attacked the secular worldview. They promoted victory through power or truth encounters with the demonic. Chuck Kraft wrote a whole book about paradigm/worldview shift and the praxis shift that accompanied it (Kraft, 1989).⁹ But Hiebert in "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle" warned

there is a danger of returning to a Christianized form of animism in reaction to the secularism of the modern worldview. Scripture offers us a third worldview. . . . it is full of references to God, angels, Satan, and demons. However . . . the Bible does not

⁹ Kraft correctly points out that we need a conversion to both more biblical thinking and practice. At one point, I admitted to Tanzanian Pentecostal minister friends that I had written several papers on spiritual warfare, but had never cast out a demon. They said, "What?! How can you be a missionary in Africa and not cast out demons?" I said they should just pray for me. Maybe God began to answer their prayers: A few months later, a woman came to John Mwanzalima's house for a lengthy exorcism in which I did participant-observation (see more details on page 162).

focus its primary attention on the activities of the spirit world. Rather it is the history of God and of humans and of their relationship to each other. Humans are held responsible for their actions. They are tempted, but they choose to sin. (1994, 200)

Hiebert (1994, 2000) later adds the Indo-European warfare worldview and the myth of redemptive violence to the list of errant worldviews. Power encounters in scripture usually result in opposition, persecution, and martyrdom as well as some believing rather than massive people movements. Victory is in the cross not the sword and in truth, love, suffering and righteous means that seek to reconcile a rebellious creation back to a fully sovereign God and to produce shalom and justice between people. The battleground between loyal spirits and rebellious spirits (not God vs. Satan) is within each society, culture, individual, and inner self (not good guys vs. bad guys) (2000, 171-179). The romantic chase and the battle are not the focus. Eternal loving marriage and God's Kingdom are (1994, 203-215). Suffering is the fault of humans. Prayer is primarily to change us not God so it can be costly. The illegitimate authority of Satan and the human governments is demonstrated on the cross and striped in the resurrection (1994, 210-212). This contradicts those who say Satan (Anderson 1990, 98-99) or demons control the world or certain territories (Wagner 1996, 161-183).

But the new wave of missiological teachings on power encounter by Wagner, Kraft, Warner, and Murphy may be have overreacted to secularism and syncretized with some beliefs from folk religion/animism according to Priest, Campbell, and Mullin, (1995). Demonic transfer through objects, curses, descent, or territory is magical not biblical (14-21).

What all of these doctrines have in common is the idea that our vulnerability to the power of demons is based on nonmoral and nonspiritual conditions—conditions of physical contiguity and symbolic association with words, objects, persons, and places. The Bible emphasizes that we need to fear Satan's influence in the doctrinal, moral and spiritual arena—that we need to fear sin and deception. . . . These authors directly invert the biblical emphasis (76).

The evidence given is insufficient for building what amounts to new doctrines. Anecdotes, testimonies of demons and pagans, pragmatic results, feelings, and words of knowledge form the basis of much of the teaching. Specific Scriptures backs up these teachings in a suggestive way, but alternative interpretations of the passages or contradictory passages are not examined (55). Daniel 10 for example is unclear and has been interpreted in many ways other than referring to territorial spirits. Paul's example in I Corinthians 8 and 10 shows that even meat offered to idols can be eaten without harm as long as one does not believe in the idol's power. However for the sake of those who are still bound by a conscience formed by animism, we should avoid doing in front of them anything that they would perceive as idol worship. They may imitate our action, but combine it with a lingering belief in its connection to real power. Thus their action would be following demons. Demons use the opportunity given through faith in contagious magic. But if we fear, follow, and trust God only, we have nothing to fear (56-64, 76-77). This article and the related debate over epistemology relate a great deal to how to discover ontology amidst the phenomenology of spirits, demons, and witchcraft in Tanzania. One student in the critical contextualization class agreed completely with this, but with a different reasoning: He said that witchcraft is real and dangerous and meat or other things can be infected, but if you trust Jesus you will not be harmed just as Mark 16 promises protection against poison and poisonous snakes.

Discussion in Africa

In this globalizing era, Africa has influenced the discussion of spiritual warfare and also been influenced by the debate (cf especially Onyinah 2004). Various

African (and American) worldviews and experiences influence how various African (and American) Christians read their Bibles and do ministry.

Spiritual Warfare and Etiology of Misfortune

For those in most African cultures spirit beings obviously exist. "The typical African cosmology sees the universe as a multi-dimensional entity inhabited by a hierarchy of spiritual beings and forces. The earth is seen as an arena where the spiritual beings and forces interact with man for good or evil depending on the circumstances. . . . the African worldview has no room for accidental death and natural illness. It has no natural cause and effect category; every event has metaphysical etiology" (Onwu 1985, 152). Another author claims that some diseases are classified as natural and can be treated with medicines alone. Others result from some imbalance and must be treated with special medicines and rituals. This occurs because the universe "is full of beings some of which are continuously struggling to disturb the balance" (Oosthuizen 1988, 3,4,9).

Relationships with Spirits in Africa

Evangelical Anglican missiologist Taylor claims the self for Africans is not an object confined within the individual's body, but rather is in relationship with others including the unseen beings. Therefore, deciding if a spirit has invaded the mind or if it is just mental illness is not necessary (1963, 43-53). Christ transforms the relationship to the ancestors by offering victory over any unseen power, but also life and a future resurrection to the dead (164-166). The doctrine of the communion of the saints allows Christians to address the dead and both alive and dead to pray for one another. But the Christian has no need to ask them for anything. Since the dead and living have their needs provided by Christ, they no

longer need each other (166-169). He even wonders if “the Christian’s link with his pagan ancestors, in remembrance and unceasing intercession, may be part of their ultimate redemption” (171).

Some Evangelical African Christian and missionary writers critique this approach as not paying enough respect to Scripture (Gehman 1987, 44-89). O’Donovan says that, given the existence and deceptive strategies of demons, how can one be sure one is talking to one’s ancestor (1992, 259-275)? Gehman asserts, “Evil spirits are present and working in mystical powers, specialists deceive the people, and the people themselves mislead themselves. And the whole of Scriptures from cover to cover forbid any use of mystical powers, whether good magic or bad, protective or destructive, socially approved or anti-social” (1993, 118).

Ferdinando shows that Enlightenment demythologizing of scripture is inaccurate and has serious negative consequences (1996, 103-110). Then he analyzes African understandings of spirits. He finds these to be much closer to Biblical understandings (also Abijole 1988, 127 and Onwu 1985, 152), but highlights important differences. In both there is a belief in powerful, personal, spirit beings organized in some hierarchy. Both look to spirits as a cause of suffering. Both believe in spirit possession and connect it with similar symptoms. However, the Bible is centered on God who is actively controlling. It focuses on His activity and his relationship with humans. Angels are very occasionally mentioned doing something on His behalf. The Bible mentions demons one fourth as often as angels. It never says that ancestors contact people or cause things in their lives, but it does prohibit contacting them. Because Job, Psalmists, Jesus, and the apostles view the spirit realm as a monarchy not anarchy, they give their prayers, praise and complaints to God the King. African religion is centered on people and their relationships with spirits. Biblically spirits are good or bad according to their submission to God. In Africa they are good this time if they are serving me

(111-124). Biblically, demons primarily seek to cause sin rather than suffering. As in Job, suffering is a means to incite rebellion. Salvation likewise is primarily reconciliation with God and entrance into his already/not yet Kingdom. For Africans, salvation is primarily immediate relief from suffering often caused by spirits (125-132).

Blaschke says that to reach animists Evangelists need to preach Jesus as Lord over the demonic powers not just as savior from sin (2001, 33). The first message is that on the cross, He has conquered the other powers they have experienced and now serve with fear. They should not be told that they do not exist, which will only prove to them the evangelists ignorance and keep them from discussing their reality. We must begin with their phenomenology (see Margueritte Kraft, 1995). Maybe some powers only exist in their worldview, but some also have ontological reality according to scripture. Outsiders must be humble. Expect a spirit-filled local to minister more effectively than almost any outsider (Moreau, 1990, 188,189). After they have followed Jesus, He will teach them the other meanings of Jesus' cross for them (forgiveness, freedom from death, example in suffering, etc.) (Hiebert, Shaw, and Tienou 1999, 224,225).¹⁰

Christian salvation must be presented as a full salvation for body, soul, and spirit. The victory of Christ over demonic powers must be included in the understanding and experience of this salvation. "It is because this is not done that millions of African Church-goers trust in other powers apart from Christ" (Abijole 127). The African must understand how Christ relates to the spirits that impact his/her life before he can truly acknowledge Jesus as Lord of his/her life (Baker 1990, 309).

¹⁰The 2000 Lausanne conference in Nairobi gave quite a balanced approach to spiritual warfare in the book published from there and especially the joint statement (Moreau, 2001).

The African Independent Churches tend to have a much more contextualized (and sometimes more syncretistic) theology and practice. These writers all noted this and held it up as an example for other African churches to follow. Those in one South African church "are considered to be experts in granting people protection and fortification against the powers of evil. This accounts to a great extent for the growth of the movement" (Oosthuizen 1988, 17). Another African author arguing for the use of exorcism in the church says: "The result of such a ministry often leads to 'avalanche-like conversions' to the Christian faith" (Igenozu 1985, 190). Writing from a Nigerian perspective, Kailing claims that Western Orthodoxy produced split level Christians and Aladura / Spirit churches tended to syncretism. "Pentecostal evangelicalism offers a third option which has the twin advantages of a fresh approach to African tradition and a reinterpretation of the received Christianity." It acknowledges the spirits, ancestors, gods and the power of curses, blessings, and traditional doctors, but demonizes any spirit or rite that is not directly connected with the Holy Spirit. Therefore sacrifices by local healers to traditional gods bring results because these gods are actually demons and give power in order to deceive. This view has spread far beyond the Pentecostal churches (489-560).

Onyinah (2004) says that while Westerners (like Kraft) have learned from Africans about spiritual warfare, Africans are also learning from the spiritual warfare preaching and teaching of Westerners like Oral Roberts, Kenneth Hagin and Benny Hinn. African deliverance ministers have been building a "witchdemonology" using such influences that is strongly influenced by African cosmology and the centrality of "witches." "The terms 'witch' and 'witchcraft' are used synonymously with the terms 'demon,' 'demonology' and 'evil spirit.' . . . Witchcraft is taken as an advanced form of demon possession. From this background it is assumed that almost all traditional priests and sorcerers are witches" (336). After bringing case studies he says the new ministry and

theology of witchdemonology is engaging with local worldview, but it also has dangers because it does not deliver people from fear. Suppression will not work. This needs to have proper theological analysis of the spirit world to compliment and compete it (345).

Suffering and Witchcraft

As mentioned earlier, all people suffer and try to respond to and understand their suffering, including illness and death. They do this in a variety of ways so there is not really one problem of suffering or evil (as debated within theistic theology in the West), but there are multiple problems with multiple approaches to answering. Christian theologians need to respond specifically to the problems and understandings of suffering in East Africa. In Northwestern Tanzania, beliefs in witchcraft are a significant way that people understand and use to respond to suffering so some of the anthropological and missiological literature on this is explored specifically.

A Theology of Suffering and Misfortune for East Africa

David Clark (1991, cf. 1993) compares various religious worldviews' responses to suffering/evil in a way that coordinates with Hiebert's model. The philosophical problem of evil asks for an intellectual (belief) explanation. There is the problem of what basis we have for deciding something is right or wrong, good or evil (values). In addition the pastoral, experiential, existential problem of pain (feeling) cries for a remedy, relief, a personal answer. Clark claims these dimensions are universal and can be compared between worldviews. He shows that while theism does struggle with the philosophical problem of evil more than atheism or pantheism, it gives a better response to the other two problems. When the same theologian writes about the belief/intellectual and feeling/pain problems the

differences are highlighted: Compare C.S. Lewis' *The Problem of Pain* with *A Grief Observed* and Feinberg's *The Many Faces of Evil* with *Deceived by God*.¹¹

Sudanese theologian Isaiah Majok Dau (2002) gives an extensive explanation and an insightful examination of historical approaches to the problem of evil (primarily in Western theology). He discusses the assumptions in the classical problem that the world should be good, there is a moral law, and we should be able to rationally understand

¹¹Physical suffering also brings other problems. Where there is witchcraft belief a major social/spiritual/meaning problem is that not only am I in pain and afraid of death, but those closest to me may have turned against me.

Feinberg writing from a Calvinist Christian perspective says the most painful social/spiritual/meaning problem is the sense that God, our only hope and former best friend has abandoned or rejected us (1997, 35). Job (23:1-3, 8-16), David (Ps. 22:1) and even Jesus felt this complete abandonment (Mt. 27:46).

Similarly Tienou (2004) says many in Africa ask him about why they are cursed with poverty and other suffering. They sense humiliation and shame because of Africa's suffering. This is understandable given the frequent close connection in many African cultures between suffering and sin. Bediako references Mveng's concept of "anthropological poverty, a category which, for him, denotes more than poverty on the material level, and takes account of the exploitation and sufferings which African people have experienced and which make them the most humiliated people in history, in their social and cultural identity as well as in their humanity" (1995, 144,145). Tienou suspects this is one reason why very little has been written by African theologians on suffering. Yet he feels they should make it a priority (Tienou 2004).

Stereotypes, history and shame may also deter African missiologists and theologians from tackling witchcraft. Ellis (2007) says the term "witchcraft" has been used by Europeans especially beginning in the late 19th century for many extremely varied and little understood African religious practices. This then identified African practices with "primitive and irrational" beliefs and practices in European history. This understanding bolstered the project of colonialization for civilization and Christianization. These European terms and understandings also impact how Africans translate and understand local practices. Ellis appeals for increased, careful, and comparative scholarship into Western and African history and current realities. Before we compare we must know exactly what we mean by "witchcraft" in which contexts in current and historical Europe, Africa, and elsewhere (31-52).

everything (81-88). Western thought follows its Greek heritage in its tendency toward dualism (good battles evil) or monism (evil is not really evil in the big picture) (88-89). He examines Augustine's, Luther's, Calvin's, and Enlightenment Christian responses to the problem of evil (90-108). The Enlightenment abandoned much of the heritage from the Reformation and earlier. Leibniz expresses the optimism of its theodicies by claiming this is the "best of all possible worlds." The suffering of two world wars destroyed much of this confidence (108-117). Dau explains and evaluates how Barth, Moltmann, Berkouwer, Liberation Theology and African Traditional Religions (ATR) answer suffering in a post-Enlightenment world (118-170). All of these more recent views give up on fully understanding or explaining suffering and focus on responding to it (172).

Dau summarizes the rational explanations: evil as non-being, God/good versus Satan/evil, God as sovereign, and the moral view which states that God limits himself out of love. Responding to suffering by accepting it or striving to eliminate it are both advocated. In the end there is much more to suffering than we can explain (213-217). No theology answers the suffering of Sudan.

However, there are striking similarities between the African view and the biblical view. Both consider reality as a totality, as an integral whole. Both assume, not explain evil and suffering. Both do not do away with God because of suffering and evil. Both protest against suffering and evil in songs, prayers, laments and dirges. (169)

Dau (2002) takes a fresh look at the problem of evil using his own and his Dinka people's experience of suffering. Among the Dinka, Nuer, and other African peoples, the deep sufferings of recent decades have not caused people to lose faith in Jesus, but to come to faith in Jesus (51-61). Dau uses a theological approach much like Hiebert's critical

contextualization/missional theology approach (moving from phenomenology to ontology/theology to ministry). He addresses the problem of suffering in a specific East African context. He also approaches this question as a Pentecostal. After ordering his book on the recommendation of a Trinity New Testament professor, I was surprised to discover that he is principal of a P.E.F.A. Bible College in Nairobi (the same denomination that I have worked under and did much of this research with in Tanzania).

Dau analyzes various common Dinka Christian responses. They praise God when victory comes and question him when suffering comes. Many interpret Sudan's sufferings as punishment from God based upon Isaiah 18. Worship of the *jak* (powers revered in traditional Dinka religion but understood by Christians as evil) brings one into a cosmic war zone (as well as the physical war zone) because God is at war with the *jak*. This results in suffering. They believe that suffering has come to turn them to God after the Dinka's long rejection of Christianity. Though they sense God's absence and presence, they believe God will answer their prayer for deliverance from evil (61-72). In this case the humiliation of suffering motivated the Dinka people to respond to Jesus and trust him for answers. An outpouring of over 1500 songs which wrestle with faith, suffering, and the coming of God has been the Dinka theological laboratory and have made Christianity Dinka in a powerful way (72-80).

Dau explores many Biblical passages and perspectives on suffering using five themes: Suffering as consequence, discipline, test, result of following Jesus, and innocent

suffering.¹² Suffering comes as a consequence of sin. God may allow and use consequences, but he is not to blame for evil. We are responsible for our choices. We must rely on God to deliver us from the evil within us as well as around us. Sometimes God not only allows natural consequences, but sends suffering as a correction or discipline (173-185). Suffering also comes as a test of faith to prepare us for greater praise to God and blessing to others (185-190). According to Jesus, Paul, and Peter suffering comes as a direct result from following Jesus (190-203).¹³ According to the book of Job, innocent suffering also happens as a result of living in a fallen world and forces beyond our control (203-211).¹⁴ In the end

¹²Some of the variety of responses to suffering in scripture are also spread into many religions and worldviews. Little identifies four understandings in various traditions of Buddhism and Christianity: retributive, educational, therapeutic, and vicarious/sacrificial. He sees the difference in emphasis (Little 1989, 71). Bemporad says, "Traditionally, religions have responded to the problem of suffering in two ways: first, by trying to place the human experience of pain within the context of an overall understanding of the universe and, second, by showing ways to overcome or transcend suffering through faith, piety, appropriate action, or change in perspective" (1987, 99).

¹³Dau's explication of the Biblical themes is not really new. Compare Hogg's (1917) summary before he begins his theology:

"the ultimate cause of the presence of suffering in the world . . . the Biblical view that this ultimate cause is sin. But as regards the question of the distribution of suffering among individuals the position is different. . . . These elements of a solution are the ideas (1) that sometimes individual suffering is due to individual sin; (2) that sometimes the individual's suffering is due to his individual need for discipline which could be afforded in no other way; (3) that no one need suffer uselessly, since in answer to prayer God will always remove any suffering that serves no good purpose; (4) that to be called upon to suffer for a good purpose is no hardship but an honour, since to be permitted to suffer in that way is to be permitted to follow in the footsteps of God incarnate. (244)

¹⁴Job exposes the exceptions to suffering from sin or discipline. The book shows that God does not (cannot) always explain the mysteries of suffering to the sufferer. Job never gets an answer to "Why am I suffering?", but he gives an answer to the question of how to suffer with his response. He perseveres in pursuing God with honesty in pain (James

Dau says there is no current solution to the problem of suffering because it would have to entail an end to suffering and death.¹⁵ What needs to be done is to face suffering. The key to enduring suffering is in Jesus' incarnation. He explores the themes of the cross, the community, character building and hope as handles to help us confront suffering.¹⁶

The cross tells us that although suffering is still a present reality, God has done something about it and he will completely and totally eliminate it in the future. . . . The cross testifies to the fact that God knows and feels our pain and suffering. He sustains and strengthens us. . . . The cross reminds us that God is actively and lovingly working through our suffering for our good and for his glory. . . . By providing spiritual, emotional, material, and social support to those who suffer the community reassures the suffering ones that they are not alone. . . . Depending on how we respond. . . . Negatively or positively suffering shapes our character. Suffering is somehow related to the process of human maturity and character development. . . . In facing the obvious mystery and cruelty of suffering and evil, the believer stands firm in the hope that they will ultimately be defeated in Christ. Suffering is not the way God wanted things to be. (Dau 2002, 238)

Anthropological Descriptions of Witchcraft

Evans-Pritchard did paradigm-setting research on various African understandings of causes of misfortune, especially sin and spirit with the Nuer (1956) and

5:11). About 100 lament Psalms back him up as the psalmists go to God (the world's ruler and judge) with their complaint. Jesus affirms this by praying Psalm 22:1 "My God, why have you forsaken me" from the cross. But the Bible always keeps a hope that even if the righteous suffer long and hard, if they endure, they will be well rewarded even if not until after the resurrection. Beker says suffering and hope must always be integrated. "The death and resurrection of Christ provide the most adequate norm for dealing with our experiences of suffering and hope" (1987, 117).

¹⁵"Suffering is down at the center of things, deep down where the meaning is. Suffering is the meaning of our world. For love is the meaning. And Love suffers. The tears of God are the meaning of history. But mystery remains" (Wolterstorff 1987, 90 quoted in Hauerwas 1990, 150).

¹⁶These ideas are similar to ones put forward by Yancey (1977) who agrees that scripture has no answer to why there is suffering, but instead focuses on how best to respond to suffering.

witchcraft among the Azande (1937). He gives deep, emic description of how the ideas, feelings, values, behaviors and products of the Azande connect misfortune daily with *mangu*, which he translates as witchcraft. They distinguish the psychic act of witchcraft that one is born with from the sorcery which is acquired/learned and uses bad medicines to perform magic rites. They combat both with diviners, oracles and medicines (21). “Witchcraft explains *why* events are harmful to man and not *how* they happen” (72). A particular unusual misfortune needs a why as well as a how. How a person cut their foot on a stump is obvious, but why on this particular occasion the person should have been so careless and then why it should refuse to heal brings people to suspect witchcraft (67, 68). “The attribution of misfortune to witchcraft does not exclude what we call its real causes but is superimposed on them and gives to social events their moral value” (73).

Westerners expected belief in witchcraft to die out as Africans understood more about science and Christianity.¹⁷ Instead witchcraft beliefs seem to be on the increase (Moore and Sanders 2001; Hiebert, Shaw, and Tienou 1999, 173). Many have commented on this in East Africa (Nki 2001; Abrams 1994; Green 2003).

George Foster (1972) discusses the importance of envy in limited good societies, like most in East Africa.¹⁸ Health, children, and food are the greatest objects of envy. Foster explains ways of reducing envy in order of preferred/first option: concealment

¹⁷According to Ellis (2007) this was based on a misunderstanding of the history of witch-beliefs and witch-killing in North America and Europe and what caused their rise and decline (32-33).

¹⁸I wonder the period of Tanzanian socialism under Nyerere reinforced the sense of limited good in Tanzania and suspicion of those who are rich. I wonder how it is

(display a similar house, clothing, and food as others even if you have money, food, or cows hidden somewhere else¹⁹), denial, symbolic sharing (hospitality, generosity, and patron-client relationships), and true sharing (helping with significant expenses like school fees for close kin) (1972, 165-184). Anyone getting too far ahead of the expected rough equality is envied and accused of witchcraft (cf. Beidelman 1986, 146-158). Anyone getting too far behind is suspected of envy (and therefore possibly witchcraft) like old red-eyed widows. “. . . weakness as well as hatred and jealousy, invites accusations of witchcraft . . . Azande . . . prefer to inquire about men without influence at court and about women . . . persons who cannot easily retaliate later for the insult contained in an accusation of witchcraft” (Evans-Pritchard 1937, 112-113). Various authors suggest that sometimes allowing ambiguity and suggestions that one might be a witch is a way for the weak to get some power and respect.

Many anthropologists have explored how ethnic groups now deal with witches. Three Tanzanian examples: Sukuma force them to leave or may kill them (Bukurura 1994, 61-69). The Kaguru used to kill them, but now “move away or make him do so, for a witch needs contact with a victim” (Beidelman 1986, 145). The Pogoro follow a neo-traditional purification rite, which cleanses witches of their witchcraft. It includes shaving of all body hair, wearing traditional clothes, using medicines, and the killing of a chicken (Green 2003, 120-131).

changing now.

¹⁹For example, most Kaguru eat outside their house where their neighbors can see what they are eating. Thus they prove they are not eating better than others. On the other hand their food storage area is inside the house (Beidelman 1986, 50-60).

Christians' relations to witchcraft are complex. Mainstream Tanzanian Churches agree that witches exist and yet prohibit using traditional means to counter them. They proclaim the power of the church or Jesus over witchcraft and stories abound about power encounters between Christian leaders and witches. Anti-witchcraft movements express opposition to the power of churches and government (Green 2003, 135-140). "At revival meetings Christian Kaguru confess purchasing witchcraft. Some interpret this not as reform but as advertisement to inspire fearful obedience and to secure customers" (Beidelman 1986, 149).

Revivalists thought their salvation cleansed them from the pollution of sorcery . . . confessed publicly to the intimate sins of hatred, jealousy, lying, envy, making false accusations and selfishness . . . greed . . . a few confessed to practicing witchcraft in secret. . . .Conversion to the revival was a means of protection against sorcery and a means of clearing one's reputation. (Peterson 2001, 481)

Recent Missiological Responses to Witchcraft

Harriet Hill recognizes that research on witchcraft is helpful to a point, but limited by researchers' assumptions that the spiritual and psychic do not exist. Most researchers say witchcraft is due to stress on society, social structure or psychological problems. Similarly some missionaries ignore it as superstition. A few researchers say it is a spiritual reality due to psychic powers, which can be used for evil. She sides with this view and says the call then is to live a pure life and use all of our powers for God. She says witchcraft worldview postulates must be transformed to Biblical assumptions which she backs with scriptures: a perfect world to a fallen world, misfortune must be explained to we know we are in God's hands, seeking revenge to trusting God for justice, do not talk about evil to expose darkness, human beings as victims to human beings in control, fear to peace

and protection, managing relationships through witchcraft accusations to speaking the truth in love, group equality through jealousy to group equality through love, kindness out of fear to kindness due to love, guilt projection to acceptance of responsibility (1996, 325-338).

Bosch contends that because witchcraft beliefs are a foundational reality in Africa, they must be taken seriously. Witchcraft is often fused with the new beliefs about Satan and the demonic.²⁰ He sees witchcraft belief as having two negative sources: jealousy and scapegoating. “People’s misfortune is not due to their own incompetence, weakness or sin, but to an enemy who is at the same time branded as enemy of the entire community” (46).

Mission Christianity ignored physical evil/suffering and focused on sin defined as only personal disobedience to God. Often the sins listed were behaviors that Africans respected rather than felt guilty about. Traditional Africa reasons from suffering as evil physical consequences back to sin. Sin is understood as breaking a horizontal relationship, i.e., lack of love. According to Bosch, we need a wholistic understanding so that “if sin and evil are both moral and physical, affecting both our ‘vertical’ and ‘horizontal’ relationships, so is salvation” (52).

Bosch outlines two categories of missiological response to witchcraft: The first is to work within the traditional framework:

1. Develop pastors and rituals that meet the felt needs related to witchcraft beliefs.

²⁰Bosch says this may be influenced by a similar fusion that developed in Europe and led to 500,000 executions of witches in the 1500s and 1600s. Europe at the time was in transition as Africa is today. Others have also shown that witchcraft is the essence of evil in Africa: “Witchcraft is *the* enemy of life” (Magesa 1997, 186). “Witchcraft . . . is a sin

2. Encourage confession and forgiveness (including of perceived witchcraft).
3. Do exorcism that fits within an African and Biblical viewpoint (not a Western import) (52-54).

He thinks we should instead work to transform people's worldview:

1. Avoid scapegoating by admitting we all have a mix of good and evil. Christ is the only sinless one and the only real scapegoat.
2. Confess and combat our own sinfulness.
3. Don't always demand power, but follow Christ in accepting weakness and suffering.
4. Return good for evil.
5. Affirm that good will conquer (55-60).

Magesa (2006) says witchcraft is as real as evil and therefore it serves no pastoral purpose to explain it away. It should be understood in its various contexts. We must scrutinize the authenticity of the practices around beliefs in witchcraft, especially divination. Especially we must ask what parts of divination promote good and which ones destroy. If divination is discouraged by the Churches other means of discovering and dealing with evil must be instituted. New rituals are better than leaving a void in this matter (185-186).

Ferdinando (1999) says modernist Western approaches leave the sufferer in a universe that is ultimately meaningless. By contrast Biblical and African views agree in looking beyond physical causes for meaning in suffering. But the Biblical concept is much more theocentric than Africans' anthropocentric views. So a spirit or person is good or bad depending upon whether he serves God rather than upon whether he benefits me. Suffering

against life itself, not just an aspect of it" (Kwenda 2002, 108).

does result from sin, but according to Job, Luke 13:1-5, and John 9:1-3 particular suffering does not indicate a particular sin that caused it. Spirits can cause suffering in scripture, but communication is to and solution is from only God who is fully in charge (379-389).

Ferdinando (2007) warns against misunderstanding complex patterns of belief by labeling them “witchcraft” or “sorcery.” “Central to most notions of witchcraft is the idea that some human beings possess a capacity to injure others by non-empirical, occult means” (1). He says the Bible says very little about witchcraft. All magic arts are condemned, but their efficacy is not denied. “Nevertheless, nowhere in the Bible are witchcraft and sorcery presented as significant sources of human suffering” (1). The source of magic power is not explicitly identified in Scripture although supernatural power sources seem to be limited to the godly and angelic or the demonic.

Since the Bible does not deny the possibility of witchcraft, labeling it as mere superstition may be more syncretism with modernist rationality and does not comfort those who experience its attack. They may simply return to non-Christian means of defense. “On the other hand, responses which accept the total structure of local witchcraft beliefs at face value, thereby affirm a brutally destructive explanatory system which has little biblical support and so fall into the trap of what has been termed ‘missiological’ syncretism” (1).

Ferdinando counsels a Biblical approach which sees human fallenness as the main cause of human suffering, exalts the supremacy of the risen and enthroned Christ (as Paul did in response Ephesians and Colossians without belittling the his reader’s fears), recognizes

Satan, and not the witch is the real enemy of humanity. As such, he – the liar and father of lies (Jn 8:44) – fosters and exploits witchcraft paranoia in order to foment

human violence and suffering and destroy human community. Finally insofar as witchcraft fear and accusation breed in an atmosphere of interpersonal suspicion, envy and hostility, churches must proactively seek to become true communities of reconciliation, which function as salt in the wider society. (2)

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

I designed a research methodology for this ethnographic research that fit the context of Northwestern Tanzania and my role in that context. I also aimed for greater understanding and ultimately positive outcomes for at least some participants in and recipients of this applied, action research.

Data Collection

I collected recollected experiences of illness and/or death episodes using ethnographic methods, including interviews, focus groups, participant observation, written stories, and rechecking with key informants. I recorded these with audio tape, field notes, transcriptions, video taping, digital sound recordings, and digital photographs. I sought rich descriptive detail of practices, dialogue, and sequence of events. I focused primarily on interviewing Pentecostal ministers.

In total, I did more than 130 hours with more than 100 ministers in 10 formal focus groups and more informal focus groups. These ministers also brought more than 150 recollected experiences of illness and death through written or taped personal case studies and interviews. I conducted informal and semi-structured interviews for dozens of hours in Swahili with many different people, especially Northwestern Tanzania Pentecostal ministers. I recorded more than thirty hours of the semi-structured interviews. Some of these were transcribed by others and some I translated and transcribed myself. I also typed notes during some of my interviews. I did participant observation at church services, times of prayer for

healing, hospital bedsides, visits to the ill and bereaved, exorcisms, morgues, transporting bodies, funerals, burials, post-burial condolence ceremonies, village visits, bus rides, and many other situations. I focused participant observation and informal interviews on natural situations of illness and death in the lives of those with who I am in relationship. I typed up 166 pages of field notes as soon as possible after these times, usually within a day.¹

Theoretical Base for this Data Collection

I intended this study to be action research aiming for positive outcomes for participants. Action research “involves researchers and participants who jointly participate in four specific steps: (a) the identification of a problem, (b) the joint conduct of research to gain a better understanding of the problem, (c) doing analysis of research results, and (d) taking action to remedy the problem” (LeCompte and Schensul 1999b, 90). Hiebert’s critical contextualization is somewhat like action research that incorporates the Bible as the most authoritative source of evaluation.

Using research assistants enhanced the effectiveness and ethicalness of this study. Because of my assumed wealth and foreignness as a white American, it is more difficult for Tanzanians to trust me as a fellow sufferer. Sukuma friends in different contexts told me that the Sukuma are very secretive. If they share, it is only the surface, and it might be a lie. These friends encouraged me in the methodology I had chosen: letting others who know the situation and people better do many interviews.

¹I took digital pictures when this would be natural in the situation. I also videotaped much of the Mwanza critical contextualization focus group and one interview. I did not take more pictures to protect privacy and maintain my status as an acceptable participant.

Research assistants can go places, ask questions, and have access to observations and knowledge that you can't. . . . Without research assistance, you're stuck with your own biases . . . Draw on your friends and friends of your friends. . . . Don't make the mistake of supposing that people with little formal education—or no prior experience—will not perform well . . . Look for assistants whose identities (gender, age, color, status) correspond with the issues you want to study. . . . People with a significant interest in the findings of your specific project regularly overcome fundamental shortcomings merely by being determined to collect good information. (Handwerker 2001, 253-256)

In addition to this, involving Tanzanians in the process made my research a teaching/learning/ministry opportunity for all of us. This enhanced the benefit locally. Several African leaders have expressed irritation at being used more than benefited in research projects. Rev. Kenosi Mofokeng of a South African AIC said mainline academics who study them exploit them and cause misunderstanding. “*Through us they get instant doctorates!*” (emphasis in original, Daneel 2000, 188). I tried to heed the warning of University of Nairobi professor J.N.K. Mugambi:

Missionaries and foreign “experts,” while they are in Africa, should concentrate their efforts in motivating young Africans to do research in these areas of concern and in giving them the necessary skills to enable them to carry out this task. Only Africans can make the best authorities for their own heritage . . . The eagerness to do research should not preoccupy experts to such an extent that they do not equip Africans with the skills of self-criticism and analysis. This is where the responsibility of expatriate experts lies rather than in writing down African religious heritage and interpreting African life. (2002, 188-189)

I believe Tanzanian ministers learned through the process to appreciate and use some techniques of researching, listening skills, self-criticism and analysis. Most importantly, I hope some learned to participate in critical contextualization and theologizing together, while a few even learned to lead such a process. Good theologizing requires a community engaged with local realities, the Holy Spirit, Scripture, and the larger body of Christ.

Historical Development of the Data Collection

The deans of LVCC and especially the principal, John Mwanzalima, encouraged me to pursue illness and death as a crucial topic. I did a pilot study while in the U.S. studying. Through the deans, I wrote students at LVCC asking them to write about a time when someone was sick or died. I only received the seven stories written in English. The others were lost. I analyzed these using computer software for themes. These questions were included in the interview guide in appendix A.

After returning to live in Mwanza in August 2005, I did initial interviews with the deans and some others, and they suggested additions to the interview guide. I gave an introduction of several hours to the ministers on the purpose of the research and interviewing methodology.² Most of these ministers were students in this diploma level school (only those active in ministry are accepted to study), as well as a few graduates and teachers of Lake Victoria Christian College (LVCC). I demonstrated better and worse interviewing techniques as I pretended to interview one of the teachers, Benesta. He hammed it up and gave overly dramatic answers which kept everyone interested. I encouraged ministers to do one interview

²I did this personally in Mwanza (September 2005) and Musoma (March 2006). Because driving to Ngara (April 2006) or Kigoma (April 2007) requires a full day's drive, I asked another teacher who had seen the introduction and class to introduce the research in those places. This succeeded in Ngara, but in Kigoma they forgot. I also gave an interview guide (see appendix A), a cassette tape and batteries, as well as a few tape recorders. I also allowed them to write down the interview or personal case study. To avoid coercion, I did not make these interviews an assignment, but promised a new hat with the school name to anyone who brought these. Most do not complete between class session assignments until they return. Again in this case, most did not bring three interviews before class, but some did during and after class. Not everyone brought three stories. 11 had completed three stories by the end of the Mwanza class. In the end I gave 31 hats to people who had brought 3 stories either written or taped.)

with a Christian and one with a non-Christian about their experiences of illness and death and also to write down a personal case study. Five to six months later, these students returned to do another round of intensive classes. Those who had done interviews brought these with them. We used them and student experiences as the beginning of a process of critical contextualization and education together, following Hiebert's four step process. John Mwanzalima and I led these discussions in Swahili. These discussions were also treated as a focus group. They were tape recorded and one of the students took detailed notes.

These students met in three locations of LVCC in Northwestern Tanzania and came from the surrounding area. I introduced Hiebert's four-step critical contextualization process and had them read the first two chapters of Hiebert, Shaw, Tienou (1999). We used these four steps as the outline for the class, though each time the first step of phenomenology received the most time.³

We began by discussing cases of illness and death from interviews the students had conducted and personal case studies. We paid close attention to discourse, practice and social outcomes. Then we moved on to evaluating the case studies to understand the categories, belief and logic behind them. We sought Biblical perspectives and dialogue between various Biblical and Northwestern Tanzania contexts. This discussion also served as a focus group (following the guidelines set by Schensul 1999, 51-107). I audio taped and had

³Fritz gives fifteen ways that Jesus used case studies. He says these work well to contextualize teaching in Africa. For example, "One of the most difficult aspects of teaching in a theological seminary in Africa is nurturing students' ability to bridge theoretical truths with their real problems and ministries. Case studies have a way of bringing the theoretical in line with the practical" (1995, 148).

a student take detailed notes.⁴ John Mwanzalima and I led the Mwanza, Musoma, and Ngara groups together. John learned quickly to be a good focus group leader. He met the criteria for this role, such as being an insider to the group with needed language proficiency and being a good listener and group facilitator (Schensul 1999, 79). I did a follow-up focus group with the interested Mwanza students (all Sukuma) six months later when they returned for class. I received their feedback on the themes I had discovered. Again six months later I did a group interview with four of them. In these focus groups, I also asked how or if they had used the critical contextualization process.

All 86 of the students in the four critical contextualization classes minister in their churches. Most pastor churches. In Mwanza (March 2006), the class of 29 met for 37.5 hours. The age range was 24-54 with the average being 37. Only two were women. They focused upon experiences and understanding among the Sukuma ethnic group. They came from 9 different ethnic groups, but 18 were Sukuma. All were ministering in Sukumaland. Exactly half now lived in Mwanza and half in more rural areas, but only 4 had grown up in an urban setting. There were more students who had studied in or completed secondary school than in other diploma level schools. Mwanza also had students from ten different denominations (all Pentecostal, except for one Methodist student). Ten students were from the Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa (PEFA) and seven were from the Evangelical Assemblies of God Tanzania (EAGT).

In Musoma (August 2006) and Ngara (October 2006), the classes/focus groups were 12.5 hours and almost all of the students were from PEFA and village settings.

⁴I also video-taped much of the Mwanza discussion.

30 students in Musoma were from many different ethnic groups with the Luo as the largest group. These reflect the many ethnic groups of the Mara region. Nearly all of the 17 students in Ngara were Hangaza (very similar in language and possibly culture to the Hutu and Tutsi across the nearby Rwanda and Burundi borders).

I also led ten students from various Tanzanian regions and a Rwandan through a similar critical contextualization process in Kigoma (May 2007).⁵ These students had all graduated from Form 4 secondary school (similar to British GCSE or American 10th or 11th grade) and also had a Bible school diploma (96 credit hours). They were completing their degrees. Students did readings, assignments, and discussions in English. I allowed Swahili whenever any of us felt free to express ourselves in Swahili. I conducted a critical contextualization discussion about witchcraft in a Saturday afternoon church service in a Geita (Sukumaland) village and another in a Geita town. I also preached on witchcraft in the same churches with a drama of the story of Balaam, the traditional healer and sorcerer. I preached this sermon in three other churches as well. I preached another sermon, contrasting the Biblical commands about widows and the story of Ruth with case studies of the difficulties of some widows here, especially those suspected as witches.

Paid assistants transcribed all of the student interviews in Swahili (and translated into Swahili from Sukuma, if necessary). The focus groups/classes and some of their daily homework was transcribed for Mwanza and Ngara. In Mwanza, the speakers were even identified. The transcribers were not able to hear significant parts of the Musoma and Ngara focus group tapes. The Ngara transcription succeeded with gaps, but the Musoma

transcription failed. Therefore, I relied more on field notes in those areas, and more on the transcriptions of the Mwanza critical contextualization process. I failed to get good enough recording equipment, using just common tape recorders initially. I obtained a digital recorder and microphone designed for groups only after these main focus group discussions were complete.

Transcribers typed the written interviews and case studies from Mwanza (38), Musoma (50) and Ngara (40). Eight tapes of interviews by Mwanza students were transcribed. Many of these pieces are fairly short and do not always have accurate information about the person being interviewed. I did not transcribe the tapes of the critical contextualization process or type up the assignments from the Kigoma students, but I read and listened to them.

Data Analysis

Interview, case study, focus group, and participant observation data was analyzed by an inductive process of “(1) identifying categories and concepts that emerge from the text, and (2) linking the concepts” (Bernard 2002, 462-463). I paid careful attention to letting the data speak for itself, but literature and key informants helped in clarification, as well as in discovery and analysis of themes. Schweder (2003) provided some good models for this type of analysis. LeCompte and Schensul (1999-5) gave very specific guidance. Hiebert encouraged beginning with cases, but putting them together rather than compartmentalizing, either with a story (diachronic) or a theory (synchronic) (Hiebert, Personal discussion May 4, 2005).

⁵The syllabus for this Kigoma class is attached in appendix B.

I coded themes, using computer software, in the 38 interviews and case studies brought by the Mwanza students, as well as all the field notes and some of the dozens of hours of my semi-formal interviewing. I completed a significant portion of this coding by the summer of 2006 which allowed me to follow up on those themes in my continuing data collection. I also continued analyzing the data as I received transcriptions. I had the research questions in mind, but coded inductively. I only analyzed some of the data from Musoma and Ngara with computer software for these reasons: I wanted to focus especially on Sukuma; many of the student interviews and cases were not as rich or were repetitive; it was hard to follow parts of the focus group recordings and transcriptions. I also felt that many of the themes were just being repeated. I listened to, read, and coded themes in Swahili, but translated important parts of my interviews, student interviews, case studies, and the Mwanza focus group, into English.

I continued to be in ongoing dialogue with key informants, especially John Mwanzalima and Marco Methuselah. Both are Sukuma Pentecostal ministers. John has been pastoring over 30 years, is principal of LVCC, and national general overseer of the Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa (PEFA). Marco is an elder in a Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG) church. Both have studied at Pentecostal Bible Colleges in Tanzania. John completed diploma training at LVCC and a B.A. at En Gedi Missionary Training College. Marco completed his diploma at the PAG Bible College and is continuing now to study for his BA. Both grew up in Sukumaland (Marco in Sengerema, John in Shinyanga) but in different eras. John is 60 and remembers colonialism. Marco is 37. They were also available. John lived next door for 10 years, and Marco worked for me. Marco read

the entire results section. John Mwanzalima read the entire dissertation and also attended the oral defense. Both suggested corrections for accuracy to local situations.

I also consulted with many other local people, anthropologists researching around Mwanza, and missionaries in various ministries. Fellow missionaries, my wife, and LeAnn Nelson also proofread drafts and gave feedback. Many, many others shaped this document, but since I promised confidentiality, I will not share their names.

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIELD OF ANALYSIS

Pentecostal Churches in Tanzania

Following Stanley's route, Catholics and Anglicans first passed through Sukumaland on their way to the burgeoning work in Uganda about 1878. Some graves and a monument I visited north of Mwanza city attest to this. The African Inland Church (AICT) took over from the Anglicans their work at Nassa in 1909 which had about 150 Christians. Their mission focused on the Sukuma, used Sukuma language and was identified with the Sukuma until after independence. Pentecostals missionaries did not come to Northwestern Tanzania until the middle of the twentieth century. Pentecostal churches have roots in Western and Tanzanian missionary outreach as well as revival. Early Pentecostal missionaries came to specific areas partially because comity agreements still remained. So, for example, the Scandinavian missionaries focused on areas in the center and west of the country such as Tabora and Kigoma. (These churches are now called the Free Pentecostal Churches of Tanzania - FPCT). American Assemblies of God missionaries worked in Tanzania (Tanzania Assemblies of God – TAG) while Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC) missionaries ministered in Kenya (later called Pentecostal Assemblies of God – PAG). As church members or evangelists moved, the churches spread beyond their original boundaries. For example, Kenyans with PAG backgrounds moved to Northwestern Tanzania and missionaries followed them in the late fifties.

Mlahagwa (1999) gives a history of the revival movement in Tanzania. The post-World War II, East African revival spread to Tanzania and produced lay evangelists and revival fellowships. Those who joined these fellowships were called the “Saved” (*walokole* – a word brought from Uganda). Some like Moses Kulola of the AICT in Mwanza and Emmanuel Lazaro of Lutheran church (ELCT) in Moshi were converted and inspired by the revival movement. As revival spread in the seventies, many, including Kulola and Lazaro (who joined the TAG), moved to Pentecostal churches. Such defections worried other Protestant denominations, and they reacted by refusing any pulpit exchanges with Pentecostal churches. They also rejected the gifts of the Holy Spirit, since Pentecostals promoted them. Even so revival fellowships within many mainline denominations have grown in strength through ministries such as Anglican lay preacher Edmund John who did much healing and exorcisms, the interdenominational Big November Crusade, other crusade preachers, and student ministries. Now most non-Pentecostal protestant churches have a virtually independent revival fellowship with a very charismatic meeting scheduled at a different time at the church. Unlike a few decades ago, most pastors do not risk attacking “Saved” believers openly. Revivalists and Pentecostals are both called the “Saved” (*walokole*). Often the Saved have written other groups off as nominal and claimed that they are the only ones who are saved. Pentecostals even tend to write off other Pentecostal or charismatic groups. Denominationalism is strong. I have heard examples of TAG preachers being shocked at the suggestion that any other group could be saved. This added to the hostilities in the eighties when Kulola and Lazaro led two factions which split the TAG bitterly. Lazaro forced

American AG missionaries to take his side. The Evangelical Assemblies of God (EAGT) formed and grew under the leadership of Kulola (296-305).

Mlahgwa gives a quite positive picture of the revival movement, especially within the Lutheran church which he says is the biggest denomination next to Catholics and makes up a 25% of non-Catholic practicing Christians. Marco says that in Northwestern Tanzania the revival fellowships do exist and make some impact in the Lutheran church and maybe somewhat in the Anglican church. However, Northwestern Tanzania outside of Bukoba has not been strongly impacted by Lutherans, although they are present. When I attended Theological Education by Extension class of Lutherans in Mwanza, all of the students had immigrated to Mwanza from other very Lutheran parts of Tanzania. The Catholic church is strong, and there is some charismatic movement among Catholics. An Irish priest friend has not only spoken in tongues since he was a teenager but also has a reputation for casting out demons. I have heard some similar examples elsewhere. Among Protestants, the African Inland Church (AICT) has the longest history and greatest spread within Sukumaland. The church has Evangelical roots with many missionaries coming from places like Moody Bible Institute. Despite their official theology of born-again experience, members and missionaries complain of increasing nominalism. They share with Pentecostals an emphasis on a born-again experience and water baptism. Pentecostalism has influenced some of the grassroots worship and experience. Even so the leadership of the AICT has maintained a stance against Pentecostals.¹

¹ An LVCC student from the AICT lost his post as an evangelist. The official reason was for breaking the constitution by inviting Pentecostals to speak in his church (one

The pattern in Tanzania relates to the pattern in America from which many of the missionaries have come. The charismatic movement brought the Pentecostal message into mainline churches, such as the Lutheran church, beginning in the sixties and seventies. This spawned revival, but reaction to it caused many of those who had been influenced to eventually migrate to Pentecostal churches. Only in recent decades have the “Third Wave” and other influences brought Pentecostal experiences into some Evangelical churches. More fundamentalist churches, like those associated with Moody, still resist.

The Pentecostal movement in Tanzania continues to grow and split. The EAGT, like others, has continued to birth new independent churches and church groups. I know several pastors who have left, been kicked out, or returned to the EAGT, as well as other groups. They start independent churches and denominations, especially in the cities. Most of these Pentecostal denominations do not differ from one another in doctrine or worship, though they may try to distinguish themselves. I attended a new EAGT church plant in 1986. Ten years later the pastor was bishop of his own five-church denomination and told a visitor “There are many demons in the EAGT these days.” Today he is bishop of two struggling churches. Overseas financial support influences people to stay within or exit their denominations. Often there are legal battles over property when churches split.²

of whom exorcised a demon that showed up) even though the constitution promotes cooperation. The unofficial reason may have been receiving funds directly from overseas for a church building without passing them through the head office (so they could take a portion). He finally moved to the TAG and the church building remains half finished.

²Major legal battles for control and property have taken place in the PAG, TAG/EAGT, and FPCT. The FPCT had financial incentives, because Scandinavian governments direct development project aid through missionaries. But when the churches were pushed to be more independent, the Kigoma area bishop left and sought help from

More recently there have also been new African missionaries from other countries starting Pentecostal churches, for example, a Rwandan pastor and a Nigerian church plant from Winners Chapel in Nigeria. Both of these lean toward more prosperity gospel teachings. We live next to the LVCC Bible School, which has a PEFA church meeting in the classroom. Next to it is government property on which a squatter church of slabs has been built and expanded within the last ten years. The pastor and congregation split from the FPCT. Much of the time, including Sundays and Friday all night prayer meetings, we hear him shouting into a microphone in preaching or exorcism or we hear demonized people screaming. In the last year, a new Pentecostal church has rented a hall on the other side of the Bible school. Just recently, I heard another group singing in a newly built shopping center on the other side of the Bible school. The RTM (2005) study asked why Tanzanian Pentecostals plant churches nearly on top of each other in cities, while 9,000 villages out of 40,000 villages and towns have no church of any kind (10, 219).

Missionaries from Elim Fellowship based in Lima, NY, started what became the Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa (PEFA) among the Kuria a bit north of the Tanzanian border in Western Kenya. Especially through the T.L. Osborne revival in Mombassa and follow-up monthly support, evangelists spread the work to Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and Congo. These evangelists received, at most, weeks of training, a bicycle, a megaphone, and minimal financial support for two years while planting a church. Often they moved on so they could continue receiving support. Healing, casting out demons, and

Campus Crusade instead. Churches in the area split and the courts tried to sort things out. I talked to Campus Crusade medical team members who were ministering in “an unreached village” which I knew had hosted an FPCT Bible school for many years.

evangelism characterized their ministries. PEFA began in Tanzania through the work of Ugandan and Kenyan evangelists who left when the East African Community broke up. There were no resident missionaries. Missionaries Sickler from Kenya and Dodzweit in Uganda had married twin sisters and arrived in Africa right after World War II. They came for a meeting with top leaders for a few days at least once a year to control the work and arrange to pass reports to Osborne and money to evangelists. They continued to supervise the work until their deaths. After independence and socialism, virtually all Kenyans and Ugandans, including pastors, returned to their countries. When Osborne suddenly cut, almost all support the number of PEFA evangelist/pastors was quickly reduced. In Mara, it suddenly went from 70 to something closer to 17. At the invitation of a PEFA student named Ronald Mlongetcha, my brother Nathan came to Tanzania in 1983 as the first resident PEFA missionary with what had become 150 churches, for the purpose of starting the first Bible training program. These bible schools welcome only students already in ministry with no minimum education requirement. Therefore they meet in short intensive sessions two to three times a year and cover 96 credits of courses over four years. One of the Bible schools is Lake Victoria Christian College (LVCC), which began in 1987 and teaches courses in Mwanza, Musoma, and Ngara in Northwest Tanzania. Students who complete these courses can go on to finish a degree in Kigoma, but they have to have done well and know English well. These intensive courses in Mwanza, Ngara, Musoma, and Kigoma were the context for the classes. Students from all denominations pay the same level of fees at LVCC which primarily covers food costs.

We regularly attend the church which meets in the Bible school classroom, we also have visited Catholic, Lutheran, AICT and various Pentecostal churches (PEFA, EAGT, TAG, FPCT, PAG, and various independents), usually at the invitation of a student or friend. The historical Pentecostal churches do not differ significantly in doctrine or worship style. Services are long (three hours), loud (especially as most now have some type of electrical instruments and sound system at full volume), and lively (with lots of clapping and dancing). In our church, four choir numbers is standard, all original pieces written by the choir. There might be one or two hymns to warm up or cool down, but call, response, and repetition of short lines with local tunes dominate the praise and worship. One Psalm text that is sung in nearly every church is some version of "There is no God like you!" Locals tend to be henotheistic not monotheistic. There are other gods, but God the creator is here and is much more powerful. People always have a chance to come forward for the pastor and elders to lay hands on them and pray for healing and possibly other needs.

Regarding Zinza Christians Bjerke states:

Conversion to Christianity is not understood as a radical rejection of the traditional religion and the acceptance of a new one. The Zinza do not conceptualize a section of their traditional culture as constituting a religion . . . The attitudes of the Christian Zinza to this central feature of their traditional religion may be roughly divided into three types. Most Christians probably do not maintain regular or permanent spirit shrines. But in situations of severe crises like serious disease or death believed to have been caused by spirits or witchcraft, they will consult the shamans and have them remove the inimical and intrusive powers. Sometimes they will have to enter into a regular ritual relationship with such spirits, most commonly bacwezi, in order to overcome the crisis. Then there is the minority of Christians who, in spite of the opposition of the Church, do maintain their spirit shrines and offer ritual tendance to their family spirits. And lastly there is the minority of Christians who scrupulously avoid any participation in spirit cults and who probably never ask for the ritual services of a shaman. But at the level of belief also these Christians share the common Zinza conviction that severe crises like disease and death are caused by spirits and witchcraft. And in situations that are usually handled by rites of the ritual activities of the

traditional religion, these elite Christians assume the heroic attitude of trusting in God and leaving the matter to him. . . .

The Pentecostalists maintain an intransigent attitude towards the traditional religion as well as to the Roman faith (and of course also to the Muslims). They do not drink beer, and since neighbours are defined as those men who are bound to join each other around the beer pot, their refusal to drink beer is seen as a clear demonstration of the fact that for them the ties between fellow balokoke [“Saved”] override the ties between neighbours in general. (1981, 19-21)

Biomedical Setting

“Why do local people not use the biomedical system more?” A person from a richer nation asking this question needs to recognize that the local system is not the same as that to which they are accustomed. According to local people as well as European medical researchers and consultants, the medical system is corrupt, inaccessible, unwelcoming, and ineffective at teaching health. The few personnel are poorly trained and overwhelmed with patients. Therefore they do little listening, explaining, or educating.

Clinics and hospitals charge very low prices by international standards (often cheaper than local healers), but paying is still difficult for most local people. People with treatable diseases are not brought to the clinic. When they are, they are often misdiagnosed, mistreated, or possibly given fake medicine. Corruption contributes to the reduced effectiveness of the medical system. In the Kagera region government health sector, a new accounting system caused income to rise dramatically for six months. Then employees learned how to sabotage it and pocket money again. The managers of a large local government hospital were fired only after the top national health representatives got involved. Because they had paid off those above them in the area, the managers were still able to empty the hospital account of its thousands of dollars on their way out. Local people

who go there wait hours and then there is often no medicine available. A bribe sometimes produces better service. These problems also trickle down from higher than local levels.

According to a medical researcher, one research project found that about half of the brands of a particular malaria drug to be ineffective, but the government did not ban all of the ineffective brands.

In rural villages, health facilities are few and poorly stocked with poor infrastructure and administration and are run by too few personnel that are too poorly trained. Although much better, even the highest levels of urban health services suffer from these lacks. In November 2007, two people at the top hospital in the capital (Muhimbili) were given the wrong operation – the one needing knee surgery got a brain operation. The one needing a brain operation got knee surgery. One died. The doctors said it was not their fault, because the nurses prepped the patients and put them in the wrong pre-surgery waiting area.

The hospital of last referral for 8 million people in Northwest Tanzania is the 800-bed Weill-Bugando hospital. After the government took it over from the Catholic church, it fell apart. The smell of rot hung over the hospital due to the lack of a functioning sewage system, garbage disposal, and morgue. It is now a church-government partnership and has improved significantly in the last 20 years. In recent years, more than \$6.5 million was given from Citibank and its former CEO, Weill, for the hospital and the new medical school associated with Weill-Cornell University in New York (Touch Foundation 2005-7). It also receives government aid assisted by donors. The intensive care unit has tripled its capacity, including state-of-the-art monitors.

Care at Weill-Bugando can be quite inexpensive, if a person has gone through the referral system from the lowest levels. I was shocked to pay only \$9 for Marco's wife's C-section and a week's hospitalization at Weill-Bugando. Marco heard that was the charge for any birth there now. But was it a good deal? She arrived on Monday at 9 a.m., complaining that she did not feel the babies moving as much. She waited 4 hours for an ultrasound despite protests. Staff found one baby dead. Since it was already late in the day, they began to debate about whether they should do an operation soon, saying, "Maybe she will give birth on her own." So they left her until Tuesday. By Tuesday, they had lost the card that included the results of her blood test (for blood type?). She insisted they operate anyway, as she had been waiting all morning. By the time they operated at 1 p.m., the second baby had also died also. The babies weighed 3.2 and 3.3 kilos. She was placed in a ward room with eight beds. Her mosquito net did not cover her well, and sometimes she had to share the single bed. Nurses were harsh, so she could not ask them questions like "when will I get my medicine?" or "what are you giving me?"

This nonchalant attitude toward patient care by nursing staff has been commented on by several Western doctors. A visiting American doctor realized that most patients were only seen once per week by the first-year resident she was observing. He had no one he could easily consult with. When a person was having seizures and apparently dying in front of them, she felt they must act quickly. He said, "Yea, she came in like that but then got better for awhile. It is break time. Let's go get a Coke." After an accident, a friend's father came from many hours away after an accident to the much expanded ICU unit with the latest monitors, but the scanner that could have checked his brain damage to allow for

surgery was not working the week he was dying. I waited 6 hours with the family of the deceased for his body to be released before a doctor could be found to do an autopsy and sign off on the cause of death. An African doctor at Bugando once told a priest there, "I know that they only come to me to get their symptoms treated. They go somewhere else to cure the disease" (i.e., real cause).

CHAPTER 5

SYNCHRONIC EXPLANATION OF NORTHWESTERN TANZANIANS RESPONSES TO ILLNESS AND DEATH

I will describe the practices, discourse, and beliefs that I saw and heard from people in Northwestern Tanzania in two ways. First I will synchronically present similar themes from many stories while trying to tell enough of the story and context for understanding. I have focused primarily on Pentecostal ministers and Sukumaland but will also present other Christians' and non-Christians' experiences from various ethnic groups. If no ethnic group is specified, the story is from Sukumaland.

As an outline, I use a pattern of five steps that Hiebert, Shaw, and Tienou (1999, 141) claim people worldwide follow during experiences of misfortune, including illness and death. First, they decide that some illness or death is a misfortune. Second, they choose an explanation system. Third, they diagnose within that explanation system. Based on that, they pursue some way of treating/remedying this illness or death. Finally, during the process and after it is completed, they evaluate what happened, whether the treatment succeeded or failed, and why. Even if the treatment failed, they may find a way to explain this failure within the diagnosis or explanation system that they chose. Alternatively, this may cause them to choose a different diagnosis or explanation system. They may also just add a new explanation system and try to cover all their bases. So, if a malaria treatment didn't work, they may fast and pray to Jesus or go to a local healer to defend against witches. They may seek help from Jesus, a local healer, and a medical doctor.

Label a Misfortune

The first step, according to Hiebert, is to label something a misfortune.

Although this seems self-evident with illness and death, there are variations. For example, twins are seen as a challenge to deliver safely and raise in America, but, in most of Africa, they have a special meaning that must be explained. The Luo see any unusual birth as bad luck. Among the Sukuma, being pregnant with twins is seen as a dangerous blessing.

Is death itself a misfortune? One of the major questions is whether death is a common, normal occurrence or a shocking invasion that must be stopped. After extensive discussion of the Luo context, Harries (2006) claims, “The perception of ‘good’ as the default position that is prevented by evil in the form of bewitchment and spirits is a key to unlocking the African worldview. It is implicitly assumed in the teaching of many African churches” (162). The seventy year-old son of a Luo chief affirmed Harries understanding. He said that Luo people feel good is normal and will prevail if they can just cleanse the evil. Cleansing is especially needed at death. This is the origin of the custom of village men chasing death from the village with spears and shields after someone has died. In the past, the local healers would call everyone together and divine the witch with a special stick. The next day, after spearing the witch, they would say, “We have gotten rid of the evil among us, do not let it come back.”

The normal attitude in Sukumaland is that every death at any age and in any circumstance is a tragedy that must be explained, usually as witchcraft. This also explains why Pentecostal ministers asked urgently why people are sometimes not healed in the critical contextualization discussions. John Mwanzalima countered that we should not be overly concerned about death, since it is something that happens to us and, therefore, does not have

to be explained. When Pastor John sat with parishioners at the time of the funeral for their child (two children died that year and one this year), he said, “This is normal trouble. It is not like we all haven’t had it.” Meanwhile, I was thinking that Americans never accept that a child dying (or going hungry) is normal. (Of course, in Tanzania 1 in 7 die before the age of five and 40% of deaths are children under 14 (Touch Foundation 2007). Malnourishment may contribute to 60% of the deaths before age 5.)

Choose an Explanation System

After people have labeled something a misfortune, they choose an explanation system. This second step tells them where they will look for answers to their pressing questions. I will explore beliefs/knowledge, especially those related to causes of sickness and death in Northwestern Tanzania. Then I will briefly explore related feelings and values. I have used Schweder’s distinction between causal ontologies as a way to classify local etiologies of illness and death. First, we will consider the moral (sickness caused by a sin or mistake of the sick person himself), then biomedical/natural, and finally interpersonal (sickness caused by another person). Since people most often blame others for sickness and witchcraft is the most common etiology, I have given witchcraft a whole section even though it is really a sub-category of interpersonal ontology. Outlining in this way simplifies in order to facilitate examination, but it obscures the complexity, especially in real histories. Not only are different people giving competing causes, but all three causes can be blamed by one person in one sickness: For example, sin or breaking a taboo allowed a witch to send something that the hospital said was malaria or AIDS. Also, one diagnosis such as *Lutego*

(discussed below) has both moral and interpersonal aspects and therefore is hard to put in a category.

In choosing an explanation system for illness or death, broadly there are three primary broad options locally: Christian, biomedical, and local/neo-traditional. Each of these has its own source of misfortune/evil, source of power to counter the evil, methods for diagnosis and treatment, locations for practice by experts, as well as home remedies.

The biomedical system focuses on causation in the mechanical and visible realms.¹ The doctor at the clinic uses tests of blood, stool, and urine to diagnose and treat with pills, shots, and procedures.

The local/neo-traditional system is the default understanding of most people. It has the deepest roots in the worldview and in history. People are surrounded by proponents of it, beginning with their parents and other authorities. They have heard countless stories and experienced it themselves in some way.

The dominant explanations in this local, neo-traditional system are transempirical causes from relationships between the sick person and visible or invisible people/beings. This is Hiebert's unseen, this-worldly, middle level - primarily using a relational analogy. The most common explanation is witchcraft. Often I heard, "People in Sukuma villages believe that every death is caused by witchcraft." Witchcraft is caused by visible people, but, usually, in invisible ways (notice that this bridges the sharp distinction

¹Of course few local people have ever seen a parasite, virus or bacteria. Few have looked in a microscope and heard an expert explain to them what they are seeing. They are more likely to have seen a naked witch at night or a zombie who has come back. Every week, they see people who have been identified as witches by people they trust.

that Westerners make between visible and invisible). Spirits are also common in this middle level. *Dawa* (medicine/herbs/poison/charms) is normally visible and mechanical, though harmful medicine is often hidden. The more powerful *dawa* is directed through relationship with witches and diviners/healers and may get its power from relationships with ancestors or spirits. The healer is the expert and has a good business.

Brandstrom (1990) elaborates on a Sukuma-Nyamwezi word: “*mhola* is the ‘cool’ state, the state of peace and good relations between the living and between the living and the dead, where the women conceive, the herds and flocks multiply and the land yields fruit” (6:2). It parallels *shalom*, blessing, life, and fertility. Everyday greetings inquire about it and indirectly wish it. Non-*mhola* has no word,² but includes illness, arguing with kin or neighbors, war, and drought (6:2, 3). I find an interesting parallel here to the Swahili expression of condolence whenever someone has been sick, bereaved or had other problems. *Pole* is said and the expected response of a bereaved person is “I have already cooled (*poa*).” Perhaps the greeting intends to cool the relational and circumstantial, while the response assures the other that the disturbance is over.

Brandstrom carefully analyzes three sources of life: “*Liwelelo* represents power beyond human reach which takes any shape, personal or impersonal, ancestors represent personal power within human reach and imagination. *Bugota*, finally represents impersonal power within human reach” (6:12, 13). At the end of the analysis he illustrates with a prayer from Tanner (1956), praying to “God” and ancestors to give success and

²John Mwanzalima says the word for non-*mhola* in Sukuma would be *makoye*.

divination and using “medicine”, that Sukuma mix them all together in their pursuit of *mhola*

(6:14). *Liwelelo* was labeled as God by earlier ethnographers but not by more recent ones.

Sukuma sayings explain that *Liwelelo* has no relative,

is creator but not created, that ‘he’ knows everything and resides everywhere, and that ‘he’ is the provider both of the blessings of life and the tribulations of death. However at the same time the term . . . is applied to the universe in its entirety . . . to describe wonder, the unexpected and the inexplicable. Rather than ‘an original belief in a High God’ which Millroth (1965:205) asserts, the concept of *Liwelelo* expresses the ineffable and constitutes . . . an ‘empty category’ . . . the ways of *Liwelelo* are unknown and can never be foreseen, unveiled or affected by man. *Liwelelo* is *Nyahazimbolwa*, ‘the one with whom humans have nothing to share’ . . . Though invoked on various occasions under numerous appellatives, there is no particular cult of *Liwelelo* . . .

Ancestors are *badugu*, kin . . . at the same time, as a source of power affecting the living, they manifest themselves as *masamva*. *Masamva* or, in some areas more frequently *mizimu*, refer to the active power of the ancestors. The ancestors are the mediators between the past and the present, between what is near and what is far, between what is visible and what is invisible and the worship of the ancestors from the very core of the ritual life. . . . Ancestors have the power to provide or withhold the power of fertility. Facing the affliction of barrenness the diviner, *mfumu* is called in as a mediating agent to unveil the hidden blockage in the flow of life . . . the relationship between the living and the dead is that of reciprocity, characterized by gifts and counter-gifts. *Bugota* however is power that can be manipulated by man . . .

Cory divides *bugota* into four classes: a) protective medicines for safeguarding the customer against evil influences, b) assertive medicines for making a man successful in the various walks of social life, c) creative medicines for producing fertility in men, animals and fields and d) aggressive medicines for homicide and bewitching persons and objects (1949:16). Hatfield in his study of the Sukuma *mfumu*, includes herbal medicines . . . revises that of Cory into curative, protective, assertive and aggressive medicines. (6:9-13)

In Swahili, the comparable word to *bugota* is *dawa*. I have decided to preserve the word *dawa*, because, like *bugota* and, according to Ashforth, *muthi* in South Africa, there is no single English equivalent to the breadth of meaning included in it.

Traditional, Muslim, and Pentecostal Christian each understand “spirits” to cause illness and death. Each explains much illness with a particular kind of “spirit,” which

does not necessarily correspond exactly to the meaning of that term in English. Neo-traditionalists explain much with ancestors (*mizimu* – *Swahili* or *masamva* - *Sukuma*). Muslims refer to *majini* (*jinn* or genies). Christians use the term “spirits” (*mapepo*) but usually with the understanding of demons. All local people have an understanding of all of these terms and use them.

I found different opinions even among my informants as to whether *mizimu/masamva* are actually ancestors or spirits associated with ancestors. I have chosen to translate it as ancestors, but the disputed and broad meaning should be remembered. Traditionally, ancestors are the focus of treatment. Within Islam, *majini*, who are similar to spirits but not exactly, serve a similar role of causing illness if ignored and prosperity if appeased. I chose to maintain this Swahili word because local meaning and usage is not exactly equivalent to orthodox Arabic Islam’s use of *jinn* or Americans’ dreams of genies. Caleb Kim (2004) contends that Swahili Islam has a very African history, worldview, and ritual life. There is mutual influence with the Middle East, but racial explanations of blood mixture are inadequate. He insightfully examines possession by *majini* which cause illness and rituals to appease them (especially *kupunga*) on Tanzania’s ocean coast. He also shows that these rituals do not cure but only suppress and the *majini* continue to demand more (Dar, Zanzibar, and Bagamoyo). Local Pentecostal Christians understand local Islamic healers as a variation of local healers with similar understandings. Pentecostals understand *majini* and ancestors (*mizimu*) as *mapepo*, which means spirit in general, but which they also mean as demons in a different disguise. Their treatment for spirit sickness is exorcism without appeasement.

God

Seldom is God referred to as a cause of illness. For most people, God may be the ultimate cause, but he is not near. As a Sukuma Pentecostal elder said, “People think that the healer gets his power from roots, ancestors, and inheritance. They also say that it is from God. They don’t differentiate the power. They say that God helps both the healers and the witches to have power.”

The Christians may say that illness or death was the plan of God. A Sukuma student in the Kigoma critical contextualization class said,

The relatives sit and ask, “Who has killed our relative?” Then they may go to the healer and ask. Then they have another meeting. And they decide maybe they will kill the suspected witch.

But the Christians know that this is natural and everyone must die according to Genesis 3. Non-Christians come, “Why did he die?”

“It is the plan of God.”

“You Christians are fools! There are many witches in this place. Your relative has been killed by someone, and we know him very much. Come with us, and we will show you who.”

Another student case:

The Christians said, “It pleased God that this sick person should die, because he had persecuted his relatives a lot with being sick for 9 years.” Those who were not Christians said that he had been bewitched by his young mother, who is very much a witch, and chased her from the village.

Caused by the Sick Person

As mentioned earlier, Schweder says a category of causes which blame the sick person themselves for causing their own sickness is present in many societies, and prevalent in some. For example, the Brahmin group in India he has researched focus on

karma as the prevalent cause of illness. The idea is present in America when people blame a smoker for his/her lung cancer.

Within Northwestern Tanzania, such a moral etiology of illness is present. People do sometimes speak of the sick person's failure at least allowing sickness to come to them. They mention sin, sexual sins, taboo, negligence, and what is called *Lutego*. However they most often say this failure opened the door for another human or spiritual being who ultimately caused the illness.

Sin

Local people seldom blame disease or death on the sin or negligence of the sick person. Churches say that sin causes illness, death, poverty, and other misfortunes by opening the way for Satan. Satan may use his agents, such as demons or witches, to accomplish this. Saved Christians believe that Jesus protects them from witchcraft and harmful spirits but only as long as they follow him faithfully and avoid sin. More than one case was reported of people who thought they were protected by being Christians but who were actually fornicating. They eventually got sick from an evil spirit or witchcraft. All mention of sin was in relationships with other people. There was no real mention of sin in relationship with God or creation other than failing in church attendance or tithing.

At funerals, Christians often say that death is caused by sin and that this death was the plan of God. Since we have all sinned, death is now a normal thing. But we can conquer death and go to heaven by following Jesus. Then people are encouraged to repent and follow Jesus. By this Christians usually mean the fallenness of the world. However there was a Catholic woman who argued with me in a rather upset way about why saved Christians

say that death is caused by sin, when we know that it is the plan of God. Maybe she thought saved people were blaming a specific person's sin?

In church, sermons, choir songs, and prophetic messages often tell people that they should sanctify themselves. Our church choir sings, "Do not be a bat [which is half bird and half mammal]. You are here in church, you give offering, sing, speak in tongues. But you also are proud, lazy, steal, and anger people." A woman squeezed out a prophetic message between stuttering and speaking in tongues. She screamed nearly a hundred times, "Sanctify yourselves! Sanctify yourselves!" The main point of one sermon was "To succeed you must come close to God and leave evil and bad ways." Yet, only very rarely have I heard a testimony where someone admits sin other than before they were saved.

A Musoma student in the critical contextualization class tried to figure out why his three children died in a terrible fashion. He received a verse, Jeremiah 6:8, saying that God was punishing his people. He asked another pastor. This pastor responded that this was possible; he should ask God how he had sinned. During a critical contextualization discussion in a church, a different pastor explained how his child had been very sick from witchcraft. The pastor's sin of refusing to give a suit had opened the door for this. God asked him, "Do you want a suit or a son?" When he gave and earnestly prayed, God healed his child.

Taboo

Non-Christians do not talk so much about sin causing illness and death but about concepts like pleasing the ancestors, taboos and *Lutego*. In these cases the person's failure causes the ancestors rather than God to punish. Ancestors are understood to

communicate that they want something or to punish infractions by causing illness. Ancestors punish those who break taboos. According to Luo informants, breaking customs/taboo is frequently blamed for illness and death. Harries (2006) confirms the prevalence of sickness caused by breaking a taboo, although taboo is often translated as sin. He mentions “331 rules . . . to avert calamity or death” (154). Much effort is spent maintaining and restoring purity with rituals. Pentecostals preach against these taboos and rituals as demonic but also stress their own rules.

Lutego

People cited several examples of people stealing or committing adultery as being trapped by *Lutego* (called this in Western Sukumaland from Haya language *Ulutego*. John said this was related to the Swahili *kutega* (to trap). Marco thought it was not. In Shinyanga area it is called *Lusumbo*). According to informants, *Lutego* results in serious illness and death, often of everyone who has been in contact with the house. This is like witchcraft, but people with this power are sought out and not seen as witches, apparently because it is morally justified. A person who dies and is suspected of having *Lutego* is buried quickly with all of his clothes and without touching him or announcing his death. People are afraid that if they are not careful, the whole family could catch it and get sick and die.

Bjerke (1981) in an ethnography of the Zinza says that God is considered as the source of all good or bad and therefore considered passive as simply allowing misfortune through lower level spirits the most important of which are called *bacwezi*. *Bacwezi* of the family cause most misfortune which may be considered morally deserved or undeserved, but those from spirits from the outside

tend to bring about more serious misfortunes than the family spirits, the graver forms of suffering are often ascribed to evil outside forces and morally undeserved.

However, attacks by 'bacwezi' of the outside', irrespective of their seriousness, are not always considered morally undeserved. We have seen earlier that a family head, if he is in the right, may ask his ancestors or him musambwa to punish the person who has wronged him. This practice, known as kutega, is also associated with the bacwezi. A shaman (but not the ordinary layman), by means of medicines can send his bacwezi, who he controls, to attack people. He may do this at the request of a particular person provided that his client has been wronged in some serious way by the prospective victim. This form of kutega, like the others, will be effective only if the client has been wronged and the person against whom the kutega is directed has offended him in a serious way, such as by stealing or by witchcraft. But as the serious consequences of the dangerous kutega with bacwezi will often be out of all proportion to the wrong committed by the victim (provided that he considers himself as a victim of kutega in the first place), the moral element of guilt or shame may in such cases be negligible. (123)

Several cases of *Lutego* from Geita were brought to the Mwanza

contextualization class. One was discussed at length: In one Geita village, three people from the same family fell suddenly ill and died one after the other within a week. The healer blamed this on *Lutego* caused by the first person, who died having failed to pay for something. The family tried to stop it by following the prescription not to cry or grieve at the funeral but eventually ran away in fear.

Lutego reveals some of the differences between ethnic groups and the way in which their etiologies of sickness and death influence each other. Most examples I had come from Geita to which many Sukuma have moved recently and mixed with native Zinza and other ethnic groups, at the same time moving much closer to the Haya.³ Marco has a

³Informants discussed people moving to Geita and Sengerema to flee witchcraft accusations. Brandstrom discusses the search for new land for cattle and farming. He shows that that, between 1948 and 1967, the Sukuma population in Geita district increased from 41,000 to 178,000 and from 30% to 50% of the total. He also demonstrates expansion into other districts neighboring Sukumaland (1990, 3:21).

Sukuma father and Haya mother. He said *Lutego* had its origins west of Sukumaland among the Haya and Zinza. This made Sukuma more afraid of it. Others confirmed its non-Sukuma origins.

Ancestors act through *Lutego* to defend the rights of their descendents who have been wronged by others. This is different from Sukuma witchcraft, because the origins of witchcraft power are less clear than a request to ancestors. Sukuma witchcraft is directed at one person who the supposed witch feels offended by and who is usually a relative or neighbor. This may just be the “witch’s” envy or there may have been a real offense, but witchcraft is far out of proportion to the offense and therefore unjustified. *Lutego* is a response to a serious offense. Normally the clan will deliberate before deciding that the case is serious enough to ask the ancestors for *Lutego*. The Haya typically just give each other simple poison rather than witchcraft. Marco compared it to the deliberations over dropping a nuclear bomb on Japan, because it has major and lasting effects. (Sukuma witchcraft is more like a rifle.) If someone notices deaths, suspects *Lutego*, and has it confirmed by a local healer, they will go to those they have wronged and beg on their knees to have it removed. They will also return a debt or pay a fine or whatever is demanded.

Marco’s elderly uncle traveled back from Hayaland to Sukumaland with him in search of witchcraft to use against a relative. The uncle had fought with his relative for years, trying to get cows that he should have inherited. Court cases had not helped him. He did not want to use *Lutego*, because other relatives might be harmed. Similarly, other ethnic groups can buy *Lutego* from the Haya or Zinza. Marco also told this story about *Lutego*, ethnicity, and zombies:

If a person is from far away, they are afraid to bewitch them. My grandmother is a Haya, so they were afraid to bewitch her or us. When we went places, someone said, "Those are children of the Wahaya, leave them (alone)." [i.e. don't try to bewitch them] They thought that his grandmother was a witch from the Haya. Therefore, they were afraid. His grandmother, when she heard about this, said, "If you are going someplace, don't eat in the homes of people."

The neighbors apparently bewitched and killed my older brother. He was two. After he died, my grandmother heard him at night. He said, "Grandmother, I want some water", and they heard him trying to crawl to the water barrel for a drink like he used to do. Then she said, "If you want to take him, just take him away forever. If you want to bring him back, just bring him back!" So she said it during the night for them (the witches) to hear. Then in the morning she went and said to the neighbors, "You just wait and I will go to Bukoba and you will see." She was threatening to go and get *Lutego*. My mother prevented her. Because she knew that my father wanted to be engaged to one of their daughters at one time. I think later he heard that they were witches and gave up that idea. So the family took vengeance by killing this first child (or, they thought, taking as a zombie). Mother knew that *Lutego* starts by killing the mouse and chickens and all of the livestock and then it kills each person in the house, including those who visit. She was afraid that her husband might go there to visit, because he had liked the girl in that house before they got married. Then he might get sick and die which would cause her more problems, so she told her mother not to do that . . .

Later on my grandmother went anyway to Bukoba just to visit people, and then the neighbors became very afraid. When they asked about her and heard she was gone to Bukoba, they became very afraid and lived with fear after she came back. Then later they moved away, because they were afraid.

Negligence

In my research, I had very few examples of people blaming a person's mistakes or negligence for causing their illness. A few pastors in the critical contextualization discussions criticized people in general who fail to drink clean water or test and treat diseases promptly with modern medicine but then blame someone else when they get ill. Some gave examples of mistakes or negligence on the part of medical personnel being blamed, but this is in the area of others being blamed.

Sexual Sins and AIDS

Local Christians and non-Christians make connections between AIDS and moral failure in various ways. Christians connect it with the sins of fornication and adultery. Faithfulness and prayer is the churches' answer to AIDS and seldom goes beyond this. They connect condoms with promiscuity. Most Pentecostal pastors would not recommend them even for a faithful Christian whose husband is an adulterer. A Luo informant said that, because AIDS has similar symptoms to a disease caused by breaking a taboo, many believe that AIDS victims suffer from this disease instead of AIDS. A Sukuma Catholic priest from Shinyanga said that people consider an AIDS death in the village not to be caused by AIDS, but rather believe that the victim was bewitched or given *Lutego* because he had stolen from or committed adultery with the wife of someone who had or bought this power.

Connections with moral error are often mixed with witchcraft. In the critical contextualization class a student told a story of young relatives that he warned to stop seducing girls. They did not listen and they died. I assumed he had warned them about AIDS. John's clarifying questions showed that people assumed the young men died through bewitchment because of lying to girls about marrying them.

"Natural" Causes

"Natural" causes use mechanical explanations of what thing caused something. This category is used especially for low level explanation of minor illnesses. Bugs or bad water may be sufficient explanation for malaria, cold, or stomach pains that go away on their own or with simple medical treatment, but serious illness and death usually result in people looking for a more important "who" cause.

Accidents

On May 21, 1996, the M.V. Bukoba ship overturned in calm water 30 kilometers out of Mwanza. After 7 hours, holes were cut in the hull which allowed three people to escape as well as the remaining air keeping it afloat. Just over a hundred survived. About eight hundred died. I saw plenty of reasons to blame negligence – the ship was known to have been built unstable, hundreds more passengers were allowed on than the safe capacity of the ship, police boats did not go out because the commander was not around, the holes that were cut let the air out, etc. The government gave \$15 and free burial to all victims who were raised and identified. I saw part of the ceremony that President Mkapa led in a Mwanza stadium. No specific person ever took or was charged with responsibility. Instead, to my surprise, many people in town talked about the president sacrificing people in Mwanza in order to gain political power. This suspicion increased after two other “accidents” occurred in Mwanza during his 10 years in office: a bus without brakes moved aside for his motorcade and rolled over killing nearly 20. A flash flood killed about 40.

People sometimes identify overlapping, multiple levels of causation in road accidents. Those who cause them can be beaten or jailed and are expected to contribute to the cost of care for the injured. A 60-year-old Kuria pastor walking alongside the road was hit by a car. His children pursued and received some compensation from the driver. At the funeral, most of his children argued that he had been bewitched by the Kerewe people where he had begun a church. His Pentecostal son argued with them that there was no evidence of this. He did wonder why God allowed his father to die. He finally concluded, “His death was just caused by God who decided he should rest. Job 14 says the life of man is in the hands of

God. Ecclesiastes says every thing has its own time. If God had not decided, he would not have died. He would have seen the car and gotten out of the way.”

In another case a flat-bed truck driver demanded greater pay than he had originally negotiated to carry so many people back from a funeral. When they refused to pay the higher price, he said he would make them fall. When he then rolled the truck on the short trip and injured many people, the passengers caught him, beat him, and wanted to burn him. They felt he did it intentionally. The six people in the truck who were from our church testified. They thanked God that they were not injured. One of our church elders said that the driver probably was giving a “sacrifice (*matambiko* – “sacrifices to propitiate the spirits of the dead”), a covenant with Satan to shed blood.” He said the number of accidents increases in December because of such sacrifices. The elder said that the section of road next to our church once had people dying every week, until the people of God prayed and rebuked the spirits causing death and now it is much better. A former resident said that the same section of road was the site of many accidents that were blamed on the *majini* from a Muslim graveyard next to it, but, since this section is now full of churches the number of serious accidents has been much reduced.

Another one of our church members who was hit by a car while riding his bike in the dark, testified that he was glad that he had fasted and prayed just the day before. God had protected him. He said, “You don’t know what day Satan will come to finish you off.”

Biomedical Causation

Biomedical causation and treatment is used more now than in the past. It is used more in urban centers than villages.

Often Christians and non-Christians debate the real cause of a sickness or death. Many locals argue for witchcraft. Local Pentecostals explain it more often with a biomedical diagnosis. Many people from every belief system seek a biomedical diagnosis at some point before death. Often they seek this after a long period of illness. Often they wait too long.⁴

This case from a student interview shows how people explore many explanation and treatment systems:

“We took him to a traditional healer, and he failed to treat our child. We took him to the hospital, and it also failed. We took him to many hospitals, and they failed. Finally, even the doctor sent us away and told us, ‘This child has a condition. Take him to the traditional healer.’ We left, and when we got home the child died even before we could take him to the traditional healer . . . I believe my mother bewitched my children . . . and also she can bewitch me, because she was beaten by the neighbors and moved.”

European medical researchers told me the story of a daughter of their employee, who had been treated by a local healer for many months in the village for bewitching. She could not breathe well or walk. The researchers took her to the best clinic in Mwanza. The clinic found she was riddled with hookworm. They killed all the hookworm. She recovered. Before long she began having trouble breathing again. The clinic found nothing. The researchers found that if they could distract her sufficiently, she breathed normally. They decided she had psychosomatic symptoms. They surprised their SDA worker

⁴One study found that 80% of the ill Kwaya people in Musoma-rural district

by encouraging him to find another healer. After several months living with the healer, she was cured.

Marco said many died of hookworm in the village where he grew up, because they thought they were bewitched and failed to treat it medically. Others came to the clinic after it had disabled them or caused them terrible swelling. He said that in the villages most people start with herbal medicines that they know. If that doesn't work maybe half go to the healer and half try a clinic or pharmacy. If the biomedical people cannot diagnose or treat their symptoms, people automatically assume it is a "local disease," meaning witchcraft or ancestors. Non-Christians and nominal Christians then go to the local healer for divination to discover if it is witchcraft, ancestors, or some other local cause. If bio-medicine gives no diagnosis, most Pentecostal Christians would understand it as "powers of darkness," by which they mean demonic power (which may include witches or demons pretending to be ancestors). Only the most committed Christians stay with only biomedical treatment or Christian prayer.

AIDS

AIDS now attracts large amounts of foreign assistance and attention in Tanzania. Other issues dull the effect. State-of-the-art testing equipment sometimes sits idle at Bugando because of power failures. Western companies make AIDS test kits designed for use in the West. The kits are too sensitive to antibodies of other common diseases here. A researcher that I know told me he just published the results of his PhD study, which showed

went to a traditional healer before seeking bio-medical help (Nyaga 2007, 262).

that a person under age twenty in Mwanza is as likely to get a false positive AIDS test as someone who smokes is likely to die of lung cancer.

Because anti-retroviral treatment for AIDS has just recently become available, AIDS has often been identified with long-known “local diseases” which have similar symptoms and are connected with witchcraft, ancestors, and breaking a taboo. A Sukuma Catholic priest from Shinyanga said that when someone dies of AIDS in the village, locals do not recognize it as such. They say either that he was bewitched or that he stole. Others in the discussion explained that if you steal from or commit adultery with the wife of someone who has the power of *Lutego* or has purchased it, you will die and it may spread to others in contact with you as well.

I have no examples of anyone admitting they or their close family were dying from AIDS. A few claim to have been healed from AIDS. Pentecostals claim that God even heals AIDS. Many are rightly or wrongly suspected of having AIDS due to their lifestyle/circumstances.

Marco and his wife reported on the funerals of two different close neighbors who died a year and a half apart. They slept all night at the house of each. The families claimed that witches caused the deaths, but neighbors suspected AIDS. Both these young women with young children had reputations as adulterers. They worked serving beer, which commonly includes casual prostitution. Others in each family worked in the same business. Neighbors suspected that they also had AIDS. In one family, the mother also worked in the beer brewing industry, including associated prostitution, and encouraged her daughter to make money in this way. The mother’s husband also slept around and did not provide for the

family. One extended family never went to church. The social support at the funeral came from the mother's beer brewing association. The members of this association came in large numbers, sang loud, drank hard, and contributed materially.

The other neighbor's family had some nominal church connection. The sick woman in her last days went to get prayed for regularly by the "Saved" Christians (EAGT Pentecostal pastor?). Marco's wife said that having the Lutheran pastor do the funeral and hearing that the deceased was a choir member there made her question if the deceased really was "Saved."

Caused by Someone in Relationship with the Afflicted Person

As mentioned, according to Schweder and Park, when someone becomes ill, most of the time, most peoples in the world identify interpersonal causes rather than moral (the ill person) or biomedical (a thing) causes. This is certainly true in Northwestern Tanzania where, when someone becomes ill or die, most people believe this misfortune is caused by someone who they are in relationship with. Several possible means for one person to cause another to be sick were mentioned including poison, bad luck, curse, taboo, and spirits (thus an invisible someone), but the most common was witchcraft.

Poison

I heard several stories of poisoning people by putting something in their beer or food. This was sometimes used as proof that the perpetrator was a witch. As mentioned, *dawa* can be medicine or poison depending on whether it heals or kills. Some *dawa* does its work simply through its chemical properties (herbal, modern pills, shots, rat poison, etc.). However, locally people believe a witch and healer can also add magical properties for more

sophisticated effect. For example, a witch can speak to the *dawa* and tell it that it should only hurt a certain person. Ashforth reports the same in Soweto (2005, 56-57). A Luo pastor said some witches in his area could look at the soup you are drinking or even the breast nursing an infant and turn it into poison so that you would die later.

One medical anthropologist suspected that much witchcraft is actually poisoning. She suggested that this may explain why patients of healers who say they have been bewitched told her they have dirty, black blood in their legs.

In a Sukuma town, a faithful church member I knew lost her unsaved second husband. He got sick and died after several days. When he began throwing up dark, mud-like blood, people blamed witchcraft, but the doctors said poison was slowly killing him. Neighbors said poison would have killed him more quickly and insisted he was bewitched. Her pastor thought someone put something in his beer. He explained that sometimes people use poison, because they do not have access to witchcraft. She did not plan to seek out the killer. Unfortunately a year later, she died.⁵

I know a church overseer that I will call Mark. Nearly everyone feared him. A relative accused him of having a mistress in another city. Because of a threat, however, the relative would not testify when the issue was brought before the national elders.⁶ The elders

⁵Two of her children went to live with her mother in a village far from major roads and were reported not to be well fed. Another was living with her sister. The oldest was a teenager whom she had given permission to marry the younger brother of the pastor, without any bride price. Unfortunately this brother left her with nothing and moved away after little more than a year. She came to live with Pastor John because she said the church was her only family.

⁶Now more than 20 years later, his children by this other woman are more

suspended Mark until further notice. They replaced him with a distant cousin that I will call Luke. Reportedly, these two parts of the family have a running feud, and Mark was unhappy to see Luke exalted. Luke died suddenly soon afterward. Less than a year later, the other Bible school teacher went crazy. After a partial recovery, he accused Mark's family of poisoning him. Medical treatment for a stroke took Mark out of the country for years. Suddenly he returned and took over the church region, replacing and ordaining pastors and leaders as he liked. Mark claimed he had never been officially removed from his position. He brought government officials to the announcements of the new order. When Luke's child was about to become the Bible School principal Mark threatened Luke's widow. Mark said that Luke's son would die if he became principal. Luke's widow shared this with a missionary and along with their belief that Luke was poisoned by Mark. She also said that the relative who had accused Mark of having a mistress had died in what looked like a poisoning after visiting the home village of Mark's brother. Luke's son needed much encouragement to take the risk of becoming principal. When confronted by national church leaders privately, Mark attacked them and then repented of everything. But he did not show up at the meeting where they announced his repentance. After they left, he denied repenting. He used police, legal threats, and other means in his church coup. Some years later now, Mark seems to be losing more and more support, but people wonder what he might try next.

publicly known. He reportedly even told a church group that adultery is no reason to discipline a leader; it was okay for him. A teacher accused him of being a witch. Some expect this is why so many people in the church in his area fear to oppose him.

Bad Luck (Mkosi) and Curse (Laana)

A curse causes everything to be destroyed. It is spoken onto a person by an authority figure because you have done something seriously wrong to them or offended them. The authority figure(s) could be parents, God, gods, or ancestors. Although something is always spoken, there may also be a demonstration, such as a parent showing their naked bottom to their child (what Americans would call “moonning”). John Mwanzalima said, “A curse is declared in front of the whole clan. They have tried to warn you, but you have continued to rebel and done shocking sins.”

According to rumor, our neighbor’s barrenness originated in a curse from her grandmother. She had refused to get her grandmother tobacco and the grandmother responded by saying, “We will see if you have any children then.” No healers have succeeded in removing the curse. A curse takes away all blessing and ruins business, home, etc. A simple mistake could be repented of and forgiven, but a curse can only be removed with blood through a sacrifice. Marco’s relatives told him the story of how his ancestor cursed his daughter using words and then serious action: He “moonned”⁷ her and she returned the favor. Many years later, they met. They were both happy to see each other and were filled with love and forgiveness. He killed a cow, but before they could eat it, they died, first one and then the other. The family said that the curse was still effective and enforced by the ancestors and that they should have offered a sacrifice to remove it.

⁷In other words, he bent over and showed her his naked rear end, and she did the same to him.

Bad luck is not as completely destructive as a curse but results in some type of loss or failure to succeed. It can be inherited, gotten accidentally, or result from breaking a taboo. It can also be washed off at a crossroads and then accidentally picked up by the next person who walks or bikes over it. So people carefully avoid anything suspicious on the path. Bad luck seems to be understood as a thing but can be thrown on you by a witch or an ancestor if you have broken a taboo. It may also be inherited from an ancestor who maybe broke a taboo. Generally only healers can diagnose and treat bad luck.

Although bad luck was understood as a thing, using a mechanical analogy, it could result from bad relationships with people. Marco and John believed that curse and *mkosi* belonged in the spiritual realm and likely had a spirit behind them even if they were sometimes thought of as things. Though both curse and witchcraft are caused by someone else, a curse is sent by a legitimate authority, because the cursed one has done evil/acted wrongly. Witchcraft is an illegitimate attack, and the witch is evil.

Although present everywhere, the focus group and interviews with ethnic groups in the Mara region (including the Luo and Kuria) referred more to bad luck, curse and breaking taboos (*mwiko*). The Sukuma and Hangaza talked more about witchcraft.

Marco said that he was taught to go around places on a path where he saw broken pots or other evidence that someone had washed off or disposed of their bad luck, which might be waiting to be picked up. Another elder announced in our church that he went by a healer's hut regularly, and, rather than avoid the place where he apparently washes people, he rebukes aloud in Jesus, name. Marco said that after he was saved, his mother taught him that he could do this, but he still remembered his grandmother's advice. He

continued to wonder which to do whenever he saw something like a broken pot on the path. “For us we were raised with all of this stuff, so it is hard to forget.” A few weeks previously other children told him that his kids would get sick, because when they went to get water they walked right over witchcraft. So he went to see. It was just this kind of thing where people had washed. He told his kids to just say, “In the name of Jesus” when they walk over it. He did not want to make them afraid.

Ashforth’s (2005) discussion of pollution fits bad luck (*mkosi*). People try to wash it off at crossroads, and others can pick it up from there. John agreed with Ashforth’s observation that people try to get rid of witchcraft in the blood by taking a steam bath, sweating it out, and breathing the medicine. They are more likely to take *dawa* to throw up or induce diarrhea to get rid of something they have eaten. In remote areas, they provide a certain tree (used like a bar of soap) and a basin of water at the graveside for people to wash at the graveside. A student’s participant observation mentioned using the dung from one of the deceased person’s cattle as the soap. This animal’s skin was also wrapped around the body.

Customs (Mila) and Taboos (Mwiko)

In order to avoid sickness and death, certain ceremonies must be performed, and certain taboo activities or food must be avoided. These vary between ethnic groups and clans. A clan with the same taboos as you is considered to be the same clan with the same ancestors (*mizimu*), even if they are part of a different ethnic group. One Kuria pastor reported that there were taboos in his clan, including that if you steal or kill someone, you will die and if you smoke marijuana, you will go crazy. In addition, his grandmother, who

was a brewer of beer, put a taboo on beer drinking as she was dying from being cut on the head in a bill dispute with a customer. He followed these taboos. A Sukuma pastor thought that these clan markers and taboos were especially Satanic because of the fact that it is the ancestors (*mizimu*) who make the rules and enforce them with sickness.

Many of the ceremonies relate to sexuality and reproduction. When discussing with a group of Kuria pastors in a Kuria village why it was so hard to stop female circumcision, they said that there is social pressure from peers and parents. Even if a woman finds a husband and he agrees, the parents will not allow her to take the role of a daughter-in-law, because they are afraid she will bring sickness and death. The parents say, “She has come to finish the home.” We debated whether female circumcision was just a custom or a sin. John Mwanzalima said it is a sin, because it is motivated by fear of spirits/gods causing sickness and death. One of the Kuria pastors said that the family is actually bewitched, but they blame it on the uncircumcised daughter-in-law.

A child born unusually (e.g. breech, twins) among the Kuria or Luo was considered bad luck and abandoned at the crossroads, where the childless might take them secretly. Traditionally, among the Sukuma everyone who has twins must join the twin society by offering a sacrifice which is eaten by previous members of the society. The community enforces this by not allowing the parents to do normal things like throw out their garbage, until they have completed this ceremony. The community believes that failure to do so prevents rain or causes other misfortunes to the community.

A Sukuma pastor in a Geita village [that we will call “M”] said that after his twins were born, he only did a church dedication. The village applied no pressure to do a

traditional ceremony. Christians won this freedom in the late eighties. When this pastor's mother had twins, she got lots of pressure, but stood firm. She said that they could steal her cows or kidnap her twins if they had to, but, as a Christian, she could not give a sacrifice. The village finally gave up. Eventually the government instructed that if people chose to have their children blessed in church, the community should consider that sufficient. This led some people to bringing their children to church to be prayed over just to avoid the cost of the traditional ceremony. As a result, the biggest churches (Catholic and AICT) began charging \$10 for this service. The pastor's church still does not charge. A Sukuma Catholic priest said, "They bring them [babies] to the church to get a certain protection, like charms of words. They are not really Christians; they are just looking for a cheaper form of protection." I talked to another man in this village who had his twins dedicated at the AICT church. He did it just to buy time while his family figured out how to transport the sacrificial animal to him. The community had been pressuring that he was delaying the rain. Then his family decided the sacrifice for the traditional ceremony wasn't necessary, since he had chosen the church route. Eventually, the man chose to follow Christ and is now an elder in the AICT church.

Spirits

Locally people identify various types of spirits which can cause sickness and death. There are various spirits understood by non-Christians and especially healers to be quite different. Pentecostal pastors sometimes use the terminology and concepts that non-Christians use, but ultimately understand all of these spirits as demons. For Pentecostals the generic term for spirits – "*mapepo*" is used with the meaning of demons. "*Mashetani*" from

the Arabic is used less frequently, but Satan (*Shetani*) and sometimes Devil (*Ibilisi*) is used more often in church contexts. For example, our choir sings, “I won’t go back. I am going ahead . . . Satan don’t follow me. If you follow me, you will get a flat tire” (followed by the hissing sound of a punctured tire). In contrast to Scripture, angels are almost never discussed by Pentecostals or anyone else.

Ancestor spirits (Swahili - *mizimu*, Sukuma – *masamva*) have the longest tradition in Sukumaland. I have heard various opinions expressed by Sukuma pastors and others about whether these are actually the ancestors themselves or whether this is a spirit who was associated with and worshiped by one’s ancestor, who now is acting as a messenger from the ancestor. For example, John says they are the ancestors, “Of course, Sukuma cannot worship what they do not know.” Marco says, “Maybe others are just getting confused because the *mizimu* speak like the ancestors. How could an ancestor himself still be present?” Others are unsure. I have chosen to translate *mizimu* and *masamva* as ancestors (or ancestor spirit, if they also use the word for ancestor), but this diversity of understanding should not be forgotten. Other ethnic groups believe in minor gods, but, for the Sukuma, ancestors serve the function of intermediaries with God. The ancestors can make a person sick, because they have been ignoring them and not giving offerings to them. They can bother an infant until the child is given the ancestor’s name. They can also afflict a person until they agree to be a healer. Ancestors are also seen as one’s defenders against witches (if one has been honoring them). Some say that in order to bewitch you, a person must know your ancestors, possibly to get their permission. This is why a bewitched person normally assumes the witch is a blood relation who has contact with their ancestors. Witches use the power of their ancestors who

were witches. Those who had ancestors that were good at defending against witches also use those ancestors's power.⁸

Majini (Swahili, from the Arabic *jinn* [singular] *jinni* [plural] which is also the root of the English word genies) are understood to have been introduced by Muslims on the coast. *Majini* tend to afflict people until they go to a healer who finds out what the spirit wants and makes a deal, which settles them down. They tend to impose Islamic rules and make a person act Muslim so that sometimes people convert to Islam or even become Muslim healers. A minister from the village said that, unlike ancestor spirits, *majini* are rarely encountered in Sukumaland. Informants said *majini* can be bought and sent to afflict an enemy or to protect a business or house against thieves. Post-election looting in Mombasa, Kenya, reversed itself as people returned goods for fear of *majini* and other curses. TV and print media showed people returning goods out of fear and reported incredible second hand stories of illness, craziness, stolen goods sticking to the thief, and even death (The Nation [Nairobi], Jan 8, 2008, downloaded March 4, 2008, from <http://allafrica.com/stories/200801071735.html> and the Standard [Nairobi], Jan. 14, 2008, downloaded March 4, 2008, from <http://www.eastandard.net/mag/mag.php?id=1143980354&catid=349>).

A Kigoma student said Muslims fear that if they become a Christian, they will be killed by the *majini* if not by other Muslims. They are afraid because they have already been bothered by *majini*. Some people say that if you are a Muslim and you have not given

⁸ John said that corporate traditional worship no longer exists, because there are no recognized authorities, like the chiefs, to lead people in such worship. The regional

permission to *majini* to come into your body, you are walking without protection (This was said by a saved Muslim). It seems that all Muslims believe that their houses are kept by *majini* which they think are servants of Almighty God. This is why this student said that it is necessary to pray very hard before talking to a Muslim, because the *majini* are preventing him from understanding, making him angry, etc.

For non-Christians, being possessed by ancestors or *majini* can be a good thing. It may give a person powers, such as divination and healing, which in turn can provide an income. People even seek and pay for the privilege of being possessed. Healers use various methods to encourage their possessing spirits to “climb up” and assist them in divination and healing. *Majini* also often promise financial success. The danger comes in disobeying or attempting to dislodge the possessing spirit.

Witchcraft/Sorcery (*Uchawi*)

Witchcraft, a subcategory of diseases caused by others, is by far the most prominent etiology of illness in Northwestern Tanzania. It may be combined with any other cause of sickness or be the ultimate cause.

Understandings of Witchcraft

Sabuni (2007), a medical doctor from Northeastern Congo did focus group and case study research among the Bira of Mobala and the Nande of Mukukia. The local say “Congolese people do not die by microbes.’ The perception of witchcraft is strong as a cause of illness” (1280). Sabuni’s mother told him scary stories about witches, but European missionaries at Sunday school in an evangelical church told him that witchcraft does not exist

commissioner did initiate an inter-faith prayer service for rain during the recent drought.

and that he only needed to trust God. Eventually he learned about microbes. “Having in mind these conflicting paradigms on causes of illness, I always find it hard to position myself in the everyday context of people for whom these paradigms are in perpetual conflict” (1281). Locally, illness can have some type of natural cause (social, physical/environmental, and “natural” [i.e. frequent and easy to cure, caused by God]) or metaphysical cause (inheriting something like a curse or breaking a taboo related to food, “pollution”, “worms”). “Sorcery is the ultimate explanation . . . any illness can have natural causes and at the same time be caused by witchcraft or sorcery. If someone dies, the participants said, the cause is always witchcraft or sorcery” (1286). Sabuni goes on to explain some subcategories, including binge drinking groups that eat members and “poisoning.” Informants said that “poisoning” is more frequent now due to tribal conflicts, jealousy, and hatred. “Only traditional healers can ‘diagnose’ these poisons. Most of the people suffering with poisoning are suspected of having, or have been clinically diagnosed with, chronic diseases such as AIDS, cancer, or TB” (1286). Ancestor punishment or demand is the only alternative diagnosis to sorcery and can only a local healer can distinguish it. Sabuni mentions three local means of identifying witches: dreaming about someone in a dream that you are in relationship with, the words of the suspected witch, and local healer testing. Suspected witches even use the same word as in Northwestern Tanzania [*utaona*]:

the Swahili word *utaona*, meaning “You will see what will happen to you,” is perceived as strong evidence of witchcraft that is accepted by customary law. If something happens within a few days or weeks or even months after she or he has been told, “*Utaona*,” then the sorcerer is easy to find. Most often the word *utaona* is used by a weak or marginalized person who is physically or economically compromised and who feels belittled or abused by other relatives or neighbors . . . the suspected persons are tested by the shaman and then the identified

witch, and his or her family is chased from the village, or they might be stoned and killed by the villagers. (1287)

Empirical Evidence

One pastor said, “There is no evidence for witchcraft, but we see its results.”

Others made similar statements. Since witchcraft is, by definition, secret and invisible, there can be no evidence that would stand in a court. For those with a witchcraft worldview, this secrecy only increases its power and their fear.

On the other hand, Northwestern Tanzanians feel witchcraft has abundant circumstantial, social, and experiential evidence. Given the configurational nature of knowledge and this worldview, many things add up and are proven sufficiently for everyone, including ministers. Everyone believes that witchcraft exists, but many dispute whether a certain case should be understood as witchcraft. Everyone hears about what witches have done, on a daily or weekly basis. In the critical contextualization and other discussions of witchcraft I mostly listened and asked clarifying questions. However, when people understood that I was not sure witchcraft existed they would give lots of examples that they had seen or heard about the results of witchcraft. These included media reports and confirming statements by young children, but most of the examples had been related by friends or family. They would also tell their own experiences of witchcraft, and everyone seemed to have at least one powerful experience that was irrefutable for them. They had seen naked witches at night or other bizarre phenomena. Pastors feel that the error is not in believing there are witches, but in blaming everything on witchcraft. When it comes to explaining serious sickness or death, many agreed with a minister who said, “The witch has

power or it could be your own negligence or it could be God himself. But many people believe that everything is witchcraft.”

Every Tanzanian I asked, including pastors, believed that witchcraft existed and that witches made people get sick and die. One Tanzanian Pentecostal Bible school teacher with a master’s degree said he did not know if witchcraft really existed, or if it was just the ignorance of the Sukuma. (He was Haya.) He gave examples in which he disagreed with neighbors in Mwanza and Hayaland, but did not commit himself to saying that witchcraft does not exist. I also met Europeans and Americans who had experienced what they identified as witchcraft and now believed in it. While in the Congo 30 years ago, the home of a Mennonite missionary couple was struck by lightning out of a blue sky. They agreed with locals’ assessment that a witch sent this but that Jesus had protected them. (They grew up in Africa. The husband has nearly a doctorate in agricultural development.) I talked with anthropologists and medical researchers who were researching for their doctorates. One left the village for good after a terrifying night during which she was convinced her neighbor was attacking her with witchcraft. One had been bothered for years by *majini*. Another found her bed shaking until she placed medicine from a local healer under her pillow. When the shaking occurred again one night, she realized that her worker had forgotten to replace the local healer’s medicine after making the bed. One researcher was given the task of finding a Sukuma person who did not believe that witchcraft existed. She finally found one woman in a focus group, but everyone else said that the woman was a witch who had killed her husband.

Types of Witchcraft

Pentecostal ministers differentiated two main ways of getting witchcraft:

1. Inherit it – People are pressured by a living or dead ancestor or spirit of the ancestors until they agree, to do it and learn it. If they do not, the whole clan will be afflicted. An ancestor spirit will makes you sick or will kill you until you accept. Relatives take a baby to the crossroads and put witchcraft related paraphernalia in its hand. If the baby grips the paraphernalia, the baby is considered to have agreed and will be taught witchcraft as it grows. People say it is “in their blood.” Some seem to understand this literally and others figuratively. Thus, it is impossible for the witch to stopping being a witch.

2. Seek it/buy it as a valuable thing – often this witchcraft has to keep being paid for by killing people on a regular basis, especially before meeting with other witches.

Amy Nichols-Belo, an anthropologist researching locally was told about another rare possibility by a local healer I believe -- a witch puppet, a person who is acting like a witch because a witch has caused the person to do his/her dirty work (e.g., go naked around people's houses). This seems to be a way for a healer to get a nice person caught as a witch exonerated because this can be cured (personal conversation). There does not seem to be any cure for a true witch.

Witchcraft has three types of activities according to Pentecostal informants:

1. To kill (another informant differentiated killing from those who make zombies)
2. To make sick or persecute a person, but not kill them, so they will have a cough and go to the doctor. Maybe they will even get better at the hospital, but when they get home they will fall sick again.

3. To play with someone (*kucheza* or *kumchezea mtu*), usually at night. A variety of things may be done – you might wake up tired because they sat on you, they might take your big pot at night but then return it in the morning after their celebration, they might scare you so that you (or your child) wake up screaming and terrified. People sometimes use distinctive terminology for this type of witchcraft. They say “*Anawanga usiku*,” by which they mean fear-causing night time activities such as to walk on the roof, throw sand (with *dawa*) on a person, or to take someone outside. These are not just normal people trying to play tricks or scare people. In the Jita language, they are called “*mtumbuji*” or “*pitipiti*” after the sound they make at night.

A final distinction: Witches normally use *dawa*, but some who have inherited witchcraft may just use words.

Among the Sukuma, Hangaza, and many ethnic groups in NW Tanzania, all witchcraft is considered intentional (sorcery to use Pritchard’s terminology). Among the Luo there is unintentional witchcraft, as well as intentional sorcery, though I found no distinction in terminology.

Spirits and Witchcraft

Witchcraft and spirits (*mapepo*) have some kind of relationship, but it is not clear what it is. Pentecostals understand these spirits to be demons. They understand witches to be servants of Satan. Some talked about witches keeping spirits (which they send to do their bidding). On the other hand, a spirit of witchcraft can force a person to kill or do witchcraft (or else kill the “witch” or his/her child) and another to go around naked and curse

people. The relationship with *majini* is also unclear. People buy and send *majini* on others; some distinguished this from witchcraft, and others identified as the same or similar.

A school teacher said that people in the village blame everything on witchcraft, but he understood there are regular sicknesses as well. He said that people in the city are not nearly as concerned about witchcraft, but they are concerned about spirits (*mapepo*) and *majini*.

Here are examples from interviews with ministers:

A Luo pastor challenged people, “We should not be afraid of witches. We should preach to them so that they can be released from the bondage to this spirit that requires them to kill. They kill, but they themselves are in the worst possible situation where they are required by the demon to periodically kill someone, especially [or else it will be?] their husband or most beloved child.” He gave an altar call at a large meeting, “If you are here and have trouble with witchcraft, come forward and we will pray for you.” A woman came forward and everyone was afraid. But they prayed for her and cast out her demons.

“This elder was keeping a certain kind of *majini* called *Lutego* which he sent to this person who had done this bad thing to him.” (Although the reported results can be similar, this was the only time that I saw *majini* and *Lutego* identified.)

My child died in 1998. My relatives believed that my child was bewitched when I prayed for those possessed by spirits; meaning they say that when they [spirits] leave the believers they go and enter the people of my family. I did not get confused. I continued to believe God.

Here are some reports from ministers in the Geita area:

My mother was talking strange languages and could not speak straight, but she was now a [nominal] Christian who refused to go to the healer. Pastor prayed for her and she said “We are *majini* that were sent here by so and so to cause her to become crazy.” This was a Ha neighbor who was upset at the children for accidentally

tripping him and causing him to fall and break his bucket. He had lost a civil case against them. He bought the *majini* from a healer of *majini*. She got over this after the prayer.

A Sukuma pastor explained,

There was a grandmother in Geita area . . . It happened about three times...that grandmother was a witch. The spirit of witchcraft, when it wanted to kill, it started by making her sick. When she was healed already, that spirit killed someone else whom she had given him [the spirit]. Now that family came to understand this play of this grandmother. One day when she got sick her family ran away and left her all alone and that spirit killed her.

Other Sukuma pastors told me a variation of the above. They said local people would understand that someone (they gave an example of a grandmother) was bewitching them, but this was actually a demon that they had inherited. When the woman moved to live with her daughter, the children would start to die. The daughter would then make her move away out of fear. The next place she moved, people would also die. Eventually, no one would let her stay with them. Even the village would not let her stay. The pastor from “M” village said that he had twice cast out demons from people who were actually causing these types of problems. One of the women to whom the pastor referred said that her mother and grandmother had been witches, but they had never taught her the use of *dawa*. However, the family spirit had attached itself to her and was killing those near her without her doing anything. The pastor reported that they cast out the spirit, which solved the problem. The pastors said that only they understood this possibility. Everyone else just says that such people are bewitching others.

In this story from a PEFA elder in “M,” a Geita village, a problem believed to be witchcraft was dealt with by exorcising a demon: Bujiku (not his real name) was attacked and robbed by armed thieves. His wife identified them to police. One attacker was jailed and

died there. Bujiku went crazy. He thought he was bewitched by the deceased person's mother. He went to Sengerema and lived by salvaging garbage for some years. Someone prayed for him there and cast out demons. He returned in his right mind to the PEFA church. His wife reluctantly left the man she had married in the meantime and returned to her penniless husband. Bujiku's business and family are now restored, but some people envy his financial success. The healer who treated him years before demanded payment. Bujiku refused, saying that the treatment did nothing for many years and that it was Jesus that helped him. The mother suspected of bewitching him goes to an AICT church. The elder says that her demons can get accustomed to such a church and not make noise. However, if they really prayed with strong prayer, they could get rid of her spirits.

After the critical contextualization class, one of the Sukuma students reported how he had used the critical contextualization process and learning from the class in his Geita village, "I taught them about witchcraft. Satan is the torturer of people, using the witches. I taught them that it is not good to be afraid of them."

What "Witches" are Suspected of Doing to People

People suspect "witches" of doing various negative behaviors. Primarily "witches" make people ill or kill them. They also may threaten to do harm in order to motivate someone through fear to do what the "witch" desires. They also make people into zombies, which seems to be even more feared than death.

Sacrificing People

One suspected motivation for killing is that “witches” make covenants to kill in order to have power, respect, and riches, or to remain a part of the witch’s group and keep their witchcraft power (for example, to remain invisible). It is assumed that they are asked to give up their most beloved child, spouse, etc. to be killed. The social consequence is that the bereaved are accused of being witches and families are torn apart.

As John Mwanzalima preached, “Even Satan gives rules to follow. Haven’t you heard that in Sukumaland people sacrifice their children, husband, or wife as offerings so that they can get respect?” I heard many specific examples of people doing this. People other than witches sacrifice people in order to get power, respect, and especially riches. There was a report that a father locked his children inside the house and burned it down in order to become rich. Sometimes this involves killing a person (especially an albino) to harvest body parts for healers.

Threatening Witchcraft

People threaten witchcraft in roundabout ways like saying (especially in anger), “You will recognize me.” or “You will see [what will happen] (*utaona*).” This is interpreted as a clear threat of witchcraft. When a death or sickness occurs soon afterward, the threat is understood to be a confession by a witch.⁹

⁹Actual confessions of witchcraft usually only take place after strong pressure, often including beatings. Rarely will a person confess as part of their conversion story. In Ngara a student said that three of four accused in his village confessed to being witches, but only admitted using it against enemies. This allowed them to get out of the specific accusation but kept people afraid of crossing them. John said such confessions of witchcraft never happens in Sukumaland. This may be because witches are more readily killed in Sukumaland than in Ngara.

A Kerewe pastor explained to me that he began cultivating in a Shinyanga village, just after a rain with high winds broke a long dry spell. Others in the village saw the high winds as a warning of the ancestors' anger. Therefore they did not cultivate as a sign of repentance. An old woman known to be a witch asked the pastor who gave him permission to cultivate. He said, "God gave me permission, because he sent the rain."

The woman responded, "You do not recognize [village name]." A bit later an old man repeated the warning and added, "You will recognize me!"

The pastor responded to each of them, "And you will recognize the Jesus that is in me!" Within a week, both the woman and the man died.

A couple weeks before Marco's pregnant wife, Edith, lost her twins, she went to a neighborhood funeral. The neighborhood leader (*balози*) complained that Edith did not come to all of the funerals and give her contribution. (Edith has a full time job.) The *balози* said, "You will see [what will happen] (*utaona*)." This may have been a threat that when Edith had trouble, the neighbors would not help her. After Edith's twins died, various neighbors told her that the leader should not have said that to a very pregnant woman. (Indeed most women will not reveal their true due date to neighbors out of fear of witchcraft.) They said she should bring a case against the *balози* for saying this. Edith replied that, as a Christian, she could not do that. The *balози* did not show up to give condolences after the burial, although she lives nearly next door to Marco and Edith, nor did she respond to greetings. All of this made Edith wonder if the *balози* might have done some witchcraft, even though she has no reputation as a witch. Marco, on the other hand, thought that the *balози* might feel shame about what she said; he did not believe she had bewitched them.

Make Zombies

Witches are also known to make people into zombies (*msukule*).¹⁰ I heard the most about this in Sukumaland. It seems less common elsewhere. Benesta, who lived in Sukumaland and later returned to his own Kwaya area in a village outside of Musoma, said that this was especially prevalent in Sukumaland but that it was spreading outside of Sukumaland, including to his home area. This is also known in many other parts of Africa and the African Diaspora (cf. Ashforth 2005, 234-235 and others research referenced in his footnotes about commercialization). I had heard stories from Haiti but had not recognized Haiti as part of the African Diaspora.

I found the stories of zombies surprising and nearly impossible to believe. Yet there were dozens of stories told in my interviews and in those conducted by my students. Pastors whom I respected felt this was possible though not always true.

What evidence did they give? These are common elements that I heard in more than one story: The dead person comes back at night to call at the door and asks to be let in. Non-Christians said that they felt themselves being seized by someone invisible as

¹⁰ Interestingly none of the words used is from the people noun class. This suggests that people do not think of zombies as people. The term used most often by informants was *msukule* in Swahili and *litunga* in Sukuma. Interestingly, this word was not in the two Swahili dictionaries that I had and “zombie” was not in the English to Swahili dictionary. I never found a word for it in a dictionary (does this suggest it is a more recent phenomenon or not in the area where the dictionary writers and translators are from?) One informant insisted the right word was *mzuka* which was listed in the dictionaries as “one who appears suddenly and so an apparition, ghost, spirit, goblin.” Does this suggest that the concept is more recent (since the dictionaries were written in 1939 and 1981) or localized to Sukumaland, since both were written on the coast by people living on the coast. Mostly coastal researchers wrote the 1981 edition, but one person from Musoma and one from Bukoba contributed. No Sukumaland researcher is mentioned.

they left a funeral. Many had heard stories of people who were buried and then came back again later. Others had seen them. Usually they could not talk, either because their tongues had been cut out or they were not in their right mind. The young children or grandchildren of witches made comments about seeing an individual that had died at their house.

The 7-year-old granddaughter later came to the elder of the church (and he later called me to hear the story) and said that her grandmother had taken "Josiah." He was with her and was helping her to farm, milk cows, and care for the cows. She also said that her grandmother was teaching her about witchcraft.

Often zombies had died in a shocking and sudden way. Sometimes they were buried quickly. Sometimes the body looked older. A child, for example, might have gray hair or wrinkles. This would make people suspect that some other body had replaced the real person.

Several people reported that when their child or wife died, several neighbors reported having sighted them somewhere. Sometimes the Christians responded by saying that the child had died from a normal disease and had not been bewitched or taken as a zombie. "A woman who is my neighbor told me, 'Your child did not die from spinal meningitis. A certain woman told me that she was taken by the witches. They switched your child, and you buried a dog. Your child is at your neighbor's. Two days later she came back and said, 'Until now your child is still paraded about at night' (to sell?)." Another pastor had neighbors reporting sightings of his dead child, but he told them that that was impossible because he knew where his child was -- in heaven.

More than once after a child died, the family refused to bury the child. In one case, they sent for the healer with a reputation for bringing back zombies. The healer was supposedly busy in a far away place with a similar project, so they had to bury the child.

Another time, the healer showed up, spent a couple well-fed weeks searching, and then disappeared with his pay.

Witches reportedly take these people and put something else in their place. They are kept hidden in the witch's home or elsewhere to work for the witch at night, which gives witches greater prosperity. They also are taken to a place called Gamboshi.¹¹ Gamboshi is an actual village in a relatively remote area east of Mwanza, but people say there is a village full of zombies of all races, professions, etc., in another realm. Pastors who had visited said that the real Gamboshi village does have a reputation for witchcraft. One told a long, amazing story of a long confrontation between a praying pastor and witches in the area.

Some people report having seen zombies who have returned; many more have heard of sightings. One Bible school student said that the body of a child he had played with was laid out for burial. The face was definitely the child he had played with, but the body looked much older and wrinkled and as if it had been dead for longer. The child's father came with an axe that had been treated by a healer. He split the body apart like wood with everyone watching. It turned into the core of a sisal tree. When the father did this, his son came out from behind the door inside the house.

¹¹Whenever I mentioned this name to local people, they had heard of it, but were surprised that I had. John tells me that the reputation of Gomboshi arose in the eighties. People told stories of other places previously as well as of witches hiding zombies in their houses.

After the critical contextualization class, a student returned with a report of an incident that occurred a few months earlier in his Geita village. The house of a suspected witch fell down in a storm.

After this house fell down, three zombies came out of this house and people saw them come out. They then spread around the village. There was one who had hurt his arm and could talk a bit and explain. Two of them came out naked and didn't talk at all. They had not had their tongues cut. The one talked like he had come from far away in a house that had fallen down, but people knew he came out of this house. He said, "There are many that we left there." They continued to ask him. Later they left him alone. These zombies continued to go around the village. The mangoes were ripening when they showed up. Then they were eating mangoes. Finally they began to eat from people's corn, just breaking it off a bit at a time. Then one of the ones who didn't talk died, apparently from starvation.

The police fined the person in whose field he died, apparently for not reporting this person when he died. Therefore, the village said that everyone should kick them out of their farms or areas rather than have more trouble with the police. So everyone kicked them out. No one knows where they have gone now.

We hear that the one who came with the hoe (*jembe*) is now in Muhama. One day he was at our church. When we met him he was hoeing in our garden. He hoed all day, so we couldn't kick him out. We didn't give him anything, but he was getting the area ready to plant. We do not know where the third one who talks a little went.

I - Why couldn't people give him work?

They do not have any awareness or understanding (*fahamu*). One time someone tried to chase him away but couldn't understand him. It is years since they have bathed and they have long hair and nails. We were only able to get a little bit from this one guy, plying him with tea in the middle of lots of stuff that made no sense.

The one who was talking said something else, when they were asking him questions. He said that there was a young woman who came, very young, and she was very light and very pretty. 'She was with us.' A grandchild of the [suspected] witch who was there said, "He means so-and-so who was with us at our place." So they understood that she was there at the witch's house. This young teenager who died was from the teacher. One morning she awoke fine and then at 9 got sick. Then she seemed to lose her mind. Then she died like 10. She had just started secondary school.

They brought this news to the one whose daughter died. He came to try to follow it up. They told him, "If you bring this up, you will bring up more things. It is many

years now. Let it go, because it has been too long.” So they counseled him, and he left it alone. So still we hear from people that this young woman is at this house.

They think a woman in town is responsible for these zombies. Even the Christians and my informant believe she is a witch. Her house in the middle of town fell down. This is how villagers know that the zombies came from her house. They believe she was hiding them in the house, and they were hoeing in the night. “This woman is 80 years old. She is a widow. She lives with her child and her grandchildren. She has lived there for many years. She was there when I was born and probably is a founder of the village with others.”

I discussed these issues with one of our graduates, a pastor and his wife. She told me that she once been taken as a zombie. She told me how she had left school with a headache. Her classmate took her to her parents who put some medicine on her forehead. She understood that this made her invisible. They gave her a great deal of work to do. Her family came looking for her. The village was alerted. They hid her under the bed. Her family came into the hut looking for her. They could not see her. She could not speak to them or move to touch them. Later, her uncle who was a pastor prayed. Then a neighbor saw her pounding grain. This was reported to her family who came looking for her. They again did not find her and left because a rain storm was coming. Those who were keeping her told her that their daughter was supposed to have taken her to Gamboshi, but since the daughter had delayed, she would have to leave. They put her out in the road in the middle of the night. She found her way home and lay down in the kitchen. When her uncle found her, she could not speak. So he beat her. “After finishing the third rod, I began to beg him for mercy.” Then she was

better. The village told the family that had kidnapped her to leave the village (since they were witches). They did not, but they were ostracized by the whole community.

Feelings

Hiebert's model says that culture and worldview contain cognitive, affective, and evaluative elements (knowledge, feelings, and values). Choosing an explanation system is largely a cognitive matter, but this is connected to affective and evaluative matters.

People's knowledge/belief also affects how they feel in general and, in particular, when faced with sickness and death. Feelings of fear, grief, anger, envy, and giving up are probably universal, especially when people are sick or bereaved. However the understandings of what causes these in Sukumaland shapes these emotions in particular ways. Anger and envy are understood to be two major motivations for one person to harm another. This may be done publicly, but usually it is usually done secretly and often by mystical means, like witchcraft. The result of this is that people are afraid (cf. Ashforth, 2005).

Envy

Envy is understood to cause people to bewitch others. When Marco was younger, his family had a school teacher friend whom they saw as a good person. He loaned things to them. He was educated, and his son succeeded in school. Then the son died, and the teacher felt he had been taken as a zombie. The healer failed to return the son. The teacher moved to another village, saying, "I am surrounded by my relatives, and they are witches. They look at me with envy. Now I have lost my child." He thought that if he moved away, they wouldn't see his success and wouldn't have so much envy. His daughter had gone to

study to be a nun. He was afraid they would kill her as well. Marco claims that most Sukuma are not very interested in studying. Many who did study were bewitched by others.

Richard and Paulo (not their real names), both Bible school graduates and evangelists in their respective churches worked faithfully at the same place. Eventually their employer had to let one of them go because of their arguments. He let Richard go. Richard explained it to me this way,

When we were working together Paulo said, “You are getting paid more than I am.” I explained my hard work and investing in projects, like raising chickens. He said, “If I were a witch, I would kill you - just kidding.” But that is nothing to joke about. I was also investigated by immigration. They told me that my fellow worker had reported me. One day he called me to tea. I saw the cup just sitting there. I poured it out behind the shed. The grass died in that spot [therefore, it must have been poison].

In the critical contextualization class, other examples were reported: A person was given a chance to study in China and came back to a high position but then got sick and died. “A big part of his death was caused by envy.” When a neighbor’s farm succeeds better, others think, “He has taken our harvest to his place through witchcraft.”

When I visited the pastor from Ukerewe in the Sukuma village where he now pastors, he asked me, “Why are there only thatch houses in this village? There is good soil fertility and good crops so people could improve their housing, but everyone is afraid to build a house that is nicer than their neighbor.” They competed over radios one year and bikes another year, but no one yet dared to build a nicer house yet.

The city is not that different. I encouraged a worker to build a rainwater tank at his hilltop house so he could have clean water to use and sell rather than buying water at the bottom of the hill. He was afraid to build the tank, because his neighbors were from a

different ethnic group. If they saw him getting ahead, they would be envious. Some day, if he did not have enough water to share, they would poison his water.

Christians are not exempt from envy. The Pentecostal pastor of one church in Mwanza that I will call “Glory” preaches quite a prosperity gospel. He was the head of the United Churches Fellowship until others became envious, because, when the group welcomed foreign guests, he dominated the relationship with them. He and two other pastors, in particular, had difficult relationships. The pastor sent some students to LVCC. Later, he accused two of them of trying to poison him and put them in jail. The case lasted a year. He ignored the pleas of others to drop the charges. In the end, he could not prove the poisoning, and they were freed. They left his church and went to one of his rival’s churches. Another LVCC student who was an assistant pastor in Glory church was kind, smiley, generous, quiet. He also stood out as the only student with a car and a laptop computer.¹²

Later the assistant pastor’s child was attacked by a gang in the yard in the yard one evening. He went out to stop the attack on his child. The assailants asked who he was and he said he was a pastor. They cut him down with machetes. Both the assistant pastor and his wife recognized one of the assailants as a new church member. I attended his large funeral and saw his face with the nose stitched back on, the large wailing crowd, and his inconsolable widow. His fellow students were jailed for a time, as the police continued to investigate the accusations. Some suspect the rival pastors. Some suspect a neighboring

¹²Reportedly, this car was donated to him by his parents who live in America so that he could get back and forth to Bible school. It is likely that they also gave the laptop to enhance his studies. All three of these students were in the Mwanza critical contextualization class.

pastor who felt that a 30-year-old pastor should not be outdoing those who had worked hard for years (even if it was through the support of his sister and parents in America). The latest twist was that his senior pastor was poisoned and was hospitalized, although he was doing well when I saw him preaching at his church not long after.

Anger and Hatred

Anger motivates people to hurt others by beating them, taking them to court, or using witchcraft against them.

A woman in “M” village tripped and broke her water bucket. She accused the informant and his brother, who were children, of intentionally putting a grass rope across the path. She accused them before a local official but lost the case. The official said that the grass had become entwined because of what they did, but it was not intentional. Then she went and bought *majini* and threw them on their mother.

Sukuma people are known to be kind and relaxed in their dealings. They do not easily confront or show anger. This may be motivated by a desire to disguise anger so that others do not suspect you of being angry and suspect you of causing ill. Several Sukuma people said that the typical Sukuma response is “no problem” with a big smile, but they will just get you later with witchcraft. Thus, people remain suspicious. I often hear, “Not everyone loves you” or “Not everyone who laughs with you loves you.”

Fear

Around the world, people are afraid of sickness and death. In Sukumaland fear was described as a constant companion. Life is difficult; sickness and death are common.

Sickness also adds the fear that witches are trying to destroy you. These witches are believed to most likely be those who are close to you, especially family and neighbors.

One of the Bible school students told about all that he and his brother did to get a healer's protection from witchcraft. "When Sukuma make a little money, you begin to be afraid that people will be jealous and kill you. In the past even people were afraid to build a nice house. So we sought *dawa* to protect our shop." When his brother got sick and died, the healer could not help him. "After this I stopped believing in healers, because I saw that the witches have more power. So I saw that I must get more powerful protection than the healers." This was when he began listening to a "Saved" relative and eventually converted.

Belief in witchcraft has a symbiotic relationship with fear. This knowledge/belief fosters fear. Fear combines with circumstantial evidence to produce an assured knowledge that the person has been bewitched. John shared,

Even if it is not witchcraft, the fear itself, the fear which is inside, he has no alternative translation that he was afraid of something else. He sees that witchcraft alone is doing its work. . . . He says, "Pray for me, pastor, for this sickness, but I know something happened. . . . I got to a certain tree, and it happened suddenly. I have been afraid since that time. Now that sickness of mine has continued. I have tried going to the hospital, but there was no improvement. I have tried to pray, but there is no answer. Pray for me, pastor!"

Pentecostals say and show that Jesus is more powerful than witches or illness, but even after people get saved, they have a hard time believing this. It usually takes time, teaching, and, especially, experiences of Jesus' power over witchcraft before they believe it.

Churches that deny or do not discuss witchcraft do not address people's fear and knowledge of witchcraft (some say this is true of the AICT, and Catholics). As a result, people live in a syncretistic way and go to the healers who acknowledge, and, in fact, heighten, people's fear but also promise to heal and protect. Pentecostals typically

acknowledge witchcraft but promise that Jesus is more powerful. However, in the testimonies about Jesus' power over witchcraft, spirits, and healers, the power of all of these things is reaffirmed, but is described as less than Jesus' power. People normally have to experience God conquering witchcraft before they really trust him. Marco said,

Fear of witchcraft is very strong among non-Christian Sukuma. Among Christians there are many different types. Usually it is only those that have really seen God heal them from what they considered to be witchcraft that are strong in their trust in God. This might even include that they vomited up some *dawa* when they were prayed for. Other Christians sort of believe until they or someone they love gets seriously sick.

Pentecostals often tell stories of how people become afraid of saved people when they cannot bewitch them. One minister told how when his family got saved, their neighbor, whom they had feared and defended against as a witch asked them why they prayed so much. When he told the neighbor they were saved, he became afraid and eventually moved. Often "Saved" Christians are said to heal through the power of strong witchcraft.

I - Why do they say Pentecostals are doing witchcraft, not healing?

John - The healers do not cause much fear (amazement). They treat people who may eventually get well. But if God is gracious and a person is healed suddenly, that is something more powerful than healers. That is why they call it witchcraft . . . something happens suddenly, either a sickness or healing - people call it witchcraft.

I - So witchcraft is the most powerful force for most Sukuma, even more powerful than God?

Yes.

Pentecostals contrast faith in God with fear. The struggle is not only to get people to have initial faith, but to grow in faith and to decrease their fear, especially when confronting illness or death.

Connections between Feelings and Values

Anger and envy are bad and can cause sickness and death. Even too much grief is seen as bad. Anger, and especially envy, are the motives behind witchcraft, so anyone who displays them is suspected of either being a witch or obtaining witchcraft.

Grief

In Northwestern Tanzania, people like to be loud in volume, colors, exuberance. They tend to be very demonstrative about feelings. This can include grief; however, there are times when demonstrative grieving behaviors are forbidden. People value persevering through difficulty and discomfort without complaining, perhaps related to the fact that the best coping strategy for distress is often acceptance due to the lack of power or options to change circumstances (also noticed by Roth, 1996). A healer sometimes says that no one is allowed to cry at the funeral. If they cry, they may become sick and die. (This is related to witchcraft but in some stories was connected with death caused by *Lutego*.) The typical condolence is “*pole*,” for which the expected response is “I have already cooled (*poa*).” Christians may add that this is God’s will. One student said his church taught suppression of grief, because Christians should not grieve like the heathen. After three of her four children died, a pastor’s wife refused this passive acceptance and continued to grieve a few weeks longer. When people criticized her, she asked if they had lost a child and refused to listen to them if they had not. One pastor stated that her attitude disqualified her from leading others as a pastor’s wife. He blamed her bad behavior on the fact that they had only been in ministry for 16 years.

Pastors in the critical contextualization class mentioned practical reasons to encourage suppression of expressions of grief. They have seen women begin weeping and fainting everywhere at a funeral and getting other mourners stirred up. It is required that everyone attend a funeral and, it seems, demonstrate that they are sad. Otherwise they may be fined or possibly suspected of witchcraft. Some in the critical contextualization class mentioned that sometimes, however, people hang around and grieve loudly so that they can keep eating meat.

Values

As Hiebert mentions, beliefs and feelings combine to produce the values out of which people make decisions and then act. Related to healing the biomedical causal ontology sees disease as mechanical and amoral, the moral causal ontology sees disease as the sick person reaping the results of their own sin, the locally dominant interpersonal causal ontology sees the “witch’s” evil as the cause of sickness in someone else. Therefore actions locally are primarily directed toward protection from or removal of witches.

In the next section, I will discuss just a couple other areas of values that came up in discussions about illness and death: money and possessions and storytelling and secrecy.

Money and Possessions

Many values relate to handling money and possessions. The hyena is a greedy, gluttonous fool in many stories, and greed is portrayed as bad. Desire/temptation (*tamaa*) is bad, and giving up (literally, cutting desire - *kukata tamaa*) is bad.

Reciprocity is expected and even demanded. If you are in a relationship with someone, there is no easy/right way to say no. “I don’t have anything” is the only good defense. People use it even when it is not true. It also motivates people not to save or have cash on hand. People ask frequently.¹³ If one tries to politely say no, people usually just keep answering the argument and persisting. Sometimes people are afraid not to give to someone with whom they are in relationship. When they refuse, they can become more afraid of assumed envy or anger and, therefore, witchcraft. This may be part of why the weak with whom a person is in relationship are most often suspected of witchcraft (cf. Macfarlane 1970). The weak are the most likely to be needy and to have little to give in return. They may sometimes threaten unspecified bad effects if you do not give, since it is their only leverage. The rich are also suspect, because they may have gotten their wealth illegitimately through witchcraft. During the socialist (*ujamaa*) era, the government rhetoric was against rich people, describing them as parasites on society. This perspective was used as justification for nationalization of much property and many businesses. Some people ate their cows rather than have the government take them. Nationalization, according to some locals, discouraged people from hard work and effort.

Witchcraft according to Ashforth is the negative side of *ubuntu* – “a person is a person through other people” You only survive if others don’t kill you (2005, 84, 87). Brandstrom (1990) emphasizes the importance of reciprocity in neighborhoods, among relatives, and voluntary associations. The morality of sharing among kin and even neighbors

¹³Maranz (2001) helpfully compares Western and African moral logics though he generalizes, stereotypes, and essentializes too much.

implies that there is no immediate return or set time for repayment like a debt. Beyond neighbors there are voluntary associations which share farming labor, economic assistance and entertainment. He shows how one household in a year had called for assistance from several associations of the neighborhood, plowing, threshing, and women's associations and the dance societies. Churches are not mentioned (4:9-4:21).

Reciprocity is critical at times of death and at funerals. Everyone with any relationship to the deceased should go to the funeral or visit the bereaved family soon afterward to give a small contribution of food or money. If a person has not contributed, they are fined by the community. The ultimate threat is always that when you die, the community will not bury you. The church is an alternative community which may actually add more burdens with expectations for tithes, collections, and special giving but may also help out in difficult times. In the EAGT, and now recently in PEFA, all tithes and offerings go to the pastor personally. The pastor can then decide whether to help an assistant pastor or widows or to pay for other church expenses. The pastor, therefore, has become a patron.

Reciprocity also makes life difficult for pastors. Most of the AICT's work has been done by local evangelists. One older Sukuma AICT businessman said that AICT evangelists are caught between the church and the family. For example, families pressure pastors to contribute, when the family wants to pay a diviner to find out who bewitched and killed a family member. If the pastor refuses, they may ostracize him saying, "Let the church take care of him!" But the pastor feels, "The church does not recognize me." By this I assume he means the church (especially the leadership above the pastor) does not notice or respond to the pastor's needs.

People sometimes experience the local church as an alternative extended family or another voluntary association, a safety net in difficult times. Church people also value reciprocity. Once a month or so someone has a death or a major crisis, or there is some ongoing help being given to someone who is out of work. Pressure to contribute money, things, or labor is applied. People give to emergency needs with the expectation that they may need to receive help someday.

Systematic contribution to the poor is more difficult. When our church started a fund for the poor, we contributed. No one used the contribution because of arguments over who should be eligible to tap into it and what kind of dues they should pay.

Deacons or elders often give stern/angry announcements: “You need to come on time to services. Come to Wednesday and Friday services. We are shaming ourselves. Do this, and God will tick off that you have done it. The Bible is full of commands that just need to be obeyed. The church is lazy. God keeps telling us to do things, and we don’t obey. You work hard at your own business but ignore spiritual things. God has decided to bring his punishment. When he decides to punish, don’t complain, be surprised or expect others to help you out.” One elder, pressuring for special giving of labor or money said, “You think it is expensive to be in the church? You should try in the world. You will soon be hoeing the garden of the healer.”

Local people connect wealth (and health) with honor and spiritual power and poverty (or sickness) with shame and curse.¹⁴ Therefore, they do all that they can with work,

¹⁴Local Christians also see poverty as a curse and shame but wealth as blessing and honor. I will use vehicles as an example. Our church raised money for years to

rituals, and sacrifices to become rich. Many people talk about those who sacrifice someone, even their own child, because a healer told them that this sacrifice combined with his rituals would enable the person to be rich. People also reportedly seek human body parts taken from graves or murdered victims for ritual purposes of enriching themselves (or in other cases bewitching others). Human skins traded from southern Tanzania to West Africa received international attention (BBC news 2003). Recently in Northwestern Tanzania people have attacked and killed albino children so that their body parts could, reportedly, be brought to a healer in order to increase the possibility of getting rich, for example by finding gold. In the last few months of 2007, I heard from a missionary who had recently visited a Mwanza region village where people had gone to the funeral of an albino boy. News reported similar killings in Geita and Biharamulo. The BBC picked up the story:

Tanzania's Albino Society has accused the government of turning a blind eye to the killing of albinos, after four deaths in the past three months. An albino spokesman

buy a car for the national overseer, called a bishop. Church leaders motivated giving for this project by talking about the shame of other bishops arriving for meeting in their own vehicle but our bishop arriving by bus. When the churches finally bought him a car, other leaders said that now the blessing would begin flowing down to them and lower leaders.

Marco gave examples of other missionaries with whom locals disagreed. One preached that a pastor should not expect to get rich. When missionaries were invited to a nearby church for a special day of giving in order to get a car for the pastor, they did not attend or send apologies. The church people understood this to mean that the missionaries did not want Africans to have a car and be their equal, that the missionaries preferred to rule.

Frequently, missionaries and Tanzanians misunderstand each other due to the large cultural and economic gap. During our time in Tanzania, the average per capita income improved from 0.5% to 0.7% of U.S. per capita income. Local Western missionaries like myself may feel some shame at owning a vehicle (usually 4WD because of terrible roads), while almost no pastors do. We tend to justify the expense by citing practicality and efficiency for ministry (high Western values), especially since fellow Westerners own vehicles, despite infrastructure developments in Tanzania, like mail delivery and payment of bills by mail. Issues of money, missions, and cultural differences need much more research in Tanzania. Many misunderstandings arise from the large cultural and economic gap.

said there was a belief that the condition was the result of a curse put on the family. Some witch-doctors also say they can use albino body parts in a potion to make people rich. A teacher in the northern town of Arusha has been arrested for killing his own child, who was albino. As well as the four killings, the body of an albino has also been exhumed. It was found with its limbs cut off. (BBC News 2007)

President Mkapa rebuked this in a new year's speech and later television address as well as appointing an albino woman to parliament, but this has not stopped the killing.

Our correspondent says that in some parts of the country, people think albinos bring bad luck to the whole community . . . witch doctors in the country use body parts from albinos in magic potions they claim will bring people good luck or fortune . . . While there have not yet been any prosecutions regarding the recent spate of murders, 172 were last month arrested in connection to the cases - 71 of whom said they had been told by witch doctors to bring them albino body parts. They remain in custody. (BBC News 2008)

A grieving missionary gave me before and after pictures of Mariamu, a six-year-old albino child whom he had been sponsoring and for whom he had been trying to find a foster home. The father had abandoned all of the children long ago, and the mother had more recently abandoned Mariamu, her older sister and older brother (also albino) to the care of a grandfather. At 4 a.m. on January 21, 2008, people entered the house in Ikiriguru village. While her sister lay next to her in the bed, they cut out Mariamu's esophagus, drained her blood, and cut off her legs. The missionary and his national co-worker went as soon as they got the news of her death. I asked why there were only about twenty people at the house for a funeral that would normally have been attended by at least a hundred (especially since it was later reported in the press and even the regional commissioner got involved). The missionary said that he was also amazed. He waited for the funeral service and the burial but was told that, since Mariamu was an albino, there would be no burial or service. Instead, close family members would secretly bury the child that night so that no more body parts could be taken.

Dawa or other magical means can be used to protect a person's property against unknown thieves or unknown adulterers. *Dawa* causes sickness or other difficulty for the offender. Some gave examples of traps, like ropes left around a garden that turned into snakes and squeezed the thief while looking the intruder in the eyes and then bringing them to the property owner. Love medicine can be used make a husband less vicious and/or keep him from adultery. People say that wives have given love medicine to husbands, when husbands are kind and helpful to their wives by cooking, washing clothes, or otherwise submitting to or obeying their wives rather than demanding their wife's submission and obedience.

John Mwanzalima said that for the Sukuma, the most common source for riches is understood to be grace from the ancestors because of doing rituals for them. Next would be a ritual of being prophesied over which also release riches from the ancestors. The other source some point to is *majini*. In the following interview with Marco he claims that local people assume that riches come either from a ritual of being prophesied over, from theft, or from a Western contact:

Concerning 'riches of being prophesied over (*kuhangilwa* – Sukuma)', the healer does things so that you can get rich, but it is necessary to follow his rules. For example, someone I know went to the healer and did the *kuhangilwa* ceremony. The healer told him, "On the way home, you will meet something. Do not be afraid or run away. If you manage this, then you will be rich. Later on the road, he met a lion. Then he ran away. So when he didn't get rich, he went back to the healer, and the healer said he got nothing because he failed the test. Then he was coming back on the way from the healer. Then a car was coming and he thought it would run him over, but it disappeared.

Then he went to Geita area. He found gold and became rich. He went to the healer and brought a thank offering. The healer said that every month he had to give a burnt offering (*kafara*); then he had to drip the blood over the house of the ancestors. He continued to do that and was now very rich. Then he lost it all (*alifilisika*). The healer told him to wear a wire on his hand and other things. He also was told not to commit

adultery, but only sleep with his wife. But later he became a rich person (*mtu mstarabu*), wearing his suit, etc. He got rid of his charms and slept with the attractive women. So then if you go back to the healer, he will tell you that there is nothing he can do now.

So what we learn is that God has rules (*masharti*) like Satan [i.e. through the healer].” So there are things you must do to receive blessing or healing.

Do people think that everyone who gets rich has done it through kuhangilwa?

Yes, in the past they always thought that it was that way. Now people still consider that possibility, but they also consider the possibility that he has stolen it, especially in town.

It is true that, in fact, anyone who becomes rich is assumed to have either been prophesied over or to have stolen it. There might be an exception for those who get a chance to live in Europe or America or benefit from a relationship with a white person. To be prophesied over is an acceptable way to get wealth.

It is interesting that people use the word “to prophesy over”. Do you think some Christians are using the same beliefs, but in a Christian way, when they are prophesied over to get wealthy?

[Laughs] No, there are some people that go to Nigeria and get *dawa* from healers there that are designed to make your church grow so you will be successful and rich. They are doing pretty much the same thing as *kuhangilwa*.

But don't you think that even evangelists who say “Come and give an offering, and I will prophesy over you” are doing something similar to kuhangilwa?

No, it is different.

Not in terms of power, but in terms of the beliefs or worldview that are behind it?

Maybe, have you heard about this Kenyan pastor named Oko'ngo? He has come to many PAG churches and also others in various places in Mwanza. He tells people, “I feel moved to prophesy over people about succeeding financially. Bring all of the money that you have at home, and give it. Then I will prophesy over you, and soon you will be driving your car.” He told us at our PAG church that in a year we would have lots of cars parked outside – because people with cars would be getting saved. The year passed, and there was not even an extra bicycle. Now there are getting to be more cars, but it is long after the year that he said.

But isn't this like what we say in all of our churches that you should tithe and then God will bless you?

But that is different. We are just teaching people what the Bible says. But this Oko'ngo seemed to us to not be very right, because he was telling people to bring all of their money and it was all going to him.

Storytelling and Secrecy

People value openness and community and condemn secrecy and selfishness. Yet people also hide their resources to strive for individual success that will not be dissipated by sharing with all of their relatives. Churches condemn sins of hypocrisy, lying, and gossip. Secrecy is seen as a cover for evil, but also as being very common. People project openness and welcome everyone who passes, but normally people sit outside in the shade or in the sitting room. Almost no one is welcomed to the bedroom or attic where food is kept. (Zombies are also hidden/live in the attic of witches). Witches do much of their work secretly, but some they do openly to scare people. Acting at night enhances both of these. Witchcraft is also a secret thing and generally people only refer to it using euphemisms like "There is a hand of a person [in this sickness or death]." This explains why I lived in Mwanza for eight years with only a minimal awareness of witchcraft. People seldom would talk to a Western guest about such things assuming that we do not understand and even if we did, we may label their beliefs ignorant, illogical, or primitive (which to them only affirms our ignorance). All of this makes anything related to witchcraft hard to research, especially for an outsider. Referring to his ethnic group of the Sukuma more than one person said, "Our people are very secretive." "Sukuma people will tell you many stories that are all lies." Therefore several encouraged me that having local pastors doing interviews I was more likely to get the truth. Some doubted that other researchers were told the deep things or even the truth. But they said, we are telling you the deep things. Those who did interviews said

they also had difficulties when they wrote things down or taped because people wondered if they were spying or investigating something. Many were also “afraid that if you started asking about witches, the witches would find out and attack you.” Sukuma pastors said that if they say something openly against witchcraft, there are some in their congregation who will not come back for a while out of fear. Their understanding is that if you annoy the witches they will attack you. A few Bible school students reported others surprise at their boldness in holding discussions about witchcraft and teaching on it after the critical contextualization class.

Brandstrom (1990) explores storytelling, truth, and values. He gives another perspective on “secrecy.” He says the Sukuma are good storytellers. They value a person who sits with others in a relaxed and friendly manner to trade stories and laugh. A person who keeps company and “laughs has no evil intentions. He lives in peace, *mhola*, with his fellow humans” (7:5).

Then he relates three very different stories that the same person told about the same event in three different contexts. They could not all be true, but he says they were all appropriate to the context. The first context was greetings and the simple facts that he borrowed a bicycle which was later stolen by a false friend. The second was in a context of relating to elders. In this story, he goes to search for corn for the family, searches for the best price, out of mutual help loans the bicycle to a friend who does not return. For the hierarchical relationship with elders respectful speech, “shame,” reverence, respect were appropriate. The story highlighted the values of the elders: mutual help, “family responsibility, calm and deliberation, willingness to accept advice, not being credulous and

easily fooled in transactions” (7:14). When he tells the story to his young age mates he uses the appropriate speech for them: disrespectful speech, “lack of shame,” jesting and disrespect. The story in this opposite context emphasizes the opposite pole of values: “strength, wildness, and rebelliousness.” In this story he borrows the bicycle to get to a drinking party. He gets so drunk that he cannot ride. A drinking buddy offers to be the designated driver. On the way he stops to flirt and have sex with a beautiful woman and when he is done the friend has left with the bike (7:5-15).

Brandstrom says that it is difficult to tell which story is true, but the better question is which story is appropriate. Each story is appropriate. Respectful elder stories are appropriate to the campfire while disrespectful, youthful speech is appropriate to the dance. He admits that this brings difficulty to the researcher, but says that anthropologists also trade tall tales around the table quite different from what they tell in presentations and articles (7:16). Missionaries also must tell appropriate stories to supporters, missionaries, and locals. At times I find it difficult to do this and still maintain integrity and truth, especially given limited time and considering that people hear differently. As a researcher I have found that local stories do differ. Having long, deep, trusting relationships with locals, having their research assistance, as well as pushing for details helps. Sometime local people enjoy the story without bothering to investigate if all of it is true. The process of critical contextualization requires everyone working together to discover and live the truth as well as helping others.

Choose a Treatment

When I showed my codes for the various treatments that came up in interviews, a focus group of Pentecostal Bible school students/ministers said that each of the treatments had a Christian version and a non-Christian version. Another explanation and treatment system is the biomedical system, which they would see as complementary to the Christian version. Other options might be discussed, but at least for Saved Christians in this area, these three are the main options.¹⁵ I will try to compare these systems in the following table:

	“Local” Neo-traditional	Pentecostal Church	Biomedical
Focus area of explanation	Middle zone relational	High zone relational – God But Pentecostals claim Jesus and Holy Spirit power and presence in the middle zone and therefore compete with Neo-traditional	Lower – visible and mechanical explanations
Cause of sickness and death	Who? Social and “spiritual” Especially evil person – witch Evil spirit or Ancestor (usually neutral or good spirit?) that has been offended or is	Who? Social and “spiritual” Especially evil spirit – Satan, demons Evil person – witch God’s plan	What? Mechanical Bugs Parasites, viruses, worms, bacteria, BP, AIDS, etc.

¹⁵ An Islamic option could be presented, but Saved Christians understand Islamic explanations/treatments for illness as a subset of local/neo-traditional. *Majini* replace ancestors as the possessing spirits and Muslim healers replace neo-traditional local healers, but the logic is the same. For Saved Christians the source is also the same – Satan.

	demanding		
Onset – how did sick person become ill?	Attack by evil person (spirit) Sin – failure to honor ancestors, break taboo, ignore customs	Attack by evil spirit (person) Sin – rebellion, lose protection of God. Punishment from God on sin The plan of God	Attack by bugs Amoral - negligence, accident, contact with something dirty, just happens – statistical chance,
Diagnostic method	Divination – Discussion throwing stones, rubbing, examining chicken entrails or euphorbia Ancestor or Jinn possession	Prayer – Discussion Holy Spirit possession	Examination - Medical history Tests
Results of diagnosis	Spirit speaking Results of tests Often witch identified	Vision, prophecy, advice from pastor or prayer	Results of tests, presence of bugs
Treatment	<i>Dawa</i> , rituals, charms, contract/agreement with spirit to pacify	Prayer and fasting, rituals, Trust Jesus, Name of Jesus, Exorcism – casting out demons. Confrontation, including loud forceful shouting. Sometimes Christian rituals/charms. <i>Dawa</i> or witchcraft might be suspected, but seldom named.	<i>Dawa</i> – medicine, procedures
Source of healing power - self-claimed	Ancestors <i>Dawa</i> (mystical and chemical agency) and rituals	God, Jesus, Holy Spirit	<i>Dawa</i> (medicine – chemical agency) and medical procedures
Source of healing power - according to other systems	Churches say this is: “Demonic, Satanic” (evil) Biomedical says this is: “Psychosomatic” (limited)	Neo-traditionalists say this is: “Witchcraft, hidden <i>dawa</i> ” (evil) Biomedical says this is: “Psychosomatic” (limited)	Churches and Neo-traditionalists say it is: “Chemicals” (limited)
Source of knowledge	African/village/local Ancestors (healer’s and	Western/urban/global God: Bible, Holy Spirit (vision, dream,	Western/urban/global Scientific research

	patient's)	prophecy, sense, etc.)	
Place	home Healer's house, huts	home limited Church, pastor or elder's house	home very limited Clinic, hospital, pharmacy
Expert	Healer part-time – full-time, very many – most paid by patient fees, self-supporting, independent but possibly hidden informal networks, uses local plants	Pastor, evangelist. almost all part-time, no fees, paid a little by offerings, few outside funds- almost none at local level, lack of resources, independent to bureaucratic	“Doctor” M.D.s rare, medical assistant, nurse, drug store owner. mostly full-time professional. very few paid by patient fees and government and outside health funding. fewer outside funds reach local level- lack of resources, inefficient bureaucracy. uses imported instruments and medicines.
Training for expert	Informal Local, but more respected if from a distant area like Sumbawanga	Informal, non-formal, Few formal Nearby training center	Formal, non-formal, informal Distant formal training center
When	As needed (e.g. when sick, death, fear) Rituals for ancestors could/should be regular, but seldom are	As needed Pushed for weekly or even multiple times weekly Commitment of time and money	As needed Difficult to get to follow precautions or follow through to finish medications
Explanation or education to patient	Always Very specific for your situation	Often but are sometimes general rather than specific for this illness	Almost none No specific “why” purpose given
Availability of Experts – time and location	Very available Everywhere, especially village and away from main roads	Available – even at odd hours Many places, especially in towns and near roads	Unavailable Distant and few so often involves travel and long waits. More available in towns
Degree of understanding by local people	Everyone understands and believes the basic	Minimal understanding Minimal belief A few saved are more	Minimal understanding Minimal belief

	perspective, understandings of details vary	committed.	
Price	May be the highest, but local currency like livestock, labor, and sex accepted	Free, but tithes and offerings strongly encouraged	Perceived to be high, but very cheap by American standards
Advice/opinion about the other systems	Compete, say that other systems are ineffective against your disease. A few might refer certain cases.	Very competitive against the neo-traditional. Mostly cooperate with biomedical. Prayer is first and better for most. Almost all accept biomedical treatment, but fewer encourage. There is some debate if any local <i>dawa</i> can be used as herbal remedies. There are few Pentecostal medical services, mostly due to lack of resources. Accept local worldview, but fight most strongly against local response.	Competitive with neo-traditional. Traditionally very opposed to healers, but some at low levels may refer to healers or churches. Originally, almost all medical treatment was done by the older churches and, although the government tried to take this over, they have continued to depend upon churches.

As said earlier, the students identified the themes I found in the data as having both neo-traditional and Christian versions. The following were the themes: persevere, faith, prayer, healing through prayer, exorcism, charms - Christian, medicine - traditional, ritual treatment, sacrifice and rules. In fact, I only had Christian examples under the headings of perseverance, faith, healing through prayer, exorcism, and Christian charms. I had only neo-traditional examples under the theme of traditional ritual and medicine and sacrifice. Below I will discuss what I coded under these themes.

First, I will make a few comments of comparison with biomedicine. Although I had coded biomedicine in a different category, all three categories talk in terms of battling adversaries. They differ in who or what they identify as the enemy. Neo-traditionalists focus on witches and also discuss the spirits or ancestors. Ancestors and spirits might be bad or may just be forcing the patient to do their will through inflicting suffering. Faith in the treatment and healer is critical to healing in all three systems. This faith is called the placebo effect in biomedicine, where its power is well-established and still debated through research. The lack of faith in biomedicine in Tanzania probably contributes to its poorer outcomes here, both directly and through lack of early and persistent diagnosis and treatment. As Marco said, most people give up after one ill-equipped clinic has failed to diagnose or cure, rather than persisting in following up and pursuing other biomedical treatment options. Biomedicine normally puts prayer or exorcism in a religious and non-scientific category. Biomedicine has its own sacred rituals which help to maintain its mystique. Sacrifice in fees, time, travel, and torture (consider the side effects of cancer treatment) are required for treatment. Rules must also be followed; for example, the prescribed dosage of medication must be taken at prescribed times for a prescribed length of time.

Especially relevant related to witchcraft (or so called voodoo death), the so-called nocebo effect refers to physical effects arising from faith that harm is coming especially from a substance or ritual. For example, the incidence of side effects has been found to be higher for those warned about side effects and even a placebo drug can produce harmful side effects. In one study, women who believe they have heart problems were four

times more likely to die than otherwise identical women with no such belief (Reid 2002; Wikipedia 2008).

Healing through Prayer

Pentecostal Christians told me many stories of healing through prayer. In virtually every Pentecostal service, there is a time during or at the end of the service for sick people to come to the front for prayer. Often they kneel on the floor and have hands laid on them and prayer said over them by elders and pastors. Only occasionally are they talked to about what their problem is. Often there is a testimony time and many of these testimonies are about God healing someone. I will relate just a few that happened recently, told by very close, unspectacular friends that I trust and have worked with for 13 years:

In addition to what happens during services, some come at other times from other churches for prayer or from villages for medical treatment and prayer. These are some results of those prayers in our small PEFA church recently: A grandmother brought her 14-year-old granddaughter, who had always been incontinent and was healed. Two different people received healing through prayer without surgery from (ectopic?) “pregnancies in the wrong place.” They were examined by ultrasound before and after. One of them was a Catholic woman who had bled for three months and was scheduled for surgery but asked for prayer first. John talked about Jesus’ healings and asked if she had faith that He could heal her. Then he prayed for her. That night the bleeding stopped. John told her to keep her doctor’s appointment but to make sure they examined her before they did an operation. She went and was told that they must have examined her incorrectly before, because now there was just a dark patch. Three weeks later at the follow-up visit even that was gone.

A close friend who is a Luo pastor in PEFA prayed for a 1-2 month old baby who had neither male nor female organs. They took her to the doctors who could not figure out what she was but said that perhaps they could do surgery to try to make her something. The baby's mother heard a voice, telling her to take a bucket of grain as an offering. Her husband was not a Christian, and she was from the Anglican Church, but she came to the pastor's church for prayer. The pastor tried to build her faith with Scripture but admits that he was afraid to pray for this situation. Still, as he read Scripture and heard her story, his faith began to grow. He prayed, "You are the God of yesterday, today, and forever. In the past, you did mighty things. Now it is our time. Do your work today so that, even tomorrow, people will recall what you did for us today." In the morning, the mom checked and saw the beginnings of a line, like pimples. Then it got some mounds on each side. In a matter of a few days, the baby got a vulva. The parents were so excited that the mother was screaming, and the father got saved.

Benesta Misana is dean and teacher at LVCC as well as a good friend. He is also the pastor and regional overseer of all the PEFA churches in Northwestern Tanzania. Soon after it happened in 1999, he wrote this story. I have inserted my own experience in the brackets:

In September, I was typing students' notes at the Bible College. I received a telephone call that my daughter Seseliah had passed away. Because home was 270 kilometers away, I decided to sleep until the next day and then travel. That night I could not sleep. I prayed. [I also talked and prayed with him that night. This death pierced especially deep, because another time when he traveled away from home a different daughter died. He asked God to give him another in return. He felt that God answered by giving Seseliah.]

The next day when I reached home, my wife told me that the child was suffering from malaria for seven days. . . . At that time, she was in the hospital waiting for the shot for the child. About 12 noon the child cried once and passed away. Her mother

prayed for her daughter for 15 minutes. At last she found that her daughter was dead. She ran to the doctors with the dead body. The doctor tried to help but confirmed that she was dead. . . . He laid the body on the table. After three hours, the child started breathing and became alive. Everyone thanks God for what he has done. Many people have gotten saved after proving that God is good, including the doctor and nurse who saw the miracle.

Prayer

Tite Tienou (1993) highlights how African words for prayer (including *kuomba* in Swahili) mean to beg or ask. People ask for material blessings like children, rain, and health. Since, in African worldviews, the world is supposed to be good but is not, the focus of prayer is on misfortunes. Prayer has a triangle of God, the prayer, and the adversary. It is asking for God's help against the adversary. Prayer is also communal.

These observations fit Northwestern Tanzania within the church as well as outside of it. Neo-traditionalists basically pray to ancestors or *majini* with some distant relationship to God. John mentioned that because there is no chief to call them, the neo-traditionals no longer have corporate worship services where they make sacrifices to the ancestors during times of sickness, pests, or drought. The closest thing in recent history was when the Regional Commissioner called an inter-religious prayer service for rain during the most recent drought.

Perseverance

Another theme in sermons and songs is perseverance. A favorite sermon text is the story of Joseph, who finally succeeded despite great persecution from enemies. "He persevered unlike many. . . . Ahead is healing. . . . The rocks of testing are only stepping

stones to success.” Pastors encourage each other to stand in the face of hunger, persecution, sickness, opposition from witches, etc.

Charms

Charms are used to protect people from witches and sickness. For example a charm might be tied around the waist of a child to protect him. A Sukuma priest said that Sukuma people sometimes bring twins to the church to get a “certain kind of protection, like charms made of words.” I challenged my students in some of the critical contextualization classes that Pentecostals use the name of Jesus as if it were a magic word to bring protection, exorcism, healing. They spit it out forcefully and repeatedly in prayer for healing or exorcism. “Leave, in the NAME of Jesus!” Early in a service, the leader will loudly proclaim during his prayer, “Satan you have no authority in this place . . .” and everyone will shout with him, “In the NAME of Jesus!” An elder friend confirmed that people do use Christian charms, like his wife who had tried sleeping on a Bible to take away a toothache. When it did not work, they gave up on such things.

Calming and Casting out Spirits

Both local healers and pastors perform rituals to relieve illness and symptoms that they understand to be caused by spirits. There is one key difference: Healers calm spirits. Pastors cast out spirits. Healers, whether dealing with ancestors (*mizimu*) or *majini*, are seeking to negotiate with the spirits. They are trying to find out what the demanding, possessing spirit desires so that the patient can give it to them and then get well. The rituals dealing with traditional spirits (*uaguzi*) is similar to that for *majini* (*kupunga maruhani*). Even if a spirit or *majini* is considered bad, it is not usually cast out. Instead, a good spirit is

added to rule over the bad spirit. The spirit is not necessarily considered to be bad. Often the spirit promises wealth and power if obeyed. The healer often has his possessing spirit rise up within him in order to discover what is needed by the other spirit. So this ritual is not properly called exorcism since spirits are appeased rather than cast out (cf. Kim, 2004).

However, in the exorcisms that I saw or heard about, Pentecostals treated the spirits as demonic and destructive and their promises or threats as lies. They ignored the spirit's insistent pleas or threats and demanded that they leave in the name of Jesus. "We are not negotiating with you. You have no authority here. Leave in the NAME of Jesus!" They see themselves as following the example of Jesus and the apostles. For example, John Mwanzalima cited these Scriptural examples: Luke 9:49, Mark 16:17, and Acts 16:18, 19:13.

Occasionally in the Pentecostal churches that I have attended, someone will behave strangely, especially while being prayed for. Here is an example from my field notes about a service in our church when someone was being led through a prayer for salvation and then was prayed over:

After the service, John said there was someone who wanted to be prayed for to give his life to Jesus. Everyone cheered. Five young women went and danced around the young man in his 20s, as he came down the aisle. Then John asked Benesta to pray over him. As he prayed, the young man began to go up and down [his shoulders] taking big breaths like he was trying to throw up, then shaking, then he fell backward on the ground with his knees still bent under him and his hands lying above his head. This lasted maybe five minutes. Then he sat up. The elder talked to him and told him that now he was saved and healed. He said, "You probably did not know that you had that in you, did you? But now it is gone, and you are healed. Unless you welcome it back, you are free." The young man seemed quite calm the whole time.

Sometimes there is a more dramatic confrontation during which people seem to lose consciousness, and people gather around them to pray over them or shout: "Leave in Jesus' name." As they sit or lie on the floor, people may spread clothing over them to cover

any indecency or to hold women's legs together. If they go wild, someone might hold their hands or feet, so they don't injure themselves or others. Normally people do not touch them, though they may point and shout at them. I have heard of cases where people have hit demonized people, but always as a bad example intended to teach people that we should not fight spiritual battles physically and that the demonized person is a victim not an enemy.

An Ikoma man and wife who live in Mwanza explained how she had problems one evening and began crying and growling. His neighbors told him that he had problems with *majini*.

So I told them, 'How can this be, since in our ethnic group we don't have any *majini*?' They said, 'People can get *majini* in many ways.' For example,

1. Cleanness – they don't like dirtiness. If you are a very clean person, the *majini* can choose you because you are so clean.
2. There are those that are caught on the path (as in a trap - *yanayotegwa kwenye njia*). For example, the traditional healers put them at the crossroads for people to catch them. They do this so that they can get customers.
3. To be sent – they can be sent to ruin your life, kill you, make you crazy, or persecute you.

After this I told these people that I didn't understand. What was I supposed to do to get rid of this? They said, 'Until you go to a local healer of *majini*, there is no hope.'

They began to obey the rules told them by the *majini*, which required very Muslim dress and action and special food. The man went to three Muslim healers. He explained to me in great detail the rituals: the *majini* climbing up in the healer and causing *majini* to rise up in the patients. Then the rules given by these *majini* were written down. Some of these were daily rules. Others were specific, expensive requirements to prepare the sacrifices involved in the ritual (*kupunga*) of welcoming the *majini* to live. But the things

they demanded for this ritual were far too expensive for him. The man's wife received more *majini* during the rituals. So for a long time, she just got worse.

Then someone came and asked to pray for the man's wife. The man knew that such things made things much worse, so he said, "Okay fine, you can pray for her if you want to. But I am only waiting to bury her. I will go. If she dies, that is your problem . . . if you start praying, those *majini* will strangle her." The woman agreed to be prayed for. When her husband came back, he was told, "Today the *majini* will not hit her (which they did every day, casting her around the room so that she banged into walls). Today she will eat (for the first time in a long time)." So he went away. . . . She began to have a little bit of faith but was afraid that it would come back. The next day, this man took her to the Egon Faulk crusade." She went to the crusade only able to walk with help, which was how she had been for a long time. (She was afflicted for 3 years). She came back walking and then cooked for him, which she hadn't done for a long time. The person with her said that she had been saved and was ready for heaven, "What about you, though?" The man's heart was pounding. He could barely eat and didn't sleep, because he was amazed at what had happened to her and thinking about all the money he had wasted on healers. He was also trying to figure out whether the neighbors who had brought her had some hidden motive, because they had not wanted money.

The Ikoma and his wife are now faithful members of a PEFA church. He is an elder who feels real compassion for the demonized and enjoys praying for them with real faith. He does not say that everything is demonic. For example, I heard him and others praying for a woman who was about 18 years of age after a service. She was seeing some

naked and some clothed people around her bed when she was ready to go to sleep but was still awake. After she saw the people around her bed, she would itch all over. In counseling her, the church elders explained to her, “It is possible that you were being beaten by witches and that is who you were seeing. Or it is possible that these were demons that you were seeing. Or it is possible that you actually were sleeping, and these are just images that come out of your desires as young woman. If you have a desire for something, when you start dreaming you will think about that.” (Or it is possible that she was going down to the lake and watching people who were naked.)

The Ikoma man explained to the young woman, who agreed to get saved, that was told that now there was a new spirit inside of her, so that she should not be afraid of these things. Of course, they might very well come, but she should stand and rebuke them in the authority that she now had. If this was caused by spirits would realize that it was Jesus speaking through her, and they would leave her alone. “We also told her that she should not pray for the dead, which she had been doing a lot as a faithful Catholic. She can also be praying for those who are dead and they can show up. Therefore, she can be thinking about them.”

The following is a longer case in which I was a participant observer for the final months of exorcism as well as for the 6 years of health since:

I was going to the churches of salvation. I was going to the PEFA church in D village and singing in the choir when I was a teenager and going to primary school, but I hadn't really valued salvation. I knew there was a God, like history, but was just a normal Christian, not really saved. I didn't really follow this up after leaving the village. Then in 2001, after getting sick, I began to go once in awhile.

The speaker explained how she had gotten ill. She tried several local healers, who diagnosed her as having picked up bad luck (*mkosi*) on the path. They treated her

unsuccessfully. In addition, she was hospitalized several times. At one point, she was assumed to be dying in the hospital. She gave a detailed account of a vision she had of hell and heaven during that hospitalization. After that, she went to church more. She was hospitalized again. The man with whom she was living left her. Her family hospitalized her near them for 9 days. Then they took her to the traditional healer.

So when I was at the traditional healer's place, I began to have faith that I should leave the traditional healer and be prayed for. So I asked my relatives to take me to church, so they took me back to D. Then my stomach was full and swollen after the medicine from the traditional healer. Then I was home for a week. The pastor and parishioners came to pray for me, because I could only be carried. I wasn't able to walk. When they prayed for me and said the name of Jesus, I felt that the pain and heat increased at that moment.

So the pastor would come and pray for me, since he was a neighbor and they knew that I had decided to give my life to Jesus. So I would put my feet in water to try to cool, but it would get warm quickly and they would have to put in cold water again.

When I was going to sleep they would put a wet towel on my stomach to try to cool it and sponge me. Then I was not able to eat. I could only drink milk. Then later my parents didn't believe. They brought a traditional healer from Sumbawanga. After a week, they brought him, the one called "Second God (*Mungu wa Pili*). They said he will come and divine, and if he says you will be healed, you will be healed. If he says you will die, you will die. So he came that day in the morning and started about 10 a.m. . . . I saw that he had a Bible. He had a picture that he had drawn of Jesus and the Virgin Mary on a piece of paper. He had a white cloth like a sheet. He had a thing that he had drawn like a dove/pigeon. He put it on the wall. He said, "The word that I say, believe." He opened up somewhere in Luke. He read it. . . . He said do you see these pictures? I have been given my traditional healing by God to help people. After this he took some medicine and spread on his hands. Then he asked me to put my hands out and he slapped them [shows action like "giving five"]. Then he said, "Look at me." We were sitting on a woven grass mat with the medicine between us. Then he began to growl and to tremble. I followed him in his growling and trembling. As we were continuing to do this, I began to growl with great strength.

Then he said to my father that I had been bewitched by my mother who gave birth to me (*nimerogwa na mama yangu mzazi*). I refused and said that my mother hadn't bewitched me. After he said this, my father went out because he felt bitterness inside. Then I asked him, "Really? My mother has bewitched me?"

He said, “No, it is your father’s youngest wife.” [Her mother is the middle of three wives].

Then my father came back and he said, “Can you really heal her?”

He said, “Yes, give me 100,000 shillings.”

My father said, “Right now I don’t have any money, but if she is healed I will give you a cow.” But then I saw that my father gave him 70,000 to go buy medicine. . . .

But he said, “She must stop getting mixed up with church stuff, she needs to listen to me first.” Then the traditional healer moved me from there to Mugumu where we had a family home. My father told him to do what he needed to do. When he came to me, he cut me on the chest and head and shoulders and put in medicine, and he covered me with a big blanket and cooked medicine in big clay pot. Then he put the pot in with me under the blanket and kept adding hot rocks to make the steam from this come up in the blanket. So he treated me for three days, and the condition got much, much worse. I had a sister who came from Seronera, and she came and I had no water in my body. I was throwing up. I couldn’t eat anything. She took me into the hospital. I stayed in the hospital for 3 days, and they began to give me more water, but my stomach was burning very viciously (*kali*). Then they X-rayed my stomach and my lungs, which were very tight like I was carrying something big. The fourth day I was released from the ward. They said that I had many ulcers (*vidonda*) in my stomach and my lungs, bugs (*wadudu*) had eaten a great deal. They gave me Molox and Tagamet and milk. They said, “Bring her home, her condition is not good [i.e. let her go home to die]. Just give her milk.”

Then when I got to the village I had gotten very thin and I couldn’t sit long, because my tail bone hurt and you could see all my bones. People said she is just waiting for her days to be up. I also gave up. They also told their relatives to come and say goodbye to me. So they would come.

Then I began to repair my life on my bed (*kutenganeza maisha yangu kitandani*). I began to pray for repentance and to pray with great bitterness. I had already been shown where I didn’t want to go. And Pastor John and those from other churches came and prayed for me. I decided to open my heart to God and be open. When I was in this condition, an EAGT pastor came and told me about Lazarus. This was in June 2001. I told him that the traditional healers and hospital have failed. I asked, “Is it true that if you believe in God he can heal or is this just history?”

He said, “It is true, if you believe.” At that time, I was tired from the suffering, because my whole body was burning.

Then I told him, “Okay, let me try (*Ngoja ni jaribu*). If it really isn’t just history, let me see.”

He gave me a test. He said, “How will you feel if you are going to a wedding, and you can’t find your good clothes? How will you feel if you look for them, and you can’t find them to go to the wedding? Believe Jesus is like those wedding clothes. Seek him like you would that lost dress. Pay the price (*Lipa gharama*).”

At that time, my relatives couldn’t believe that God is here (*Mungu yupo*) and could do anything. He said, “Tomorrow, I ask you not to drink or eat anything, and pray to God for mercy. Tell him what you want. That evening I had drunk tea and milk.”

Then I slept but not really. I was continuing to think about my problems. I noticed that I was in a nice big room, a place with grass on the outside and trees/sticks inside. There was a person with a big table and book and pen. I was surprised and didn’t know what it meant. Then I slept until morning. Now it was July 2001. Then in the morning someone called out “*hodi*” twice [equivalent of knocking]. Then I said, “Welcome” and wanted to welcome him. But I had no strength. So my sister-in-law welcomed him inside. He said, “I have been told there is a young woman here who is sick and has come from Mwanza.” I have followed her to bring her to the meeting so that she can be prayed for. He had a bicycle. He took me with me sitting on a cushion and leaning on him. And there I saw the house that I had seen and there was the table and the person who looked just like I had seen with the pen and book.

Then they gave me a place to lie. He was a preacher from Kenya. He was preaching to people in the meeting. He said, “Now is the time for prayer.” He mentioned things. He said to everyone, “You have been to the hospital and they have said you have AIDS, you have cancer, your liver has rotted, but you haven’t been healed.”

So then I thought, “He has seen me!” Then I put my hand on my stomach and head like he said to put on the place that hurt. When he was praying, I got strength and was surprised that I had jumped up.

Then the *majini* said [through her], “So today you have discovered me. I have been sent to torture her and then kill her (*kumbe leo umenigunda, nimetumwa nimtese halufu nimue*).” Then my intellect was confused (*akili imechanganikiwa*), and I started to say things like “Now we are feeling hot when she goes to church. We had loved her, but she has failed to follow our rules (*masharti yetu*).” Then I manifested myself (*nilijizirisha* – was made open or the *majini* manifested themselves). I said, “She took a husband of someone else when she was at college. That woman got angry. She bought us for 60,000/= . We were taken from the graves (*imetolewa makaburini*) at Tanga. We are three spirits: Makata (male), Maimuna (female), and Kishima (male).” The one who was talking was the leader, Makata. They said, “We were sent in 1995” - when I was in Mugumu. They said “that was the day that we came in.”

There [in Mugumu] I lived with this man who was the OCCID (police). We talked like we were going to get married. He said that he loved me and because I was free

and he was free, we should get together. But there was another middle-aged woman who he hadn't married. (He did have a couple kids with a different woman but not her.) One day he told me that this woman had said she will do something bad to me, so be careful of her. And after three days, this woman came and met me with this man in his house, and she met us there. She came and greeted me. She didn't know if I or my friend were the one who was his girlfriend. But he introduced me as his fiancée. Then she came to hit him. She said, "You are still a little girl. I have come from Tanga. You can't compete/fight with a woman from Tanga. "

Then I left with my friend. But in that month, I began to bleed for three months straight. And really I finished school well, but whenever I got a job, I didn't keep it for more than a year, and I was fired. I didn't know why. Truly (*kumbe*) there was something that had been done in the spirit world.

Then that night the spirit (*pepo*) said that the woman had given a charm (*hilizi*) to the daughter of that man and told her to put it in my food. On the weekend I went to eat lunch with him, as I had been invited. The spirit said that this small charm had been put in the water, when they cooked porridge (*ugali*) and meat. When we came that day, the daughter welcomed me. I ate the food by myself and that is where the trouble started.

Then after eating this, suddenly that week my relationship and engagement with that man ended, finished (*Basi*). Then the spirit said that it was sent, that it could seek out its own man/husband. Then I began to get good money, but the money never did anything useful, only comfort (*starehe tu*). The spirit said that it had given me all that money. It said that it had begun to be my husband so it didn't mind my having a man who was already married, but it didn't want me to actually have a husband who would really marry me. It didn't want someone who would take its place, more important than it.

After, I got engaged to marry this other man, I began to stop drinking and dancing and other things of comfort (*starehe*). It liked those things, so it got more angry. It said that is the reason why it made me sick and made the relationship break up. "Because she failed to follow our rules (*masharti yetu*), we decided to persecute her and then kill her." "If you want us to not persecute you, leave the things of the church and follow our rules (*fuata masharti yetu*), because also that man began taking you to church." Follow these rules (*Fuata masharti haya*): "We want the clothes that you wear to be like you used to."

I was surprised that I began to want to wear Muslim women's black dress (*bayibui*) and to pay for a very strong perfume. My husband/fiancée also had asked me to leave these Muslims things and drinking (*mirundi* especially I loved) and dancing and to come to church with him. "If you do not go to church and you follow our rules we will give you lots of money and any man that you want with lots of money."

But as they were saying this in the meeting, I felt faith that I should refuse this condition. I stayed at the house of this pastor next to the church for three days. They kept praying for me, and I kept throwing up black stuff. And during that time I began to get strength in my joints. I began to get more faith and boldness that I would be healed. The fourth day the meetings ended. I was brought back to my house and now I was able to walk with my own feet. I had been unable to do anything, but I took a basin and I went to the river and I took a bath myself. I felt I had strength. That night, I began to feel that my condition began to get worse again. I began feeling that I was being choked. When I said "In the name of Jesus!" it began to speak, using my mouth (it had very different Swahili of Tanga, and you could tell when it was talking instead of me) and to talk to me, "We will give you whatever you want, just don't make us leave. Follow our rules (*masharti*) and we will give you whatever man you want, but we want a Muslim." I struggled a lot (*nikaongaika sana*) that night and felt worse. Then I went that night to pastor John to be prayed for. [This was the end of July].

I continued to be troubled and sick. Whenever I left going to church or reading my Bible or praying for a couple days, I felt better. But during this time I began to read stories of people who Jesus had cast out demons. My faith began to grow a lot. I believed that if Jesus can heal those like Mariam Magdalena and the man with demons in the graveyard [then he can heal me]. But when I was reading, I felt worse (*nimeangaika zaidi*).

Then in the beginning of August, I remember I was sleeping at night and I heard a person calling me. Then I began to pray that God would open a way for me to be healed, because it was hard. People at home would say, "What demons? She is crazy (*mapepo ya wapi? amechanganikiwa*)." I was sleeping with my sister-in-law (*wifi*). It was maybe 1 am and the light was out. I heard someone calling me, "'Furaha', my child. I am with you. Go to Mwanza, to the PEFA church, to the house of my servant. There I will heal you." . . .

August 22, 2001, in the morning, I left. There I began to feel terrible and boiling hot. They were saying that that we are not going to let you go there. We are not going to be with those people. . . .

So on August 23 about 9 a.m. in the morning, my sister-in-law brought me to John Mwanzalima's house. Here we met the pastor's wife and daughter. Immediately when we arrived, they began talking. "We won't stay here!" They began to pray. I began to be prayed for. You remember when I was being prayed for Baba Hannah [me] talking to me? You remember that I was saying things to scare people. One night I woke up and saw that a bat was lying on my chest in the night. I pushed him away. And I kept throwing up and my stomach started going down and I started to eat food well. But when I would throw up, something would not come up. It would go back down and hit my stomach. Then one day in October when I was in the meeting of Pastor Maboya, there was a word. He said, "There is a woman who had been suffering a great deal and today God is going to free her. She was given to eat a charm (*ilizi*)."

When I heard this, I went up. He prayed for me and laid his hands on my chest. I threw up a lot and this thing came out – a bracelet like thing with “hair” all over it that was all black. It was hard. Then I felt that my stomach went down completely, and until now I eat well.

In those 5 months they prayed for me and I struggled (*nimeangaika*), but when it got to 2002, I felt completely well and began to be able to work. After that I felt that my health was good, and I felt to serve God.

This is an account that I wrote at that time:

She arrived at Pastor John Mwanzalima’s house and was welcomed in, although he was traveling. She had barely arrived when different voices began speaking through her. The church people were called. They are accustomed to such battles. They demanded in Jesus name that these demons depart. Often such prayer takes less than an hour. After a couple days of constant battle, two of the demons left. One voice remained, calling himself Makata.

When Pastor John and N. arrived for the school board meeting, Makata greeted them. They began binding this demon. When I arrived for our meeting this was going on. I decided that observing these experienced ministers might be a chance God was giving for me to learn. So I watched and participated.

Makata shook her body and talked in a different voice and accent. He claimed that 7 years ago he had been purchased and sent from a coastal city by a woman that was jealous of “Furaha” for sleeping with her former boyfriend. The boyfriend warned her, but she said she was a Christian and had nothing to fear. Makata claimed he had married her, and she felt him sleep with her at night. He could not let her go. He claimed that if she paid him what he needed, he would go. He threatened to attack those praying, to wear one of them, to kill her, etc. They answered that, in Jesus’ name, he had no authority. For hours, day and night, Makata bartered, boasted, threatened, and lied while he made her body tremble. Yet he sat on the floor and did nothing but whine about the prayers torturing him. Shouts of “Come out in Jesus’ name!” could be heard even at our house [next door] throughout many nights.

Actually, the best opportunities for progress seemed to come when Makata did not show up. When Furaha was in her right mind and aware (even if disturbed by voices), John and I and others counseled with her. We led her to affirm that she had given her life to Jesus and to renounce every connection she ever had with witchcraft, charms, vows, etc. We showed her that she did not need to repent but was forgiven already. I gave her a list of Scriptures from Neil Anderson, confessing her justification and position in Christ. Makata would try to confuse her so she couldn’t read them and tell her to turn to Ezekiel. She became stronger in being able to affirm the truth and counter his lies. She was already forgiven. She had already renounced everything and owed him nothing. (This “you owe me” thing was great for steering prayers off track,

since then they started to focus on things she may have hidden and not have renounced. He would come up with new lies, like that she was going to die or someone close to her would die.)

Twice, after various ones of us had yelled at Makata to be quiet for hours, I told Furaha to tell him to be quiet in Jesus' name. She began speaking and telling him to be quiet, and he was quiet. This didn't always work.

It did begin to appear that Makata's showing up and arguing was really to keep her from hearing the truth. One time I just walked by and greeted the women outside including her, and he showed up and began talking – apparently afraid that I would counsel her and tell her the truth.

I did gain confidence from noticing that I was not afraid, that the demon was a powerless whiner, that some of the counsel I gave seemed to really help her get footholds of truth to defeat his lies.

The students and teachers and young men in the church gave themselves for hours to fight with this *jini* named Makata and counsel with Furaha. The pastor's wife gave the greatest thing by hosting her for 3 months. I didn't counsel with her for many weeks. I just talked to her. She said that she hasn't been bothered by the voice(s) for over two weeks. She is feeling good, eating, walking, and working. She is so grateful to God and the church for the hospitality and counsel and healing she received.

In the six years since that time, she has lived in good health at the Bible School with Pastor John and Elizabeth, like one of their daughters. She assists in the cleaning and cooking at their house and the Bible School. When she first came, she could not endure even minutes of a church service without beginning to act strange. These years, she sings in the choir. She tried to move out for awhile in 2003, but the worries of life began to bring back old symptoms so she moved back. She heard that the son of the woman who bought the demons/*majini* has now gotten her symptoms and has lost her mind. She considers the person who sold the *majini* to be a witch. She has not gone back to nursing but is sewing with a woman from the church, as well as helping around the Bible School and church. She is engaged to be married.

Rules (*Masharti*)

The possessing spirit makes demands accompanied by threats and promises if particular rules (*masharti*) are followed. Some compared these demands with the rules necessary to follow Jesus. For example, Marco related a story about someone from his home village who had gone to the healer to be prophesied over to get rich, then got rich for awhile. When he stopped following the rules given to him by the healer, such as wearing charms, making regular sacrifices, and sleeping only with his wife, he lost it all. Marco's conclusion: "So what we learn is that God has rules (*masharti*) like Satan." In other words, there are rules a person must follow in order to receive blessing or healing from either God or Satan.

Evaluate

After people have identified an illness or death as a misfortune, chosen an explanation system, gotten a diagnosis, and treated the illness or death, there is an outcome. The treatment has either succeeded or failed to some degree. The ill person has recovered, continues to live with the illness, or has died. The cause of impending death has been identified and stopped - or not. Then people evaluate the outcome, judge why the outcome happened, and decided what it means for them. Evaluation is a social process which occurs over time. A witch is identified as a witch, because everyone knows the person is a witch.

Even after death, there is an evaluation question--die the person really die or was the person taken as a zombie? There is also a question regarding whether the cause of death is still lurking, ready to kill others in the family. After the death, therefore, most people go to the healer for his evaluation. They want to find out who caused it, if there is any chance of returning the zombie to the family, and what should be done to prevent the killer from

continuing to kill people in the family. Strong Christians refuse to participate in or contribute to this divination, which can cause them to be ostracized from their families. The Christians' argument is that discovering who the witch is will not bring the person back from death, nor will it prevent further deaths. They say that the death was God's plan and that death is normal and a way to heaven. Therefore, we need to just keep trusting Jesus for health now and eternal life later.

Funeral

The funeral and the liminal time around it is a time when treatment is concluded, in a sense. This is a rite of transformation. The person who has died must become something different (a rotting carcass, an ancestor, a zombie, a heavenly spirit) and the funeral events aid in a proper transformation. Those who are bereaved also become something different (a widow, an orphan, poorer, richer, a person suspected of witchcraft, the next victim of what caused this one to die, etc.). Evaluation is foundational to a successful and smooth transformation. The funeral time is also the time when evaluation of what happened and what must be done now to correct the situation can be the most intense. The evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment must be correct, or death could spread to others, especially those closest to the deceased.

Evaluation of Other Systems

When people see that people are miraculously healed or protected from witchcraft in Pentecostal churches, they often say, "Well, that proves that the Saved are witches and are using witchcraft." (Like Paul being recognized as Hermes, people interpret experiences using their own cultural understandings and worldview, despite what preachers

may say). I asked several people why they don't say that Pentecostals are healers and are using healing powers. John told me that was because people are not overly impressed by or afraid of healers that people go to and eventually get better,

When God graciously heals someone instantly, though, this is something more than a healer's powers. It is witchcraft.

So this means that people understand witches to have more power than healers?

Yes.

So that is why they are very afraid?

Yes.

In Shinyanga town, after a remarkable healing, people began showing up at a pastor's door in the evening. He would welcome these people to the family service they had each evening before going to bed. Rumors spread. Some said they met at night naked. More and more people came to his house for prayers in the evening, hoping to see something unusual. When they didn't, the numbers dropped off. The pastor was disappointed, because he had thought they were actually interested in the gospel. When they got a church building and a sign with a name that some people recognized, people realized it was a normal church. People say that saved people bury *dawa* in the altar and all around the building, and that is why people get healed, spirits are exorcised, etc.

Contested Cause

The search for a cause and an explanation for illness and death is an ongoing process, from the time someone first gets sick until long after the person has died. The search is perhaps most intense when the illness becomes serious and around the time of the funeral. This search is a process for each individual and group involved, but it is also a social process.

Individuals and groups discuss and debate which explanation/treatment system applies to this situation, as well as the specific diagnosis and treatment. As mentioned, there are three dominant systems (neo-traditional, church, and biomedical) which compete and complement each other in complex ways in local individuals, cultures, and societies.

Very often, there is a debate between Christians and others about the cause of someone's death, with others saying that the person was bewitched and the Christians denying it. They do not deny that witchcraft is a possible explanation but contend that there are many more explanations and that, in this case, it was not witchcraft. Many with whom I talked said that "Everyone in the village thinks that every death is caused by witchcraft, but we know that there are normal sicknesses as well and other ways to die."

Christians say it is God's plan; God has given and God has taken away. Christians are also more likely to accept the biomedical diagnosis, together with their view of the death as God's plan, as sufficient. There are, however, differences among various Christians as well, especially in the way that they are understood by others. In a meeting at which I was explaining my research to a multi-denominational group of pastoral care trainees, I was challenged by a Roman Catholic. She said that people at a funeral had said that "the Saved are right, 'death is sin, and to be sick is sin.' But we know that death is the plan of God." I had never heard that at a funeral, but it demonstrates how partial information can be reinterpreted as it is transmitted. I asked John about this and he said that the Saved often say that sin is the origin of sickness and death. This may have been misinterpreted by the non-Christians or by this woman or, possibly, by the Saved person.

When people contest the cause of illness and death, they do not simply debate a cognitive question. These debates cause major relational rifts, especially within families. This affects the amount and nature of the mutual support that is offered. Rifts can often occur when a person has refused to use the local/traditional healing system either to diagnose and treat a sick person or to discover the cause of death and treat it. (Since death has social/relational causes, the witch, ancestor or other cause is still a threat and must be addressed -for example, by distancing oneself from the witch by moving away, forcing her to move away, or killing her. The other option is to appease the ancestor or Muslim spirits that have caused this death and enlist powerful supporters, like ancestors or healers – usually through sacrifices, payments, protective *dawa*, and rituals.) When a person fails to use local healing responses to sickness and death, others in the family can become angry and refuse support. (A comparable example in the U.S. would be what might happen if someone refused to treat a seriously sick child with medicine or take them to a doctor. Or, if at a death from a highly contagious disease, no action was taken to prevent its spread in the family.) When someone is accused of witchcraft after a death, the situation has great social consequences. The accused person may lose supportive relationships, valued belongings, and may even be attacked by relatives. Thus, contested causes create great social rifts, which impact relationships within families (nuclear, extended and clan), neighborhoods/villages, and even churches and other groups.

The following are some examples brought by critical contextualization class students. A Roman Catholic Sukuma said this about his brother, who died suddenly at age 40:

My fellow Christians said that this is the will of God, and this (death) is the path for all of us. When our extended family came, they said that he had been taken by the witches and others said that they had seen, through witchcraft, that he was hidden among the banana trees. They brought this news through secrets and riddles that to recognize you have to talk to the elders. My sisters planned to go to the traditional (local) healer for divination. . . . We didn't go to the healer, after I strongly refused to agree. . . . The deceased's wife was accused of cooperating with some of the witches. . . . I think he died from chronic malaria, though there was no doctor's opinion so I cannot be sure. . . . Many people said he had been taken as a zombie, because he was only sick one day. . . . They mentioned some of the elders. They thought that they killed him because of their envy of the development of the family, because they say that he had gotten development, and their youths were just poor there in the village.

After a different Sukuma man died at 41:

The Christians said, 'It pleased God that the sick person should die, because he had troubled his relatives a great deal with his long [5-year] illness.' Those who weren't Christians said, 'He was bewitched by his young mother (aunt). . . . He was taken to Gamboshi [as a zombie] by her.' . . . People accused her and banished her from that village. Now she has moved, and we don't know where she is until now.

Sometimes the Christians agree that a person has been bewitched. But they say that ultimately it is the power of Satan, even if it is through witches.

A Sukuma man was riding his bicycle and then said he was tired and would hang back from his friends. Later that day, he fainted and died. 'The pagans said that he had been taken as a zombie to go and be herded by the witches. . . . The Christians said that the power of Satan had worked to kill this person through the witches.'

Sometimes people are accused of causing the deaths of their children or relatives, because they did not use local *dawa* or charms to protect them from the ancestors. In one example, the parents were accused of causing their child's death by not protecting him with charms. Their accusers pointed out that their clan has never followed white people's religion and stated that the child's death was a judgment from the ancestors. Therefore, the parents were told that if they didn't sacrifice to the ancestors, the whole family would be

swept away. A brother of the deceased then asked one of the relatives why, if charms were so effective, that relative's child had died despite having three charms tied on him. The man hit the boy with a stick for being disrespectful.

My child died of measles, together with fever of the lungs and stabbing pains. . . . The Christians . . . came to comfort me and said that God gave and now God has taken. The non-Christians said that the child could have been treated, if we had used local *dawa*. Others accused me of not knowing how to care for the child and that he died from my negligence.

A student told about a person who had "swollen feet and had to urinate a lot, which looked like hookworm. But, after being treated by the local healer and later taken to the hospital, the sickness continued for 9 years. Finally he died. . . . The Christians said, 'Satan destroyed him because he wasn't a Christian,' and those who weren't Christians said, 'he was bewitched by witches.'" Then the student gave his own view. "In order to not be bewitched, we need to trust the Lord Jesus, because he has saved us from the power of darkness (Col 1:13, Num 23:22-23). In him, we will get sufficient protections and greater certainty. Even witches cannot penetrate the protection of Jesus."

Pentecostal Christians believe in certain protection through Jesus from witchcraft. For them, this belief is attractive, central, and often repeated. They often experience this protection, but, occasionally, their experience challenges this belief. One pastor's sister got sick and had a long illness. He explained that she was prayed for, and, later that night, she coughed up a rotten cockroach. This led Christians and non-Christians to believe that she was bewitched. Later, an x-ray showed a needle and thread under her heart, which confirmed to them it was witchcraft. However, there were some who said that the way she was becoming so thin suggested AIDS. Non-Christians said the pastor should value her life more than his pastoring and should take her to the local doctor. Later she died. The pastor

is sure that a neighbor woman in the home village bewitched her. His sister and the neighbor woman had fought over a man before his sister was saved. The neighbor woman still lives next door. No action has been taken against her. The pastor questions, "My sister was saved, and she was standing in her faith. Why did God allow the power of witchcraft to kill her?"

Catholics seem to be more likely to say that it is the will of God and quote Job, "God gave and God has taken." "My sister yelled that a big snake had bitten her, but we couldn't see the snake. Then she was paralyzed on her right hand and right foot, and, after three days, started talking in ways we couldn't understand." They treated her with local healers and hospitals, including a whole year staying to be treated by one healer, but after three years, she died. The healers said that a neighbor man had bewitched her. A week before she died, the woman's father discovered a man standing with a bucket of water outside their house. "Our fellow Roman Catholic Christians said that she was bewitched by that neighbor man, because he is indeed a witch – in the whole village, they understand that."

I am Roman Catholic. . . . My wife died after a long illness. Some Christians said 'it is God's will' and others said 'it is AIDS', because her feet swelled. She was repeatedly sick with malaria, and she got very thin, and most of the time she was taking some medicine in the hospital or at home. The non-Christians . . . said it was AIDS, though some said she was bewitched and others said she just pretended for her husband, but it was her prostitution. But I know that all of this is the will of God, and she wasn't a prostitute, nor did anyone bewitch my wife. . . . Some in my family wanted to leave me with the body [refuse to help with burial], because I did not take her to the local healer.

Social outcomes result from evaluations:

I believe that my mother bewitched [and killed] my children.

Interviewer - You really believe that your mother bewitched your children?

Yes, and she could also bewitch me, because then she was beaten by the neighbors and moved away.

Conversion

Conflicts within a person, family or group may also lead to people losing faith in one system and being converted to a different explanation/healing system. Conversion tends to take place along family lines. Often there is opposition, but then people come to understand, respect, and finally convert one by one.

Motivations to Convert

Ministers mentioned various motivations to convert to Pentecostal Christianity: healing, protection from witchcraft and spirits (and thus fear), blessing from God including finances, social benefits (care shown to them), desire to live more righteously, and disgust at the deception or impurity of those in one's current belief community. A desire for eternal life is way down the scale.

These same motivations also work against people getting saved. A convert may fear that ancestors or *majini* will cause sickness or even kill him/her. One Christian heard, "You are causing us in the family problems by following the religion of the white people." A convert may be kicked out of the family and get no support (or even be kidnapped and beaten).

As I listened to stories, I began to suspect that healing and protection from witchcraft motivated most converts to Pentecostal Christianity. Some informants confirmed this. A Sukuma student from Geita said, "The big reason that people get saved is because they are tired of being persecuted by Satan. The other reason is that they want eternal life. They have no answer to death. Others enter to defend themselves against witchcraft, and they have not found any way to defend themselves."

During a break from classes, a student in Kigoma said that he was very afraid of witches. “Armed robbers are better because they at least break down the door, but witches come in without going through the door.” So he was terribly afraid at night, listening to the witches rustling pots in the kitchen. “But I heard Kulola preaching that if you are saved you do not have to be afraid of witches; they can not touch you. That was enough for me. I got saved and the confidence of salvation filled my heart and I was no longer afraid of witches. This was enough in itself.”

Another Kuria elder, who graduated from LVCC, was a lukewarm PEFA member. He had some women and did some drinking. When he saw people being amazingly healed at the Reinhardt Bonke Crusade in 1996, he decided that God was amazing, that he should take him seriously. A year later, his wife was healed from a “swelling hole” in her stomach (hernia?) after they prayed and fasted without food or water for 7 days. His father later got saved and, on the advice of the elder, got rid of his second wife. Later, his father started a church.

An EAGT pastor and LVCC graduate’s mother was sick from 1972 to 1985. Her husband left, because she never got better despite all the treatments by the healers. Finally, she was taken to the Moses Kulola Crusade and was healed and converted. Later, the pastor believes, God healed him from a sickness that was caused by his impregnating someone from a witch’s family. This was when he got serious about salvation.

A young Luo man from a Christian family was coming home late from a dance and saw a naked woman looking at him from afar and began to defend himself in Jesus’ name. He got more serious about following Jesus after that.

People are also converted to Islam or traditional beliefs by becoming sick and going to a healer, who then tells them that they must perform certain ceremonies or become a healer or a Muslim in order to make peace with the ancestors or *majini* that are bothering them or in order to protect themselves from witchcraft.

Sometimes the desire for a holier life leads someone to the Saved churches: “When I was in the other churches, I saw unholiness. . . . The other churches do not teach you how to receive the Holy Spirit to cause you to be holy.”

There is little money motivation mentioned, because Saved churches usually do not have employment, educational, or development opportunities. Financial motivations may be more common in denominations, such as Catholics or Lutherans, who have more rich members and development projects with outside funding. Some converts may be motivated by getting God’s blessing in finances, as well as health. This is especially true in the newer churches that focus on prosperity. Sometimes there are major financial disincentives to conversion due to the loss of support and cooperation of parents and extended family who do not believe.

A Muslim shoe repairman and sign painter came to our church irregularly. He told my wife that he wanted to convert and come to church but only after he moved out of his parent’s home. Later he did move out and get married, and he started coming more regularly to church. He testified that he had not been coming to church partially because he did not have clean, appropriate clothes. Now, however, he had decided that he was not going to let that be an excuse and was going to make a real effort to come. He said that since he got saved, his life was really different. He had been successful. The money he used to make

didn't last; now his money is accomplishing things and not just disappearing. However, he now has no parents, since they said he was on his own if he was going to be a Christian.

The following story illustrates how a combination of motivations (holiness, protection, power, care, social) leads a whole family to be saved:

A secondary school student got saved through a friend and disillusionment with what he perceived as sin in his Catholic Church (e.g., priest chewing tobacco). Initial opposition from his father stopped after he was impressed with his son's lack of getting in drugs or other trouble like his friends. He got a girl in the church pregnant, but they were disciplined, married, and eventually accepted into leadership. His siblings began to be saved.

Later his father was brutally murdered by a political rival. The family lost their house. Other relatives ignored them. Only this son took care of them. He encouraged them that God would care for them. His Muslim stepmother had trouble with nightmares [Did she see an evil spirit or witchcraft connection in these?]. He prayed for her and said that God would help her so that these would go away. Then they did get a house and saw this as God's provision. They were also encouraged, because other relatives who had given up on them were surprised and began visiting them again.

Then one night recently they called him to come over and help them, because they couldn't sleep. His stepmother and the sibling who had not yet gotten saved were being strangled by witches whenever they lay down to go to sleep. He went over and prayed with them. But then he told them that they should give up and get saved, and these witches would not bother them anymore. So the next day he went with someone else, and they led them in prayer to become Christians. They have not been bothered by these things since. She came to church.

Social/Relational Implications of Conversion

Conversion is not just a personal, spiritual decision; it has social implications and pressures. These include the threat of losing financial and other forms of support from family.

Conversion from Islam is not easy, because there is pressure and threatened or actual violence from family and *majini*. In Kigoma, a young boy saw a dream of Muslims and Christians together, and then the Muslims went down into smoke and dark, and the

Christians went more and more up following Jesus into the bright light. He came and asked for the Imam (*shehe*) of the Bible school. They prayed for him and got rid of all his spirits. Then he lived with one of the teachers for five years (from whom I got his story). He was kidnapped and beaten at the instigation of his parents, but, finally, his mother and father were miraculously healed and saved. After this, they also faced persecution. They disappeared. The last report I heard was that they were taken to a Middle Eastern Country and eventually killed after refusing to recant.

Of course, motivation can be difficult to determine. Another Kigoma Muslim seemed to face financial loss. He was no longer teaching at the mosque, but, soon after converting, he got lots of opportunities to do seminars in churches. He also received help with housing, Bible School tuition, learning English, etc. He asked every missionary and many church leaders for help nearly every time they saw him. They usually helped, but saw little of him between times. He traveled with his fiancée who got pregnant before they were married. He did not always follow through on commitments. Some of us began to question his motives and sincerity, as he moved from one church to another.

Local healers do not often get saved. Losing income deters some. There was a local healer who got saved at one point in response to a dream and the testimony of one of our evangelism students, who went to his house. The healer came to church and made a confession but later chose not to burn his equipment, because he didn't know how he would find financial support if he left his healing work. He said that he planned to return to his own original church, which was SDA.

A minister/student related the consequences of the conversion of some in his family:

Our family is very angry with us. They think that we are completely lost. Now we are two groups, and there is lots of pulling back and forth, especially at times of death. For example, one day there was a death on the side of my mother. As a family, we said to see how this death happened. The clan decided to go to the traditional healer to see who was involved in killing that child. We refused this thing. They went and when they came back, they didn't involve us. They ostracized us completely, until now our grandfather does not come to our home.

Marco gave me his observations of why people get saved:

Not many healers get saved. A healer is afraid that he will lose his income, and also he is afraid that he will be sought out by witches he has prevented. Witchcraft also causes a person to have faith, because he discovers after getting saved that he is able to rebuke in Jesus' name and then it stops. Many tell experiences in the testimony services, especially in the villages. "I was not able to breath in the night, but God helped me." So I think protection from witchcraft may be the major reason why people get saved. People learn about eternal life later. To be protected from witchcraft is the first reason why people get saved.

To be healed (including exorcism) is the next reason which is just as much as witchcraft. . . . Maybe 30% each, so 60% total of all who get saved, get saved for these reasons.

Pentecostal Converts from Witchcraft

Every person who I heard had been converted from witchcraft was still suspected by some of being a witch, even if he was now a pastor. I talked to people that others were calling witches but who denied it. Other researchers and people said that, of course, witches do not tell you anything about what they do. It seems that since witches are entirely evil, there is no option in cultural understanding for them to be transformed.

There were a few examples of people suspected of witchcraft who had converted. In our church, I saw a young man who came forward to be led in a prayer of repentance. He had been a Muslim and, according to John, was "just getting started in the

things of healing and witchcraft.” Therefore, it was not hard to burn the bracelets and other paraphernalia that he had brought after church.

Very few of these converts confessed to being witches. Mostly, I heard reports from my close pastor friends of the few people who had been converted in their ministries. Some of these had brought things that they used to be burned and had been released from demons. One Luo pastor reported about one such woman, “I asked her to explain the purpose of the things she had brought to be burned. I have never asked her how she got started and her whole story, because for a person to explain all of their things it is necessary to be very close to them. We have mixed people. They say they are saved but actually have not left their old ways. We should be close to these people so that we can help them.”

One pastor in Geita, who converted from witchcraft decades ago, was recently kicked out of his church. He had continued to tell stories of how powerful he was as a witch. Recently, he had threatened someone, saying, “You are lucky I have converted. If I was still a witch, you would die.” He had also told the unsaved husband of a church member that he could show him how to protect his garden. In addition, he had often told how he used to guard his garden with ropes that turned into snakes and coiled themselves around thieves. The snakes held the thieves tightly, looking in their eyes until he called them off. The church people and his fellow pastors believed both the stories of his former powers and that, perhaps, he had returned to using them.

People assume that, even if they renounce witchcraft, they still remember what they have learned and could use this knowledge again if they chose to. According to Benesta, some refuse to believe a witch can convert even after many years, since “witchcraft

is in their blood.” Many reported, “Even though they say that they have changed, even ask the pastor, people still suspect them of being witches.”

I heard from several about an 81-year-old retired pastor who had been a witch. Another pastor and leader, who is no longer pastoring after being disciplined for financial sins, was reportedly very afraid of him. He thought it was unclear, because the retired pastor tells about having killed people and having created zombies but also claims to be saved. Another pastor said that he wondered if the retired pastor was still a witch, because he had little desire for people to hear the Word of God. This pastor himself is reported to preach more about the amazing things he did as a witch than about the Bible. “He says he is saved, but it looks like he is still a witch.” John felt he was really saved but could not lose his testimony.

I went to interview the retired pastor who claims to have been a witch. He spoke in general terms about the amazing things that witches can do. He said that he used to be part of that group and even led them. But after he got saved 45 years ago, he became a new creature and left that, just like other people leave other sins. He said that people believed he had really been saved and, even those he used to do this with were afraid of him because of this greater power. He would not discuss in specific terms what he used to do in his pre-salvation life. Maybe this was because the discussion was in Swahili rather than Sukuma, and, before this interview, I did not really know him but had only met him.

John said, “In the world of the spirits, we have not reached the witches much, because, when they get saved, they do not say the whole truth of what they were doing. They just explain superficially. This causes the church to have people who are mixed.”

An EAGT pastor/student introduced me to some older women in his Sukuma village church south of Mwanza. They had been suspected of being witches. One of them was not sleeping at home, because she had been threatened that she would be cut. The pastor said that it was shown to be a matter of envy. Her husband left her a considerable amount of land, and the neighbors wanted it. Still other church members were unsure what to do with her. The pastor was not sure himself whether she was saved. There had never been obvious demons cast out. He discussed this in the critical contextualization class, and others confirmed that parishioners are suspicious of suspected witches even after they are saved and part of the church. Informants see plenty of evidence for the guilt of witchcraft, yet they admit none of this is evidence of witchcraft that would stand in court. On the other hand, there is not sufficient evidence to establish innocence of or conversion/transformation from witchcraft.

This becomes a difficult situation for suspected witches, churches, and pastors. If they welcome suspected witches, the community and some within the church accuse them of protecting killers and bringing danger. Informants said that the Catholic Church used to welcome them and let them live by the church. Then people believe that, during confession, the priests learned all the secrets of the witches and then began using witchcraft themselves. For example, Marco heard,

There was a priest in our area, who, when some people came to confess, he took their equipment and *dawa* and asked questions about each thing and wrote down what its use was. Then, people said he tried to fly later but was brought down by the charms of a healer and landed in a graveyard and was found wandering around there disoriented. Also, of course, Father Clement was from our area and you know what they say about him.

Indeed, I heard from many people about how Clement began by contextualizing Christianity, using Sukuma music and dance, but eventually he wanted to learn all about what the Sukuma healers did and to collect their things. He was accepted by them as one of them. Clement is understood to have died from witchcraft by most people. His fatal mistake is variously interpreted as entering into the world of the healers which is all Satanic, trying to learn about witchcraft as well as healing, or others sending him to be treated in Canada for a witchcraft-related illness. Strangely, there is what looks like a tomb for Clement at the Sukuma Museum (which he started along with some others) where he had hoped to be buried. The curator explains, however, that he was buried in Canada.

Benesta Misana wrote me the story of the conversion of a witch in his congregation in a village outside of Musoma:

Elder N was saved in 1994. In 1998, after six years in the church he met God in an amazing way. This old man became seriously sick. For a week his head and whole body were in pain. He could not even leave his house so one of his family members called me to go pray for him. So I went to pray for him about ten in the morning and found him lying in his bed. I called him to come to the living room so I could pray for him.

I began praying for him after he explained to me all about his problem. As I continued to call on the Lord Jesus, he lost consciousness and fell down. I continued to call on the Lord. Finally he stood up and opened his eyes. He went outside and began taking things out of his [thatch] roof. Others he brought from under his bed in his bedroom. He took small bottles which had various kinds of *dawa* in them. Some had black powder, red powder, lard, lots of small, tied-up bundles. I continued to rebuke the spirit which had manifested itself.

After he finished bringing all of it, he fell down again like he had fainted. I continued to plead with God to heal him. And truly God healed him that day. After regaining consciousness and seeing these things which he himself had brought, he was very afraid. He had extreme fear.

I asked his wife if she knew about this *dawa*. She said she only knew a little of it. Others she did not know about though they had been married for 45 years. All of the *dawa* weighed about 15 kilograms.

I started to ask him the uses of the *dawa*, one kind after another. He told me that it was the fat of a lion, the boiled fat (lard) of people, fingernails, various hairs and pubic hairs from people, beads, and bands – all wrapped in various packets. When I really interrogated him, he confessed that he had been doing the work of healing and especially he was a witch who had been killing people.

Even these packets he had tied up in preparation for killing people. The hair, nails and beads he had gotten at night when people were sleeping. He was able to go in without those concerned knowing and do his work of cutting nails, cutting hair, and taking the beads from around women's waists.

Also he had participated in cutting open the dead bodies of those they had killed and taking fats and boiling them for the special work of their witchcraft. Also parts of hands they dried in the fire for their work. And this work he had been continuing even after confessing the Lord Jesus as the lord and savior of his life.

Since he brought his things, he left his witchcraft completely. These things I brought to the church so that they should be a testimony that N had left witchcraft. And with his own mouth he told the church that truly he had been accused of doing witchcraft, and truly it was not a lie, he had been doing it. Since that day, he left it.

What confirmed that truly he had left it, one day he was invaded by a kite (type of soaring bird) who landed on his head and pecked at it. This event caused him to become very sick. This caused people to believe that he had left witchcraft and that his in-law had sent this bird to test him.

We went to pray for him and truly God healed him from this trouble. He had been shaking a lot and jumping with shock, but without a fever or pain in his head or body.

This in-law, who was suspected of sending the kite, was killed much later, maybe 15 years later. He was accused of being a witch. He was slashed to death with machetes at night by unknown assailants. He had been a pastor long ago in the PAG church. He left and entered PEFA. There he left and entered Global Mission. There he also failed and entered the Anglican. Even there he failed and entered the Baptist. [One thing that caused people to doubt his salvation was that several times when he left a church he kept its wealth: for example, a parsonage in one case and two oxen in another.]

The day of his death, even the pastors were afraid to go and testify that he truly was a fellow pastor, but with great mercy the AICT evangelist buried him. So he was known to be a witch.

But N has been a good church member and many of the church members trust him that he is saved. Even so, some of his extended family do not trust that he has really left [his witchcraft] and a few of the church members from his area and Luo ethnic group.

Truly he has become a new creature.

Social System

I have explored the cultural system by examining behaviors (discourse and practices) and what those reveal about the cognitive, affective, and evaluative domains of culture and worldview. I have tried to follow this through steps used in most cultures in situations/stories of illness and death: labeling as a misfortune, choosing an explanation system, finding a diagnosis within that system, treatment, and evaluation.

Actors

I now want to explore the social system. First of all, I will examine a few actors in the social system and how they relate to matters of sickness, death, witchcraft, and Pentecostal churches. I will explore family, widows, authorities (government and Sungu-sungu), and traditional healers.

Family

Tanzanians depend upon their relationships to survive. Life is not easy. Almost no one has enough resources by themselves to handle extra challenges beyond daily living. Fees for schooling beyond primary school, bride price, throwing a wedding, getting bailed out of jail, starting a business, serious sickness, and death all require most people to tap into their relationships. Most people also invest in these types of situations, because they know that they will some day need help. The frequent requests and the difficulty of saying no can become a burden, however. They discourage the individual or immediate family from keeping cash, savings, or capital (Maranz 2001).

Social capital is the base for every other kind of capital. An employee of mine was encouraged to start some income-generating projects, because “Your children will grow up and say you had a [relationship with] a white person, and what did we get from it?” He was saving and borrowing money from me for these projects, but the primary capital was good relationship.¹⁶

The primary social capital with its rights, responsibilities, and reciprocity is within the extended family, not just the immediate family as might be the case in white, middle class America. This is reflected in kin terminology. Children call their father’s brothers (from the same womb) “father” and their mother’s sisters “mother.” They also call the spouses of these people “mother” and “father.” This also greatly increases the number of people they call “brother” or “sister.”

Churches sometimes stand in, when the extended family fails. Within churches, committees are formed when someone wants to get married. They plan the wedding and collect contributions of money, labor, and goods. People are pressured to buy an invitation card, so they can get into the reception. Church weddings are relatively extravagant with the Western paraphernalia of gowns, hall rental, cakes, rice, meat, and soda for everyone. The recent trend in our church was to bless the marriages of people who had

¹⁶There is very little for most people to help them with capital for opportunities or emergencies from a job, insurance, or government to help them with capital for opportunities or emergencies. Someone shared a statistic in conversation that Mwanza had 20% employment, 40% self-employment, and 40% unemployment. Even among those employed, a small number actually have full-time employment with benefits. NSSF, the government-affiliated retirement and health fund, is trying to encourage more participation with employees putting in 10% and employers matching it. Many employees do not want to participate despite promises of improvement. They have heard too many experiences of long

been married in a more traditional way without a marriage license or church celebration and who now had several children. This includes everything that a normal church wedding required. When three of the church's elders had their marriages blessed within a few months, it was a heavy financial burden for some members.

When Pastor John asked our church to contribute to the special need of a member, he said, "Like many of us in the city, his only family is us, the church, so we need to help him out." The need was for travel money so that a young man, who had just had stillborn twins and then learned the next day that his mother had died, could travel to his home village. The church took a significant (\$45) offering to help him fulfill this family responsibility. When he arrived, he found that the news was a lie sent by someone who simply wanted a family reunion. That person was fined.

As this example shows, any social system can be used selfishly, as well as to help others. Reciprocity can be used by the lazy to be burdensome, for example, by coming to stay with their relative in the city for months.

When reciprocity is not practiced and someone is not taken care of, people assume that the needy are angry and envious. This can lead to witchcraft accusations. Witchcraft accusations tear many families apart. Partly, this is because it is assumed that, in order to successfully bewitch a person, you must be allowed to by the person's ancestors. Who knows a person's ancestors? - others in his family. Therefore, family members are more suspect than others. This is one meaning of the local proverb: "It is the louse inside of your shirt that bites you." One Sukuma man said that it is fellow family members that drop

bureaucratic hassles and bribery required to get out exactly what was put in without interest

accusations of witchcraft in the Sungu-sungu vigilante group's suggestion box for investigation.

Many examples came up in my interviews and in the students' interviews. For example, a Kigoma man had prostate cancer, but he was healed by the healer. Then he got hiccups and died. His sons went to a healer who said that the man's wife had bewitched him. They tried to poison her or bewitch her. She, however, was also going to a healer, and he told her of the treachery. So she went to live with her daughter, which resulted in all relationship between the sons' and daughter's family being cut off. The son of the daughter, who related the story, had not seen his uncles for many years.

The expansion of the Sukuma, according to several informants, relates both to search for land to farm and feed cattle (Brandstrom 1990, 3:1-39) and to witchcraft accusations. Many reported that the Sukuma who moved west to Sengerema and Geita were chased away as witches (either by chiefs, villages, or rumors).

A pastor told me how his grandfather had responded to deaths and healers' divination by chasing away one wife and then a daughter-in-law. The pastor's own father moved far away from the witches because of his younger brothers' deaths and told everyone in the family that, to protect themselves, they must never visit these relatives. After he and then his brothers became Christians, they decided that they did not need to fear this witchcraft. They went to visit their relatives and brought greetings back to their father. He was very angry, but eventually when they continued to visit without harm, his mother and then his father renewed their relationship with him and his brothers.

Here is what a Baptist pastor said,

For us as Christians, we have nothing to be afraid of. We are not afraid. Witches cannot do anything to us. The difficulty is that it is hard to get people to leave the way that they have believed. You know, we are taught since we are little children to be afraid of witches. Even I myself, I was very afraid of witches before I became a Christian.

My father was very afraid of a certain neighbor that he thought had bewitched us and killed my younger siblings. But after I got saved, I began to visit this man and his family, because the person who witnessed to me was friends with them. When my father found out, he was very angry and said that we were going to get ourselves in trouble. I told him, 'But, father, we moved from Geita to here in Sengerema because of witches. Now here we met witches. Where will we stop?' So I continued to go to his house and eat with them.

I - So people move because of fear of witches?

Absolutely, that is the reason why many move. . . . So I became friends with that man and his family who my father suspected of being a witch. And after about a year, my father began to talk to him, and eventually they became good friends. Even now that man has helped my father a lot in his old age. My mother has told me that it is good we were able to repair that relationship, because it has been such a help to him."

Marco explained how, after he was saved, he had the confidence to begin visiting his grandmother of the clan, even though she reportedly killed his father:

Even my big father (uncle), Moses, fought with Stella, a grandmother of our clan (a distant relative). He and others said that my father was bewitched and was the second person to be killed. They say that Moses looked for a way to get poison and kill her. But the mother of Stella ate or drank the poison instead, and after a week or so she died. Then this witch [Stella] discovered this and went to accuse him at the office of the village. The office of the village asked him if this was poison. He said, "No, it isn't."

They said, "Then you take it." But he refused. They said, "Then it is poison," So finally he tasted some. So Moses' children say that, when he died much later, it was she that had killed him before he could try to kill her again.

Even at that time of Sungu-sungu, they were doing a village cleansing and took Stella away. They stripped her, beat her, and tortured her. They beat her with "the stick of

sprinkling rain”¹⁷ I don’t know exactly what they did to her. This beating is normally what they were allowed to say, but they also would do things in their secret parts, like pulling their pubic hair or sticking a spear up their vaginas.

Then they took Stella in front of people and told her to confess publicly what she had said. She said that she was a witch, but she only bewitched her own relatives. Who? Moses and his younger brother (but not my father) is who she said. Of course people believed she was just defending herself, but had bewitched many others.

I - What do you think? Did she bewitch your father?

I don’t know if she bewitched him or not. And after this, one of Moses’ children, Shimiya, sold his farm and left. He said that if she killed our father, she will kill us as well. My cousins and I used to only greet her from a distance from the road but not go to her house.

Later, our mother told us that, since we were Christians, we could go and greet Stella but to be careful about eating. My cousins told me this was crazy, “Your mother is bringing things of religion, but one day you will die.”

Stella said about Shimiya, “He thinks that he can run away from me, because I am a witch? You can’t run away from a witch.” But I understood this as an indirect admission that she was a witch. How would she know that you can’t run away from a witch? In the village, people were very afraid of her.

When we went to her house, she would tell us about our father. She talked about how he never wanted to sit on a dirty seat and dusted his pants off. She thought that was strange.

I - How did you feel about this?

It made me feel good to hear things about him, because he died when I was only seven. But when I heard this, I also felt bad because I heard that she had killed him. My mother didn’t think that Stella was concerned with his death. He didn’t die at home. He died when he was off fishing and died in a hospital far away. But truly she is a witch. She even came to bewitch her own father.

¹⁷ (*Fimbo za mvua ya manyunyuyu*) Marco explained that the beating was named this, because these light rains can drip on you anywhere. They stripped the accused and then she had to run around inside the circle of the Sungu- sungu, and each would beat her anywhere except in the face. This was different than the normal beating, where a person would be stretched out on the ground and beaten.)

For example, Stella once was sleeping with her lover. They were both witches. They came to her father, and the other witch strangled him while she cut under his tongue. Normally you wouldn't see witches, but he saw them. So one day he could talk, and the next day he couldn't. My mother went to see him, and he made signs to her [he demonstrates them] to show that it was his daughter and another man who strangled him and cut his tongue.

I - He was just dumb, but his mind was fine?

No, his mind was fine. About a month later, he died. My mother was sure that he was bewitched by his own daughter, Stella.

Writing from Nigeria, Kunhiyop says,

Witchcraft has nothing good to offer. Witchcraft encourages disrespect against parents, children, disunity and hatred among families, and murder. Recently a young man hacked his father to death because he suspected his father of killing his son in witchcraft. It is almost incredible the atrocities that have been committed because of witch-hunting even among Christian communities. (2002, 136)

Widows

Widows and orphans are dependent upon the extended family. The family should provide protection and provision, but sometimes they neglect their responsibilities and take advantage of their rights and power related to these who are defenseless. The life of a widow in Tanzania is usually very difficult. The same is true of other women without family (especially grown male) protection - divorced, abandoned, single mothers.

Traditionally, a wife is understood to have been purchased by the husband's family with bride price. Therefore, she, her children, and the husband's property still belong to the family. Traditionally, and occasionally still, in most tribes she would also be inherited by the closest relative. In one of the critical contextualization assignments, one Sukuma told this story of how his relative died in a bicycle accident, what he and local people did, and how he evaluates their actions now:

He lost his brakes going down a hill. . . . The one who killed my uncle was my small mother who, according to the explanation of the healer, there was argument with her because he sponsored my studies in secondary school instead of the son of the young mother. . . . She often complained that I would have a good life, because I had studied. It was said that she had started with him, and I would be the second to make sure that my mother also “ate loss.”

I knew that I was chosen by one of the wives of the deceased (that I should inherit her). Because I didn't want to marry her, I took off in the night to go back to my job in town before the meeting. When the meeting happened, all the wealth was distributed among the relatives.

My evaluation of the cause of death: It is true that he died, but from a normal condition caused by his brakes breaking. Because he was going so fast, he failed to stop. Such things can be caused by witches--true, but it can also just be an accident. . . .

My feelings: to distribute all of the wealth of the deceased to relatives is a big injustice (*dhuluma*) which brings distress to (makes *dhiki* of) the deceased's family and his wife, who many times will refuse to be inherited and usually is thrown out empty-handed. This condition usually builds lasting anger in the hearts of the children and their mother, which the end result is to take revenge with fear-causing deaths. It is better if all of the wealth of the deceased stays in the hands of his family (wife and kids), because they are indeed the true inheritors--not just this, but also they contributed their strength to produce the wealth.

My evaluation of widow inheritance: Biblically, they inherited wives. . . . Scientifically, inheriting wives with current diseases is not a good idea . . . [Socially, inheritance is] good . . . because if she isn't inherited, she will be married by some man who won't live with children who aren't his. They will miss education and other things. . . .

Even so, it is not good to continue with this custom, because it is dangerous. It kills in this time of these diseases.”

The Luo regularly inherit wives, and this is not easy to resist. A Luo pastor told me that his stepfather convinced his mother of a levirate marriage by promising to care for her and her family. In reality, the stepfather used up the cows and other inheritance so that this pastor did not get to continue to secondary school. He said that this is the usual outcome. When this pastor's older brother died of AIDS, several relatives wanted to inherit

the brother's widow. Since he was the closer relative, he had more right and responsibility. He did not marry her but took care of her and the children at his house, until she and the baby died of AIDS within a year or two. He has continued to care for those children along with his own – ten in all. He has found that he must treat them all exactly equal, or they begin to feel unloved. He did not need to adopt them, since he already called them his children and they called him “younger father.” This has been a big economic challenge, especially since he began church planting in a less-reached area.

Christian emphasis on monogamy and laws, beginning in colonial times, try to resist the pressure for levirate marriage and to give widows the right to choose who they will marry and to inherit property from the husband. One Sukuma EAGT pastor said it was only ignorance that kept widows from receiving their rights to inherit the husband's property. Nevertheless, a Sukuma woman is not allowed to speak in important meetings, even at the meeting at which the property of her late husband is distributed. Therefore, despite official laws to protect them, most widows are dependent on the generosity of the family to be left with anything. It can be dangerous to resist. A missionary told how in a Kwimba (Sukumaland) village, a widow tried to insist on her rights. When all attempts by the brothers to get the cows from the widow failed, she was found drowned in a rice paddy with a stone tied to her. It only takes one or, perhaps, a few cows to bribe the police to drop the case.

One widow that I know was left with the house her husband built, because the mother-in-law defended her against the deceased's brothers. The argument used was that the widow's son should grow up to something that his dad had left for him. She was also helped by her Pentecostal church in various ways, including help to arrange a marriage. This broke

up, however, when it was revealed that she had another man living with her and was carrying his child. She left the church but has begun to come back occasionally.

It is difficult for a widow to remarry if she has children, because the children are still considered to belong to her former husband's family, and her new husband does not want to raise someone else's children. To increase their hopes of attracting a man, some mothers send their children to live with their parents so that they can appear to not have the entanglements of children.

Literature suggests people perceive widows as dangerous. Brandstrom says that among the Sukuma-Nyamwezi "men's mission is to tame the wild bush and make it fertile by planting seed." The analogy is transferred to women. A wife "is likened to the sorghum field, *ilale*, which is wild bush and forest transformed into cultivated land, the woman outside the marital control of the man is wilderness, *iplolu*" (1990, 6:7). Harries discusses

inheritance/cleansing of widows. Until inherited, which involves the building of a new house and usually four days of cohabitation with a selected man, a woman in Luoland is considered to have *okola*. In my 8 years in Luoland, I have seen many women widowed. Many of those have said that because they are Christians, they will not be inherited. All those whose cases I have followed have been inherited despite such resistance. A non-inherited widow having limited social contacts and being liable to be blamed for calamities that arise in the community will usually not stand up to the pressure. (2006, 156)

Most suspected witches are older women, and most of these are widows. The desperate economic situation of widows contributes to this. If they have very little, they are suspected of envy and anger at relatives who should support them but refuse. If they inherited much, they are suspected of killing their husband to get his wealth. It is also suspected that

they killed their husband, son or other person who they most love and depend on in order to gain power in the witches' group.

A student interviewed a Sukuma widow from Geita. Her husband was a catechist in the Roman Catholic Church for many years. He developed a hernia (*mshipa wa ngiri*). He had had surgery for one earlier, when they were living in Kahama. The family used lots of local *dawa* to treat him, but, when he got worse, they searched for transport to take him to the hospital. He said to leave it, because his time to die had come. He died on the way to the hospital. He died in 1994 at age 66:

The Christians said that it was God's plan. We are just travelers on the earth going to heaven, and our way is this one of death. They said I should sit and depend on God in my whole life. They would be ready to help me. I should be a person of prayer and to defeat temptation. I should not be enticed to go to the local healer but, instead, depend on God.

The non-Christians said that he had been bewitched. Especially the deceased's brothers enticed me to go be treated by the local healer, but I did not agree with them to this day. I continue well, and my children are alive. I was left with seven children. The other thing that the brothers did was to distribute the clothes of the deceased and some of the cows that he left me, which were the inheritance of my children. They left me 6 cows. I was treated very rudely by the deceased's brothers. They took the bicycle.

Despite all of that, now I have 39 cows. Because the farm they wrote to be the wealth of their clan, indeed every person of the clan who wants to farm it can come and farm, I should not sell it. I thank God, because now I have a farm that I bought with 8 cows. . . . They talked about that I should be inherited by his older brother. I refused. The brothers of the clan brought me to a meeting. They threatened me that they would distribute my children among them. But it failed, and they left me with the children. But I had to leave their farm and go wherever I could find, but the [village?] leaders who were there refused [to let this happen]. . . .

The church indeed took responsibility to give a lot of help of food and money . . . I learned to persevere and depend upon God because the people of God have help from the Lord.

Authorities: Government and Sungu-sungu

Ashforth says people expect protection from the government, yet African governments with institutions inherited from the West have been unable to protect people from what they feel is the very real threat of being made ill or killed by witches (2005, 243-310). Older informants agreed with literature that, in the past, Sukuma chiefs punished witches. Witches and accusations were a significant problem to the chiefs. They were referred cases by more local officials. Distant diviners were consulted. When it was determined that someone was a witch, a variety of punishments were meted out. They might be told to grind thorns with their hands. They might be killed with a stake driven through their head down into their body and into the ground. Most likely they would be banished, for example to Sengerema and Geita. Marco reports,

I heard from my grandmother, who, when my mother was just a girl (1960s?), heard the chief of the Zinza come to the hill (island that is just near the ferry dock) and blow a horn and cry out “Witches, come here!” Then he went on to tell how there is good land and fish, etc. Truly, it is the witches that began to move there. Then they came and got their men. Others heard about the good land and economy there and began to move to Sengerema. The Zinza chief wanted help to settle the land, because it was full of lions and wild without enough people.

The colonial government had anti-witchcraft legislation, but normally did not get very involved with local affairs. “The colonialists did not have much to do with witchcraft. They denied it and said, ‘What is your evidence?’” In about 1945, a healer was hanged by the British in the center of Mwanza. His crime was identifying a witch to a bereaved family who then cut her to death with machetes. This was unusual. According to Amy Nicholas-Belo, colonial archives detail a time when three suspected witches were banished to Mwanza from a southern province. The district commissioner wrote back,

“Where will I find three Satan-proof households in an already hag-ridden city, like Mwanza?” (personal conversation).

After independence, Nyerere got rid of all chiefs. He felt they had resisted independence and would continue to resist development. According to John, “In the colonial times, the police and courts were not to be played with. If someone killed someone, they would be punished, but now things have gotten corrupt. People began to do as they liked.” Lawlessness and armed robbery increased. In the late sixties, this began to include killing supposed witches by hiring assassins from Mara and then locally. In the eighties, people finally got so fed up with bringing killers to police who bribed their way out and came back that they began the Sungu-sungu vigilante movement.¹⁸

The Sungu-sungu movement went after cow-thieves, then witches, and finally armed robbers and even village drunks and trouble makers. They called whole villages together for a day and had an impressive display of unity and force. After people had gathered on the soccer field, the Sungu-sungu made an impressive display of power: The Sungu-sungu members from many other villages came running out from the trees to surround the crowd shoulder-to-shoulder. They had taken their shirts off, put on protective *dawa*, and disguised their faces with feathered headdresses. They held traditional weapons, like sticks and bows and arrows. The leader preached and led villagers in songs and chants about “Let us protect each other!” They forced people to confess and then beat, tortured, and killed

¹⁸My account is condensed from several interviews of Geita and Sengerema ministers, but fits with other literature (see Abrams 1989, Bukurura 1994) Wijzen and Tanner see this as a prime example of what they call neo-traditionalism which uses traditional names like chief and traditional magical power in a brand new way (2002, 147-151).

offenders. They killed many armed robbers and turned in hundreds of hidden guns. They forced witches to admit their crimes and then kept demanding that they pay higher fines until the court agreed. The witches were then ostracized until they had paid their fine and the Sungu-sungu returned. Some witches were beaten or tortured into confessions. Some witches initially were banished and since other villages were prohibited from taking them in, they died of starvation in the bush unless they could get far enough away.

The Sungu-sungu coerced the entire village into cooperation. They used traditional *dawa* for protection and diviners to seek thieves. This was a challenge for pastors and Christians to know how to respond. In the end, compromises were made. For example, Christians were allowed to cover their chests and not use protective *dawa*. At first, the government resisted this movement, but after it spread all over Tanzania, they adopted it as the traditional army. The greatest excesses of violence were eventually reigned in by the government and police by putting Sungu-sungu commanders in jail. Even the Christians were glad to have the Sungu-sungu deal with rampant crime, including witchcraft. Even today Christians trust the Sungu-sungu more than the police, whom they see more as corrupt outsiders.

Ashforth discusses the challenge that witches, witch-killing, and witch-killing movements pose to African governments. Do Africans trust governments that do not provide security, including “spiritual security,” governments that do not protect them from witches? Sungu-sungu provides security that the Tanzanian government did not and does not against armed robbers, cattle thieves, and witches. Ashforth claims that, as in the past, to have justice regarding witches would require an impartial judge, evidence which would probably need to

include divination from distant diviners, tests of the suspects' motives and characters, preferably a confession, high costs for accusers, and, finally, punishment including death for witches (2005, 255-261). The Tanzanian government does not meet these criteria. Sungu-sungu comes closer. In the government, there is a penalty for threatening witchcraft or accusing someone of witchcraft. Sungu-sungu gives no penalty for a false accusation – just putting an anonymous tip in the Sungu-sungu suggestion box. Sungu-sungu does get confessions of witchcraft but almost always through beatings or torture. They give severe punishments to witches with fines, beatings, and banishment, although they no longer kill witches openly. Apparently, many feel they still are not doing enough and hire hit men (more accurately, slash men) to kill. Sungu-sungu reportedly uses diviners, but do local diviners accurately diagnose and accuse?

Local Healers

Sungu-sungu use local healers and diviners, but they are not alone. The majority of Sukuma and other Northwestern Tanzanians consult healers. Local healers are the experts of the neo-traditional explanation, diagnosis and healing system. They divine and give explanations for and meaning to the illnesses and deaths of most local people, directly or indirectly. Local people question specific healers but respect that some healers do have real divination and healing power. Pentecostal ministers are more skeptical, but they still accord some of them real power and insight. However, they label this power demonic and teach that people should not go to these healers. They compete with local healers in many ways.

Prevalence of Healers

A 1999 survey in Musoma-rural district found that more than 80% of patients “visit diviners and medicinemen before seeking treatment in government or private health facilities” (Nyaga 2007, 262). One reason for this is the relative prevalence and availability of local healers. Benesta, who pastors in the area of this survey, claimed that every third house in his village had a local healer in it, but, to get to a clinic, one has to walk several hours and wait several hours to be seen for a few minutes. Now they have discovered that the doctor there knew that he had AIDS and was raping some patients. So now there is no doctor. Sukuma ministers gave lower estimates (e.g. 50 healers out of 2,000 adults for a village in Geita with one clinic) but all agreed that healers were exponentially more accessible than biomedical health care, at least in the villages. Marco said “There are three dispensaries in our village [in Sengerema] now, where there was only one. Each has a ‘doctor’, as we call them. They are medical assistants, not actual doctors. In every sub-village there were 4 or 5 healers, and there were 5 villages in our official village with one dispensary.” So, at that time, there may have been 20-25 healers to one medical assistant. Now, he says, there are fewer healers, because there are fewer animals to pay them and more education and more message from the Pentecostal churches. Even those who do not get saved are more suspicious that they are wasting money on healers. A medical researcher gives current, official (probably under-reporting) statistics of a 9 to 1 ratio for the 10,768 people in Nyanguge Ward forty-five minutes east of Mwanza on the main road: “A total of 45 registered healers in the Ward and a total of 1 Medical Officer, 1 assistant Medical officer and I think 3 nurses. . . . there are likely to be many more practicing and even more when you

consider the number traveling regularly between the ward and other areas” (email from Nicola Desmond, February 2008).

In addition to the prevalence of local healers, they also spend a great deal more time listening, give detailed explanations about causes, and prescribe impressive treatments. At biomedical clinics, a patient receives a few minutes and no health education regarding causes or prevention. They are just told to take pills a certain number of times a day. So, even in the city, after people have been to the doctor, they sometimes ask us, “They gave me the little yellow pills. What are they for?”

The city is not exempt. The roads any direction out of Mwanza are dotted with healers’ hospitals: clusters of traditional huts (hospital rooms) – most often round and mostly thatch from roof to floor, which locals call a “full-suit.” In the center of the huts are “ancestors’ huts” a circle of sticks bound together at the top with shells, in which *dawa* has been placed. There are several such obvious healers’ residences within walking distance of my house. I once transported the body of a 16-year-old girl from one of them. Others tell me of many more healers in my neighborhood, including Muslim healers who are allowed (by their spirits) to live in “Swahili” (modern) houses and are, therefore, less obvious. These Muslim healers do not move around much.

Non-Muslim healers tend to move around. They move to a new place and build a healer’s hut on any open space that they find that is separated a bit from people, no matter who owns it. Normally, people appreciate having a healer nearby. Marco said that a healer came to build on his land in the village. His mother told him to move, because they were saved. People in the village said she should leave him, since he had come to help. She

said, she would ask her sons whose land it was, but since they were saved, she was sure they would not allow it.

I did not interview any active healers, because other researchers have done and are doing that;¹⁹ it was not the focus of my research, and I did not have time or easily available contacts. However, my students interviewed healers, and I interviewed some of them whose parents and grandparents were healers and some who said they themselves had been healers before conversion.

Healers' Activities

Healers do diagnosis through divination. Often this involves encouraging a spirit to “climb up” through gourd rattles, singing, and other devices. Some of the most common divination methods in Sukumaland involve healers smelling a euphorbia branch or investigating the stomach of a chicken brought by the patient. In both cases, the patient has spoken about his problems to the branch or mouth of the chicken. But there are many other divining strategies, including investigating the innards of other animals, throwing objects and interpreting the pattern, using spears, skins, magic mirrors, rubbing boards, and *dawa*.

One Sukuma healer, interviewed by a student, began healing after repeatedly seeing a dream that she should go and dig up certain roots. She said, “Many of the sick had been bewitched by their relatives or those who were jealous of them.” Now she no longer treats people, because she has illness in her eyes and cannot see well. She explained that this happened, when she was trying to improve her healing powers with another healer. While

¹⁹See especially dissertations by anthropologists Nicola Desmond and Amy Nichols-Belo which are being written now.

they were washing each other with *dawa*, someone stole her *dawa* to use it as a protective charm (*kufanya zindiko*). So she sees that she was beaten by a fellow healer with more power, and others say she has been bewitched. She gave up on healing and became a Roman Catholic. Even so, she still does not believe in heaven but rather that, when she dies, her breath will remain in the air seeking to enter someone else like her child or grandchild.

I interviewed another student who is a church elder in a Geita village:

My father was a local healer. On my mother's side, my grandfather was a witch. . . . He used euphorbia (*mnya*) a drum, a skin of a leopard and many spears. . . . At home we treated people using chickens. When a sick person came to be healed, they came with a chicken. When he has come he opens the mouth of the chicken and spits in it while telling how his sickness started. Later, my father would slaughter this chicken and begin to read it like a person reads a book. If he sees the stomach is broken, he tells the person, "Your stomach has problems. You have been hit by witches." He gives them *dawa*.

On my mother's side, we knew after five people died in a row, one each year. The clan wanted to sit and look at this and maybe go to healers. My grandfather refused. Then we came to understand that my grandfather is a witch after my mother explained to us that he wanted her to inherit his witchcraft, and she refused.

Even there is a time when my mother had spirits of the ancestors climb on her and she went to the hills. She would stay there for 3 or 4 days. When she came back, she had a red sheep on her neck. When she arrives, she pours it out so that the ancestors will settle down. We understood that everyone who gets sick or dies has been bewitched.

Other times, if the healing of my father lost strength to treat people he would take a spear, a gourd rattle and begin to walk around and around singing songs to call the ancestors. When they came, he would run to the hills and stay there for three or five days eating dirt. When he came back, he would grab a white chicken and slaughter it. He would bring the blood to the ancestor houses and sacrifice there.

If the sick people got very sick when they were being treated at our house, they paid a fine by becoming a child of the place (*Muhemba* in Sukuma). He had been born through healing. [They would have to stay and work off their debt.]. . .

[A sudden illness will cause a family to suspect witchcraft and seek divination from a local healer.] There they will be told everything and who was involved, and they will seek people to take revenge and to cut him/her with a machete. Know that healers are

listened to very much. If they say a word, it is taken as completely true, because people believe healers more than anything.”

[Eventually his brothers and he got saved in a PEFA church.] So we got power of two kinds in our one family competing with each other. So we became surprised that our father began to fail to get the answer for the sicknesses of the patients who came, because the spirits that helped him to divine failed to arise in him. So it came to the point, where the spirit didn't come anymore. So it came one day when we were praying, and our father was lying down in the next room. He began to talk in ways that did not make sense and to make lots of noise. There was a spirit of the ancestor that woke up now. When we called to him, he didn't answer - like a crazy person who is no longer aware. We were taught to use the name of Jesus. We began to pray for him and to say, “In the name of Jesus, leave!”. . . They began to speak and say that they were his spirits (*mizimu*) of his ancestors that he had inherited. So it began to say goodbye and to make noise and say, “We are going, we are going, but he has our property.” Then it had left, and he came back to his normal self. Now he said that he felt good, and his lungs were not tight; his body was healthy. He felt joy. God had freed him. He voluntarily asked for his things for divining. like the gourd rattle, white, black and red clothes, spears, and all his *dawa* to be brought. Then we burned it all, and he followed Jesus. A month later some people came and asked him to divine for them, but he had no relationship with the ancestor spirits (*mizimu*) anymore. They couldn't arise in him anymore. . . .

After we all got saved, that [being chased by animals that represent witches in his dreams] stopped completely. Even the work of healing has gone completely. There is no one who does this work. All have believed God. Even the fear of being seized by the ancestors is not there, because we pray regularly before sleeping. Other times we fast and pray. This has helped us a great deal to continue without fear. Even the faith that we used to have that every sickness or death is caused by witches is not there. We trust God in everything.

Response of Various Churches

The response of churches to the local healers varies. The responses within churches vary even more. Several Pentecostal informants said that most Catholics have no real problem with local healers. Almost all Pentecostals, at least officially, reject any use of local healers, claiming their divination is contact with demons who pretend to be ancestors or *majini*. AICT and others are somewhere between. They and others sometimes allow use of local healers who only use herbal medicines but forbid local healers who use divination.

Do Healers Deceive or Give Real Divination and Healing?²⁰

There seems to be agreement among most Northwestern Tanzanian Christians and non-Christians that many healers are simply using sleight of hand to get money, but some have real power behind them.²¹ Pastors are more skeptical of healers' divination but still retain respect for some. One Geita pastor told how, before he was saved, he went to five healers and none of them divined his problem. The fifth told him to come after so many days, and, when he did, there was a healer there from far away. This healer told him things that he had thought but had told no one. "Your problem is that you are fine with your wife, but you are impotent when you sleep with other women. You are afraid that your wife has given you love medicine. You are afraid that, if she would do that, she may bewitch you and even kill you later. But this is not the problem. The ancestors want you to become a healer." This was something that he never wanted, and so he asked if there was any other escape. The healer said there was no other way; they would keep pursuing him until he became a healer. He

²⁰Marco told me healers are sometimes liars, but there is a more reliable type of person in Sukumaland who he called a "seer". This is an older person who has had *dawa* cut into their skin and is expert with *dawa* but does not have a business of healing. They only use their ability to see invisible things like witches and zombies for the protection of themselves and their own family. Often the local chief of the Sungu-sungu is such a person and will use this ability to investigate witchcraft accusations. Marco told me a long, detailed story of how his uncle had *dawa* put in his eyes and could temporarily see zombies, but his uncle was the only witness to all of this.

²¹As far as belief and doubt about healers, the situation here, in a modern South African city, and in Azande villages 70 years ago are similar. Locals like "Sowetans who consult traditional healers generally combine a healthy skepticism about particular diviners with a deep faith in the necessity and possibility of divination, of perceiving the nature of invisible forces operating and on the manifest visible world" (Adams 2005, 58). Evans-Pritchard's (1937) informant was apprenticed as a witchdoctor and learned the sleight of hand and other tricks of the guild (148-182). Although the informant and others were skeptical of most witchdoctors, they still believed that they some had real power (193).

chose to try getting saved instead. When he got saved and was prayed for, he felt physically and spiritually free. He actually tested himself and discovered that he was truly healed. He was no longer impotent with other women. Then he got serious about following Jesus and stopped chasing other women. Once he experienced the power of Jesus to free him from ancestors' demands and power and from his fear, he was motivated to follow this Jesus closely, including giving up his starring role in one of the dance groups and becoming faithful to his wife. This shows that, despite the rhetoric that once a person is saved he never sins, salvation and transformation of body, mind, thinking, and behavior usually involves a process. This process may begin with various, often selfish, motives.

Healers and Witchcraft

In the critical contextualization classes, there was considerable discussion about what healers and witches do. Many said that healers and witches are part of the same group using the same power, but one claims to use it for healing and the other uses it for harm. Some healers even claim that they must understand witchcraft in order to be able to fight it, but their good character prevents them from using it to harm. The Pentecostals continue to be suspicious. They said that if you go back to the healer at night and ask how to take revenge on the witch that has harmed you, they will do it for you. They see this as basically doing witchcraft.

When an anthropologist and I conducted a small focus group with four of my Bible School students, she was struck by the fact that most of them had close relatives who were healers. She asked, *“Do children of healers often get saved?”*

“Yes, for sure. As the children and grandchildren of healers, you have seen many things. You have seen that they deceive people.”

One Sukuma church elder in this group continued,

My grandfather (Mleka) was a healer. . . . He had his own god, which he worshiped at home, called Mleka (the name of his great grandfather) and it had the spirit (*mizimu/masamva* in Sukuma) of his fathers. It was a tree trunk with three branches that had all kind of *dawa* put on it. There were calabashes, or open gourds, hanging from it with all the *dawa* in them, including a skin of a leopard, etc. He had all kinds of *dawa* on it to treat people for head, feet, etc. So when they came, he would take some medicine from it. They had something like a house of ancestors (*masamva* - Sukuma) called a *Magubole*. It is a local house with the wooden framework filled with mud.

When the sun is coming up, my grandfather took this tree outside and then began to pray. For example, he prayed that it will bring him blessing, that it will make people sick so that they will come to him and get healed. He caused people to get sick in this way. And when they came to him, he healed them. Then when the sun is going down, he prays that people will get sick, and he can heal them. Then he takes Mleka inside. After he prayed, it is true--people got very sick with different sicknesses. For example, children, especially little children, would get measles, convulsions, etc. [*surua, dege dege and mwehu kidogo*]. This was especially in the dry season. Also he had *dawa* to trap people at the spring. He would put it in the water at night. Then they would get sick to their stomachs. He also would put traps on the path, and people would limp and get very swollen feet and legs. He continued with these activities, and therefore he succeeded to get lots of wealth.

He was both a witch and a healer. This is normal. They need to either have the ability to make people sick as a witch. Otherwise, they need to have a friend who is a witch who makes people sick, so that the healer can heal them. They have one secret. They do business together.

The people in the village knew my grandfather as a healer, but didn't think he was a witch. But we understood him as a witch. He will go into their house at night and make them sick. They will go other places and to try to get treated, but they will not succeed until they come to him, because he knows the treatment for the sickness he gave them.

[Anthropologist] *Are all healers witches?*

[Different student] There are ranks of witches. His father was a small witch, because he didn't know how to change into other things. 90% of healers are witches.

Despite this connection made by Pentecostal ministers and the prevalence of healers, healers are not normally accused of doing witchcraft. Although genders are mixed in both, more men seem to be healers, while the great majority of those accused as witches and, especially, of those punished are older women. Marco guessed that maybe 60% of healers are men, while 75% of witches are women and 85% of those punished as witches are women. He said that only once had he seen a man beaten as a witch.

Why is this? Part of this may be due to the fact that accusations normally begin with a healer, and healers would be reluctant to accuse other healers and suggest that healers harm. John said that a healer, who only has a spirit that helps him divine, is in danger, because he needs something to defend himself when he frees people from an illness sent by witches. He said a healer must be a greater witch than the witch he is defeating. Healers claim to collect defensive and curing strategies from distant places to give them greater power than witches. Of course, there are some places that healers do not go but leave to the witches. Sometimes healers and witches make agreements over a particular case. Most people believe that healers do bad things, including putting *dawa* in springs to make people sick. They believe that, although they may be evil, the person is also good and is ready to help them and heal them. Those (especially women) who are witches are only evil. For example, people say that it is clear where a healer gets his power. He spends time being mentored by and paying another healer. It is not clear where witches get their power. Therefore, she must have paid for her power with blood by killing someone, maybe her child or husband.

The divination of healers contributes a great deal to the belief in and fear of witchcraft. At least among the Sukuma and Hangaza, the most common diagnosis by local healers seems to be witchcraft. Divination by a healer was usually key to the accusations of witchcraft that divided families. In the interviews, grandmothers, mothers, sisters, daughters-in-law, and wives were chased away from their homes on the word of a healer.

Quoting the Enemy

Although pastors warn people not to seek divination or treatment from healers, they also give some respect to what healers say and do. They tell the powerful things that healers and witches did, but then show how Jesus was more powerful. They like to quote the opposition: healers, witches or demonized people, when they say they can do terrible things but not against Christians. For example, Christians claim to have been told things like, “What *dawa* do you have? We came to bewitch you, but there was fire all around your place.” This reinforces fear of witches, while giving people the message that they must seek protection in Jesus.

Pastors also sometimes indirectly quote the enemy by agreeing when “everyone knows” that someone is a witch, even though a major basis of this community gossip is the divination of healers. For example, one Bible School trained elder told me that there was a woman who had been a member of their Pentecostal city church for 20 years, but people say that she is a witch. Her daughter is blind, and they say that this is because the woman sacrificed her daughter.

They can sacrifice a person close to them to being deaf, or crazy or blind.

I - How do they know this woman is a witch? Just because of people saying it?

Yes, everyone says she is a witch, including those back in her home village. I have seen that witches are usually known, even though what they do is secret. Those who people say are witches, they actually are witches.

I - How is it known that they are witches?

Well, the healers say that they are witches. Sometimes people see them at night, coming close to their house, and then they sound the alarm or rebuke them in Jesus' name and they leave. In the past, the witches were very bold, and they would ask you to go for salt or whatever, and if you refused they would say 'You will see (*utaona*).' Then bad things would happen. But now they are scared to do that, because, if they say that to someone, they will be accused. The person will go to the police and say, "She said, 'You will see.' So if anything happens to me, you know that she did it."

I challenged this elder and John that this amounts to substantiating gossip with gossip and listening indirectly to healers. John responded, "Of course, that is the way the culture is. It is hard to close your ears to what everyone is saying. Even if you don't agree, that won't stop others from saying so. This is what we have learned, ever since we were little children." Then they went on to tell many stories of other confirming proofs that they had seen and heard, primarily, night time sightings of naked people and small children of witches inadvertently telling things which revealed the family secrets. The child of a suspected witch next door to John refused to eat at his house, saying that they eat meat with their mother at a distant tree. Then later on, one of those children refused to be left by the father, because he was afraid of the hyena in the garden, which no one else could see. A visitor who knew nothing saw strange fire in the middle of the night at their house. The child of another witch told about his family hiding a person that John knew, who had died at their house as a zombie. John said that, even in Israel where they heard the Word of God for centuries, Saul still believed in healers/diviners enough to go seek an answer from the one at Endor. For example, one of our church members said that, since he was up at night praying, he often saw the owner of the house that he was renting going out. He decided to lock the door. The owner

came back naked at 5 a.m. and yelled at the church member for stopping him from making his living and kicked the church member out of his house that day.

Source of Power

Where there is real power, the source of that real power is disputed. Some see the source of all power of witches, healers or even some would say Christian healers as all being the same. Many people see the power as coming from ancestors or *majini*. Pentecostal Christians see both of those as simply disguised demons. Both witchcraft and local healers get their power from such demons according to these Christians. At the same time, some will use local vocabulary/understandings and say that *majini* are new and came with the Muslims in order to distinguish them from ancestors. When I asked John how they that *majini* were not ancestors, he said, “If it is an ancestor, why, when I go to the healers’ place, does his ancestor feel badly and not want to talk, so the healer chases me away? Christians who die never come back as ancestors to bother people.”

Interviews with Former Healers

In each of the Mwanza and Ngara classes, there happened to be a student who said that he had been a healer in the past. The other students found this interesting and asked them questions about the reality of it. Both claimed that the great majority of it was trickery. I followed up later by interviewing each of them.

Solomon, Converted Hangaza Healer from Ngara

In the Ngara critical contextualization class the question of healers identifying witches and witches putting objects into people came up. One of the students strongly

claimed that this was true. He had even seen an object come out of someone's foot in answer to prayer. He had also heard healers' identifications of witches confirmed by several healers in different villages.

Another woman in the class said it was all trickery. She said she has seen someone put the object in that he supposedly took out. She said that her Muslim neighbor used to go to healers all the time. This student told the neighbor to mention the name of one of her children as the suspected witch. As expected, this child was the one who was identified as the witch by the healer. This caused the neighbor to stop going to healers and become a more orthodox Muslim.

Solomon replied that he had been a healer and had a government certificate from the time when he was practicing to prove it. He explained that, when he was a healer, he walked around a lot and listened to all of the gossip. He said that healers also talked to each other in the healers' network and told each other what they had divined so that another healer could confirm the first healer's diagnosis.

Some months later, I interviewed Solomon with his wife when he came to Mwanza for graduation ceremonies. Solomon gave me permission to use his real name as well as to video tape his demonstrations of the sleight of hand that he once used in healing people. He is now 57 and pastoring. When he was young, he went to Sumbawanga (famous in our area for healers), looking for a way to make a living. A person there told him that if he stuck with just farming, he would never succeed, but he had some *dawa* that would help him. Solomon asked if it was witchcraft, and he was assured that it was only for healing. The healer offered to show Solomon for 7,000/=, but, since he did not have that, he lived and

worked with the healer for 3 months in order to earn it. Then they sought *dawa*, which the healer cut into the back of his hand, shoulders, and chest. Then he taught Solomon how to treat people. When Solomon went back to his Ngara area village, he began to treat people made a good living at it. He said that he never lacked for goats to eat.

Later on camera, Solomon demonstrated how he hid rocks in his mouth before people came to see him and yet was able to talk perfectly. During the treatment, he pretended to suck out these rocks from the person's body. He also showed how he would cast a group of small rocks and could control the way that they landed. He would give an interpretation: "These rocks shows that there are several witches coming against you." Later he would throw them again, and the rocks would go far away. "Now you see that, after our treatment, the witches are running far away from you."

Solomon demonstrated a divination ritual where he would rub a special stick with *dawa*, while people mentioned names. Based on their expression and his knowledge of local relationships and gossip, he would rub freely while they mentioned people who were not suspicious. Then when they mentioned the name of the supposed witch, the rubbing would suddenly and dramatically stick (as he gripped tightly), and the divination would thus prove who was bewitching the person.

Solomon also demonstrated how he would wave medicinal leaves and burning coals over people in order to draw the spirits that were bothering them out of them and into the leaves. Then he would carry the spirits away in the leaves and bury them. He said people did get better when he treated them, and, at the time, he thought he was really burning and removing these spirits. If people did not pay, he would dig up the *dawa* and release the spirits

to go back and make the person sick until they died. Now he thinks the healing was a result of the ill person's own belief that they had been effectively treated. He did not think that what he did had any spiritual power but was just trickery.

While he was doing this, he heard PEFA preachers preaching against healers who were deceiving people and telling people that they must get saved. He trembled and came forward to be prayed for. He began attending the PEFA church in the area. This continued a couple of years. Then he got interested in one of the girls at the church, but he knew that she and her family would never agree to a marriage because of his reputation as a healer. This was a major motivation in his giving up his healing practice, burning all of his tools, and pursuing Jesus seriously. They did get married and were sitting on my porch together during this interview.

Although Solomon had a higher income as a healer, he said it all just disappeared, partially through a sinful lifestyle, which included drunkenness. He said getting drunk gave him the boldness he needed to face sick and demonized people. Jesus, however, had given him so much: "a good wife who I love . . . 12 children plus 5 others who died . . . 6 grandchildren . . . I was living in a grass house, now I have a tin roof," enough success in farming, and, more recently, after years as an elder, he was even pastoring a church that he had planted. Now he had actually graduated from the Bible School and come all the way to the big city of Mwanza. His new church had even paid for the trip.

Converted Healer Originally from Kigoma— Student in the Mwanza Bible School

(I interviewed a Mwanza Bible School student from the Manyema ethnic group, originally from Kigoma, who told me about his former career as a healer.)

I am saved and love Jesus. I got saved in Kigoma.

Before that, I was a local healer. I healed people. I also got rid of witches. I was one of the *Kamchape* – we went and took out the witches. We went and told the witch the witchcraft that he had. I had a group of people. Then we went into the witch's house and took out the witchcraft items that he had. I would cut them on the forehead (*chale*) and take out the blood from the person. Then I would mix it with *kamundo* (type of *dawa*). I mixed this with water and give it to him to drink. Then we tell him that if he touches witchcraft again after this treatment, he will die. And many did die, because they despised this (*walipuuza*).

As far as sicknesses, we treated many. For example, the type of spirit sicknesses called *mikuli* (this means those who died and the witches take their ancestor spirits (*mizumu*) and throw them on you). We treated many kinds of sickness. For a few examples, tuberculosis (*vifua vikuu*), to clean his star (so that he has good luck), love medicine - to make him or her love me or marry me. We went to sleep in the graveyard to get the healing powers. We dug up the graves of those who had only been buried for a day or a few days. We took the things that we wanted, whether it was heart, stomach, tongue, teeth, or liver and private parts of men or women. We would take the brains of people who had studied. We wanted to mix with *dawa* to do our work. All of that was done at night. Of course in the day time, people would see you.

I - How did you get started in healing?

This healing is from Congo, a place called Moba from the region of Katanga. This is on the Lake. The tribe of Tabwa came with this healing. . . .

Also in our family there were problems of witchcraft. 1986 is when it came to our village, and that is the year I got married. The problem started with my wife. Suddenly her panties would have disappeared, when she looked in the morning. Her body had pain. Then she had dreams that people were carrying her at night. She told me. I told her, "There are *Kamchape* who have come from Congo who divine (*piga ramri*) and get rid of witchcraft. Let us go and find out what is causing this." We went.

When we went, they asked us for 500/=, which at that time was a lot, and also a chicken. They caused their ancestor spirits to climb up (*Walipandisha mizimu yao*) These ancestors said that it was my father and mother who were doing this. When they said this, I was angry: "Truly they are witches, and I didn't know it?! These ones who paid for my marriage?"

I said, "What shall I do?"

They said, "Put this powdered medicine (*dawa ya unga*) in the container of the drinking water. Then when they drink it, they will leave witchcraft. Don't you or your wife drink it."

The amazing thing was that I did this and when they went to open up the water, it boiled up and had lots of foam like it had laundry soap in it and it spilled all over the floor. Therefore they discovered my secret, and they cast me out (*walinitenga*). So I decided that I must go with the healers so that my parents do not kill me. I figured they would bewitch me at any time.

So I went with them wherever they went. I did everything for them, and I didn't get anything except some porridge (*ugali*), cigarettes, and beer. But no money for clothes, etc., because I had nothing to pay them. So I worked for them.

I was with them in 1986 until 1995. 1987 I began to go on my own. When I went with them, my wife stayed with her parents. After I was on my own and traveling on my own, she came with me. I also had 4 people who were my assistants and were learning with me and knew the secrets of the *dawa* and what I was doing (like going to the graveyards). But there were many people who came with me for healing, or others who were caught up on the excitement. They might go and get stuff for me, etc.

I - How many extra people came along?

It varied, maybe 20-50 or however many. We were going around to various places.

People came who had various problems, who were sick or wanted protection against witchcraft (*zindiko*) for themselves or their house.

I - So was your work especially dealing with witches?

Yes, my work was especially to fight with the witches. If a person had gotten sick because he was bewitched or his feet had swollen up, they would come to me for help. We also had a way of setting broken bones. We would put the *dawa* on, and when they went for an X-ray they would see no broken bone. Or if people wanted *dawa* to keep knives or spears from going into them, we did this. We would even demonstrate how knives would just bend or the spear not go into them.

I - Did you help individuals with witches or villages?

We were welcomed to look after individuals; or sometimes the whole village would ask for us. The village chairman would ask us to come and would collect money from all the households. Then we would come and go house to house. First we would put *dawa* to make sure that the witches didn't leave with their witchcraft. If they tried to

run away with it in a bag, they would arrive and find that it was not in the bag and would return to see that it was back in their house.

I - How did you know who witches were?

We used the power of spirits/demons (*mapepo*). So the spirits would climb to our heads (*panda kichwani*).

I - Were these demons (mapepo) or ancestors (mizimu) or what? You know some people distinguish them.

They were not ancestors (*mizimu*). They were definitely demons (*mapepo*). Each demon had its own name. The head boss was called Kongolo. There were many but he was the boss, and it was his work to get rid of the witches. After divining (*piga ramri*), I would go to the house of the person and find the witchcraft that was in his house.

I - How did you do divination?

People would come with their money. They would spit on their money and secretly they would say what they needed to their money. Then they would come with their money.

We would be sitting on the pestle (used for grinding grain, etc.) turned upside down. There would be a statue carved from wood (kind of like the ones you see of ancestors (*mizimu*) or of the Virgin Mary). [I brought him a wooden statue we have from Kigoma of a woman carrying something on her head, and he agrees.] We had put a hole in the head and back and chest and had put *dawa* in these holes. Then we would cover it with the skin of an *msimba*. Then the patients would tuck the money in the statue's arms [He shows me the space between the raised arm and the head.] Then whatever was said to the money would connect from that *dawa* in the statue to the demon that I had. This was especially the power of the healer.

Also, we had another way. If a person was a witch, we would tell him to lift up the statue, and he, if he was really a witch, he would not be able to lift it. Or we would tell him to walk around it three times. He would go around once. Then the second time, he would get stuck and fall over. This would show that he was a witch.

I - You had announced that this would prove he was a witch?

Yes, we would tell people that if he was really a witch this is what would happen. But usually they already knew.

I - You told us in class that most healing is deception. Was this deception?

What I have told you is what everyone will recognize. Tomorrow I will tell you the secrets of the ways that we did things.

Next day: truth and falsehood.

I - We said we would talk about "Where is the truth and falsehood in this work?"

Let us start with falsehood.

Their falsehood is that when they say that the witches have put something which is making you sick. Since you don't know what it is, I will say that they have put a horn (*pembe* of a cow or *pongo*) so that sickness continues to go around your place because of this thing which has trapped you. So, because you have been sick, you will want it to be removed. Then I will tell you to get ready some money and a goat and a chicken to pay me. After you have come and said you prepared these things, I will say that I will come in the evening. Then you come to get me.

And already, before you have come, I will have prepared a horn with things in it. I will have put meat (*nyama*) of a person in it, I will put teeth and skin and private parts of a person and fingernails, and I will wrap it in a white cloth used for burial (*sanda*) and wrap with a black thread and put a needle in it on top of and a *shanga* (necklace, bracelet, or belly chain) outside of it. I will decorate it perfectly.

Then we took two skins of an *msimba* that are the same size. They will be glued together so it looks like one skin, but it has a secret pocket. And there is a mirror in it and I put lots of charms (*ilizi*) around it. I will be wearing a white robe (*kanzu*) for this work, and over it I will wear this skin and mirror on a cord around my neck. Then I will look at the mirror like it is my radar. I will say that I want to find the thing, which I said I was going to find. Before starting, I will stand up and tell you to search me. You will search all over in my *kanzu* and find nothing. Also I have a pail (plastic or metal) in which they see me put water and powdered medicine (*dawa ya unga*). Someone follows me with this bucket.

Then I begin to look around all over the house, under the bed. When I am under the bed by myself, I will begin digging a hole. Then I will dig up with my fingers, even if there is cement. And I will be growling, because the demons (*mapepo*) have climbed up. I will put the horn in the hole that I have dug. They are also afraid of what I have told them about how this can kill them on contact, so they are keeping their distance. Now, I will tell them to hurry and run out and get their shoes on, if they don't have them. Then I will say that it has left and moved to another place. Then I will go to another place and search. Later I will come back to that place. Straight away, I will dig down and pull it out. Then I will drop it in the bucket of *dawa*. Then I will faint right there (though not always). My assistants, who know the secrets, will immediately take the skin/mirror, fold it up, and put it in the bag. Then they will take

me out. They will start to cut me and put medicine in (*changa machale*). (You see all of these marks up my arm from being cut. Of course this is nothing really, though they think it is a big deal. I have already tricked them.) After they do this, I will come around. It will look like the danger of this horn nearly killed me, but they are saving me and helping me come around. The skin was called *kabuli mayele* (meaning graveyard knowledge/deception - in the language of those who brought this healing ritual).

Then I will pick it up. Although they are afraid, they think, as a healer, I can handle it. Then I will begin to take it apart and to tell them that these are your fingernails and your hair which the witches took. Then these bits of flesh or body parts are *dawa* that they mixed in to make you afraid and cause you harm. Then I will tell them there was a day that you woke up, and you were tired. Another time you woke with a headache, or you stood up and were dizzy. These are all things that are common to people, but I will translate them as an effect of this that was put in their house. You also heard footsteps outside your house one night (which of course you probably would some night of drunks or whoever going by). You heard birds making noise near your house. All of these things they would remember and be amazed at my understanding of them.

Then, I will demand the payment that I told them to arrange before I came. You don't pay the workman, until he has finished his work after all. This was my system, but not everyone accepted payment afterward. Then it was necessary to put guarding *dawa* (*zindiko*) that we put around their house, and I would cut them and their children and put *dawa* in to protect them. This, of course, I would do for an additional price.

I - Now let us go to what was true.

How will I know that this person was a witch? I will tell him to pick up my ancestor (the statue prepared with many *dawa*). They will also call it *mkisi*. It has a face of a person. It is the power of demons, though people understand it as my grandfather or grandfather's spirit. He will not be able to pick it up if he is a witch and if he is not he will be able to – or not be able to walk around it – by the power of the demons – truly.

The true thing was that, when we bring witches in front of people, we told them their witchcraft was this and that. Then we tell them to bring the witchcraft out to show people. Because they have already been shown to be a witch, they will do it out of shame. I will get some small guarding charms (*mazindiko madogo*) and bring them out. There were other times that we went inside to get these small guarding charms. I was able to know where they were because of the *dawa* in my body. (Of course, no one would actually keep real witchcraft in their house, it could kill their children. Instead, they would hide it somewhere in the woods.)

I also knew if I went by *dawa* on the road. I was able to know if a person was a witch because of the *dawa* that was cut into my body and the demons that went with it. If I looked in their eyes or shake their hand, I knew that they were healers (*waganga*) or if they were just people who used *dawa* to guard themselves or had love medicine.

The thing is that the healers and the witches know each other and meet each other in the graveyard. They would run away if they saw us there, because they could not expose us or it would be obvious they were witches, but we could expose them.

Another trick related to quarrels of people (*fitina za watu*). People would give me good money to say that a neighbor they didn't like was a witch. So I would say that he was, and people would believe me because of the other things I did. We began to say things that were not true, and this began to ruin our *dawa*.

I - Why?

We were thus ruining the taboos/customs (*miko*) of the *dawa* that we were given. For example, the Muslims would pay us to say that a pastor was a witch, and we would do so and bring shame to him, and he would be beaten. We gave them the medicine I mentioned earlier that kept people from doing witchcraft called *kamudo*, and we put hot peppers mixed with black charcoal in your face and your eyes. It will show that you are a witch. There were other churches that were closed because of this, because no one wanted a pastor who was a witch. That kind of thing happened a lot.

I - So how did you go and find witchcraft in the home of a person who wasn't a witch or even a pastor that had no dawa in his house?

I would go into his house and find the *dawa* through my tricks that I mentioned earlier. I would not make him go around the ancestor, because it wouldn't work and I knew that. So he would promise, if that I could really find witchcraft in his house, he would pay two goats to the village, and I would find it and he would have to pay.

First, he is beaten 5 times and given a chance to confess. This is just to make him afraid. But you don't continue to beat him or you will beat him to death, and then you will have a case. I didn't fight a lot with pastors. I never split a church, but others did and other teams. I, in fact, never fought with a pastor. But others did. One time there was a group of women who came to witness to me in house-to-house witnessing. I hit them and tore their clothes, and they ran off naked and scattered in every direction. I told them not to come back to my house.

Actions in the Social System

Within the social system there are actions, which happen when people are ill or when they die. Some of these actions seem to be positive in bringing people together and some of them are negative in dividing them.

Funeral

Often a situation, such as a funeral and the time around it, can be a place for reconciliation and comfort or it can be a place for division and pain.

Positive, Comforting Actions

When someone dies, they are usually at home. People comfort the bereaved by being with them (especially, all night the first night but continuing for several days), contributing to expenses, and doing the practical labor that needs to be done. Close family, neighbors, friends, and church members are there all night from the death until the burial. The burial normally takes place the next day, though, occasionally, the body will be brought to one of the two morgues in the city for embalming and refrigeration. Someone walks around our neighborhood a bit before dawn, beating a drum (in the past and using a little electric siren and sound system now), loudly saying, "Announcement, announcement, announcement. ____ the son of ____ from the neighborhood under the leadership of ____ has died. The burial will be at 4 p.m. today." Young men are assigned to go and dig the grave. Others wash the body and get a wooden coffin built. Transportation is arranged for the body, from the place of death to the house and then to the grave. Everyone in the village or urban neighborhood is required to come and give a small financial contribution. This is recorded, and they are all given porridge to drink after coming back from the burial. This tradition

continues in neighborhoods in Mwanza, although it seems to me that attendance is less frequent than in the recent past and certainly than in the village.

If the death is that of a child who died soon after birth or was stillborn, the burial is usually done with few people invited and in an unmarked grave. Two Christian Sukuma families had twins who died at birth in the summer of 2007. The parents who lived in a village buried their twins in the floor behind a door, as is often the case with any stillbirth. As a church elder, Marco received special permission to bury his twins in an unmarked grave inside the fenced church compound. Part of hiding such graves relates to keeping the remains safe from local healers or witches, who might want to dig up the bodies and use them for making *dawa*. Twins are thought to have special power.

When we recently went to the funeral of our former house worker, we thought she would be pleased that a couple hundred people had come. She had been asking to get off of work by four about every other week in order to attend every funeral in her neighborhood. She said that she wanted to ensure that she would be taken care of when she died. We arrived late and were surprised that there was no service at the home or graveside. According to her son, she had not been faithful to the AICT church in recent years, and so the ministers refused to do services. Although malaria or other official causes were given for her death at age 50, the gossip on the women's side of the gathering referred to her heavy drinking, even her son alluded to it.

At the time of the funeral, the social network of the deceased is mobilized to deal with the practicalities and relational/emotional/spiritual aspects. The family is normally at the center of this. If the person was a church member, then church members will take a

prominent role in the services that will be conducted at the home and at the burial as well as being present to sing and encourage at other times. Lately, in our church, a special service is conducted at the home of any bereaved person to encourage them. Practically, each member encourages the bereaved with a \$.40 to \$.90 offering (a few give as much as \$4) or some food. Singing, preaching, and words of comfort are given to the family, as well as directed evangelistically out into the community. (Occasionally, the sound system is set up, and the speakers are turned away from the gathering so that the neighbors will hear.) I have many field notes and tapes from these services and other funerals.

In addition to these church services, I have been a participant observer at the funeral and burial of many from the church, some of my students, some in the neighborhood, and one in a distant village. I also went to the ceremony at the end of grieving for one of my students in Ngara, when care for property and surviving family members is decided. As the only person in church with a large enough car, I am often called upon to pick up coffins and transport bodies of church members or their relatives from a morgue (once from a healer's hut) to the house for a service and on to the burial. I have spent many hours waiting for bodies to be released from morgues. I even participated in washing and dressing the body of a close friend. Sometimes people will pay a \$9 fee to the morgue personnel to prepare the body.

An interesting practical issue arose recently, when a coffin was made too small for the body of the deceased. The morgue attendant, first of all, knocked the foot out of the coffin so that the dead person would fit, but I eventually managed to bend the feet enough to nail the piece back on. This seemed symptomatic of the "let's get this over with as cheaply

as possible” attitude that I sensed in the relatives responsible for burying this distant village cousin, who had come to die in Mwanza. This is in contrast to the great effort normally invested in burials, especially in the village, where no one can work for days prior to the burial. The family does no work, except welcoming a stream of visitors and distant relatives, as they arrive to give condolences.

It is not only fellow church members, neighbors, and family that go to great lengths to help each other. The example cited above mentions beer-brewing women and casual prostitutes coming in great numbers to help, support, get drunk, and sing.

Negative, Dividing Actions

Funerals are also times for negative relating. This is when evaluation is most intense. For one thing, many people with different worldviews are gathered together in pain and with a deep desire to know why this disturbing thing has happened and to prevent it from happening again (to cleanse the pollution of death). There may be disagreements among groups, individuals, and even confusion within individuals as to what the true explanation system and diagnosis is for the death. At times this leads to family break-ups. For example, people sometimes blame and accuse each other because of differing perceptions of cause or appropriate treatment. They may accuse other family members of directly causing the death through witchcraft. Sometimes people blame family members because the dead one was not diagnosed or treated biomedically (as family members might do in the U.S.). More often in the stories I collected, people were accused, because they did not take the sick person to a local healer.

Bible School students gave these two examples of family break-up:

One day, a funeral took place. A child died on our mother's relative's side. As a family, we met to see how this death happened. The clan decided to go to a local healer to see who was involved in killing the child. We refused this thing. They went and when they came back, they did not share anything with us. They ostracized us completely. Until now, our grandfather does not come to our house.

After my wife died, her relatives met and fined me \$400, because I had not paid the bride price yet and they blamed me for causing her death. This shocked me, and I still have not been able to pay the fine.

I went to the large, village funeral of Benesta's 81-year-old mother. Afterward we ate at his brother's house, where Benesta's mother had lived her last 10 years due to ill health from high blood pressure. Later, accusations floated around that the brother's wife had killed her through witchcraft. Benesta led a large family meeting. No one would admit beginning the rumors. The meeting insisted that the rumors must stop, because they were creating bitterness for the woman who had cared for Benesta's mother.

Marco said that most Pentecostal church members do not attend burial ceremonies where people perform "pagan" rituals. Therefore they are always fined.

There are also frequent conflicts that arise over money and possessions. Who will inherit the land, cows, house, furniture, clothes, wife, children? People can be greedy, instead of generous, when it comes to inheriting property or responsibilities (like caring for orphans or widows). They can also be greedy at the funeral. They are hoping to be fed. It is also a time when families differing perceptions of the cause of death can erupt into accusations. The generosity of reciprocity is often forced. Anyone who doesn't come and contribute will be fined. The ultimate threat is that when they or someone in their family dies, no one will bury them.

The child of a person within walking distance of our home died. The neighborhood helped bury the child, but they also fined the family because they had not

contributed in the past. The father was rumored to be somewhat of a drunk. The mother was attending our church. The pastor conducted the burial service and other church members attended. As is customary, the church community went there on a Sunday night soon afterward. Each person brought a money or (possibly) a food contribution to the one who was collecting. Each person gave condolences to the bereaved by shaking their hands and saying “*pole*”, which means sorry but at its root means “cool.” We sang, a sermon was preached, and an altar call was given. The father responded by deciding to follow Jesus. Afterward, the pastor commented that the grace and practical love of the church, when others were condemning him, must have touched him.

A missionary friend living just across the border in Kenya among the Kuria emailed this from his participant observation in February 2008:

A next door neighbor’s son died about a year ago. His young wife, Anna, fell sick and got worse. Of course, no one admitted she had HIV/AIDS. They had two children, a boy and a girl. As she got worse, her mother came and took her and demanded money from her in-laws to get her treatment. They had a small fundraising and gave the cash and maize. About a week later, Anna was dumped back at her in-laws, close to death. Her family had done nothing, except sell the maize and use the money for a brother to go to Nairobi. They said that her husband’s family had bewitched her. She died in a few days. At the funeral, her family raised a huge row. It seems the girl had been married before, and her son belonged to that first husband. However, it wasn’t really a “husband”, but a childless woman in a polygamous marriage that had “married” her, even paying cows, and then invited a young man to get her pregnant. This is an “old” Kuria tradition. Anyway, she finally left that home, paid back the cows, and married our neighbor’s son. However, the child by the first “marriage” technically belongs to that other family. Now, they were saying all the cows were not paid back, so they wanted the small girl, the child of the second marriage, as well. When she is big enough, they will give her in marriage and get cows for her. So there was a vast amount of shouting at the funeral, and lots of crying and screaming. They did not want the body put in the ground. Finally, Anna’s father publicly “divorced” his wife, saying she was now a widow, as he was not in favor of all the fighting, and it was only Anna’s mother and brothers who were causing the problems. He said it was ok for the body to be buried.

Just think, she had been dead for almost 5 days, lying in the house. Some plain clothes policemen were even in the crowd to keep order. We finally left, with the coffin being lowered into the hole. They finally gave the boy to Anna's family, and one of her sister-in-laws took the little girl to her home which is in another district. She should be safe. It was just a very sad, crazy event. Several of the Christians in the family just tried to keep peace, the tempers were so hot, and the issues so "cultural," we could only pray. The saddest thing is that no one in Anna's family cared about her or the children, but only that there could be some dowry paid some day.

A PEFA Luo pastor told what happened when a 15-year-old orphan girl died at his house. His wife was the girl's mother's sister. The dead girl's father's family back in Shinyanga insisted that she not be buried in Shirati. (The trouble is that if you go ahead and bury the person, the family will even come and dig them up and take them). They also insisted that the grandfather and others come along to the burial in Shinyanga, because the father's family was angrily insisting that the girl had been killed by them as a sacrifice to remove a curse from their family. This was what they had been told by a healer that they went to see. Discussion about suing the doctor delayed the burial 4 or 5 days, the pastor thought, because of concerns about medical malpractice. The family decided to preserve relationship with the doctor by not suing, but the doctor would not give them any documentation on the death, which made transport difficult. A dozen people packed into a van with the body for a nighttime trip in a vain attempt to avoid police questioning.

When they arrived in Shinyanga, they were surrounded by an angry mob that was rocking the van full of people and the body. The driver threatened that he was Kuria, a former soldier, and had a gun. An Anglican priest friend, whom the family had called ahead of time, was there with police. He gave the pastor a chance to explain what had happened. The pastor said that they were saved and had no reason to sacrifice people. He told how, while with them, the girl had been transformed from failing to succeeding in school and from

sleeping around to singing in the church choir. Then the dead girl's father's brother gave his accusations, but the community did not believe him because they knew he had beaten the girl while she lived with him. They knew he chased her away, because he envied the rent she received from the family home. They thought he was the most likely to have caused her death by his abuse of her. So they buried her and left in peace.

A Pentecostal deacon and his wife were separated briefly after the death of their son. At the burial, female relatives told the father that this was what they had said, that he would never have a male heir. The daughter-in-law understood that they had bewitched her son. The son felt the cause was just malaria. When the mother came later to visit, the daughter-in-law harassed her until she left and the son left with her (rather than beat her as he did before he was saved). She thought he was leaving to marry someone from his own tribe as his family has always encouraged. After a couple of weeks, the pastor and his wife helped them to resolve issues and grieve together and live together and again.

In the Mwanza class there was discussion about how to critically contextualize funeral practices. One pastor asked if he should do funerals for people who had no relationship with the church but seemed to want a Christian funeral just because it is a cheaper, shorter funeral process that would involve less feeding of guests. Others talked about how funerals sometimes seemed to be extended so that the mourners could eat more meat, which would mean that the neighborhood would require the family to slaughter their best livestock. One talked about how everyone would be having a good time talking, and it would appear that they might be ready to leave. Then, when it got close to meal time, they would begin extravagant mourning: wailing loudly, throwing dust in the air - at least until the

meat was cooking. This could go on for days. Finally, the village elders made rules to stop this. Other specific practices were also discussed. Burying people alive with the chief to accompany him was a traditional practice that was considered good to abandon. Setting up a large stone was seen as a suspect tradition, because it would later be used as a place to pour libations out to this ancestor. (Christians normally arrange stones in the shape of a cross on the grave.)

What People Do to Suspected “Witches”

“There seems to be a sociological rationale in the escalation of witchcraft discourse, from belief to voicing, from voicing to naming, and from naming to persecution and execution” (Van Beek 2007, 311).²² When someone dies in Northwestern Tanzania, there is often suspicion of witchcraft and gossip, especially if the person died in an unusual manner. Every village has many people who are suspected of witchcraft. People may accuse a particular person of a particular act. (Usually divination has been used to identify this person at some point). Some are too socially powerful or well-protected for people to do

²²Van Beek (2007) gives an intriguing model that shows that places various African societies along a continuum of promoting increasing witchcraft violence. At each step a new element is needed to go from tension to suspicion to gossip to ‘witch’ naming to public support to annihilation of opposition to conviction and execution. Some societies have no witchcraft beliefs that individual people cause harm to turn tension into suspicion. Some value relations too much to turn suspicion into gossip. Some think a witch can repent and change. Some do not believe a diviner can really identify a particular witch enough to make the label stick. Some do not have different socio-economic or other groups that use witchcraft accusations to benefit them in their competition with other groups in the society. Some have authorities that effectively protect rather than allowing or encouraging persecution of “witches.” Combining all of these factors produces deadly violence, but accusations and violence can be stopped by removing a support at any step along the way.

anything against them. But for some the accusation may result in shunning, banishment, beating or murder.

Accusation

I have given examples of witchcraft accusations throughout, but let me share a longer example of what happened with a Pentecostal church member in an informant's

Sengerema (Sukumaland) village:

I knew a young woman called Balili (not her real name) that was chased from her home by her mother, Esther (not her real name). She came to our house. She had swollen up around her neck. She had marks of being beaten and strangled. My mother took her in, and she lived with us for a year. The mother, Esther, complained to the pastor that we were keeping her daughter without permission. My mother said, "I sent for Esther, but she didn't come right away." They did have a conversation with the pastor, in which Balili accused her mother of trying to make her into a witch. Esther refused, cried and said, "My own daughter is accusing me of being a witch. This is unbelievable."

Her mother, Esther, hated just this one [child] but loved the others. We think that Esther was a witch. They had sought Esther to cut her with machetes, like they do to old people (*vikongwe*), but they didn't succeed. I don't know why, maybe she stopped them with her witchcraft.

We started to hear from people that Esther was a witch. We said, "It can't be, because she is a faithful member of our church." She lived in a neighboring village but came to our church in the central village.

Balili stayed with us for a whole year. Later the pastor counseled them, and Balili went back home. She stayed there for a year. Then she ran away. We heard eventually that she was in a mining area around Geita called Nyarugusu. She got married and came back with a baby as well. The husband showed up after her. It was just a few days after she came to visit her mother and then left to go back that she died. We thought that maybe Balili was finally killed by her mother.

Esther stayed in the church for a long time. Then when her daughter Balili died, people began to say that she had killed her, and then she left the church and eventually (maybe because of her shame) she moved to Geita where she still lives.

Van Beek thinks that such understanding should result in action to stop anti-witchcraft violence (296-312).

Esther had an older son and five daughters.

I - Are people concerned that Esther's other daughters are witches now?

Yes, people are concerned that her daughters are witches as well, because Balili said that her mother said she wanted to teach Balili witchcraft but she refused. Any small thing and Esther got angry with her, but she wouldn't with the other children even though Balili did more work than the others. I saw this myself. The problem was that she wanted Balili to follow her as a witch.

When Balili stood in her faith, her mother was not able to bewitch her. Balili had dreams that her mother and sister were coming to bewitch her, when she stayed with us. It is not easy to see witches openly (*wazi wazi*.)

Later Balili was married locally (*kienyeji* - i.e. lived with someone) and probably we thought that she had left her salvation and had started sleeping with this man, since she had grown up and her body wanted a man.

Esther had an older son and he left. (We hear from people that it was because of running away from his mother's witchcraft.) He went to Zanzibar and came back only once in 1984 and had been gone for ten years. When he returned he was fine, but, within a week, he was brought to the church on a stretcher near death. He had spirits/demons (*mapepo*), and they said that they were sent by his mother to kill him. They prayed for him at the church for one night (8 p.m. to 2 a.m.). They chased away the spirits, and he was healed. Then he stayed one more week and left and has never returned. We hear that he told a friend he was afraid to come back because of witchcraft. We hear he is still okay but only sends greetings home.

Esther was a very good person. She sang loud and prayed in tongues. She was a widow but had a lot. She had thirty cows, goats, and chickens. She was very hospitable and would often butcher a chicken and give milk for the visiting pastors. She attended the church regularly and was faithful with her tithes and other giving.

After all the things that happened, including Esther's daughter's death, people in the church didn't care for her anymore. When she sang or whatever, they said it was all just hypocrisy. When she spoke in tongues, they said it must just be tongues of her witchcraft. This is where I learned that a person can seem to be so faithful in church but actually not be at all saved and even be a witch.

After the younger brother Richard (not his real name) of the elder of the church died, people began to say that she had killed him. He seemed to like to help her. He often went to help her milk cows and cultivate her farm. He began to be in love with her daughter Lusia (not her real name). They began to spend a lot of time together and go off away from the group at all-night prayer meetings. Then he stopped cultivating at his house and cultivated only at Esther's house. Then his family had a meeting and

told him that he had to stop doing this and must cultivate their land. But he would get up at 6 to farm at Esther's land and then come to start at 8, farming his family's land.

Then one day Richard began saying that he had a headache. We were brought the news. The pastor was busy and said that we should go tomorrow. We got ready to go and pray for him the next day, and we heard that he had died.

People began to say that Esther first began to entice him (*komoa* (Sukuma *lukomolo*) – before bewitching they first put a *dawa* that makes the person want to go to their house a lot). Then they thought Esther used her daughter to pull him away from his salvation by sleeping with him, which enabled Esther to get at him.

Richard's family went to the healer, who said that there were supposed to be three who were to die, the elder of the church and me. But Esther succeeded with only him. She tried to kill the wife of the elder so he would marry her daughter.

Later (when I was 15) the granddaughter (7-year-old child of Balili's older sister) came to the elder of the church (and he later called me to hear the story). She said that her grandmother had taken Richard [as a zombie]. He was with her and was helping her to farm, milk cows, and care for the cows. She also said that her grandmother was teaching her about witchcraft.

I - Why did she come?

First, she liked Richard and felt bad that he was made to be a zombie. Also there was a night that the hyenas came [witches supposedly ride hyenas] and made a lot of noise (howling sounds like “*uwii*”), but when he looked out he couldn't see anything. He kneeled and prayed. He saw that later they had gone and cut a banana tree from his garden. She said that “we cut one of your banana trees from your garden” to use the bananas, and when he looked it was true.

She also, like Balili, did not want to inherit the witchcraft of her grandmother, but because she was small she agreed. She saw all the trouble that Balili had gone through and didn't want that.

I - Why did she tell you?

Maybe she felt guilty about doing such things to the elder of the church, like stealing his bananas.

After hearing this, his family went to try to get Richard back from being a zombie by using the healers. They tried everything they could. We saw him dead and buried.

I – Did you believe he was taken as a zombie?

Yes, we believed 90% that it was possible that he was taken as a zombie.

I - Did you pray for him to come back?

[Laughs loudly.] No, I don't think I have ever heard of this. I heard one person that did, and they came back.

In the end, because everyone in the village and church said bad things about her, Esther moved to another village in the neighboring Geita district. People from her original village sometimes see her if they travel that direction. She is still attending church. This informant said that when Richard died he was never taken to a hospital, so there was no alternative diagnosis to that of the healer, who said he was bewitched and turned into a zombie.

Shunning and Banishment

Marco explained what he saw,

In about 1976, I saw this with my own eyes. This was the last time I saw it. This is what they used to do. They would all gather together and have a village meeting with the village chairman, and if they decided that they were tired of a witch and the way that she was bewitching people or killing them, they would decide to banish her. They went and got everything she had. They told her to leave and never come back.

They burned her house. They threw out her family and all of her possessions, even the three stones for cooking over the fire. They took her out into the bush. Everyone was accompanying her. They were singing "Banishment! We stuck her with two spears!" (in Sukuma *"Ng'waniberenge, tukanchime machimu abili*. Swahili translation of second phrase - *Tukamchome mikuki miwili*").²³

²³Marco sang the tune that he remembers. It sounds festive (or taunting?), like it was a big parade with children dancing or like the song when the bride arrives at the wedding. When I asked, he agreed that they were celebrating, because they were getting rid of the enemy that had been causing them trouble. When I asked another informant if "*Ng'waniberenge*" was the Sukuma word for suspected witches being chased from his village he said no. He thought this word meant taking them out of the village to kill them. John said this was a warrior's song. They sang it when going to battle an enemy, not only witches. He said that in the past it was used to stir up the warriors to make them angry and crazy enough to go to war. He said that when witches are taken out into the bush with such a

Beatings and Murder

The ultimate penalty for suspected witches is execution/murder. If local people agree that the killed person truly was a witch, they consider this not as murder, but as capital punishment of a murderer. When I showed pictures of an albino child who had been killed to Edith, she was grieved and blamed the healers. Then I mentioned killing witches, and she said, “That is much better, because they have killed others until people are tired of them. People have made certain they are witches before they kill them.”

In a class before this critical contextualization class, one of the students asked me without prompting what I thought of Exod 22:18, which literally translated from Swahili says “Do not let a woman witch live”. He said, “Here in Shinyanga, they follow that and kill witches.” I encouraged him to read it in context with Exod 22:22, where God says, “Do not mistreat a widow or orphan” and goes on to say that he will kill anyone who does. Then I explained the importance of the upcoming critical contextualization class. (I knew that people suspect older women of witchcraft and kill them at a much higher rate than men or younger women. As I collected stories, I saw that widows are even more suspect and vulnerable than married women of the same age. The suspicion is that they have killed their husbands, possibly together with their fellow witches. Not having a husband to protect them makes them more vulnerable.)

One of the students obtained this interview from a 50-year-old pastor:

My mother who gave me birth was invaded by the army of the Sungu-sungu. They were accusing her of being a witch and she was ostracized (*tenga*-separated/banished/shunned). A woman slandered her. The first time they did not beat her. The second time they beat her with canes (*viboko*) and ostracized. After that they took her to a neighboring village to torture her with her fellows. They were beaten a

song, it is possible they could be killed, or they could just be left there and banished.

lot, and they returned her unconscious and near death. . . . My uncle accused the leaders of Sungu-sungu, and they were jailed. When they were jailed, their relatives began to collect their wealth to pay a bribe to get them out.

The deceased was 65. There was no relationship at all with this accusation, but they were envious of her because she had succeeded a lot in everything. Therefore some of her relatives decided to remove her from this place by accusing her of being a witch. There was a series of happenings that each time she gave birth, the child died. When the child died, her relatives were happy, because even when her condition was bad, they did not take her to the hospital. They just left her. Nothing happened after the burial but that family dispersed. This happened in 1983.

CHAPTER 6

STORIES OF MINISTERS HANDLING ILLNESS AND DEATH, ESPECIALLY ISSUES OF WITCHCRAFT, FOCUSED ON SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

Now that I have done synchronic explanation of the elements in stories of illness and death, I want to put the elements in context. I have done surgery so that we can learn anatomy. Now I want to put the heart back into the body, so it comes alive. I want to tell some longer, complete stories out of the many, many I have heard directly and through others.

Some Life Experiences of a Pentecostal Leader

John Mwanzalima has been my next-door neighbor, my pastor, and my closest coworker since we arrived in Mwanza 13 years ago. At that time when I was handed the job of principal at what is now called Lake Victoria Christian College, he was the Bible School administrator and a graduate. He attended a school in Arusha, Tanzania, where he earned a B.A. Then he came back to be principal of LVCC and has been national general overseer of PEFA for the past six years. John facilitated the critical contextualization classes/focus group with me in each of LVCC's locations. He has been my chief advisor/informant in understanding Tanzanians and how to minister and relate here. Because of my debt to him for his encouragement and insights, it seemed to me more important to acknowledge his contribution than to protect his anonymity. He agreed that I could use his name. His story is also representative of the many stories that I have heard as he works to minister the truth and power of Jesus in his context.

John was born in 1947 in a village not far from Shinyanga town. His whole family followed the traditional religious and healing ways of the Sukuma. He was a Sukuma boy in the heart of Sukumaland. He saw many examples of witchcraft. A neighbor woman was denied meat by another neighbor and warned him, "You will recognize me!" Then several of the neighbor's children died one after another. She bragged around town about how easy it was to bewitch the neighbor's family, saying, "I thought he must have something to challenge me. After all, he had nothing."

John was impressed by the unforgettable stories that he learned from the Catholics who taught him. He said he was first really saved at 12 in the Catholic Church and felt a strong love for Jesus. But he later cooled in his devotion to Jesus and resistance to sin, though he remained a nominal Catholic. He was able to study through 2 grades of secondary school at that time before the post-independence drive for universal education, a time when education was rarer but, in his opinion, better quality. He was a farmer and herder like everyone else, but he also did office work in a cooperative.

John paid 20 cows of bride price for Elizabeth from a not-so-distant village. After their marriage, Elizabeth suddenly became very sick for many months. She could only drink porridge and needed help even to sit up. Local healers tried various treatments to no avail. They said that the ancestors wanted her to become a healer. John told her that they should run to Jesus. He invited Timothy, a PEFA traveling evangelist to share the good news with them and pray for her. Timothy came to the house. She chose to follow Jesus, and John burned the charms that she had. Timothy prayed for her. That night God showed Timothy that Elizabeth had other very old and expensive family charms that she had hidden in a box.

God told Timothy to pray for her again the next day. When he came and told her this, she says her thought was, “Indeed, he is a servant of God. How did he know this!? I put them there when he was not here and John was not here. I put them in a cloth and hid them perfectly. But he has seen. So I agreed.” He prayed around 5 p.m. She slept well and awakened at 2 a.m. and went out to the bathroom. She suddenly realized that she could walk again and that she was completely well!

Soon after, John began to travel with Timothy. Timothy taught John how to pray for the sick or the demonized and how to discern the difference. One day, Timothy announced that John would be preaching at the next meeting. John discovered that God could use him in that way.

John started pastoring a church part-time in his home area in 1975. Then the PEFA overseer asked him to pastor the Musoma town church, beyond Sukumaland. The overseer said that everything would be provided, if he would just move these few hundred miles. When John arrived, he realized that the church already had a pastor from Kenya. John did not want to be part of throwing this pastor out, so he asked if there was another church where he could pastor. The overseer gave him a Jita village church a few dozen miles away. The church had only one family, headed by a Luo widow who did not even speak Swahili. John had no language in common with her. Instead of everything being provided for, he did not even have a bucket with which to draw water. He certainly did not have bus fare home. “This is where I learned to pray in my meals.” Some neighbors helped him by giving some food to his infant daughter, allowing him to farm on some land, and even giving him a plot on which to build a house.

As he was building, a group of old men (whom he understood to be witches) challenged him. “We like you young man. So we thought we should warn you that this land is not safe to build on. If you want to be sure, just go look at all the graves at the bottom of the property of others who have tried to build here.”

John replied, “Haven’t you heard me preaching in the marketplace? I am not afraid to die. In fact, the life I am living is difficult, but I know that the place I will go when I die is wonderful.”

However, after they left he did go and look at the graves and began to be afraid. He reported the conversation to his wife. She responded, “Are you becoming afraid?”

“No, I am a man, so I am not afraid, but I am concerned about you and our daughter.”

Elizabeth responded, “Don’t you blame me if you are afraid. Jesus will take care of me and us.”

John continued building after this conversation. He relates,

A fellow pastor came and, together with him, we fasted and prayed. This was the first time I had fasted and prayed with no food or water for seven days. Then our guest began to plaster the house. After the house was built, we were sleeping in it. We heard, “Bang!” The door flew off. I asked my wife if she had closed the door. She said, “Of course.” So I got up and saw that the door had flown off of its hinges several meters away, and there were no tracks. So I went back and reported this to my wife. [They understood this as an attack by witches.] So then I said, “We have already prayed, so now let us just thank God” which we did and then we slept . . . so soundly that we slept in. Eventually one of those old men who had tried to scare us off stopped me suddenly in the path, and said, “Okay, pastor, we give up. Let us be at peace.” But the story that they spread around was not about how great Jesus was. They said, “You know that young man is Sukuma and the Sukuma have strong witchcraft. You have to be careful of him.”

This village church got going, and with an assistant they started another church in a neighboring village. Just when things were going well, the overseer transferred

him again. This became a recurring pattern. At each place, John built a strong church and developed younger leaders.

John says that that was his first experience with witches, which really gave him boldness to trust Jesus and not be afraid. He has no doubt of the reality of witchcraft. He tells other experiences, including strange, scary sightings on a midnight walk which he survived through Jesus' protection. Others walking in the same area ended up unable to speak.

As a pastor, he also dealt with lots of discussions and experiences of witchcraft. In the critical contextualization class, John told a story about a time when he was in Geita and a mother would not bury her son, insisting that he had been taken. The elders met and said there was a healer in the next village, who had brought back zombies before in Ukerewe. John said, "Why only in Ukerewe, when we have this problem around here all the time?" They started to get upset with him, asking him if he was refusing to consult the healer. John said, "No, I would be happy to see this person brought back today, if he really can do it." They sent the young men with money and apparently they did not even go all the way to the next village but came back saying that the healer was off in a distant place, bringing back some other zombie. So they buried the child.

When the Sungu-sungu first came to town with their pagan revival and attack of armed robbers and witches, John was on the field together with all of the villagers and had to help the Christians fashion a response. In the same village, someone in John's church battled in prayer at night with witches for her husband's life. He asked for details about why and who she was battling, but she would not say. John prayed for her husband the next day.

He was healed, saved, and came to church. The wife secretly told John that she confronted her husband's mother and sister in her nighttime struggle. Although she claimed to keep her secret, the mother and sister left the church, and the family is still estranged. Was this because they knew they had been defeated, or because they heard slander from people who read between the lines?

Just two years ago John went to the funeral of his wife's half sister. He wrote up the story for me after he returned. Her fourth husband had died not long after he and John's wife's half sister had argued. Her husband's brothers hired people to cut her up with machetes.

Because of his experiences, John now has little fear of witchcraft, demons, and other powers of darkness. When an older woman came to church and started dancing strangely in the middle of the service, she was taken out to be prayed for. Benesta¹ identified her behavior as evidence that she had witchcraft spirits (that made her act as a witch). He said these are more difficult to remove. Her neighbor told me the woman had been physically and mentally sick for some time and had been running out naked. When I heard screaming a few days later, I learned that, after some prayer on Sunday, she insisted on staying in Pastor John's small house until she got better, not even in a Bible School room where guests often stay. Now the assistant pastor and an elder were praying for her, since John was busy with meetings. I asked, "Most Sukuma men would be afraid to have a witch staying in their house, wouldn't they?" He said, "Yes, but this is just demons. We will deal with them, and she will be fine." In less than two months, she was completely healed.

On a recent Sunday, a young man in the church begged the church to pray, because he had a dream that John would lose his eyesight on a trip and now he had heard that John was traveling. The church prayed intensely. Then John got up and quoted Paul's response to prophecies that said that Paul should not travel to Jerusalem, "The will of the Lord be done.' As ministers we can't be afraid. We are ready to die or lose body parts for the sake of the gospel. Do pray for me, but I am still going to travel and God will take care of me whatever happens." John's trip was safe and successful.

John is a teacher and pastor, not a prophet or miracle worker, but he prays for those who come and sometimes they are healed or freed from demons. Usually prayers for exorcism are a matter of hours and are often left to the younger leaders now. But one exorcism in which I participated took months. The woman who was healed stayed at John's house the whole time. She continues to stay there after several years.

John has experienced poverty, sickness, and death. He has also buried his own child and grandchildren so that, when he buries other people's children, he can say, "This is a common experience that we all face." His most recent sermon had these points: learn the Word in order to keep hope and faith in difficult times. The forgotten side of the gospel says we get a hundred times as many physical blessings in this life, together **with** persecutions and trouble (Mark 10:30). We can show faith when the blessings turn to difficulties, as in the end of Hebrews 11.

¹She is Jita. Benesta is from the very closely related Kwaya ethnic group.

The Pastors' Response to the Banishing of Four Witches in a Geita Village

“M,” a certain village in Geita district has about 7,000 people in the whole village, which covers a large area. In 2006, I drove there with my family leaving Saturday morning and returning Monday night. My family had also visited briefly ten years earlier. We walked around town, visited the primary school, talked to the principal, and spoke with parishioners in their fields. We had three meetings in the PEFA church. We pitched our tents inside the new church building and ate with the pastor's family next door. They had a new church with a metal roof. It appeared to be the most thriving church in that section of the village. The AICT and Catholic were the only other significant churches. I did see tiny Baptist, SDA, and Lutheran churches with unfinished buildings. On Sunday, I preached from the story of Balaam, the healer who tried to bewitch the Israelites. On Sunday afternoon, we had a panel discussion about witchcraft, following the critical contextualization pattern. The main speakers on the panel were the pastor who is an LVCC graduate, an LVCC student who had been through the critical contextualization class and has leadership responsibilities in the church, and me.

Banishing Suspected Witches and Burning Houses

In 2007, I interviewed four eyewitnesses separately for hours about the recent banishing in that village of four single older women suspected to be witches. I translated and typed over 40 pages of transcription of the most important parts of the interviews. Since I talked to them the longest and they seemed to have the best information, I will try to summarize the stories, primarily from the LVCC student and the pastor. Though I will try to maintain their voice, only those parts in quotation marks are direct quotations. They didn't

agree on all the details, partially because some of the events happened during meetings at which they were not in attendance:

There was a woman of about fifty who moved to our village three years ago [call her Fumbo]. Fumbo has two daughters but no husband. The village that she left is four miles from our village. She came with a letter stating that she was a good person, but the village leaders knew she had been chased from there as a suspected witch. They welcomed her but warned her that they would chase her from the village, if they heard anything about witchcraft. She came with five cows and some money, but she worked hard at farming and especially made money by brewing and selling distilled liquor from corn and cassava. A year ago she rented her second small two-room thatch and mud house for 1000/= shillings (\$1) a month to a 35-year-old man [call him Mayala] who had come to the village from Shinyanga a couple years ago because of the famine. She also agreed that he could sleep with her, if he paid her 1000/= (\$1). They slept together for 3 months. Then Mayala began living with a 30-year-old woman who had been kicked out by her husband 5 years earlier.

Mayala became sick. He used medicine but did not go to the doctor. He called the village, neighborhood and Sungu-sungu leaders and told them, "I will not get well. I will just die. But what will cause me to die is because of a certain woman who I agreed to have sex with her for 1000/=. I paid her, but she still said, 'Give me the 1000/= and the 2000/= in remaining rent. If you don't, you will die.'" The leaders questioned her. She said she had no ability to kill him, but he did owe her money. She was quiet when they asked about a threat. They took this as an admission that she had threatened him.

After the meeting, Mayala's new wife and relatives took him to the house of a local healer who is also the Sungu-sungu commander. In the early evening, someone was watching him by the fire, but Mayala disappeared. After a long search they found him in a bad condition in a place that they had already looked. Mayala said that someone had called him, so he left. People understood this to mean that he had been taken through witchcraft. Then in the morning, he got worse and died.

The next day the whole village was required by the Sungu-sungu soldiers to go to the soccer field. The village leaders told the story of how they had been called by Mayala who now was dead and how he had accused Fumbo. Fumbo said that they had agreed to have sex and that he owed her money but refused to say if she had threatened him and said she did not kill him. They pressed her with questions and some mild beating. She said it was her partner [call her Milembe] who was involved in killing Mayala (possibly by putting poison in his alcohol)? (The student said that the deceased had accused Milembe. The pastor said Fumbo accused Milembe and also a woman I will call Ng'walu.) Fumbo cheered that he was dead. The villagers began beating and kicking her, but the leaders stopped them. They told all the women that they were banished from the village and then sought a legal way to enforce that. They sent people to collect the liquor and brewing equipment of Fumbo and Milembe. Then they took them to the police station, where the people explained about the witchcraft. The women were then taken to court in Geita. There they were accused of brewing illegally, and no mention was made of witchcraft. They felt that the court would punish illegal brewing but not witchcraft. Fumbo was sentenced to 6 months in prison. "Because she is old and because of the conditions in jail, she could die, but I don't know."

Milembe was allowed to pay a fine of 500,000/= (\$435) which her uncle paid, but she never returned to the village.

Milembe was 45 and had moved to the village just a few years earlier with her three adult children. Mayala had been her customer, and so it was suspected that he may have drunk poison in her alcohol. [The pastor and student differed on whether Mayala had accused Milembe, and the student did not mention Ng'walu.] One night the houses of four suspected witches were burned down. Three were those who had been accused and banished in this incident. Another [call her Kabula] was suspected of having bewitched her brother a year earlier. "There was some investigation but not very much, since (Milembe's) family had been ostracized. They had to pay 20,000/= to return to being greeted. Then people helped them build a house."

Ng'walu and Kabula, whose houses were burned did not leave. They are long-term residents, nearly born in the village. "They refused to leave. There is no law that can force them to leave. . . . They are just building again."

Suspected "Witches'" Relationships with the Local Church

I asked the student about the suspected witches' relationships with the church.

He said,

The church members believe that she [Fumbo] was involved with witchcraft. It is just that witchcraft does not have power over people of God. It is true in the village that they are recognized as complete witches. The church members, although we don't have much belief in witchcraft, since she said with her own mouth that she was going to bewitch him and it was discussed before the villagers...because of the testimony of the sick person, we believe it . . . Yes, I also believe [she bewitched him].

As I talked with the pastor, he began to explain in depth about the relationship of these suspected witches with the church. Ng'walu "was our church member at one time.

But later she was defeated by the environment of the church, and she left. She stopped worshipping.” She tried for a little while in the recent past but left again. Her daughters still go to our church. And the daughter of Milembe also goes to our church. Kabula’s daughter goes to our church, and her mother lives with her right next door to me on the opposite side from the church. Kabula also “is one of my church members [laughter] . . . and the day that you were teaching [on witchcraft], she was present.”

I asked about how the church related to the families when their houses were burned and Milembe’s family was ostracized by the village.

I - They ostracized the whole family? . . .

Yes, but she continued to come to church . . . The church is a different place. It is known that it serves the families of all people with various problems. The church, they don’t interfere with questions of the church. What is of the church is left as that which is of the church.

I – So you continue to greet her and . . . visit her when she is ostracized?

Yes, because I am going as a person who can give her help. So they allow it. They don’t interfere with the things of the pastor and the church. Even, if it is necessary, the church can give a little help. They don’t interfere much with the church.

I – So when they burned the house, did the church help to build the house? Some of them, even if not everyone?

We didn’t help even one, to be honest. . . . [For Milembe’s family] the son has his own church. He is a person of the Roman Catholic; and he was like the father of that house now. So, we said maybe they would help . . . the fellowship where he is present. . . . They didn’t help. . . . I think maybe because of this condition of being ostracized. . . . so we just left it.

I – And this neighbor of yours [Kabula]?

They didn’t help her . . . Yes, even if you tell people, they aren’t able to come. Don’t they know? . . . You can tell people what they already know, but they don’t have any responsiveness (*mwitikio*). Don’t they know already? Even if you urge them . . . They aren’t able, they will leave it. Aren’t they afraid of her? They know her. Do you think

they will come? . . . so we just left it. Because even so, she hired a certain man, and he fixed her house. He fixed it.

I – And these daughters . . . who you say are members. They are members who are really saved?

They have made some steps. As far as the steps that you can see with your eyes, they have them. As far as the steps that you can see with your eyes, they are like people who love Jesus . . . They love Jesus. I see them that way. They are good people.

I – What do they think? They think their mothers are witches, or they think people are just saying things about them?

They talk in the condition of giving up. They say, “If they are witches, that is their problem (*shauri yao*).” Truly they can’t know well. But they say, “If they are witches, that is their problem.” Why, don’t they have ears? They hear. And they have been hearing.

I – If they defended them, would people be doubtful about them?

Ehh (yes).

I – Are people doubtful of them, because the daughters of witches can inherit?

No . . . They only look at the witches who are mentioned. But their daughters? No.”

Pastor’s Neighbor and Church Member - “Kabula”

I asked more about the pastor’s next door neighbor and church member, Kabula. Here is a summary of her story, as he told it:

She was originally from this village and married here. After her father died, she asked repeatedly for a share of the cows, especially since many had been given as bride wealth for her. But her brothers said, ‘No, just let the oldest brother be like the father of the family and keep them all together.’ When he died the remaining two brothers accused her of bewitching him, and finally she and her husband moved to a village a little ways away and were neighbors to me and my parents. There people also said she was a witch, and they moved again to a third village where her husband left her. Then she moved to a fourth and fifth village, each time because of suspicions. She has six girls and three boys, but two of her sons died. Apparently, divination showed that she was responsible for sacrificing her boys for the sake of power in her witches’ fellowship. Finally, she moved back to her original village.

She moved close to her older brother there. Then what happened was that he got very sick. They took him to the hospital, and they couldn't do anything. They took him home, and he was very sick. When they were going home, they went by the local healer's. He told them this kind of news. They took her and sat her down. They had a meeting with her, her relatives.

After seeing that she had done this, it was necessary for them to warn her. They said "This brother of yours, he must recover."

She showed off like they had nothing against her (*akajifaraghua*). "Me, I don't know anything, me . . ."

And later she told me herself. Isn't she my church member? So I asked her, "Why are they accusing you of things like this, you? Are you involved with such things?"

She said, "No, pastor. I don't know anything about it at all. They are just slandering me."

I tried to help her that if she was involved in such things she should leave them. I used all of my ways to try to counsel her. I tried to return/call off/correct her (*kurejeza*). But . . . I left her (or she left him - *kamwacha*). So she has these accusations until now [a year later]. And that is why her houses were burned.

Three times recently people had tried to attack her and cut her with machetes at night but were discovered and chased away. "But the third time, I didn't know, but she herself discovered them themselves. And the next day, she went to accuse them at the office, herself - two young men. One was the child of her older brother. The one who she tried to kill, the one who they thought she tried to kill. And one was just a person, a friend of this nephew. They called them in, and they gave them a fine of 50,000/= each. Right there they told her that she should leave our village. And that is the day they chased her out... They said, 'You will cause us an accident here in this village.'

Everyone in the village and her family "knows" that she is a witch. But she supposedly got saved in one of the other villages she was in and has faithfully attended this Pentecostal church as well. How do the church people and pastor see her? They do not believe she is really a Christian. One reason the pastor gave was that he has never heard her pray. She comes to prayer meetings, but she refuses to pray aloud. She just sits and listens. The church and pastor also believe she is a witch. Their response to this varies.

There are some who are very afraid of her. And especially there are some who do not want her to continue to be with us. They say, 'Pastor, you should tell her that she should stop coming to church.'

I said, 'It is not good because church is where she will get the truth of her life. If we prevent her, we will have deprived her of her chance to change. Leave her to come to church. Leave it, because people will preach about this. And if it is the choice of God, she can leave her bad ways and turn to God. But if it is a plant that God did not plant, let her continue, and, in the end, she will just separate from the church. Because she will get tired of church, and she will just leave it. So for us to chase her out straight away, no, Let us help her. Let us help her with discussions also. Let us talk with her.' And that is why we sat with her, and we tried to ask her why she is the one that people say this about. Why don't they talk about some other person? Because . . . we have many old grandmothers in the church. Why don't they accuse others? Why don't they say this about so and so?

I – So even in church . . . others are afraid of her and avoid her? They don't fellowship with her well? Or not?

Umm, Umm (Yes).

I – And there are others who try to greet her and to . . .

Yes, those who understand God is able to defend them in this kind of condition. So they don't care about her character. They don't care what they hear about her. They go to her like just normal. They can go to her house and also talk to her.

I – They eat and drink there?

No, I think the only one who is that bold is just me. [laughter] . . . But you know she can't do anything to me . . . Yes, my wife also. Although I haven't witnessed my wife drinking there, she goes there. I have not witnessed her drinking, but I see her go. She is our neighbor. She is close."

The pastor says that he and his wife have continued to greet Kabula, visit her, and love her, despite his wife becoming very ill with pain in her chest, tiredness, and weakness. They tested in two different places. Then she was hospitalized in the nearest town, but the only diagnosis was possibly overwork, which they dismissed since it wasn't even farming season. She was simply given pain relievers and rest in the hospital. They debated going to a hospital in a bigger cit, but decided it might be the power of darkness, so they

should just pray. When they returned, they told people she had been hospitalized and treated so that rumors did not fly.

When they returned from the hospital, others in the church and neighborhood told him that Kabula had been seen naked outside his house, along with others who somehow were trapped and delayed in their bewitching. Now he has heard this from many people, but he has never found the one who actually saw it. At the time this was reported to have happened (also about the time his wife got sick), Kabula began bleeding for a whole month which is very unusual especially for a 60-year-old woman. Kabula requested prayer in the church for this, and others learned from the daughter about the timing.

The thing to do is just to pray to God and to leave it to God . . . We thought it was just a different power of darkness. So we knew that God would help. Yes, we knew. It is possible that the condition of harassment (*hali ya kuonea*) could be there. This is simply happening in various places. But if you trust in God, he just helps (*anasaidia tu*). There is no trouble at all. Because these things I have seen many times. When you talk about things like this like witchcraft, you talk about things that are not there. But the results show that this thing is there. Yes.

For example, When I moved [from my village to the church] where I am now, there was great opposition. And there are things that were taking place, like a sign. For example, you go to bed at night, you close the door and then it is opened, and you don't know how. You close it, and then it is opened again . . . I mean I closed it, but now it is open. And you can't see who opened it. But you see that it is opened. You go and close it, and then it will be opened again. That's it (*basi*).

One night we were sleeping. We woke up, and we no longer have our sheet that was covering us. It was taken away. So it is things like that which are evidence (*vidhihirisho*).

But if we trust God, he is able to help. He is able to guard.

[The previous pastor told me that this was part of a threat from a woman who was upset that the village gave the church this land, which she claimed, and threatened to run

him and the church off. During this time, the former pastor came to encourage and pray with this pastor. The village people said, "Now the elder has come to complete this young man." When he persevered, rather than be scared off by the witches, they said that he had been completed in his witchcraft. They identified his perseverance as coming from more powerful witchcraft.]

I—yes, so now your neighbor has bothered you for a long time?

The one who we were talking about yesterday? Maybe it is just this one time. I have not heard anything or felt anything about her. But I have heard and heard. I didn't see myself, but I have heard from people. That's what they say. But I didn't know that she could do that. But . . . there are things that you can think about if you are an adult, things that make you think. For example, she began to be VERY afraid of me . . . So when someone begins to be afraid of you, you begin asking yourself. Why is she so afraid of me? . . .

[I heard this story about what she did.] But it didn't shock me because I am not a stranger to these things. I am not a careless/slack person (*mlegevuvu*- could also be remiss, negligent, inattentive). I have already been bereaved before. I have had my children die there at home. So I understand.

I—You were bereaved of your children because of witchcraft . . . or?

I didn't know. I only knew that they died. But people said. Now that condition of people to say . . . It doesn't have a lot of meaning, because I didn't see. . . . Now for me to be told that it is possible it could be her - It didn't give me much trouble. It just gave me the strength to say. 'If it is this kind of condition, then God can help me now.' It gave me this strength (*nguvu*). Then I knew that if it was just this condition, then it was a normal condition and God was able to help.

Now, things like this are there. In our area, they are there. It does its work. But God guards us. But it is there . . . in our area it is there.

I—God guards, but still you are able to get sick?

You are able. You are able.

I—Even to be bereaved?

Yes, you are able. You are able. But even if it should happen, we do not believe that you can die and go to hell. We believe that you will go to heaven, and you will be

received by God just fine. But if God has let it go and doesn't want to concern himself with this part, it is possible that you could go. But even together with this, the hand of God will not have been reduced in your life. To say that something will have changed - no. God will continue to love you and it will be like the turn of God that he has allowed this to happen. You know it is possible for God to do this. Like he did when they crucified Jesus, God had the ability to stop it and he had the ability to guard and the ability to send down an army or fire. Even Jesus said so. But because it was the time of the leader of darkness, that is why God decided to act like he didn't see, like he didn't concern himself with it, and like he didn't have any power. And so he chose to act like he didn't see and didn't care. Until finally, he had fulfilled his things, and everything was finished which he had purposed. But his ability was there for his son even.

So this is what we believe. And it is not able to change our faith. So that we start to worry because I have gotten very sick, so 'what have I done or maybe my neighbor has bewitched me. Or how did this come about?' uh-uh (no).

But this is something that wrecks many church members. Many of them run away from the church. And if a parishioner goes to the hospital and there is no obvious sickness, he knows straight away, 'I have been bewitched,' so that is why, because of hunting for the life of here on this earth. He knows that my treatment is no longer in the hospital. It is with the local healers (*waganga wa kinyeji*). So even if he doesn't go openly, he will use trickery/deception. There are very many that do that in this type of condition.

So we continue to trust God alone. And those who we teach and who understand us, they continue to use just this method – of trusting God alone. You know they know that the authority of death is not in the hand of the devil. The one who permits death is not the devil again. The one who allows death is God, if he desires.

Epilogue: When the pastor came into town, I asked for an update. He explained to me that his wife was feeling fine now. In the middle of a recent night, his neighbor had again been attacked and the call for help went out, but no one came to her aid. He said he did not hear the call himself, because he had just returned from a trip and was very tired. His wife heard the call but did not wake him. Kabula ran away that night to another village. He had not seen her since. The church people were relieved.

When I saw him again in March 2008, he told me that she had returned. She was called to the village office for the fourth time and again was told that she must leave the

village and go somewhere else. Since this was the fourth time she had been attacked, they were afraid that something bad would happen and they would be held responsible. They said that, since no one knows when the attacks will come and they cannot put a constant guard on her house, she must leave. She finally left without saying goodbye. The pastor said the village did not use any violence or force. He said the church saw that she came very close to repenting several times, but she did not repent.

Analysis

In these stories, reputation as a witch (through a history of previous suspicious incidents) is combined with gossip/testimony, accusation, or (more certain) spoken threat and motive (envy). This story illustrates the sociology of knowledge. Everyone knows that witches kill people and that these women are witches, including the local church people. They knew, because these women fit the type and have “criminal records.” With local worldview guiding, the line is drawn from reputation through motive to result and many empirical dots (which might otherwise be unremarkable) are found along the way as additional evidence. Even though the line itself (witchcraft) is never seen it becomes obvious to everyone. Healers/diviners assist in this process at every turn, because they also hear the gossip or else their vague accusations are obvious to their hearers. Connecting the dots in this way is a result of local belief systems and the configurational nature of knowledge (Hiebert et al. 1999, 41-43). A different belief system and worldview would suspect a different configuration.

For Fumbo she fits the profile people have of a witch – a widow with no children around to defend her. She already has a “criminal record”, since she was forced

from a neighboring village by witchcraft suspicions. Envy and anger seem to be the motives behind her threats. The amount of money is laughable. It appears that she maybe forgave some of the rent and didn't charge more for sex, because Mayala was acting as her husband, including helping in the household. But when he drops her and moves a younger woman into her house, she feels that she has been taken advantage of, whether or not he paid the \$1. (One of the informants said that she claimed he had not paid this, and the other said that she admitted receiving it but still felt he had taken advantage of her with such a small amount.) She threatens him in envy and anger, since she has no other power. Threats are equal to confessions in Sukumaland. The empirical dots connect when he disappears mysteriously during the night and then dies that morning, just two days after confronting her with the leaders. Her lack of sorrow that Mayala died confirms to the whole crowd that she is the killer. Milembe and Ng'walu are convicted and banished, based upon her testimony and their previous reputations.

For Kabula, it began as a jealousy issue. The brothers did not want to share any cows with their sister, even those given as her bride wealth. When the oldest brother died, they identified Kabula's envy as the motive to cause witchcraft. Once Kabula's reputation is established, it follows her. Every village found reason to suspect her and every time she left, the reputation grew. Because witchcraft is done secretly and has "no evidence, only results," it is impossible to prove or disprove. Kabula was proved to be a witch, both when her older brother died and when her younger brother recovered after she was threatened. Every tragedy in her life only adds to her reputation as a witch. The death of her brother, the deaths of her sons, abandonment by her husband, and banishment from villages

only makes people more suspicious rather than sympathetic. Each tragedy also increases the likelihood that she could be envious or angry. Kabula also loses the defense of her brothers, community, husband, sons, daughters, neighbors, church, and finally her pastor. He has defended her to others in the church, visited her, and eaten with her when no one else would, even after she has been banished. He rescued things from the flames of her burning house and responded to other distress calls, but his wife lets him sleep through the final attack. Did the belief that Kabula is a witch and might have attacked her contribute to the pastor's wife not rousing him? This pastor has grown up in the area. He knew that his neighbor Kabula was a witch before he knew about Jesus. He does not trust local healers but does believe that a few things some say are right. Much of what "everyone knows", including Christians, is based on gossip which often has roots in divination by local healers.

The good news of Jesus has helped this pastor and some people to respond somewhat more lovingly to Kabula. They did visit her, eat with her, and continue to relate to her. They did this even after her brothers had accused her, her nephew repeatedly tried to kill her, and the village had burned her house and banished her. However, they never accepted her as a truly Saved Christian. This was partially due to a lack of certain expected Christian behaviors. In their eyes, she was a witch who might repent. Her claim that everyone was slandering was not accepted but only seen as a refusal to repent. But is anything sufficient evidence for conversion and transformation from being a witch? Not for most people, it seems. Ultimately, even the church was no place for her to find protection and acceptance. Such protection and acceptance would be a big risk for the church in the community. The pastor and church found it impossible to completely counter the social and cultural pressure.

The good news has not changed their worldview to the point where they will eliminate the possibility of witches causing illness and death. The pastor's faith in Jesus has greatly reduced his fear. It has made him more suspicious of healers and more appreciative of biomedicine. It has made him believe that many illnesses are not caused by witchcraft and has caused him and his family to more often and more persistently seek biomedical help.²

Macfarlane's (1970) analysis of witchcraft in an English county between 1563 and 1603 has many parallels to this case study. He estimates that during this time, 2,500 people are involved in witchcraft accusations as victim or witch out of a population of 100,000. At least 110 suspected witches died in prison or were executed.³ 90% of those accused of witchcraft are women. He quotes a lengthy account written in 1587 that sounds very much like what just happened in village "M" and then comments:

How there was a gradual growth of feeling over a long period, although no event was ascribed to the witch for several years a time, and then how more and more disaster was laid at her door, are graphically illustrated. Gifford shows how the whole village community became involved in the gossip and tension. He also shows the process whereby a person cast about in his mind to see who might have bewitched him. In

²A major difficulty is that this belief is not supported by access to good biomedical help. This pastor's wife was bothered for 7 years and sought help in every health facility in the area. Finally he got a doctor to listen carefully to the symptoms and diagnose what I believe would translate as hookworms. After persistent treatment, she was healed. But it was a shift in belief that kept him seeking a biomedical cure when everyone else told him it was witchcraft. More recently, a parishioner had similar problems, and her family said they would donate a cow to her treatment with a local healer but not a chicken to bio-medical treatment. He loaned the money and used the contacts, persistence, and experiential knowledge from his wife's ordeal, to get proper diagnosis and treatment. What would happen if many local pastors like him actually had solid training as healers - both good theology/anthropology and basic training in bio-medical prevention and diagnosis?

³Thus .11% of the population was killed as "witches" in 40 years. This may be comparable to Sukumaland. Mesaki (1993) reports 3000 "witches" killed in 18 years. If this is accurate and population at the time averaged 4,000,000, the percentage of the population killed is .075%.

this case he selected a person with whom he felt uneasy and against whom he had offended. Mounting bitterness against an individual could not find an outlet until proof of her witchcraft had been discovered; then she was either forced to confess her guilt and promise amendment of life at the ecclesiastical courts, or removed from the community by imprisonment or death....Witchcraft prosecutions, we have seen, usually occurred between village neighbors. They almost always arose from quarrels over gifts and loans, when the victim refused the witch some small article, heard her muttering under her breath or threatening him, and subsequently suffered some misfortune. (91-92)

Macfarlane says the key element was tensions in close relationships prior to a misfortune, rather than the presence of a misfortune. A strong ethic of sharing between neighbors remained, but people found it necessary to not give to some less fortunate neighbors. The one who refused to be neighborly felt uneasy and assumed that the hungry, old woman leaving must feel envy and anger toward him/her. But witchcraft allowed a focus of moral condemnation on the feelings of the poor woman rather than the one who refused. The refusing one interpreted the uncomfortable feelings not as guilt for turning away the poor, but fear at turning away a witch. Later misfortune confirmed the fear. Cutting off the relationship with the neighbor was reinforced by refusing to receive gifts such as food from the neighbor out of fear of being bewitched. People found an exit from the value on loving one's neighbor as oneself even while claiming it (92-94). In Sukuma culture, one must share with a relative, yet envious relatives are most often accused of bewitching. Kabula's problems began with her brother refusing to give her cows.

Macfarlane reinforces his social relation hypothesis by quoting written sermons. This reveals the contextualized or syncretized theologies at work and the dates suggest how these change. During the witch-killing times, a 1617 sermon encourages people to not give charity indiscriminately and to refuse food or hospitality to suspected witches. They should not seek their blessings or fear their curses, but be courageous as Christians. In a

1656 book, a preacher is quoted saying that helping the poor is commanded by God.

Therefore if you become sick, you should not try to hang as a witch the old woman who was at your door, but rather say that since you gave harsh words instead of help to her, God is afflicting you. Exodus 22:23 says that if you afflict the widow, God will hear her cry and be angry with you. (92-94).⁴ This last quote follows the great witch-hunts of 1645-1647 when three hundred suspected witches were tried and over a hundred were killed.

The craze of the 1640s did not mark the height of witch-hunting; it was the final act. As in other parts of Europe, the craze first silenced demurrers by offering graphic evidence of witchcraft, but in time raised more doubts than it suppressed....The shift in opinion was driven by jurisprudential separation of 'matters of fact' from 'matters of law', but also mirrored a growing tendency among theologians to scrutinize occult phenomenon more closely. As Henry More observed, this undermined the ability of the supernatural to explain the inexplicable. (Gaskill 2005, 279-280)

Hangaza Experiences

The Hangaza ethnic group resides in Tanzania near the Rwanda and Burundi borders. They speak the same language as the Hutu and Tutsi across the border, but, at least officially, those caste distinctions are not acknowledged in Tanzania, and people identify themselves as Hangaza. PEFA has nearly 50 churches in this area. LVCC has an extension school in the main town of Ngara, and more than one hundred Theological Education by Extension students. Therefore I see students, graduates, and leaders from the area regularly in Mwanza. I stayed over night in Ngara for up to a week four times during this research and three times previously.

⁴I often encouraged obedience to Exodus 22:21-23's command not to mistreat widows and aliens, especially when discussion came to 22:18's command to kill the female witch. However I was unaware of this historical precedent to the discussion.

Pastor Accused of Bewitching the Former Pastor

David (not his real name) was a respected spiritual church leader from Rwanda. He spent decades building a strong church movement across the Rwanda and Burundi borders into Tanzania. I had often been in David and his wife, Mama David's, home to eat and talk. In the decade that I knew him, David's age and increasing health issues (an accident, high blood pressure, stroke, and diabetes) kept him from playing as active a role in the churches, including the one he used to pastor. I visited him in the hospital during his final battle with sickness. A week after David died; I went to give condolences to Mama David. After a long talk and eating together, we were all going out the door. She took me by the hand into the back hallway. She told me that I must not trust the pastor of her church (call him Moses). She said that Moses was into magical things and had bewitched David out of envy so that he could be the pastor of the church. He had put an object into David's body which was what had caused him to die.

I was shocked because Pastor Moses was one of our graduates whom I had known and fully trusted and with whom I had worked for 10 years. I had also been in his home and church. I had spent several hours with him just before this. I decided to tell the regional and national overseers about Mama David's warning.

Moses had known David and Mama David since before he was saved at age 10. David had married him, dedicated his children, traveled in ministry with him, and chosen him to take his place at the church when he retired. When Moses was going to go with David for treatment in a distant hospital, Mama David instructed the driver not to pick up Moses. When David returned home, she refused to let Moses into the bedroom to see him. Moses was distraught and could not understand it. He had had a dream three weeks earlier in which

he was not allowed to visit David. Finally, a fellow pastor passed on the news that Mama David suspected him of bewitching David. Moses laughed with relief, because this was so ridiculous. There was no history of witchcraft in his family. Moses did visit him in the hospital and Pastor David greeted him warmly, although Mama David did not greet him the first time. Moses was the first person to visit the family after David died and, therefore, had to make the funeral arrangements. He was even asked to read things at the funeral. This all made him uncomfortable, which probably caused some oversights in the funeral arrangements. Mama David never came back to Moses' church after the funeral.

The area leaders finally arranged a meeting between Mama David, her son, Moses, several men, and a woman leader to lovingly confront Mama David about this issue. They knew that eventually people would start asking why she was no longer coming to her church. Then the witchcraft accusation would probably spread. When pushed in the meeting, she admitted that she thought he was a witch. They asked how she knew, if she had gone to someone for divination. She said that a respected prophet had come to pray for David when he was sick. He had knelt to pray and then began to roll from side to side and say, "This sickness is from within the church. There is a pastor who wants your position. He is the one who has sent many *majini* into your feet . . . But he and two others will die." Also, her granddaughter had many visions of Moses up on the roof above them.

[Moses says that she also got proof from certain actions of his: for example, Moses did not come with me when I went to give her condolences. Moses announced in church the results of David's surgery before she knew. She took that as witchcraft knowledge rather than cell phone contact.]

The leaders then began to tell her that this prophet was a carpenter and member of a different church, who finally ran away suddenly because of problems he had caused there. They asked how her granddaughter had true visions if she never came to church. They read Matt 7:15-21 and 24 about wolves in sheep's clothing and false prophets.

At first Mama David was angry and defensive, but finally she began to listen. She came back to church the next Sunday and has been fairly regular in attendance and giving since. When I talked to her last, she talked a blue streak. She told me all about the visions she had before her children died. I finally had a chance to encourage her not to believe that David could be defeated by witchcraft and not to tear down the work they had built. She said, "Yes, David didn't like to hear about this and said that it was worldly talk. I am just trusting Jesus now. I know David is in heaven. I will not talk to people about it. I will love Moses, even though I don't trust him because he was envious and wanted to be the pastor."

Moses says that David was aware of all this, and it upset him. David said that, despite all their years together, his wife had never really decided to join him in following Jesus. She seldom sat through a whole church service. Some said that, unlike David, she had never really gotten over her Tutsi tribalism, looking down on the local people. He wonders if she is disappointed that her two sons who survived are mentally or spiritually unable to take over David's ministry. Moses and his brothers lead the church instead, but the overseer says it is because they are the most dedicated workers in the church. John, from his own experiences of being called a witch, encouraged Pastor Moses to just keep on loving Mama David and doing the right thing and eventually the truth would win out. He should lead the

church in taking offerings to help her with her needs, for example. From all reports of outward appearances, Mama David's relationship with Pastor Moses and the church is continuing well now.

Protecting a Suspected "Witch"

One church elder (call her Lydia) in the Ngara class gave a fairly dramatic and lengthy case in which a young woman (call her Mariamu) claimed to be bewitched by another young person (call her Elizabeth). Lydia and others from the church went to visit Mariamu and prayed for her. Then they confronted Elizabeth. She begged forgiveness. She said that she had given the beans and donuts (*mandazi*) which they ate together, but she had not bewitched or poisoned Mariamu. Elizabeth then asked to come to their church the next (Sunday) morning. They welcomed her, and she came.

During church, people came demanding that she be brought out. The church people responded that they had to finish their church service first. Eventually nearly 100 young people, most with clubs and knives, were asking for the witch to be brought out and saying that people shouldn't change religions in one day. Lydia told Elizabeth to sneak around behind the buildings and lock herself in one of the rooms of Lydia's house next door to the church. The people kept demanding the witch. Lydia said they should bring the village leaders and then she would bring her out, but they just shouted more.

The church people said, "Let us go and see Mariamu (the bewitched woman)." They went into her house. She seemed to be fine, but she demanded that Elizabeth be brought in there and only one of them would come out alive. Finally, a village official showed up. He held Lydia by the hand. Someone came up and punched Lydia. When the crowd heard that

the police were coming (because the pastor had gone off to call them), they all started running away, but the village official said, "I know each of you. You will be arrested if you run now."

When the police showed up, they asked what was going on. Lydia said that they should bring out Mariamu. When Mariamu walked out and seemed to be healthy, the police said that Mariamu could not be bewitched. They took Mariamu and her family into custody, as well as some of the crowd, but soon let everyone go, except the person who had punched Lydia who is still in custody. Lydia said that if she had not stood her ground, Elizabeth would have been killed, and everyone would still be in prison.

CHAPTER 7

CRITICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION PROCESS

By doing this research I discovered what some people in Northwestern Tanzania do, say, and believe when someone becomes ill or dies and what results from those in social relationships. But, since this is action research, I wanted to do more than increase my own and my readers understanding. I wanted to assist local Pentecostal ministers in understanding and responding appropriately and Biblically to this context. I also wanted to test a process that could assist others in other areas and with other topics. Therefore I led four different groups of students through a formal critical contextualization process. This chapter describes and evaluates that process. It also explains what I learned about Pentecostal ministers understandings and response: areas of agreement and disagreement, characteristics of a Christian response, sources of authority and scripture appealed to, and influence from the variety of student's backgrounds.

Description of the Process

First of all, I will give a brief description of what happened during the process. I will use the Mwanza class discussion as the main example.

Overview of the Discussions

All of the classes had quite energetic and animated discussions. These intensive classes met for an average of 6 hours per day. No one dozed in class, despite the long hours. For the most part, the discussion was not only between the teacher and the students but among the students. In the Mwanza class, for example, I spoke about 25% of the

paragraphs and 20% of those ended with a question mark. (This estimate is based upon computer and manual searches of the whole transcript, confirmed by estimates made by people who attended the classes. In a more detailed examination of a sample section, I counted 95 times that someone spoke. Twenty-three different people spoke. Sixteen of the 95 comments or questions were from me.)

The students shared quite personal stories. When I asked, “What things do Sukuma people in your area struggle with?” responses included, “Our family was very hungry during this drought”; “We were attacked by a witch recently”; and “My wife died last week.” Many of the things that I and others had read about or heard became more real and personal: “When my mother hired someone to kill our neighbor because he had bewitched and killed my brother, I bought the chicken which he drank the blood from (to keep from going crazy) before going out to join the crowd searching for the killer.”

My lack of understanding contributed in some ways to getting the basics laid out. They were teaching me what the actual facts are on the ground. They were sometimes trying to convince me of the reality of witches, zombies, etc. My lack of understanding and using this also as a focus group sometimes hindered things, if I was asking clarification questions that were obvious to others. It also contributed to the fact that we spent too much time on the phenomenology. Since I was hearing some things for the first time, I was not well prepared to challenge their ontological challenge empirically and from Scripture. The intensive nature of each class, with 5 – 6.25 hours a day, made it difficult for everyone to process the information together over a long period.

It seems to me that the critical contextualization process would produce more change if practiced over an extended period of time. It would also help if there were more ontological resources available and given to the students. Readings that respond to and challenge the witchcraft worldview would be helpful. Not many resources on this topic are available in Swahili. The students did get the book *Uchawi na Ushirikina* (Witchcraft and Magic) later, but I did not use it in the classes. The following readings we did discuss: I had the first 2 chapters of Hiebert, Shaw, and Tienou (2003) translated and gave this to them to read. I summarized Dau (2002) on a theology of suffering for them. I handed out short, translated summaries of articles by Hill (1996) and Bosch (1987) for them, which attempted a Christian response to the witchcraft worldview. They had difficulty grasping the logic of analyzing witchcraft worldview, since for them witchcraft is reality not a perspective to be objectively analyzed. Witchcraft is part and parcel of their worldview and “worldview is what we think with not what we think about” (Hiebert 2003b). They treated such discussions as hypothetical, like Westerners discussing “How does the perspective that there are germs and parasites affect people? What if people did not believe in germs?” Case studies from other cultures might help to challenge their worldview.

Selections from the Mwanza Discussion

Here is a selection to demonstrate how the class discussion developed in the Mwanza class; it is condensed from field notes: The class began with a two-hour session on Tuesday afternoon and ended on Wednesday a week later. On Tuesday I explained a bit about why we were doing things this way – inductive teaching versus deductive teaching and that we are all teachers in this class. I also went through the basics from chapters one and two

of Hiebert, Shaw, and Tienou (1999) so that when they read this, they would, be able to understand it. Maybe this was not such a good idea, because they seemed to be mostly trying to understand. After this first hour of introduction, I broke them into groups of 4 with at least one person who had gotten a story from a non-Christian. They spent 25 minutes sharing in the group. Then three of the groups shared their stories, and the others asked questions.

The first group explained in detail about a woman who had lost three children, and the healer said that her mother was a witch so the woman had eventually chased her mother away. Now the woman was saved and felt bad about chasing her mother away. She had also given birth to a child who was now just over a year old. The students in class had lots of questions, including questions about the sincerity of her salvation and whether she had really turned from those other things.

The next story was about how a woman became a healer. She had swelling, and then she was told in a dream to go spill milk. She did. The swelling went down. The second night she was given the same instructions in her dream. She obeyed again, and the swelling was gone. Then she was told that this had happened so that she could be a healer. She began helping people, especially with births. Then she got sick in the eyes and quit practicing as a healer.

I assigned them to read three examples of stories that students had brought so that we could discuss them together. I also asked them to read the first few pages of Hiebert, Shaw, and Tienou (1999).

For the next couple days, we focused on the situation as it is phenomenologically. We also had a missionary priest, who leads a pastoral care training

connected with Bugando Hospital, lead a discussion about whether it is bad or good to suffer. After he left, we discussed whether and which feelings were good, sinful, or neutral.

We discussed three case studies that John had picked out, which related to zombies and *Lutego* and that got us going on witchcraft. On Wednesday, we discussed a lot about the experiences of non-Christians. On Thursday, we tried to talk more about how it is for Christians and found that it wasn't very different. By Saturday we were trying to move more toward deciding what was real. I assigned them to come to school with an analysis of what was real from one of the case studies that we had handed out. They brought some good analysis, using Scripture and empirical tests but also reinforcing witchcraft belief.

On Monday, we talked about Hiebert's writing and tried to understand it. We wrote out the four critical contextualization steps on the chalkboard and I used other related analogies like the rail fence (Plueddemann 2005). We used the steps to discuss various examples from local burial customs, such as paying much more to transport the body long distances than to treat the living, and explored the beliefs behind the customs. At the end of the day, I gave them an assignment to do the four steps using one custom related to burial. In the afternoon, we finally got to their assignment: "Why do bad things happen to good, saved people?" and "What should we do about it?" We talked in small groups and then reported back to the large group on the question of why. Then I gave them a quick summary of Dau (2002) and his Biblical analysis for why there is suffering and the theological response for how to face suffering.

On Tuesday, I asked them for response to Dau (2002). They responded that there really was very little of the cross taught in churches. It was all about succeeding,

especially financially, and about being healed. They talked about how important it was to hear the other side as well. Students were impressed by one of the teachers who shared how he and his wife had not been able to have children but had been able to withstand incredible pressure to use non-Christian solutions for their problem: e.g., use a local healer or get another wife. I think the students interpreted that this was also a victory.

The students wrote down issues that they had in their personal lives. They were writing for a long time, so I did not interrupt them. I started with the quietest ones. One talked about that she, as well as her children, had frequent stomach problems. The next student said that she and her husband were just starting to plant a church, and they had no support. They had both been so sick for a week that they could not get up even to get water, so they sent their child to get food from neighbors. One student surprised us by saying that his wife had died the week before. He had not gotten word until after she was buried, so he just came back to school the next day. I talked to him later as well. His response was that God gave and took away, and He knows what He is doing. The student thought maybe God planned for her to be at her father's and for him not to get the word so that he could continue his studies without interruption.

Later, we talked about how to find some solutions for some of the problems, like people not getting healed. Seeking solutions, like going to the hospital instead of being negligent, was part of John's answer. The students agreed that people sometimes people do not take preventative medical measures like clean water or seeking medical help because of poverty. However, the students felt poverty should not be used as an excuse and normally medical solutions should be pursued.

They discussed problems at funerals: Being forced to kill the biggest goat or cow and too much crying for too long only to get more meat were issues identified by the students. Thoughts about how much someone should cry or should control themselves was another discussion that came out of a student's comments.

I asked them about whether they could have a critical contextualization discussion with their church; for example, about something like whether it was okay to use any local (herbal) medicine. I was surprised that some of the younger, sharper guys said it is dangerous to let people read the Bible on their own. They gave an example of one Bible-reading young man who was caught in adultery and said that David had been forgiven. The answer from John and another older pastor was that, if you try to stop people from learning rather than helping them learn, they will go elsewhere to learn.

In the end, there was no neat solution for the problems of suffering, sickness, death, and witchcraft. The students still evaluated the class very positively, and most said they would try a similar process at home.

Characteristics of a Christian Response

Pentecostal ministers pray with people and encourage them to trust Jesus for salvation, healing, material needs, hope and eternal life after death. But what do they say if God does not heal or provide the material goods desired? What do they say to parishioners who think someone else (a "witch") has caused an illness or death? How should Christians respond to suffering when God does not respond as they hoped? Here is a sample of the answers to such questions which were mentioned in the classes:

Christian Response to Witchcraft

This is the essence of the response to witchcraft by most Pentecostal Christians responses to witchcraft: The powers of darkness are very real. Satan, demons, witches, etc., do bring sickness and death. However, the Christian has unsurpassed protection from them through salvation and faith in Jesus. The name of Jesus is a mighty weapon. The worldview of those around the students was largely accepted, but they believed that many more people died from normal sickness and the results of The Fall than others, whom the students described as attributing virtually every death to witchcraft.

The students have had some influence on others. People acknowledge that if a person believes very strongly in Jesus, they are sometimes protected from witchcraft. Christianity (along with some access to biomedicine and Western education) has had some influence on people's beliefs. Now some no longer believe that every death is witchcraft-related, and they have a bit less faith in healers. However, everyone (often including Christians) attributes some deaths to witchcraft. For example, most people suspect unusual or sudden deaths, especially when the deceased had a headache, of being caused by witchcraft. They say, "This is not normal." Any death can be understood to be caused by witchcraft. Since there may be another cause behind the apparent cause, an obvious cause does not exclude witchcraft. Even old people who are sick a long time or deaths by vehicle accident may be caused by witchcraft.¹

¹Marco told me that when his grandmother died at 96, people said, "This is a true death (*kifo halali*).” He also heard this at the funeral of a 100-year-old woman who had been bedridden for a long time. In other words, these are the only funerals out of hundreds where he was sure no one suspected witchcraft. In many of the other deaths, people have

In this sample from the Kigoma discussion, each paragraph was said by a different student:

I believe my illness was caused by malaria and witchcraft. Why did they fail to recognize the chronic malaria at first? Why did I get better after medicine and then worse again? . . .

So, just as you can die from something else, but the real cause is AIDS; The real cause can be spiritual. I think that the devil can work through a person, a mosquito, a snake, a crocodile, lightening, etc., to kill someone.

We say there are two epilepsies -- one of the devil and one is a spinal cord problem. Why do we distinguish them? Can there be malaria of the devil and of mosquitoes?

But this can be extreme. You fall and break your leg because of gravity, not something else. So maybe you got malaria, because you were afraid.

We believe in spiritual warfare and believe in things that are invisible.

There are people who say that malaria is spiritual warfare, and they wait too long to go to the hospital. I think the problem is ignorance.

Who caused you to be ignorant? The devil is behind everything that happens. *Understanding Theology* says that the devil is the cause of every evil.

Matthew 8:17 says, "Jesus took our sicknesses and removed our diseases."

A class discussion followed that last comment about interpreting that verse correctly.

The last day of the Kigoma class, a student asked if I really did not believe in witchcraft. I told them that as an American, I do not believe that one person makes another ill or kills them though non-physical means, but I am listening and learning. They can show me how I am wrong. Then I asked them to prove it to me from the Bible, since I did not see that Scripture teaches this. We looked up many of the verses that mention witchcraft, but most of them, of course, only list it without explaining it. I mentioned the need to balance the verse

wondered aloud if there was another cause. So, witchcraft is not suspected in every

about killing witches with the following one about caring for widows, orphans and strangers. The “witch of Endor” from I Samuel is actually only called that in the title but is called a “medium” in the text.

We spent quite a bit of time studying the passage on Balaam and Balak. Three out of ten said that they had preached on Balaam (a text that I do not remember hearing preached on in thirty years, attending American churches). I tried to help them see the importance of following God and seeking His will, rather than trying to get Him to follow our will. We talked about praying “in the name of Jesus” and what that means.

We discussed some of the missiological responses to witchcraft from the two articles they had read (Bosch 1987; Hill 1996). I mentioned not listening to demons and building doctrines on what they say. A student responded immediately that this was absolutely right and gave examples where people had done this. He mentioned some examples of people saying things. He agreed with Priest’s (et al. 1995) use of the text on meat offered to idols, proving that we should not be afraid of objects being infected by demons. But he used different logic to get to Priest’s conclusion. The student felt that the infecting demons cannot harm us if we have faith. Priest suggests that there are no infecting demons, only beliefs.

I gave them my theory that demons cause sickness and death, not witches, even though witches may think that they are causing them (i.e., witchcraft is caused by demons, not by witches). A student said he thought that I was right. But in the end they

Sukumaland death, but these are the exceptions that prove the rule.

seemed to translate things back into their worldview, even when I thought they are agreeing with me.

In responding to Bosch (1987), they felt that there are no positive results of witchcraft (like students from other places, they can't really even understand what "witchcraft belief" means, because for them it is witchcraft knowledge and an assumption about the way that the world is).

When we talked about Bosch's statement that Jesus was the only sinless one, they reacted, saying that the churches that say "We are all weak and sinners" tend to excuse people's sin. It is better that we say that we are no longer walking in sin, although we may stumble or fall at times. That led to a bit of a discussion about the need for grace.

Christian Response to Suffering

We talked about suffering in the Kigoma class. A student said that we shouldn't seek out suffering or fail to help people who are suffering, like those who are planting a new church, by just saying, "That is how we started." We should eliminate unnecessary suffering.

A Rwandan student said that we should not always be suffering. I said that Jesus called us to come and die and that Jesus is our example on the cross and that He went down to go up.

Another student said that one of the problems is that we are in an era of globalization, so people want what others want/have. He said that his church is trying to raise money for a car for their pastor, which will cost \$8,000. Another pastor heard about this and

told his elders that they must buy him a car – and specified exactly what kind, which will cost \$10,000. The problem, however, is that the church is small and cannot afford it at all.

Another student said that we need to teach people the laws of prosperity, like sowing and reaping, not just tell them to give more.

Using an idea from a conversation with Tienou, I said that perhaps one of the reasons that Africans have not written much about suffering is that they connect it with curse, so they feel shame in suffering. They think suffering makes them less of a person.² The pastor probably does not need a car to get around, but he wants one so that he can have honor and be important.

The Rwandan student asked, “Well, is that wrong? What if you were us? Wouldn’t you want honor as well?” This was obviously a strong feeling in the class.

In all of the critical contextualization classes, the students came to a growing appreciation that the Christian life is not all victory and health but that we need to have a balanced gospel. We need to show that faith in Jesus brings healing and blessing but also brings perseverance and victory in the face of sickness and death.

²John agreed that local people see poverty as a curse and shame. Therefore, they do all that they can with work, rituals and sacrifices to become rich. This is true of Christians as well. Sometimes missionaries and Tanzanians misunderstand each other. Marco gave examples of other missionaries with whom locals disagreed. One preached that a pastor should not expect to get rich. When missionaries were invited to a close church for a special day of giving to get a car for the pastor, they did not come or send apologies. The church people understood this to mean that the missionaries did not want Africans to have a car and be equal with them. The missionaries preferred to rule. Issues of money, missions and cultural differences need much more research in Tanzania. Many misunderstandings arise from a large cultural and economic gap. During our time in Tanzania, the average per capita income has been between ½ and 1% of U.S. per capita income.

Areas of Agreement and Disagreement

During the class discussions, we all agreed with each other on some issues and disagreed on others. Sometimes the disagreements were between students. On a few topics, like the reality of witchcraft, the students agreed with each other, but I did not readily agree with them.

Areas of Disagreement between Students

The students disagreed amongst themselves on certain issues. They disagreed most strongly about whether local medicine could be used. They disagreed as we discussed specific cases what the cause was in that case and therefore what the appropriate response would be. They disagreed about the effectiveness of local healers/diviners.

Can a Pastor or Christian Use Local, Herbal Medicines (Dawa)?

The most divisive issue was whether a Christian could use any local medicine (*dawa*). This argument occurred in every critical contextualization process. Those from the Evangelical Assemblies of God (EAGT) were especially insistent that all local medicines had demonic roots. Others, like PEFA, do not have a uniform response. An EAGT graduate later told me that he thought PEFA's flexibility on this issue and how churches should give³ on were the major reasons that the EAGT tried for a while to insist that their students only go to their new schools (even though most of their leaders have been trained through PEFA schools). Even if you learned about this *dawa* because your mother gave it to you as a child,

³As mentioned earlier, the EAGT teachers and practices that the Biblical method of giving is for all the tithes and offerings to go to the pastors as they all went to the Levites and Priests in the Old Testament.

she, or some other ancestor before her, learned about it from a healer who learned about it from a demon. Therefore, using such medicine is always using the demonic. Even if there were a medicine that was effective, you, as a pastor, could not use it, because your parishioners might see you using it and it might cause them to accept all local medicine and lead them back into the healers' and demons' hands. One elderly woman in "M" village in Geita told how when she converted and burned everything else, she had kept some cheap nose drops from the healer. Only later with the pastor's help did she realize that this was the source of her ongoing health issues. After she got rid of the nose drops, she was healed. The pastor warned against any use of local medicine.

Others argued that, although healers and divining must be avoided, the local medicines that you learned from your mother are not necessarily bad. Many medicines that are in pills came originally from trees, so local herbal medicines might be allowed. God created everything. Just because Satan has perverted some things does not mean that we should not reclaim them. John challenged students: "When your child is sick, you have no money for a clinic and you know an effective treatment growing in your yard, will you really not use it? If you eat the fruit of the mango, why do you refuse the root? If you eat the papaya, why do you refuse the seeds?"

Students did not disagree much about the use of Western medicine. In the past, there were some Christians who refused Western medicine, but most have accepted it now. Some do still believe that it is better that one is healed only through prayer and that medicine be used as a last resort. "Winner's Chapel," a local church planted from the Nigerian home church, has a reputation for encouraging people to just believe and not take

medicine. Marco said he went there for awhile. A friend from there told him to just pray over water with faith and take it as medicine. A few months later this friend died. When I talked to the daughter of a member of Winner's Chapel, who was a pastor's wife in a Kenyan branch, she said that this was a misunderstanding. The church allows medicine. However, she also said that God wants us to live in divine health and that sickness is an attack from Satan. Satan sometimes uses witches in this attack but not always.

The pastors were curious about how to treat those who preferred using Christian customs just because they were less expensive than traditional customs. Sometimes families that had never been in a church wanted the pastor to conduct a Christian funeral, because it would be shorter and would require them to feed people for fewer days. Likewise, it is now possible to dedicate twins in the church and avoid the sacrifices required by the twin society. Some choose church dedication for their twins simply to avoid the cost of the traditional service.

What Is the Cause and Best Response in This Case?

Students disagreed about whether particular instances discussed were examples of witchcraft or something else. For example, a student brought an example of a situation in which several family members had the same symptoms and died within days of each other. The local healer said that it was *Lutego*, which is like witchcraft but comes to a person who does something wrong. Then it spreads as people cry at the funeral. Eventually, the whole family ran away for fear of becoming the next to die. One student thought this might just have been a contagious disease, especially since none of them went to the hospital to test for something else. He said if they had tested and found no disease, then he would

believe that it was witchcraft. The student was not disputing the reality of witchcraft, just the cause in this case. Others disagreed and said that this was clearly witchcraft, that contagious diseases do not kill only one family. Others gave other examples. For example John and another teacher told of a woman who came to them once in Geita complaining that she was dying from *Lutego*, like five other members of her family. They prayed for her. Demons revealed themselves and were cast out, and she was healed and is still living.

Students also disagreed about cases of zombies and people returning from the dead. An example brought by one of the students was identified by some as an example of witchcraft and satanic power. Several others told stories of local healers who promised to bring someone back who had been made a zombie by witches. In each case, the healer had taken the money but never brought the person back. In one case, the zombie child appeared as the healer promised in the distance, but some people chased this supposedly returned zombie down and found that he was not the child, but a follower of the healer who had been acting the part. No one told a story of a successful return. Some said it was witches themselves who returned to pretend to be the deceased in order to increase fear. No one said zombies were impossible. In the Mwanza class, we discussed the phenomenology and ontology of a case study where people suspected that a boy had been taken as a zombie and that they were burying a different old body. I asked what they would do as a minister in that situation. The question was followed by a fair amount of silence. One said he wouldn't bury the young person who got gray hair overnight, because he would be lying to say that he was burying the young person. Another said, of course, you must bury him. Another said I would just pray over him, and the power of God would bring him back. I asked them what they

would do now with the families that are there. No one had actually ever seen a zombie or seen one healed. One student said that he had seen one healed at a church in Mwanza, but people challenged him and wanted to know which church. They concluded that he was lying and wouldn't let him finish. John told about being in such a situation, where they eventually buried the child.

Do Healers Give Accurate Divination and Powerful Healing?

Everyone agreed that people should not go to healers, but there was a great deal of curiosity and some dispute about what healers do and what power they have. This was especially true in Mwanza and Ngara, where a former healer was one of the students in each critical contextualization class. I discussed this earlier while discussing healers.

Areas of Disagreement between Students and Me

For the most part, I just listened and asked clarifying questions when students told amazing stories (about witches, zombies, flying in rice sifters, turning into animals), especially in the phenomenological stage. This approach allowed people to share openly and to encourage, as well as to challenge each other. When we moved on to the ontological stage, I asked more challenging questions about empirical and Biblical evidence. I maintained the attitude that we are learning together, and I have the most to learn.

One area of disagreement that eventually emerged was about the reality of witchcraft and its associated manifestations. Although I was listening to their understanding and tried to learn, I remained doubtful. I challenged the Biblical and empirical basis of this belief. All of the students and teachers believed that witchcraft was real, that non-Christians got sick and died from witchcraft. All in the classes believed in witchcraft. Most students

seemed to also believe in zombies, people flying instantly in rice sifters, and other things that I found especially amazing.

In a discussion six months after the Mwanza class, John told some Sukuma ministers/students, “Take Steve out to the villages so that he doesn’t have to just report other people’s stories, he can have his own stories.” Then John and others laughed loudly at the thought of me confronting witchcraft in the way that they have. John asked, “Aren’t there many pastors who have fled the villages [in Sukumaland]?” The other ministers replied, “Very many.”

Sources of Authority

The main source of authority related to witchcraft was what “everyone knows”, or the sociology of knowledge. Students backed up these reports from others with personal experience. They then illustrated from analogous events or words in Scripture. The difficulty, of course, with what everyone knows is how they know it. Despite the fact that these students tell people not to go to local healers, the local knowledge that everyone knows usually has a mix of gossip, divination, peculiar happening, and coincidence. Each piece alone is unclear. However, given the configurational nature of knowledge, they confirm each other within the worldview, until suspicions becomes facts which everyone knows.

“Worldview is what people think with, not what they think about” (Hiebert 2003). When I summarized literature from Hill and Bosch about positives and negatives of witchcraft worldview, the students had great difficulty thinking about it because to them this is a reality they think with, not, an opinion/belief. They did not believe that, in the West, there really is no witchcraft. At best, we are blind. They even used an example of Westerners

working on a bridge at night and getting it done fast as evidence that Westerners probably do believe in witchcraft, even if they won't admit. [The implication being that they used witchcraft, maybe even zombies, to work quickly at night.] They explained "what was really going on" with this bridge-building in ways that Westerners find unthinkable. This is the same process that Western anthropologists, doctors, missionaries, and others have used to explain "what is really going on" when Africans talk about witchcraft in ways that Africans find unbelievable or naïve. John said, "If you tell people in a village here that there is no witchcraft, they just assume you are ignorant. People will treat you as Americans would if you said it is impossible for people to fly to the moon."

In affirming the reality of witchcraft, students tended to relate experiences which they had heard from what they considered to be reliable people. When pushed farther, they used things they had seen and their own experiences of what they understood to be witchcraft. Proposing an alternative understanding of other experiences convinced only a few for whom it was not a personal experience. I don't think anyone changed their mind about something which they themselves had experienced.

Students did give examples with empirical evidence of how someone had believed in a healer and was proved wrong or believed something was witchcraft and was proved wrong. For example, a student talked about praying for a woman. She said that witches woke her up regularly by throwing stones at her iron roof. She was ready to move away. The student prayed for her, but it did not help. Then he asked the woman to cut down a tree branch with ripe, hard fruits that hung over her house. She said that she was not stupid enough to mistake that sound for witches. The student was not so sure she could distinguish

the difference when she was sleeping. She agreed to cut the branch. She was no longer bothered.

Use of Scripture

Students backed up their understanding and experience of witchcraft with reference to Scripture. In Mwanza, they showed that witchcraft is mentioned in the Old and New Testaments, as well as in the future in Revelation. They filled in these references to witchcraft with their understanding of what witchcraft is. I did not find much Biblical research to explain in detail what was happening in these texts and their cultural contexts. For example, I was unable to answer their question about how the Israelites knew someone was a witch so that they could kill her (Exod 22:18). The example of the Egyptian magicians proved to them that local healers and witches have power (Exod 7:11, 12, 22; 8:7, 18, 19). One person said that this showed that witches had the power to change into a different shape or being, because those magicians changed rods to snakes and back (Exod 7:11-12). Students also used Simon (Acts 8:9-25) and Elymas (Acts 13:8-12) as examples.

When I pushed for empirical evidence of witchcraft, they eventually said that we must go beyond our five senses to faith. Too much empirical research would exclude Satan . . . and God as well. “In order to go into the supernatural, you need to have faith that it is possible: It was God, witchcraft, or Satan. Therefore, every supernatural thing requires faith.”

When I challenged them to find an example of a witch causing sickness or death in Scripture, someone said there are none. Some in Mwanza looked for inferences. If God forbade witchcraft, then it must have been real, at least to their neighbors. Balaam says

there is no curse or witchcraft against Israel, because they are protected by God (Num 23:21-23). This implies that, if they were not protected by Yahweh, witchcraft would hurt them. They said that Satan and witchcraft are the same thing. Witches, *majini*, and demons are all part of Satan's army and the kingdom of darkness, which uses its power to oppose the kingdom of God and His servants, including us. When God told Satan that he must not put his hand on Job's health, the witches are his hand. When I challenged whether it said that witches were his hand, the response was that not everything is written in Scripture, according to John 21:25. I agreed but said that Scripture says that enough is written, and we don't have to start adding things. Discussion progressed from there between the students and a Sukuma teacher that was also participating in the class:

Student – I want to contribute to the discussion – my young father got sick in the stomach. . . . he was told that he was bewitched by his sisters over the inheritance and he believed it. . . . Later we advised him to go to the hospital, and he was difficult to make listen. He went and they discovered that he had water in his liver, and they gave him medicine and told him to eat less salt, etc. But he said that these rules they were just trying to prevent him from eating well. The result was that his condition was bad, and after awhile he died. Still people said that he had been bewitched, even though the answer was obvious. . . . Witchcraft is there, but is there enough evidence about this thing? . . . Many have built their faith on vain things. It has been a problem that even Christians believe in things which are outside of the foundation of the things which they should believe. . . . Even though things of faith are there, but we should seek the truth of those things which we believe.

Teacher (Sukuma teacher and pastor who was participating in the class discussion though not teaching this class) - . . . Are Satan and witchcraft the same thing? We agreed they are the same, and even I agree with this.

I – Wait, let me explain differently. . . . If the friends of Job had been here in Sukumaland, they would not have just sat and talked, they would have sought out the witch and taken steps, maybe it was his wife who said, "Let us let him die", or his neighbors who some certainly must have been jealous. . . . Let us say that the faith in witchcraft uses the power of Satan, but that is different than saying it is the same as Satan. Because you have put in the hand of people, we are going to cut this hand.

Teacher – Eph 6:10-12 says . . . It seems there are two kingdoms, and each kingdom has its servants. Satan rules his, his demons, and his servants and that is indeed why I said that witches are the servants of Satan.

I – There you are going ahead because it says that war is not about flesh and blood. Are they people?

Teacher – Our war is not about using the flesh that we have.

I – So the meaning is that we don't fight with people. Rather we are fighting with spirits. Isn't that right?

Teachers – Yes, we don't use our power. . . . A witch, according to my understanding, is someone who has set themselves apart (sanctified themselves) in order to be used by Satan to complete the kingdom of Satan.

Evidence of Influence from Education, Ethnicity, Age, Gender, Denomination, or Location

Education did not reduce belief in witchcraft, though it may have given more ability to think critically about it. Since they could more easily grasp my view, the more educated were just better able to argue for witchcraft. In the Mwanza class, the students who gave the longer, more original written assignments and interacted most with the concept of critical contextualization were those with more secular and Bible School education. They were often older and spoke English. They were all men.

The Kigoma students, who had all completed secondary school (form 4) and earned a Bible School diploma did a better job of writing up interviews and other assignments. Here the one woman student produced the best assignments. The Kigoma students also were the only students who actually went and did a critical contextualization process with others. Of course, I also made doing this assignment the final exam rather than being worth only 10 points like it was in the diploma schools. The students did not follow the assignment instructions well. Some only interviewed a group of people about witchcraft,

rather than leading them through all four steps of the critical contextualization process. Most did not analyze well how the process worked. They were more likely to analyze the beliefs that were expressed.

There seemed to be a slight tendency for people who lived in the village and had less education to believe in witchcraft and associated things without any question. More education and urban/inter-ethnic exposure seemed to allow people to see more perspectives and to realize that some Westerners, for example, do not believe in witchcraft. It did not, however, remove belief in witchcraft: “Why do Africans hope in witchcraft? . . . In my ministry I will continue to insist that witchcraft not be the solution in trouble or death in society, but that society change to see that death is a result of sin even though it is possible that it can be caused by witches.”

All ethnic groups also believed in witchcraft, but there were differences of emphasis. Witchcraft was the main issue and topic of discussion in Mwanza (concerning the Sukuma) and Ngara (where nearly all students were Hangaza). In both of these areas death is almost always attributed to witchcraft, and there is great fear. In Ngara, John was surprised that people openly admitted being witches, unlike in Sukumaland where such admissions only happen under torture by the Sungu-sungu. It may be that since witch-killing is much less common in Ngara area, a person can claim to be a witch more safely. In the Ngara instance, the person said that they only bewitched those who did them wrong, and they had nothing against the person who died. This allowed people to continue to fear wronging them while getting them out of any penalty in this case.

In Musoma, there was a great mix of ethnic groups. They met in small groups, and each group presented their issues in their ethnic group. Witchcraft was not highlighted as much as in other areas. For example, the Luo who were the most well-represented in this class talked a great deal about issues surrounding death and widows. Failure to follow customs can cause death, especially at the time of death. A widow must sleep with someone outside the family to cleanse her and then should be married to a brother or other close relative. This cleansing is required in order to stop death. The Luo students claimed that this cleansing is so important that even if she dies before it happens, someone will be found to have intercourse with the corpse., The connection of female circumcision to preventing sickness and death in the husband's family was discussed among the Kuria.

There was also more discussion of bad luck (*mikosi*). One student shared that his twin children and the next child all died at about 10-11 months. He experienced incredible family pressure to perform a ceremony with the local healer to wash away his bad luck. He did not talk, but he did not budge. Eventually, he discovered medically what the illness was in all three cases and found out that it could be treated and prevented. We walked through the example, utilizing the four steps of critical contextualization. Then I made the mistake of asking rhetorically whether he had faith. Three younger people gave speeches, saying that the student did not have faith, because his refusal was not forceful enough. Some of the older students responded, "You shouldn't brag about your swimming, until you have been in the pool and seen how deep it is." One student from an unreached ethnic group did a good job of explaining from his own situation about how he lost his parents while still quite young and then he lost three children and how broken he was after this.

In the Kigoma class, people compared the beliefs in their area concerning witchcraft. A Rwandan said that witchcraft was not so common. In the rural areas, Rwandans may say that a child who died was given poison, but you do not hear about that in the city. They say that some of those who go in the night walk around your house, and they can change your brain to make you not think very well. There are also women who can put something in her husband's food, and he will lose authority in the house and she will be in charge (love medicine).

A Kuria student from Musoma said, "I have attended many funerals. They often think that the sickness and death comes from bewitching."

A Kigoma area student said that among the Ha,

Many people think that someone must cause the problems of sickness. They use two ways to recognize that. If someone is very sick, they send him or her to the hospital. If that sickness is not seen, they will ask to bring him or her home to the healer to find out about that sickness. Weak Christians may do the same, or they may bring the person out in order to be prayed for at home.

Evaluation of the Critical Contextualization Process

So how well did these critical contextualization classes succeed according to reports by students, others, and myself? What worked well? What could have been done better? Did anyone report changes in understanding, feeling, or behaviors as a result of this process?

Students' Evaluations

I asked the students to write a response to six questions at the end of the critical contextualization process. Here is a summary of some typical responses from the 20 Mwanza students (of 25 taking the class for credit) who turned this assignment in:

1. I liked the class because . . . “everyone contributed in discussing the issues.” “People were very open in explaining their problems.” “Because of every student explaining what he knows, everyone knows much more.” “I liked the research on death and sickness which was done by various students, how they have struggled with it and the various challenges in this research. Also how the four steps helped them to struggle with various problems and come to their responsibility. I think the discussion of the whole church must begin with the leaders.” “I liked the way the four step critical contextualization method can help us research what is really true.”

2. I did not like this about the class: “failing to come to a conclusion and help each other with what should be done about some things, for example, the question of local herbal medicine – should it be used or not?” “We should have finished each topic with a Biblical conclusion, sometimes we agreed with the students who knew how to argue well, but they kept some from speaking openly and did not come to a clear Biblical conclusion for example about using local herbal medicine.” “It would have been good to also hear about other ethnic groups beside the Sukuma.” “We did not have enough books to help us continue to learn about this. We should also have increased the amount of time.”

3. These questions still bother me: “Why are people still so afraid of witches rather than fearing God?” “Why do righteous Christians have troubles and end up defeated?” “Why do we sometimes pray for people . . . but we don’t see God do anything?” “Why do

many diseases bother believers together with society?” “Still the witches in our area bother a lot, especially at night, by lighting witch fires, changing into cats and bats and you can eat with them without recognizing them.” “How do we help our relatives the witches, healers, and all who believe in witchcraft to trust in Jesus?” “How will we remove two-path Christianity from people’s minds? [I used “two-path Christianity” to translate syncretistic Christianity based on a story and its associated proverb: “Two paths defeated the hyena.”] How do we struggle with witchcraft and magic? . . . We still have no testing indicators to get us to the true answer when something happens.” “Is all local herbal medicine magical?” “Why when a person dies is he taken as a zombie? Why does God allow it?” “How do we insert faith for healing in the sick person who has given up living so that it will do its work? . . . Why is it so much easier to follow God when you are healthy than when you are sick? . . . When we see someone who is sick because of their own negligence, should we encourage, comfort and pray or tell them openly their negligence so that they change and get out of their trouble?” “Why do people refuse to pay for someone’s treatment, but when he dies they use lots of money?”

4. What did not change as a result of the class: The almost universal response (maybe because I gave it as one example) was “I still understand that witchcraft is present”. Some added things like “Jesus heals even though witchcraft and traditional healers are present. It is better to live in Jesus because in him even death is gain.” “Witchcraft is one of Satan’s weapons,” but “in the name of Jesus, we will be victorious.” “Death is normal.” “Sickness and death are caused by demons and people’s negligence in not seeking treatment or protecting themselves, for example, by drinking dirty water.”

5. What did change as a result of the class: “Because of this class, I now understand that many people die and get trouble not only because of witchcraft, but also from various things including malaria, not having good food, and negligence of the people themselves.” “This class showed me how sickness and death confuses and troubles many people, both Christians and non-Christians.” “I realized that there are still many Christians who follow two paths and depend on the local healers.” “I realized that death is a normal thing, and we need to teach this to people.” “I realized that a person can have great troubles and still have greater faith afterward (Job).” “I learned the importance of researching and doing critical contextualization . . . Not to refuse everything that is in the culture, but to choose what is good and fix it so that it contributes to spreading Christianity. . . .”

6. After this class, in my ministry I will . . . “continue to tell people to trust Jesus for healing, but I will change so that when I see a sickness that can be treated at the hospital, I will tell the ill person to go be treated at the hospital.” “I will change so that . . . I allow the good cultural things . . . so that people feel the Lord Jesus is one of them so they can understand him better.” “I will use this critical contextualization method to teach the elders in my church.”

Most of the Mwanza students said that they would go and teach using this critical contextualization method, but I received no written reports from those who did it in the diploma schools. I did get oral reports of a few. I also got anecdotal reports that some students no longer just receive what everyone says but are more critically evaluative. Some even use the critical contextualization steps in evaluating.

Other's Evaluations

Immediately after the Mwanza class, the students and several teachers who sat in on the class did an informal evaluation. They said this has been a very good class because it taught them how to research and to think critically about things so that when they go home they have a pattern for not just accepting or rejecting things but for judging them critically. My wife is an experienced adult educator with a B.A. and M.A. in education. She sat in on much of the Mwanza class. She thought it might be a turning point for me as an adult educator. The class impressed her as an adult education experience, because the students were motivated. They talked a lot amongst themselves about their experiences and did not just talk to the teacher. They often continued these discussions during the breaks.

After leading a critical contextualization discussion in a Geita church, I complimented someone, who turned out to be the head elder on his very attentive listening. He said, "Yes, the teaching was excellent, because this is very much the problem that we have. Many are very afraid of witchcraft! Some Christians also go to healers."

John co-led three of the critical contextualization classes/focus groups with me. He encouraged the importance of this process. For example, he said that, although colonial era missionaries with the backing of the government denied the reality of witchcraft, the church still needed to deal with it:

So this lesson is very important here. Even if you refuse or you agree, I am able to say that already it is like we have been defeated because we try to force belief just with power: "There is no witchcraft, there is not this." But you yourself know that when you are doing your work with your mouth, you are saying, "There is no witchcraft." But in your heart you say, "It is here."

John thinks it is very important to listen to people about their culture and that we have to communicate in their culture. He gave the example of Paul's speech in Athens.

When he spoke at a church convention in a Kuria village, he said he didn't preach so much. He asked the people about their culture. He said, "We do this, what do you do?" People got excited telling about their culture, especially the older people. They analyzed it and how to respond to it. So it seems that he learned to teach using the critical contextualization process.

My Evaluation

On the whole, the contextualization process succeeded as a focus group, adult education class, and introduction to missional theologizing. I would use the basic methodology again for research or teaching and would encourage others to do the same. There were shortcomings which I would try to address and encourage others to address to improve the process the next time.

Before going into detail, I will summarize using Plueddemann's (2005) revision of the Stake model:

Outcomes - actual versus expected: Students openly, actively discussed burning, deep issues more than I hoped. Students did not transform their worldviews as fundamentally or implement the critical contextualization process after class as much as I hoped. Students received fewer conclusive answers than they hoped.

Context: Positively, previous experience and relationship with John and I allowed great rapport and openness. Negatively, insufficient preparation, intensive class schedule, difficulty of the topic, and lack of written resources reduced the transformation and skill development. My expected context of one class became eight invitations, but two unexpectedly cancelled allowing six good classes.

Teaching activities – actual versus expected: Students expected lectures with simple answers, but got full participation in discussions. I expected to complete the three or four steps of the critical contextualization process, but the active, open sharing resulted in most of the time being spent discussing the phenomenology, some on ontology, and very little on resulting practical ministry/missiology.

Positives / Successes

Overall, I think the class was successful in many of its goals. Student participation was higher than in any class that I have taught. They brought up the issues most relevant to their lives, contexts, and ministries. There were many questions and a great deal of energy.

As a focus group, the classes succeeded. I learned a tremendous amount about the human and cultural realities with which people are dealing. I think they learned a great deal from each other and the variety of perspectives and experiences that they brought. All of the classes were mixed ethnically to varying degrees. (Ngara was the least mixed with only two non-Hangaza. Mwanza was half Sukuma, and we kept the focus on the Sukuma, since all were ministering to them. Musoma and Kigoma were very mixed, and this allowed more comparison between groups but less depth in exploring one group.)

They sensed the importance of researching the human and cultural contexts in which they lived, including the non-Christian perspective. I think, for the most part, this provided some sense of pride and recognition that they knew something that they could teach to each other and to the white professor.

There was only one brief episode of resistance with some students in one Musoma group. The Luo students from one area began to insist on hearing more about the Western way of tackling these issues. I told them that we did not have enough time to cover and compare every perspective, but they continued to insist. I could not clearly tell where this resistance came from. Maybe they felt it was not fair that I, as a teacher, should learn from them without them learning more from me. Perhaps they felt that we were discussing and critiquing the negative parts of their culture and not sharing, critiquing or comparing the same in my culture. They might have become uncomfortable and desired to go back to the familiar mode of learning in which the teacher gives them answers.

I think it helped that I had built rapport with them by teaching them in other classes previously. The fact that John Mwanzalima was there to co-lead three of the groups helped a great deal. He asked in-depth questions that I might have missed. He affirmed their perspective on witchcraft – including arguing for it against me. He sometimes translated culturally and with more appropriate Swahili words. John explained the process when the students were not understanding me and sometimes gave me background information when I was not understanding them. He shared his own experiences and insights. It also helped to be able to compare notes with him on how the process went. For example, he thought the Musoma class went into more depth instead of just talking about witchcraft like the Ngara and Mwanza classes. I would have guessed the opposite. This may relate to the fact that witchcraft is very common to him in his whole life and ministry, while the perspectives of the various Mara tribes are more new to him despite his having spent some time living there.

To me, the witchcraft perspectives and manifestations were new, deep, unusual, and surprising.

Negatives/ Failures

The class did not succeed in transforming people's worldview related to matters of witchcraft. Both the students and I left with the same basic worldview with which we came, but we did leave with more insight into the other's worldview and with more questions for both worldviews as well as questions for Scripture. Most students apparently did not leave with an understanding or appreciation of the critical contextualization process sufficient enough to allow them to lead others through it and analyze how the process went. This was evidenced by the fact that very few went back and did the contextualization process with another group, although it was assigned. The Kigoma students did the assignment, but several did just a group interview and analyzed the beliefs of the group rather than leading students through the whole four step critical contextualization process. The following are some of the factors that I believe contributed to these failures:

Too Little Time

All of these were intensive 1, 2, and 3 credit classes lasting from two days (12.5 hours) to just over a week (37.5 hours). Some in the longest class even said that it was too short for the topic. Clearly, the time available was not enough time to transform worldview or to grasp the critical contextualization process. Too much time was spent in each case on the phenomenological stage. Two factors contributed to this: The students had a great deal of interest in exploring and sharing in this area. I also had a high level of interest since I was using this as a focus group and had so much to learn. Admittedly I have been too

thorough at the beginning and had to rush too quickly at the end of other classes. This contributed to students both not understanding and not applying the critical contextualization process. They primarily observed and, therefore, primarily applied step one of the critical contextualization process. The fact that the class in the diploma schools tended to be called a class on “research” (*utafiti*) rather than “critical contextualization” (*kutamadunisha kwa vipimo*) probably helped contribute to this. Teachers and students found “research” an easier word and concept to communicate, especially in Swahili.

Insufficient Preparation (by students, administration, teachers)

Better preparation by me as the teacher/discussion leader, students, and administrators would have helped. I did not have Biblical answers prepared for their questions, including their questions about witchcraft. This was partially my inexperience with this topic and the condensed nature of the course. It was also partially due to the fact that this is a difficult topic and very little good Biblical or missiological material has been written on it, especially by insiders. Although I gave the students an introduction to interviewing, they may not have felt confident with what to do. Likewise, when I sent them out to do the critical contextualization process on their own, they may have lacked enough experience to be confident. They saw too little of steps two through four modeled in class. They also had no chance to try it in class by, for example, leading the class in a short critical contextualization discussion themselves on some topic. The design of the class increased their appreciation for research and critical contextualization, but it did not teach the skill of leading this well enough for them to go out and do it on their own.

Most students did not do the interviews before they got to class. Those who did brought them with them at the time class started. Therefore, I did not get a chance to read them and choose case studies before they came. Most students typically respond in this “out of sight, out of mind” way to assignments which teachers send home with them to do in the months between classes. They try to do them after returning to school. Also because I did not require this as an assignment with a strict due date (for ethical reasons since the interviews contributed to my research), there was less incentive to complete it on time.

Some administrative failures also reduced the effectiveness. In Kigoma, I sent the readings and interview assignment so that students could prepare ahead of time. However, these were not copied and distributed until after the first day (five hours) of the class, so students did not get them until the second day.

In two other cases, I was asked to teach by the leadership at other schools. I prepared syllabi and readings, but administrative failures at the host schools led to cancellation of the classes. In the degree completion case, the Mwanza principal and Kenyan overseeing administration approved my syllabus for a class called “Contemporary Theology.” They agreed with my argument that it was more important to help students learn to theologize in their contemporary situation than to study 20th century Western theologians like Bultmann, Bonhoeffer, and Barth, as had been done in a previous syllabus. I gave the students a syllabus, readings, interview assignments, and an orientation, so they could prepare before the next intensive. However, someone in Kenya decided the syllabus was too different from the syllabus that they had traditionally taught. They asked me to teach the other syllabus, but I did not have time to prepare a different class so the principal taught it. In

the case of master's level class, I agreed to teach an intensive a year before, but the class was announced late so too few students signed up. Our family traveled to Kenya so I could teach, but the class was cancelled, then administration changed their minds and we started, and then it was called off again because of too few students.

Short timelines and insufficient preparation also hampered the research. A lack of adequate technical preparation by getting good quality microphones and a digital recorder resulted in some parts of taped sessions not being clear enough to be transcribed. The intensive nature of the classes also made it difficult to check recordings and/or write good field notes after a day of teaching for 6 hours and then preparing to teach again (usually in Swahili) the next day.

Newness of the Education Methodology

Students in Tanzania are not used to being taught this way. Although the students appreciated the respect they were given, some were unsure about giving others such respect. A significant group of the Mwanza class felt it was dangerous to let parishioners or even church leadership study the Bible on their own; people might come to a conclusion different from you as the pastor and then oppose you. Some felt that parishioners must be less educated than the pastor and remain dependent upon him to tell them what is right.

Local culture emphasizes listening to and obeying those in authority over you – parents, husbands, pastors, elders, political leaders, God, etc. A frequently repeated, ineffective announcement in our church is “Why are you not coming to the midweek services? This is a command of God and he will give you a tick if you come. How can you

grow without learning?” Almost never is it mentioned in the announcement who will teach on what topic. The local education system emphasizes passive learning using lecture and rote memory out of necessity. For example, the local education system goal is to cram into students the knowledge necessary to pass the tests that will allow a pupil to go on for further education. Primary school classes can have up to 100 students per teacher with few or no books.

Most of these students come to the Bible School with little experience with or encouragement in critical thinking. It was difficult for some of the least educated to grasp the abstract concepts of critical contextualization, culture, and worldview. However, these students were able to contribute, learned about the topic and were exposed to this contextualizing/theologizing/education method. The students (and teachers) with more education and experience with other cultures and languages seemed most capable of thinking critically and grasping the critical contextualization process well enough to use it in leading another group. With a couple exceptions, these were the students and teachers who had a Bible School diploma and either had additional training or had completed secondary school.

Difficulty of the Topic and Lack of Resources Available

There may be more resources available than I found, but I think that lack of resources is a general problem, especially in Swahili. Illness and death are major issues without easy answers in every culture. African witchcraft has had too little good missiological research, writing, or teaching. Andrew Walls (2007) said to Africa's top evangelical educators that he has not seen anything written that tells a pastor what to say to a parishioner who tells him that she is a witch and has killed people. In addition to this,

witchcraft is secretive. It is done in secret. It is discussed constantly but with euphemisms and indirect references, like “there is a hand of a person.” It may not be talked about directly out of fear of attracting the attention of witches, being suspected of being a witch, being accused of witchcraft in court, or being misunderstood by outsiders.

An Action Outcome

I asked Benesta Misana how he evaluated the outcome of the course in Musoma a year and a half after he participated in it. He said the class was effective. The students still continue to talk and learn from it now, a year and a half later. For example, at funerals the students from his church sometimes tell each other, “See, this is what we studied about.”

Benesta reported that the class helped during a recent, serious health crisis. His daughter Flora’s four-year-old, Grace, was very sick. The hospital had difficulty discovering why for several days. Locals were saying that she was bewitched. At least four different people were accused. Many pressured that, since the hospital had failed, Grace should be taken out to a local healer’s to deal with the witchcraft.

Grace’s father, Paul’s, family said our side bewitched Grace. My daughter died in the village long ago when I was off ministering in Shinyanga. At the time, some said it was the wife of my brother who did this because the child played there. This other family remembers that. And my sister-in-law who they said this about, she is in our church.

My brother’s sisters and other relatives said, “We told her [Flora] not to be married there, because they are witches.” When my son-in-law, Paul was still small, his father pushed out his wife for killing their child with witchcraft. His father’s three remaining wives raised him. When Paul became a man, he got saved. He continued in the church and married my daughter. After 3 months he went and returned his mother from her home area to his house. When this illness took place, my relatives blamed his mother, “She killed her child, now she is doing it again to her grandchild.”

When they talked about this, my daughter Flora started to be afraid and forgot her Christianity. My wife and I encouraged her, but her thoughts had moved. So we tried to encourage Paul and Flora and said, “Leave this and trust Jesus. Let the hospital do their work.” Paul and his family wanted to take Grace out of the hospital and bring her to a local healer. They even brought local medicine into the hospital to give her. When my wife visited, she saw this medicine and asked Flora about it. Then she threw it in the toilet. Since, among all the relatives, only we contributed to the cost of the hospital treatment, Paul and Flora listened to us and did not take her out of the hospital.

[The hospital finally diagnosed poisoning.] Grace was scheduled to have an operation. Her stomach was swollen, hard, full of blood. [Delays and mismanagement delayed the operation several days until it never happened.]

Finally Grace was healed and everyone has changed their tune and said that “Truly, God is able.” Therefore the students who were in the class said, “You see the importance of this class? This is something that we haven’t just heard about but is something that is happening right here. If they had not followed through and this child had died, there would have been a fight between these families.”

The class helped me in this situation, because it made me doubt what people say. In the class discussions I noticed that everyone had heard many things, but no one had seen them. But, because they had heard many times, they said, “It is possible.” So when people began saying Grace was bewitched by this person or that, I said, “If no one has seen it, let’s forget it and just trust Jesus.” What helped this situation was my wife and I’s stand. Only the two of us stood.

So these things need lots of research. One of your students even called while I was here in Mwanza and said, “Her (Grace’s) condition is bad. Why don’t we take her out of the hospital?” I said, “Didn’t you take the research [critical contextualization] class?” He hung up.

Another student who saw Grace before and after said, “If someone is healed from a miracle, it is this one.” So they saw it. They saw that God is great.

So the class was important because it helps you know where to stand when there is trouble. The problem is if you start to stagger, there are many who will take you away.

If they had taken Grace out of the hospital, she would have died because she did not eat for two weeks. The IV helped her so much. So they were surprised that finally she recovered.

So I think we need to keep teaching this class to each round of students. I think we can teach it now that we have seen it.

Possible Corrections

The critical contextualization process would be more effective were it taught over a longer period of time in order to give teacher and students more time to process and prepare. This would allow for more interviews, reading, and critical contextualization assignments to be required and completed along the way. Students could even practice leading the process in small groups or with the whole class. Repeating the class again to new groups of students should also help the leaders of the class to improve the process. Having the students read contrasting case studies with contrasting Christian perspectives might help students see their own worldview from the outside (provided they truly consider rather than simply reject the other perspective). This might work better with students who have had more exposure to other perspectives through education, moving, life experience, etc. Because I have completed this foundational research and have greater understanding, I could narrow the question more to witchcraft and give more emphasis to analyzing the ontology and teaching skills for the students responding missiologically and leading critical contextualization processes themselves.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings

Following is a summary of the findings related to the original two part research problem and the sub-research questions.

Research Problem

This research (1) secured detailed information on discourses and practices during selected episodes involving illness and/or death in Northwestern Tanzania with particular attention to the beliefs involved, and to the social outcomes of these practices and (2) used this material as the basis for a carefully documented critical contextualization and education process in which ministers inductively grappled with the theological and pastoral issues which these cases represent.

Sub-Research Questions:

1. *What do ministers and others in Northwestern Tanzania do and say when someone becomes ill or dies?*

Most often people say “there is the hand of a person.” They seek through divination, discussion and other means to discover who caused it (most often a witch) and then how to deal with the disease and this person. Pentecostal ministers say, “Jesus is more powerful so we should trust him and not fear.”

2. *What beliefs are reflected in these discourses and practices?*

2.1. How do people define a misfortune, choose an explanation system, diagnose, apply a remedy, and evaluate the process after success or failure of the remedy?

My informants primarily chose between local/neo-traditional, Pentecostal Christian, and biomedical explanation/treatment systems. The local/neo-traditional system has had the longest and greatest impact on local worldviews.

Both local healers and Pentecostal ministers treat interpersonal/spiritual causes of illness with rituals, prayers, words (and sometimes objects) of power, and dealing with spirits. They also emphasize persevering in trust and following the rules stipulated by an ancestor or by Jesus. There are also significant differences. For example, while local healers see spirits as possibly good or bad and conduct rituals to appease them, Pentecostal ministers understand all of these spirits to be demonic. Therefore they cast them out in the name of Jesus and refuse to negotiate with them.

People often argue about how a death or healing should be evaluated. Biomedicine points to things. Local healers point to witches and ancestors or other spirits. Pentecostals point to Jesus' power. Each system attempts to explain away or minimize the power of the other systems. Sometimes people convert from one belief to another or adopt a few of the other system's beliefs into their system.

2.2. How are various interpersonal, moral, and biomedical causal ontologies used? How are relationships with visible and invisible beings (relatives, neighbors, ancestors, spirits, witches, God) and objects (germs, parasites, cells, poison, powers) understood to relate to illness and death?

Most people in Northwestern Tanzania understand that "witches" cause almost all illness and death. "Witches" use invisible means but are visible people who are in

significant relationship to the ill person. A visible person can also cause illness through the invisible means of poison/*dawa*, bad luck or curses. Spirits such as ancestors, *majini*, demons (who are present but invisible beings) may also cause illness or death or remove their protection. They do this because the afflicted person has broken their taboo, or they want to motivate the person toward a particular action. All of this uses interpersonal causal ontology.

Northwestern Tanzanians usually understand moral and biomedical causal ontologies as secondary. “Your failure allowed her to make you sick”: The ill person sinned, broke a taboo, or offended someone, and as a result an ancestor, spirit, or God caused his/her illness or removed his/her spiritual protection so that a witch or spirit could cause the illness. “She used it”: An object or accident may be the means, but ultimately someone is responsible. “Who sent the mosquito with the malaria parasite and prevented treatment from being effective so that my child died?”

Where does each system look for causes and cures? The local/neo-traditional explanation and treatment system focuses on relationships with present “witches,” but invisible witchcraft and sometimes ancestors or spirits. The Pentecostal Christian system says that the Creator through Jesus and the Holy Spirit is powerfully present to heal and protect Jesus’ followers from “witches,” demons, Satan, and sickness. They also broaden the worldview to say that not all deaths are caused by witchcraft. God’s will, sin, and biomedical causes also play a role in many deaths. The biomedical system uses a mechanical analogy to focus on visible objects like parasites, bacteria, viruses, and medicines. Cures or protection come primarily from ancestors (local system), Jesus (Christian system), and chemicals and procedures (biomedical system) sometimes assisted by their respective experts: local healer, pastor, doctor. In the following chart, the capitalized words are the primary focus of

diagnosis and treatment in each system. Items in other boxes are secondary and supportive to the primary area of focus whether interpersonal, moral, or biomedical:

Cause of sickness	Local System	Pentecostal System	Biomedical System
Interpersonal “She made you sick”	WITCHES, ancestors	Powers of darkness: SATAN/DEMONS [may be disguised as ancestors or <i>majini</i>] Witches God	
Moral “You made you sick”	Offense against an ancestor or witch (or possibly normal person who gets help to curse you from an expert)	Sin angers God or allows powers of darkness [In the Bible and in preaching sin is primary, but not in most individual stories I heard.]	Lifestyle choices: not using mosquito net or pure water, smoking, etc.
Biomedical “It made you sick”	<i>Dawa</i> , poison or object used by a witch or other person	Biomedical causes acknowledged and treated, but less important	“GERMS”: parasites, bacteria, viruses, cancer cells, etc.

2.3. *How are beliefs related to values and morals in these discourses and practices?*

Northwestern Tanzanians understand a “witch” to be entirely evil and therefore to cause illness and death. The failure or sin of the ill person may open them up to this evil but is not the primary cause of the illness. Pentecostal Christians see Satan (helped by demons), together with sin, as the primary cause of illness and death.

Blessings or wealth also primarily have a spiritual source (ancestors for neo-traditionalists and Jesus for Pentecostals). Rituals such as being prophesied over, prayed for, or sacrificing can release wealth provided that the proper rules and stipulations continue to be followed. Witchcraft suspicions often arise with disputes over property, inheritance and envy.

Westerners see wealth and illness as having mechanical and visible sources. Biomedical causes and treatments of illness have little moral content, except that Western biomedical believers feel a moral imperative for everyone to receive treatment.

2.4. How are beliefs related to feelings in these discourses and practices?

Northwestern Tanzanians live with considerable fear of witchcraft -- the illness and death caused by it, and the envy, anger, and hatred of others which produce it.

2.5. How are beliefs changed through experiences of suffering (e.g. conversion, reversion, or spiritual growth)? How is suffering experienced differently as a result of various beliefs?

Most Tanzanian Pentecostals initially convert to seek healing or protection from witches. People also convert to Islam after being afflicted by *majini* and going to a Muslim healer who gives them Muslim practices and rituals to follow in order to appease the *majini*. Likewise, others follow neo-traditional practices to appease or seek protection from ancestors.

Pentecostal Christians say that they experience suffering somewhat differently than others. They claim freedom from fear through trusting in the present and greater power of Jesus who heals now and gives eternal life after death. However, most grow to trust Jesus and fear God alone through a process that includes many experiences and much teaching. Those who experience the power of Jesus themselves persevere as Pentecostals more than those who do not.

3. What social outcomes result from these practices and discourse?

3.1. How do various communities (families, neighborhoods, and religious communities like churches) respond to illness and death?

3.2. *How do people treat those people who may be suspected of causing illness or death (especially through means such as witchcraft or curses)?*

Neighbors, churches, and extended families spend considerable time and expense to help those who are sick and, especially, to properly bury the dead and comfort the remaining relatives. This can be motivated by love or by fear of harm: the ancestor might be displeased; the community might not help someone who does not help others; anyone who does not mourn with others can be suspected of causing the death.

People avoid, accuse, shun, banish, beat, and kill those who are suspected of witchcraft. The less harsh measures occur very frequently; nonetheless, there are still thousands of suspected “witches” who are killed. Those beaten or killed are most often postmenopausal women. Those without close male relatives like sons or husbands who will defend them live in the greatest danger.

People understand that family members are most able and likely to bewitch them. Neighbors or others with whom one has close relationship are the next most likely to bewitch them. Therefore, suspecting, avoiding, accusing, or shunning suspected “witches” cuts off relationships within extended families and between neighbors who would normally help each other.

When a person is sick or dies, most people consult one of the many local healers/diviners. Healers give treatment and protection and answer people’s burning question of “who caused this?” Therefore they are key in identifying witches. Sungu-sungu authorities identify, control, and punish witches, thieves, and others more effectively than the government in the opinion of most Sukuma. Therefore the government allows but also tries to control the Sungu-sungu.

Sometimes, fearless trust in Jesus allows Pentecostals to restore relationships broken by witchcraft suspicion. Sometimes, fear causes them to passively follow the community in suspecting and even shunning a neighbor or relative. When a suspected “witch” joins the church, she is never fully trusted even by some fellow Christians so their relationships remain ambivalent. Most Northwestern Tanzanians have more faith that a witch can turn into a hyena or an owl than that a witch can become a new creature in Christ.

4. What happens during a formal inductive process of critical contextualization?

The critical contextualization and education process related to illness and death stimulated much intense, insightful discussion and open sharing. Everyone contributed something and the students talked more than John and I did as teachers/facilitators. Discussion of the phenomenology took most of the time.

4.1. What areas of agreement and disagreement emerge in the discourse?

We all agreed that physical entities like parasites and bacteria as well as spiritual entities like demons cause illness and death. We all agreed that Jesus is more powerful and does heal. Students disagreed among themselves about whether witchcraft or something else caused particular cases, whether pastors should use local medicines, and how much local healers divine accurately and treat effectively. Students all believed that witches cause illness and death while I remained skeptical but open to learn.

4.2. What characteristics of a Christian response are mentioned?

For Pentecostal Christians the powers of darkness, like Satan, demons, and witches, do cause illness and death. They have heard about many, and most have experienced, attacks by witches. The relationship with a powerful, present Jesus brings them protection from these powers, healing, and hope in death. In nearly every service, they sing

“There is no God like you” to affirm that in the midst of many powers, Jesus has unparalleled power.

Pentecostal ministers accept some local assumptions but also challenge the local worldview. They have difficulty convincing people that they only need to go to Jesus for protection and healing and that Jesus can even convert “witches.” They reject local healers as either tricksters or empowered by demons. Biomedical treatment is acceptable. They call all spirits “demons”, whether ancestors, *majini* or other. They cast them out with the authority of Jesus rather than negotiate with them for peace, health, wealth, or divination powers. They claim that witchcraft does not cause all deaths, that biomedical reasons can be sufficient. Rather than search for “the hand of a person” in a death, they affirm that “this is the plan of God.”

They find it difficult when Jesus does not heal everyone they pray for, including themselves or their children. The ministers came to a greater appreciation during the class of the need to show that faith in Jesus brings perseverance and victory even when sickness and death remain.

4.3. Is there any evidence of influence from educational level, ethnicity, age, gender, denomination, or location (rural/urban)?

We led discussions in three diploma-level Swahili classes. In Musoma, a mix of many ethnic groups brought multiple explanation and treatment issues from their contexts, including witchcraft. In Mwanza (focused on the Sukuma) and Ngara (focused on the Hangaza), witchcraft dominated the discussion. Because of those experiences, I intentionally focused the later critical contextualization discussions on witchcraft and found great interest

both in the degree-level English course held in Kigoma with students from around Tanzania and in the two afternoon discussions in Geita churches.

Discussion participants with higher levels of education or more urban settings generally seemed more able to use critical thinking to compare viewpoints in their discussions and writing, but they all believed in witchcraft.¹ EAGT students were more adamant that any traditional medicine must be avoided, because it has demonic origins. Other teachers and students were open to using some herbal medicine without consulting a healer.

4.4. What sources of authority are appealed to? How is Scripture used?

People used “what everyone knows” and stories from others as well as their direct experience as evidence for their viewpoint. Everyone approached Scripture through direct and vicarious experiences and worldview. For example, references to witchcraft in Scripture proved its existence for students, while I continued to doubt this and demand proof of a witch killing someone or making them ill from Scripture.

4.5. What evidences of change occur during the process?

Ministers said they understood better the challenge that illness, death, and witchcraft pose to their people. They said they learned the importance of researching and doing critical contextualization. A few led discussions about witchcraft with others in their

¹The more educated and urbanized also seemed to talk a bit more, but this may have been more due to greater fluency in the classroom language of Swahili or English. Some of the women students from the village also talked a bit less and elders’ comments were given greater respect, but these traits are common to any local discussion. The parishioners discussed less than the students. This may have resulted from a more village setting and lower educational levels and Swahili fluency, but it is more likely that a couple hours did not provide enough time for most people to get to know me and embrace the new practice of them talking from the church benches and not just listening to a sermon.

home areas. A few reported becoming more firm in trusting Jesus and biomedicine and more suspicious of those suspecting witchcraft when faced with a serious illness.

4.6. How do ministers evaluate the process after it is completed?

Participants really enjoyed and hoped for more of both the teaching method and this topic. They did wish that more conclusions had been drawn about what was truly real and how to help people. In my own evaluation, better preparation on everyone's part, teaching over a more extended time frame, more resources from broader perspectives, and more time on the ontological reality and missiological response steps could help the class to come to more conclusions and to make some deeper shifts.

Research Design

I designed this research to fit my situation. The flexibility and breadth of the questions and types of respondents fit the long time and broad relationships that I had. In another situation with more focused time constraints, the research problem, methodology, and sample of people may need to be more focused.

Evaluation

The research design fit my situation well. It allowed me to use my strengths (13 years of building relationships and language, culture, teaching competence, encouragement from supervisors) to counter my weaknesses (being an outsider researching part-time without research funds or expert research assistants). The design helped me move progressively closer to understanding the emic perspective of these ministers.

Many of the opportunities and difficulties came in the execution of the methodology. Time presented challenges and opportunities. Unfortunately, I (and research

assistants and transcribers) did this research part-time along with ministry. Fortunately, because I did it over more than two and a half years in the context where I had ministered and was ministering, I could make up for this and find additional opportunities. Participant observation opportunities came naturally out of my relationships. I was able to interview, in a critical contextualization focus group or individually, over 100 ministers (plus many non-ministers) for more than 130 hours. Those ministers in the critical contextualization groups brought more than 150 stories of sickness and death from their own personal experiences. Additionally, I was able to follow up with a good number of those I interviewed some months later. With a few I interacted dozens of time about these issues. The iterative design allowed me to continue to discover, confirm, focus, and flesh out with other interviews, key informants and participant observation.

For example, I was able to not only stay briefly in the “M” village in Geita, but I also heard from others coming from that village throughout the whole research process. I had the opportunity to interview the pastor four different times over more than a year. Each time there was more openness on his part and more understanding on my part.

The critical contextualization classes were too intensive at 6 hours per day to check all the recordings or take field notes as detailed and immediate as I would have preferred. Some of the recordings were not clear, but I did not know until later when the transcribers complained. Transcriptions came very slowly, because people were transcribing part-time so that other parts of their lives interrupted their work. I sent the first transcriber to school to learn to use a computer. He was still giving me materials up until to my last few days in Tanzania. The professional transcribers that I eventually added took nearly a year to finish instead of the two months they promised.

Minimal feedback from my research committee made the process more difficult, but it allowed flexibility to adapt to the opportunities that came up. As we left the proposal hearing, Paul Hiebert told me, “This is a proposal, not a contract. Follow where the Spirit leads you.” This allowed me to respond to opportunities that arose – for example, the request from the local LVCC leaders to do the critical contextualization class/focus group in four different locations with different ethnic groups, rather than only one group focused on the Sukuma, as I originally proposed.

Recommended Changes

A more narrowly focused research question would be easier to research. My research problem had two parts, either one of which would be sufficient for a dissertation. Likewise, looking broadly on illness and death and the process of treating it allowed witchcraft to emerge in relationship to other aspects, but focusing more narrowly on witchcraft and witchcraft accusations would have been sufficient for one dissertation. My readers encouraged me that the second part of the question was the most important, but I needed the background understanding from the first question in order to do a good job on the second question. Now I am ready to do more research and critical contextualization research in answering the second question. Before the first critical contextualization class, it would have been helpful to have done more interviews and more research on the ontological questions. The classes would be better spread out over a whole semester. The research could be done with one set of students, as I had originally planned, instead of four sets of students and two churches.

Recommendations for Further Research on the Topic

Missiologial, Biblical, theological, anthropological, psychological, economic, and medical researchers need to do more research on witchcraft and witchcraft accusations in Africa. These research disciplines need to be brought together into a broader, interdisciplinary, multicultural conversation. To use Hiebert's analogy, we need multiple kinds of maps; we need structural, electrical, and plumbing blueprints that fit together. We need more research done by Africans. The conversation must directly and indirectly listen to the voices of those with local knowledge, even if they do not have the literacy, international languages, or degrees often associated with expertise.

Hopes for improving life for millions in Northwestern Tanzania and many other places in Africa and the world will be frustrated without an understanding of witchcraft dynamics. Psychological and grief research would expand its horizons and insights by taking this seriously. Ashforth (2005) shows the critical importance of witchcraft in political science research. Like many of my informants, Nyaga (2007) says that witchcraft beliefs retard development in Northwestern Tanzania. Economics researchers need to research the ways in which economic realities, patterns and transformations are influenced by and contribute to beliefs, discourses, feelings, values, and actions related to witchcraft.

Anthropologists have done a good deal of very interesting research on African witchcraft, but they have failed to help those who live in fear of being bewitched or being killed as a witch. Medicine has done much prescriptive, action research on illness, but too much has been in the lab with microbes with too little connection to people's motivations and

understandings.² Agreeing with Tanzanian perspectives, some research has shown powerful influences on health from loving relationships, faith in the treatment, and even prayer. Yet most biomedical researchers respond by controlling these out of studies so they can be ignored rather than make them the focus of research so they can be used to heal.

A book I found at the end of my writing broadens the conversation in needed directions: Ter Haar claims that *Imagining evil: Witchcraft beliefs and accusations in Africa* (2007) fills a gap in the academic literature on witchcraft because it is written primarily by Africans scholars living and working in Africa, addresses the spiritual/religious dimension, and combines the scholarly with . . .

the painful knowledge of the human suffering caused by witchcraft accusations. The personal tragedies that afflict the lives of those who fall victim to witchcraft accusations is almost never discussed in the academic literature on witchcraft, which is in danger of taking an excessively sociological approach at the expense of the moral and ethical dimensions involved. (3)

Transformational learning is increasingly popular in educational research. Hiebert's method addresses some of the critiques of Mezirow and provides an alternate approach with a similar objective. Critical contextualization should be tested with some good educational methods in conversation with Mezirow. For example, research could test knowledge, behavior, values, and feelings before and after a critical contextualization process related to witchcraft or other crucial topics.

In general, theological and Biblical scholars should consider doing a critical contextualization process in the context in which they want to write in order to discover what

²One step in the right direction locally: Medical anthropologist Nicola Desmond is completing a dissertation on local perceptions of risk in a peri-urban community and a rural village outside Mwanza. Despite her supervisors' reluctance, informants pushed

the phenomenological issues are that need ontological answers from Scripture. Specifically, Biblical scholars need to research in depth the passages that refer to witchcraft or similar issues while keeping in mind the African context, questions, and phenomenological realities. To what extent do the concepts of “witch” and “witchcraft” overlap between various African and Biblical cultures? For example, what exactly is condemned in Deut 18:9-14? What evidence did the Israelites use to identify witches before they killed them (Exod 22:18)? Are the women in Ezek 13:17-23 killing innocent people through witchcraft or producing accusations of witchcraft through divination that result in attacks?

Historians can help us understand how European Christians contextualized the gospel in relationship to illness, death, healing, and witchcraft. What positive insights did they have and what mistakes did they make? How did they respond to beliefs about, accusations of, and killings of suspected witches? What caused increases and decreases in these? This would be more relevant to African churches than more Church history research and writing on historical debates about transubstantiation, for example.³

More missiological research needs to be done on sickness, death, healing and witchcraft, especially in Africa and by Africans. Health (plus provision and progeny), including protection against witchcraft, is core to much African religion. Jesus’ and the

her to study witchcraft as a very important risk.

³Secular historians have done extensive research in this area as summarized by Midelfort (2008). Gaskill (2005) writes a fascinating account of interrogations of 300 and deaths of a hundred witches in England in 1645-1647. He blames it on civil war, material insecurity, religion and superstition. “The witchfinders resembled most puritans, believers with little breadth of mind but considerable depth of spirit” (285). Then he finds parallels in witchhunts across Africa and India including this, “the Ministry of Home Affairs in Tanzania estimates that as many as 5,000 were murdered there between 1994 and 1998” (285). Church historians have also investigated this. What has been learned that can help local pastors in

disciples' ministries included much healing and combating evil beings. Healing has been crucial to Christianity conquering the continent, but the theology for it is mostly done on the crusade platform instead of the colleges. Missions have expended great amounts of physical and personnel resources on medical care but too often specialized away from integrating it with spiritual, psychological and social care. A good, contextualized theology and practice in these areas is therefore critical and yet underdeveloped. Evangelicals complain about mixed living (like Christians consulting local healers) and mixed-up theology (like "health and wealth" extremes). But have we offered a more acceptable, truer, and more powerful alternative which truly appreciates the interconnectedness of spiritual, physical, psychological, and social? Jesus and the apostles did:

When Jesus had called the Twelve together he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick (Luke 9:1, 2).

If researchers use a similar research problem in other contexts they will likely discover fascinating comparisons. For example, to what extent do Americans choose between explanation systems, or has the biomedical system become so dominant that people feel they have no choice? What are the implications of that economically, politically, ethically, and Biblically? What social outcomes result from extending the dying process and from our burial practices? Has the medical system (symbolized by a bronze snake on a pole) moved from being a means for God to heal (Num 21:4-9) to an idol that we trust for healing (2 Kgs 18:3, 4)? What do killings of suspected witches among the Aguaruna of Peru and the Sukuma of Tanzania have in common? What differences? How have the churches in those contexts responded to the killings and related beliefs and practices? What can they learn from each

other? How do Christians across Africa (in various contexts: urban, rural, nomadic) contextualize in response to illness, death, healing, witchcraft, or sorcery? I hope to do similar critical contextualization courses and do/encourage similar research with students from across Africa at Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology. Ideally, other African researchers will also pursue these topics, and consultations and joint publications can address it from the congregational level to the graduate school level.

Missiological researchers should continue using critical contextualization as a methodology. If many dissertations and research projects use it, comparative research can be done. Within Northwestern Tanzania, there were many topics touched upon in this initial critical contextualization process that Bible schools, seminars, and churches could pursue, including funeral customs, prosperity, ancestors, music, widows, etc. Ideally, people will learn, modify and use this method to scratch many significant itches. The critical contextualization process needs to take place at the local Bible school and local church levels, though it needs to be led by someone who can think critically. This should be connected with critical contextualization processes and research at the higher levels, where skills in thinking critically and participation across more cultures can enhance the process. Hopefully, some mechanisms for summarizing, recording, and distributing conclusions can be found so that discussions in various places at various levels can be communicated to those in other levels and places within Africa and beyond.

For example, written materials could be prepared and training done for facilitators/researchers in Nairobi related to sickness and death or witchcraft or another topic arising from the grass roots. Those trained would go to various places on the continent (regional centers like Mwanza, as well as capitals) and train facilitators who would lead a

critical contextualization process over several days among groups of church leaders from various denominations. Notes from these critical contextualization processes (possibly supported by audio recording) would be compiled and summarized by the facilitator and a key participant and sent ahead of them to a consultation. Before the consultation, they and key academic researchers and wise leaders would read a summary of these notes. Then a consultation would be held to discuss the findings, responses from leaders, and next steps to missiologically- and theologically-informed ministry. Finally, organizers would give a summary of this to all who participated in the grassroots critical contextualization process, as well as writing an academic book and proposals for further research and action.

Implications and Recommendations for Action

Findings from the various kinds of research recommended above must result in action and instruction. Is the gospel “scratching where people are itching” in Northwestern Tanzania? If the church is going to be more than the proverbial mile wide and inch deep, she must address the deep itch. A local proverb says, “If you want to understand life, look in the grave.” Maybe theology needs to look at the dismembered body of the dead “witch” as one place to start theologizing.

One way to answer the call for theological education and ministers’ training to be contextualized is to use critical contextualization as a method for designing curricula and texts, as well as for teaching. We too often simply transport or translate texts, curricula and syllabi written in the West. So we require multiple courses on systematic theology and yet barely mention witchcraft, healing, or material blessing, because it is not in the texts.

Billions of dollars are now being spent to combat AIDS and other diseases in Africa using almost exclusively a biomedical model. I doubt this effort can be very effective, unless it seriously engages local knowledge, feelings, values, and practices. If people believe biomedicine to be ineffective, can it be effective? If biomedicine does not address felt needs and deep questions, people will likely continue to go elsewhere for answers. Northwestern Tanzanians need a critically contextualized healing approach that understands local beliefs and practices and responds to their integrated concerns with an integrated spiritual, social, cultural, psychological, and biomedical approach to illness.

Local healers may sometimes do this, but I agree with my informants, that they often cause more harm than good by delaying treatment and accusing “witches.” Local pastors could be excellent partners for those trying to improve health. Unlike local healers, they are not competing with biomedicine. They see themselves as more in partnership with biomedicine, although (like other locals) they see biomedicine as incomplete. Many rural Tanzanians find them more available, inexpensive, and trusted than medical personnel.

Medical researchers and practitioners need to listen to local pastors through research, consultations, and relationship building. Local pastors should receive initial and ongoing training in health. This training should include a contextualized theology that grapples with questions like witchcraft. It should also include preventative medicine, public health, basic diagnostics, and methods of referral, advocacy and partnership with medical personnel. Local health personnel should also receive theological training related to illness, witchcraft, etc. Ideally, a listening, learning, and serving partnership should be developed at every level and between levels from Bugando to the bush. We need to combine the medical knowledge at Bugando and the National Institute of Medical Research with high level

theological thinking and the spiritual and social knowledge in the village church and clinic. Then we need to act in complementary ways in local communities. Such actions would be money well spent. Probably better spent than money on another medical machine that only works when there is electricity.⁴ Similar complimentary and critical contextualization approaches could make a significant impact on other areas of development also.⁵

Closing Comments

Research is listening. This ethnographic research required disciplined listening and observing through interviews, focus groups, and participant observation followed by re-listening through listening to recordings, transcribing, reading, analyzing, and interviews with key informants. As I listened carefully to ordinary human stories of illness, death, healing, and social interaction, I caught many glimpses of local beliefs, feelings, values and worldview. I began to hear repetitions of things that surprised me - about witches, zombies, the zombie village of Gamboshi, catching bad luck someone washed off on the path, *Lutego*, spirits, ancestors, *majini*, divination, healing, ostracism, arguments, beatings, night time visits, cutting people with machetes, etc. In the critical contextualization focus

⁴Catholic Churches in Zambia have had success reducing violence through local seminars about accusations and persecutions of suspected witches. Representatives from all the local churches, police force, judiciary, and political administration engaged in discussions. Witch-finding diviners' tricks were re-enacted and exposed. Discussions about obstacles produced action. For example, churches began providing transport to police, initiating cases against witch-hunters, and helping victims write testimonies (Hinfelaar 2007:239–242).

⁵For example, Nyaga finds that witchcraft beliefs hinder socio-economic development among the Kwaya of Musoma rural district (Benesta's ethnic group). He suggests interaction with Tanzanians from other areas through sensitization and awareness seminars and training Kwaya in more distant places (2007, 266).

groups, ministers sought and then traded these stories. Although less surprising for them, they learned new things about people with whom they live.

As we began to analyze these stories together from a Biblical perspective, I began to see how they understand the Bible and they began to glimpse how I understand the Bible. The Bible had shaped their lives, especially with the message that Jesus is more powerful than witches, spirits, illness, and death. In turn, they shape others' lives as well. They expressed some frustration with how little change takes place. How could they help people to trust Jesus even when confronting illness and death instead of living in fear and turning to healers? There were other hard questions that remained for which we found few easy answers. Could any local medicine be used? How should Christians respond to those known by the community as witches? I added questions: Do witches really exist? How do you know they are witches?

As we searched for answers we turned to listen to Scriptures, almost all of which I have never heard from a pulpit in America, especially not with these emphases. I began to hear more deeply. In preaching, I began to tell the stories of Balaam and Ruth, comparing and contrasting with local stories as I sought to help people deal with these issues.

If we are going to understand truth, we must not be like the postmodernist blind men who simply argued about their own experience of the elephant. We must listen and enter in to others experience. We must allow ourselves to be led to a different part of the elephant and humbly lead others to what we have discovered. "Help me to feel reality, scripture, and God from your perspective."

Stories are one of the best ways to enter another's experience. Synchronic analysis with computer software helped me to pull together themes from various stories and

discover multiple instances of *Lutego* for example and hear the common themes and idiosyncratic elements of each story. However, I experienced frustration in presenting this information outside the context of the story. Dissecting allows one to compare and contrast hearts but only after killing something living and pulling it out of a circulatory system and body. Likewise, synchronic analysis and presentation helps, but it requires killing the living story by ripping quotations out of their context. In the same way, systematic theology helps, but it requires pulling things out of context. The heart might need examination and repair, but then it should be sewn back into the chest to allow for an impactful, living story.

Scripture encourages listening to others (e.g., Prov 17:27-28; 18:2, 13, 15; 19:2) and is central to loving our neighbor and God, to learning and to doing ministry.⁶ But we must do move beyond listening to each other.⁷ Critical contextualization, variations of the *examen* of Ignatian spirituality, and adult education models like the rail fence all emphasize the importance of listening to what God is saying in my/our life, followed by

⁶Don Larson suggested that new missionaries adopt the role of learner (observer/listener), after three months add that of trader, and three months later add a role of story-teller (not preaching or lecturing, but telling the stories of God's action in Scripture, church history and personally). When they adopt new roles, the new roles should be added to, rather than taking the place of the original roles (1981, 444-451).

⁷Kunhiyop says,
Confessions, stories and experiences of witchcraft are a clear demonstration of what a person believes according to his cultural belief. Many times the Bible is used as a proof text for our already established opinions and beliefs. Certainly our culturally postulated reality of witchcraft needs to be adjusted to and addressed pastorally with seriousness, sensitivity and respect. The Bible properly interpreted would not support the kind of doctrines of demons, evil spirits and witchcraft which are supported nursed and propagated by our traditional beliefs and transmitted through stories, confessions and experiences. (2002, 137)

discernment of what is really God and completed by action that transforms our stories. One conversation emphasized to me the need for this process in Northwestern Tanzania:

Me - *“Faith comes by hearing” – what do people hear here? Do they hear stories about witchcraft every week?*

Benesta - In our village they hear them every day.

Me - *How much do they hear the stories of the Bible, even in our churches?”*

Kunhiyop affirms this, “As long as Christians have more stories (true or false) of witchcraft, they will always feel that witchcraft has power over the child of God” (2002, 139).

People need to hear the stories, songs, proverbs, poems, commands, and letters of Scripture. Scripture itself identifies this need:

“Hear . . . these commandments . . . be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them . . . tie them . . . write them . . . Fear Yahweh your God, serve him only . . . Do not follow other gods, the gods of the people around you . . . When your son asks . . . tell him [the stories of God’s saving action and miracles for us] . . . Yahweh commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear Yahweh our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive” (Deut 6:4-24)

A major part of God’s revelation in Scripture is acting out and telling stories. Parents and pastors need to be telling those stories and connecting them with current stories of God’s work. A three-hour church service may only have a few verses read the entire time. If the multiple choir songs tell a Bible story, people will remember it. Most preachers in Northwestern Tanzania know how to tell stories well, but only the best ones listen well and then tell the Bible stories well and accurately. Too many pull a few scattered verses out of context (who taught them that?) and then repeat old points and tell other stories that might relate to that (including stories of the power of witchcraft or diviners). The best preachers I have heard in Tanzania make the Bible story come alive and connect it with appropriate local

stories and local needs. The very best preachers additionally use good hermeneutics to listen well to the Biblical authors.⁸ Most Christians do not read the Bible enough themselves.

Marco had a wealth of stories about illness, death and witchcraft. He holds a diploma in Biblical studies. He is a church elder and occasional Bible school teacher. But he admitted that he has never read the entire Bible. We need to find ways for people to repeatedly listen to Scripture and its stories.⁹

Jesus' incarnation is key to understanding Scripture and our suffering. His story with its suffering can provide meaning to the suffering in our story. Hiebert talks about

⁸Local pastors need to be taught good hermeneutics so that they can understand Biblical stories from within their context. The discipline of hermeneutics is important in order to accurately hear. Harriet Hill's (2007) research shows that use of local terms in Bible translations allows the terms to be transformed. It is a positive development that people tend to match local concepts and Biblical concepts. However things that are not actually shared need to be distinguished. In the West African group that Hill is studying, the word for "witchcraft" was used to translate the devil and the word's meaning has been transformed through how it is used in the Bible. A similar local term was not used for "angels" or "demons." As a result, the similar local term/concept continues to be used in ways that are not transformed by Scripture. Therefore local people assume that Scripture has nothing to say about this term or the reality it refers to.

In Tanzania, the Biblical term for "witch" may be assumed to share more than it does with local beliefs, but at least people do have words with which to discuss witchcraft Biblically. Therefore, Tanzanian Pentecostals and many others believe that the Bible does address their concerns.

⁹This is true in the West as well where our children now know and can quote the stories sold to them on TV, movies, and marketing far more than Bible stories. The elders' stories may be replaced by TV in Africa as these influences increase, but such modernization will not bring true development to the continent's children.

Although we could have been more engaged with our context, I am thankful for growing up in a home where we read the Bible individually and together; we discussed it's application; we heard stories from visitors and those we visited about what God was doing in their lives; we heard the Word sung, taught, and testified to in five church gatherings a week.

of the importance for a single individual to make sense of different experiences in his/her life by placing them in a narrative/story; however, an individual story needs to be put into a larger story of a family and a people and, ultimately, of a God.¹⁰ He claims that meaning (personal to cosmic) is most often found in these stories rather than in synchronic analysis (Hiebert, Shaw, and Tienou 1999, 95-102).¹¹

Christians need to mature beyond the foundation of trusting God to supply personal needs. Christians in Tanzania and America focus too much on getting God to do their will (including giving them health, protection, and provision), whether it is through fasting, prayer, tithing, or going to church. They spend too little time listening to God in order to know and obey his will.

“The first act of mission is to listen” (Tienou 2000 quoted by Ngaruiya 2008, 60). When we were introduced to our first culture, we spent a year listening as participant observers before we said very much. Once we learned to talk we were full of questions,

¹⁰To adapt the rail fence analogy to that of a railroad track, ordinary events like illnesses are like so many meaningless rocks until connected by a story line like a rail. The single rail of my story means little until it is connected to the stories of those who have gone before me and those coming after me. If I place railroad ties that tie my/our story to the stories of God’s people in scripture and elsewhere, my life and story can stay on track and have meaning and purpose for God to move forward with his purpose and kingdom. If I connect my story to other stories that are not true my actions, meanings, values soon go off track and I can derail God’s purpose in my life or our life.

Brody agrees that meaning attached to experience defines it as suffering or relieves suffering and this meaning usually comes from a story. Patients need the stories that doctors tell to identify a cause, some control, and a community they can trust. This is a large part of the placebo effect (Hauerwas 1990, 113-114).

¹¹A ritual can also pull our suffering into a story - not only our personal story, but the story of our people, Jesus’ story, and ultimately God’s story (Hiebert et al 112-117). Ritual also is where my personal story overlaps with the social, cultural, and cosmic story in

“Why? How?” I have been one of the missionaries blessed with encouraging “parents” who were here before me and were patient with my stumbling language, stupid questions, and silly (and sinful) behaviors. As a result of this research, I am beginning to know how little I know. As I/we listen to stories from scripture, the Spirit, and other saints from around the world, I hope we will move forward in living truer, holier, and more loving.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE IN ENGLISH¹

The goal of this research is to get complete explanations of what people say and do in specific cases where they are sick or bereaved in Mwanza, Tanzania, especially to see what people believe and what the outcomes of these beliefs are for their relationships in society. The purpose of getting these cases is to use these to learn and to find answers to how to teach and help people in problems like these.

Introduction to asking permission to interview a person:

People get sick and die all over the world. Here in Mwanza also these things are normal and the ministers of the church try to help people. We will learn how to help the sick and the bereaved better in an upcoming class. In order to succeed better, we are doing research intended to help us to understand how to respond to these ordinary troubles. Therefore, we seek to understand the histories of people in this area when they experience these types of troubles.

Our teachers seek to understand these things better in order to help us better. Also they are seeking better ways to teach ministers and pastors how to help the sick and the bereaved. They want to write for other Christians and teachers about ways to teach and help people in areas like Mwanza. It is possible they will use part of your history in teaching or writing. However, they will not put your name and people will not know who explained these things.

News of a person:

1. What ethnic group(s) (kabila) are you a member of? _____
Are you able to speak another language? _____ What language? _____
2. Where do you live? In Mwanza? _____ In a town? _____ In a village? _____
How long have you lived there? _____
Where were you born and where were you raised? _____

¹I first piloted a list of questions which John Mwanzalima gave to Bible school students in 2004. He emailed me the seven English responses. I revised these into an interview guide for my dissertation proposal. The English original of this guide was translated into Swahili and then additions and adaptations were made prior to the first critical contextualization class of teachers and students before they started using it. This English version is translated back from that Swahili interview guide which the students used. The Swahili interview guide they used follows in Swahili.

3. What formal schooling have you had?

Primary to standard ____ Secondary to form ____

Do you have any professional or technical training? Which? _____

For how long did you study? _____

What work do you do to support yourself? _____

4. Do you have a religion? Are you a Christian, Muslim, etc.

How long have you been this religion?

What was your first or previous religion?

Explanation of the history of a person who was sick or died:

Please tell me about one or more events where you were involved with someone who was very sick or someone who died. Maybe this was you or someone in your family or church. Tell me as much about the situation as you can. Here are some questions to help you remember, though you do not have to answer all of them:

1. Where and when was this? How old was the person who was sick or who died?

What was your relationship to the person? How were you involved?

How were other people involved? What was the sick person's relationship to them? What was your relationship to the sick person?

2. What was the sequence of events one thing after the other?

3. What did Christians talk about? What did non-Christians talk about?

Why did they say that the person was sick or died? Why did they say this about the person?

When the person recovered or continued to be sick what did people say?

Why did they say this?

What did they say about the person's relationship with his/her family members, neighbors, ancestors, spirits, demons, God, witchcraft, curses, sins, illnesses (like AIDs or malaria or diarrhea), physical causes like poor drinking water, catching germs, or the condition of the air?

4. What did people say should have been done in response to the sickness?

Did people disagree about what should be done or why the person was sick or died?

What types of treatment did they try? Where did they seek help? from the extended family, pastors, local healers, hospital doctors, ancestors, or God?

5. What did people say in the family in response to the sickness?

Did people reach to the point of disagreement on what was suppose to be done or why a person was sick or why a person died?

6. What was the sequence of events when the person died? Up to the burial? After the burial?

What actions or words seemed to help to heal or encourage and what seemed not to?

7. Did people quote traditional or Biblical proverbs, stories, or verses? Which ones? How did they explain these?

Among these, which brought help and comfort or encouragement and which were not useful? Why do you think these brought help?

What did you do to help them?

Did some people become Christians or better Christians or stop being Christians?

8. What has happened to the people involved since this incident began?

Did some people say that someone caused this illness or death? (e.g. as a witch or with a curse). Was there one person or many that were accused?

How did people decide that this person/people caused this?

Did they say the deceased was taken as a zombie? Did they talk about Gamboshi?

How did people relate to or treat the person who was accused? What happened to the accused people? Where is he or where are they now?

9. What emotions did you feel at different times in this process?

What emotions did others express at different times? Did people say or do something that encouraged or discouraged certain emotional expressions?

What did you learn from this situation?

What do you still wonder about?

What questions would you still like to ask God about this situation?

INTERVIEW GUIDE IN SWAHILI AS HANDED OUT

MWONGOZO WA MAHOJIANO.

Lengo la utafiti ni kupata maelezo kwa ujumla ya mambo ambayo watu wanasema na wanafanya mara kadhaa wanapougua au kufiwa katika Mwanza, Tanzania, hasa kuona wanaamini nini na matokeo yake katika uhusiano au jamii yao. Kusudi la kupata haya nikuyatumia katika kujifunza na kutafuta majibu ya maswalia ya jinsi ya kufundisha na kusaidia watu katika shida kama hizo.

Utangulizi wa kuomba kuruhusiwa kuhojiana na mtu:

Watu wanaugua na watu wanakufa katika dunia nzima. Hapa Mwanza pia mambo hayo pia ni ya kawaida na watumishi wa Kanisa wanajaribu kusaidia watu. Tutajifunza jinsi ya kusaidia wagonjwa na waliofiwa vizuri zaidi katika somo ambalo linakuja. Ili tufaulu vizuri zaidi, tunafanya utafiti kuelewa jinsi watu wanavyojaribu kujibu katika shida hizi za kawa ida. Kwa hiyo tunatafuta kuelewa historia za watu hapa wakati wa shida kama hizi.

Walimu wetu wanatafuta kufahamu hilo vizuri zaidi ili watusaidie vizuri zaidi. Pia wanatafuta njia bora zaidi kufundisha watumishi na wachungaji jinsi ya kusaidia wagonjwa na waliofiwa. Wanataka kuandika kwa wakristo na walimu wengine kuhusu njia za kufundisha na kusaidia watu katika eneo kama Mwanza. Inawezekana watatumia sehemu za

historia yako katika mafundisho au maandiko. Lakini hawata weka jina lako na watu hawatajua nani alieleza mambo hayo.

HABARI YA MTU:

1. Wewe ni kabila gani ?
Unaweza kuongea lugha nyingine? Lugha ipi?
2. Unaishi wapi? Mwanza?... mjini?..... kijijini?.....umeishi huko muda gani?.....
Umezaliwa wapi na kulelewa wapi?.....
- 3 .Una elimu gani?
Shule ya msingi hadi darasa la....., shule ya sekondari mpaka kidato cha.....
Una taaluma au ujuzi gani au mafunzo ya aina yoyote
Umesoma kwa muda gani
Unafanya kazi gani inayokuwezesha binafsi.....
4. Una dini? Umekuwa mkristo/muislamu/n.k. kwa muda gani?.....
Dini yako ya awali / ya kwanza ilikuwa ipi ?.....

MAELEZO YA HISTORIA YA MGONGWA AU KIFO:

Tafadhali nieleze tukio moja au zaidi wakati ulipohusika na mgonjwa au mtu aliye-fariki; yawezekana ukawa wewe au mtu mmoja wapo katika familia, majirani, n.k. waweza kueleza uwezavyo jinsi hali ilivyokuwa.(hapa kuna maswali ya kukuwezesha kukumbuka ijapo hutakiwi kujibu yote)

1. Tukio hili lilitokea wapi na lini? Aliyekufa au mgonjwa alikuwa na umri gani?
Ulikuwa na mahusiano gani naye? Ulihusika kwa jinsi gani?
Je, na watu wengine walihusikaje?
Na mgonjwa alikuwa na uhusiano upi na wao? na uhusiano wako na mgonjwa?
2. Kulikuwa na mfululizo wa matukio gani moja baada ya jingine?
3. Wakristo walisemaje juu ya hilo? (ugonjwa / kifo) na wasio wakristo walisemaje pia?
Walisema aliugua/alifariki kwa sababu gain? Kwa nini walisema hivyo juu ya mgonjwa.
Alipopata nafuu (au kuendelea kuugua) walisema nini? Na kwa nini Walisema hivyo?
Je walisemaje juu ya uhusiano wake na jamaa zake, majirani, ukoo na mizimu, mashetani, Mungu, uchawi, laana, dhambi yake, ugonjwa (kama ukimwi, malaria, kuharisha / kipindupindu) kunywa maji machafu, vimelea minyoo au hali ya hewa?
4. Watu walisema nini kingefanyika ili kushugulikia ugonjwa?
Je, watu walibishana ju ya kitu cha kufanya au sababu ya kuuguwa au kufa?
Ni aina gani ya matibabu waliyojaribu? Je walitafuta msaada wapi? Kwa jamaa, wachungaji, matabibu / waganga wa kienyeji, madaktari, mizimu, au Mungu?
5. Watu walisema nini kifamilia katika kukabili ugonjwa?

Je watu walishindwa kuafikiana kuhusu kile kinachotakiwa kufanyika, au kwa nini mtu anaumwa au ni mgonjwa? Au kwa nini mtu mgonjwa amekufa ?

6. Je, kulikuwa na matukio gani mfululizo baada ya mgonjwa kufariki? na kwenye mazishi na baada ya mazishi?

7. Je watu walinukuu mila au desturi, tamaduni au maandiko ya Biblia, hadithi, mithali au mdani ya Biblia?

Kati ya hizi ni ipi ilileta msaada na kutia moyo na ni yapi hayakufaa?

Kwa nini unafikiri kwambayalileta msaada? Na ulifanya nini ili kuwasaidia? Je,

Kuna watu waliookoka au kuwa wakristo wazuri au kuna watu waliacha ukristo?

8. Kumetokea nini kwa watu waliojijhusisha kwenye tukio tangu lianze?

Je , watu husema kuna mtu aliyesababisha ugonjwa au kifo kwa mfano mchawi, laana?

Je, kuna mtu yeyote au watu walioshutumiwa?

Na ni kwa vipi hawa watu waliafikiana kwamba mtu au watu wamesababisha?

Je, walisema amechukuliwa msukule? Walizungumza kuhusu gamboshi?

Je watu wamehusishaje au kumshughulikia mtuhumiwa?

Kwa sasa wako / Yuko wapi?

9. Kulikuwa na hisia gani tofauti katika mchakato mzima wa tukio?

Watu wengine walionyesha hisia gain kwa nyakati tofauti tofauti? Je, watu alisema au walifanya kitu ili kuwaongoza watu kuonyesha hisia mbali mbali?

Kutokana na hali hiyo umejifunza nini?

Ni kitu gani bado kinakushangazahata sasa?

Kuna swali gani ungependa kumwuliza Mungu juu ya hali hii?

APPENDIX B

SYLLABUS FOR KIGOMA MAY 2007

Contextual Theology: Doing Theology in African Contexts

Course Description:

This course will introduce students to the theory and practice of contextualization and doing theology missiologically. This includes missiological theology's complementary relationship with systematic and Biblical theology. Suffering (especially illness and death) will be used as a focal example. The theological reflections of various theologians and theological schools to suffering will be examined and evaluated. Emphasis will be on constructing an effective, Biblical understanding and response to suffering in the students' own context.

Vision for the course:

Students will learn a theologizing process that will enable them to effectively address suffering and many other issues in their context. This will also help them become contributors as well as consumers of theological understandings for the global church.

Course Objectives:

At the end of this course students should be able to:

1. Explain the theory of missiological theologizing.
2. Understand in greater depth the concrete experiences of suffering of people in Tanzania. They will understand Scriptural and theological truths which address this suffering. They will understand some of the various theological approaches to suffering currently and in historically.
3. Begin to do theology together not just receive theology from others.
4. Theologize about suffering in their context, especially illness and death, and will be better equipped to understand and respond Biblically to specific situations.
5. Think more deeply/critically about their contexts, Scripture, and theology.
6. Pastor more effectively those who suffer.
7. Gain confidence in their ability to theologize and not only receive theology.
8. Gain increased interest in theology through its applicability to their concrete situations.

Course Outline:

1. Theory:
 - a. Theological methods explained and compared: systematic, Biblical, missiological.
 - b. Contextualization theory
 - c. Case studies – Biblical and contemporary
2. Practice: Hiebert's three or four steps of missiological theologizing (In 2006 Missiology article he combines b and c below):
 - a. Phenomenology: What beliefs, feelings, values, and practices do people use to confront suffering?
 - b. Ontology: What is real? Theological/Biblical, Church History and Empirical research.
 - c. Evaluation: How do we evaluate beliefs and practices using this reality?
 - d. Transformation: How do we minister truth, love, and holiness in ways that transform lives?

Teaching Methodologies:

Because these students are experienced and educated ministers, this course will be taught primarily inductively as a seminar. Students and teacher will bring their experience, research, and reading to class, trusting that the Holy Spirit will lead us together into truth.

Before coming to class, the students will explore experiences of illness and death by doing two interviews and writing up a personal case study. The students will also complete the course readings and begin researching the first three papers.

In class, Hiebert's four steps of the theologizing process will form an outline, and students will be prepared with papers for discussions. Different methodological approaches to doing theology will also be discussed. Students will discuss the case studies which they have brought and others in order to discover obvious and underlying beliefs, feelings, values, and issues. We will look together at Scripture and other theologians for responses to some of these issues. We will evaluate the issues in our context in the light of Scripture. We will make concrete plans for more transformational ministries. In all of this, we will depend upon Scripture and the Holy Spirit to guide us.

Instructional materials:

Readings, Tape recorders and tapes, Blackboard, Flip chart

Local faculty person skilled in facilitating discussion and familiar with the local issues and situations.

Readings:

1. Read Hiebert, Paul G., R. Daniel Shaw, and Tite Tienou. 1999. *Understanding folk religion: A Christian response to popular beliefs and practices*. Grand Rapids; Baker Books. pages 13-92, 133-174, 367-392. A theory of missiological theologizing, especially related to folk religious beliefs and practices.

2. Read chapter summaries and final chapter in Dau, Isaiah Majok. 2002. *God and suffering*. Nairobi: Paulines publications. A fine example of a theological response to suffering by an East African Pentecostal. He also does a good job of investigating theological understandings of suffering in Scripture, Dinka churches, and church history from Augustine to various modern theologians.
3. Read case studies collected by students and teachers.
4. Read related readings and handouts.

Course Requirements:

Before class, write up an interview and a personal case study. Interview a Christian or non-Christian about a time that they experienced illness or death themselves or that of someone close to them. Write up immediately afterward exactly what was said. Try to get the details about what was said and done. Try to get sources that you can trust about what happened to them, not just stories that you or they have heard.

Write up a case study of something which you experienced yourself or of which you were a part (your own sickness, a family member who died, or a person in your congregation). Try to pick an experience about which you have deep feelings or questions.

Write concise papers (2 double-spaced typed pages or equivalent neatly written), summarizing the theory and each stage of the three-step process. Answer these questions each in a separate paper:

1. According to Hiebert, Shaw, and Tienou, what is theologizing, why is it needed, and how can we do it? Do you agree or disagree with them, and why?
2. What are the main belief (cognitive), feeling (affective), and value (evaluative) challenges for local Christians and non-Christians when faced with illness and death? Use examples from your interviews and case study.
3. What does the Bible, theology and experience say is really true/real in regard to these challenges, especially those in your case studies? Give Biblical and empirical reasons. You can also use other writers like Dau to help you. Evaluate what people do, say, believe, feel, and value in this area using this truth. What is loving, holy, true, and Biblical? What is unloving, untrue, unholy, un-Biblical?
4. How will you minister more effectively to transform people's lives in your church and community, as a result of your learning related to this class? How can we keep the loving, holy, and true parts of most people's response to sickness and death while transforming the bad parts? How would you recommend ministering now to the people involved in one of your case studies?

Take home exam – due June 30: Lead some group through a theologizing process, using Hiebert's three or four steps regarding some custom, challenge, or issue. I would suggest that you use sickness and death or one of the related issues discussed in class. If you are going to use a different issue, talk to me. Before class is over, give me a written proposal about the group with whom you will meet and what you will discuss.

Write up three pages describing exactly what happened: What did people say and do? What was their attitude? What insights did they come up with?

Write an additional three pages evaluating what happened: What would you do again next time? What would you do differently? What is helpful and not helpful about this three/four-step theologizing process?

Rationale for the course:

I hope Tanzanian ministers will learn through the process to appreciate and use research techniques, listening skills, and local insights. Most importantly, I want the Tanzanian church to advance in critical contextualization and theologizing together, especially about suffering in this context. Good theologizing requires a community engaged with local realities, the Holy Spirit, Scripture, and the larger body of Christ.

It is critical that Tanzanians learn to theologize from Scripture about the 21st century issues that they face, while using the insights of the global and historical church. Also I think this approach provides a complement to systematic theology courses which tell students the fruits of primarily Western theological scholarship.

Here is what some others say that supports the direction of this class:

Tite Tienou (1990) says that the desire for African theologies is good. Grassroots ministers and local congregations in Africa, especially, need to know how to do theology, but African theological education has not been contextualized enough to do this sufficiently (76).

Wayne Grudem says "Systematic theology is any study that answers the question, 'What does the whole Bible teach us today?' about any given topic" (1994, 7). This class is designed to help answer that question in relation to our suffering today but, more importantly, to give an example of a pattern for continuing to answer this question about other topics. Systematic theology helps to answer that question in ways that are assumed to be universal. Yet, according to Paul Hiebert, systematic theology seldom focuses on the diversity and specifics of "us" and "today." It tends to use Greek logic to attempt universal statements. Biblical theology brings in the diachronic dimension and uses historiographic methods but still misses the many "us" "today." Missiological theology and the process of contextualization, as developed by Paul Hiebert, is an inductive process that begins with specific cases of "us" and "today" which are brought into dialogue with the authority of Scripture through the Spirit and the church (Hiebert et al. 1999, 20-29).

University of Nairobi professor J.N.K. Mugambi says,

Missionaries and foreign “experts,” while they are in Africa, should concentrate their efforts in motivating young Africans to do research in these areas of concern and in giving them the necessary skills to enable them to carry out this task. Only Africans can make the best authorities for their own heritage . . . The eagerness to do research should not preoccupy experts to such an extent that they do not equip Africans with the skills of self-criticism and analysis. This is where the responsibility of expatriate experts lies rather than in writing down African religious heritage and interpreting African life. (2002, 188-189)

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