

# Witch Accusations against Women

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## Abstract

In Africa, with a focus on Kenya in this article, when people have problems some believe a *mchawi* (witch) is responsible. They then try to discover who the witch is in order to punish him or her. The witch is determined through a *mganga* (native doctor or traditional healer). The witch is punished because people believe that getting rid of the witch will solve their problem. Unfortunately, those accused often are children, widows, childless women, and the aged. These people face untold torture like rejection, abandonment, banishment from their communities, destruction of their properties, or even death. People try to explain why they have problems in their lives. One possible explanation is that someone has caused their problems through witchcraft. This article demonstrates how people (men in particular) accuse women as witches to explain the cause of their problems, proposes alternative explanations for the same problem, reports the untold torture inflicted on the women as means of solving the problems, examines some social effects of witchcraft on the accused, and suggests a response to the phenomenon.

Key Words: Witchcraft, Women, Traditions, Punishment, Occult Powers

## Introduction

### *Witchcraft Defined*

Most peoples of the world assume that spiritual power can be directed toward others with the express aim of harming them. We label such concepts witchcraft (Kraft 2000:1019). Central to most notions of witchcraft is the idea that some human beings possess a capacity to injure others by non-empirical, occult means. However, it may also be understood as the deployment of occult powers, activated through engagement in visible, tangible anti-social acts like cannibalism or incest, with the goal of gaining desirable ends such as power (Ferdinando 2007:428). Ironically, the weak or powerless also utilize witchcraft as avenue of equalizing economic and political disparities, to gain attention, and to obtain desired ends.

In this paper I will define *mchawi* (“witch”) as anyone that others say causes harm to others through secret, evil means. *Mganga* (“traditional healer,” “native doctor,” or “neo-traditional healer/diviner”) is a person who publicly claims to discover hidden truths, diagnose and heal (Rasmussen 2014). For some Kenyans, a witch is someone considered to possess and exercise power to harm, kill, cause misfortune, accident, bareness, etc. through secret evil means. So, when the word “witch” is used it refers to a person who causes evil and harms others through evil power. Such persons are feared, avoided, condemned, punished or even killed. People view witchcraft as something evil and harmful to others, so they harass or kill people suspected or accused of witchcraft (Priest 2015:1). Some Kenyans “ascribe all the ills, misfortunes, sickness, accidents, tragedies, sorrows, dangers and confusing mysteries they encounter or experience to the mystical power in the hands of a sorcerer, witch or wizard” (Nvirongo 1997:86).

Anthropologists sometimes use the term witchcraft to reflect two distinctions found in traditional societies. Those two distinctions involve (1) intrinsic vs acquired powers and (2)

consciously intended effects vs unintended effects. They define witchcraft as the supposed intrinsic power of a person to harm others by occult or psychic means, without necessarily being aware of it. The witch does not choose to be a witch, and the supposed harm is not always consciously intended. This means that witchcraft is an inherent power, while sorcery is socially acquired as a learnt skill or act. Among the Azande, the difference between a sorcerer and a witch is that the former uses the technique of magic and derives his power from medicines, while the latter acts without rites and spells and uses hereditary psychophysical powers to attain his end (Evans-Pritchard and Gillies 1976:387).

The Scriptures do not distinguish between a witch and a sorcerer, they are considered as same. Those referred to in some English translations of the Bible as “witches” or “sorcerers” had a social identity through their public claim and capabilities in divination as well as power display. They were not hidden entities but public figures just like religious healers, witchdoctors, and pastors. The Bible never portrays them as causing physical harm to others through diabolical means. There is no biblical reference to harming others, causing misfortune, death, infertility, sickness, and bareness via evil power (Priest 2017:55). Instances of “witchcraft/sorcery” in the Bible were not a matter of intrinsic power, but of a learnt skill. In modern Kenyan society, it is often the case that people claim to use occult power in a bid to deceive and trick people. Moreover, it is a method of “trading upon the religious instincts and superstitions of mankind. A witch, in Kenyan context, is clearly aware of it like a sorcerer among the Azande in Hayes’s and Evans-Pritchard’s definitions. The people whom the Bible condemns for using witchcraft are much closer to the African concepts of the *mgangas* (native doctors or traditional healers) than to African ideas of “witches.”

### ***Witchcraft Belief***

Most peoples for most of history have held beliefs in witchcraft. The exact content of such beliefs is culture specific, and the plethora of beliefs cannot be simply identified with Western notions of the witch (Priest 2017:2). The belief in witchcraft is real in the minds of those who believe it; whether or not witchcraft is objectively real, the effects of it can be observed in the lives of those accused. Fear and broken relationships constitute one pair of effects. Another major negative impact is on the people suspected to be witches (Priest 2017:2).

People explain why things happened to them using different systems or causal ontologies. For instance, according to an “interpersonal causal ontology”, malicious persons are understood to cause the misfortune, while from that of a “moral causal ontology” misfortune is due to one’s own wrongdoing (Gibbs 2015:8). Most often, interpersonal causal ontology is used to explain the cause of misfortune which leads to the accusation of a third party as the culprit. Bob Priest rightly asserts that,

In most cultures that stress interpersonal causal ontologies there are religious healers, diviners, shamans, or witchdoctors whose professional authority is pivotal to the validation of such ontologies. Their medical diagnoses affirm that another person is to blame for the affliction. They construct their own power and authority on their supposed ability to combat the dangerous power of purported witches (Priest 2010:3).

Witchcraft belief enables people to explain why bad things happened to them and to proffer remedies. Along with ancestor and spirit attack, witchcraft is invoked to explain the incidence of suffering or of economic or political success. For certain peoples, scarcely any misfortune or death can be explained apart from witchcraft ((Ferdinando 2007:429). This explains why when medical treatment or diagnosis fails to lead to healing, victims and

families typically interpret the condition as a spiritual disease and then seek the appropriate spiritual centre for help (Asamoah-Gyadu 2015:24). Most Kenyans suppose that someone else must be responsible for every misfortune, hardship, death, accident, strange behaviours, disaster, difficulties, and sickness as with the Azande belief of witchcraft where accidents, deaths, and other misfortunes are linked to the enmities arising from interpersonal relations (Kennedy1967:217).

### ***Systems of Systems Theory***

Hiebert, Shaw, and Tienou explain the concept of systems theory. According to this concept, one problem can have many causes (spiritual, bio-physical, personal, social, economical, and/or cultural) that are interconnected. However, people might only pay attention to one of the causes (Hiebert, Shaw, and Tienou 2000:21-29). Ignoring other causes involved gives an inaccurate and misleading understanding of the problem and its possible solution.

I am going to look at the stories my interviewees told. First I will tell their stories with the explanation they gave (witchcraft). Then, I will analyze their stories with different explanations from the system of systems framework.

### **Methods**

I interviewed people involved in witch accusations in Kenya for about one to two hours each. I found out about these people through personal connections and recommendations. The details of the participants are as shown below:

- a. A victim of witchcraft – a young man who accused a woman of bewitching him;
- b. An eyewitness – a man whose friend was bewitched through *chai* (tea);
- c. An accused witch – a businesswoman accused of killing her brother-in-law through witchcraft.

### **Results**

The findings reveal that the activities the women were accused of being involved in as witches included causing death, poisoning, and distraction. Further analysis shows that jealousy, envy, hatred, anger, and a scapegoat mentality are the root causes of witch accusation in Kenya.

#### ***Case 1: Gathoni***

Gathoni's brother in-law (Mark) was childless and in his bid to get children lived promiscuously. In the process he was infected with HIV/AIDS which he transmitted to his wife. He decided to marry another wife, hoping to have children, and the first wife was driven upcountry since the new wife had come in and her (the first wife's) health deteriorated. Gathoni and her husband (Mark's elder brother) vehemently opposed Mark driving the first wife to the village, so Mark avoided them despite the close relationship they had.

Mark became very ill and was diagnosed with HIV/AIDS; a status he kept secret from his wife and family members. He was infused with several units of blood due to his frequent loss of blood. As his health deteriorated, he called for Gathoni and her husband as well as other family members confessing he had done something wrong and gone against some of them. He asked for forgiveness but never disclosed he was dying of HIV/AIDS. He finally passed on and when Gathoni's husband was called by the doctor as a close relative, the doctor revealed to him that Mark had had HIV/AIDS.

However, Gathoni was accused by the mother-in-law and the sisters-in-law of killing Mark through witchcraft. Gathoni was a successful businesswoman in Nairobi with her son. Gathoni was accused of sucking the blood of Mark through *majini* in order to enhance their business. She was barred from seeing the corpse of the deceased, and they planned killing her but she stayed away. The younger brother of the deceased got sick with TB – which he had contracted from the deceased – and was thus unable to attend the funeral. Another girl in the family also got sick, so Gathoni was accused of trying to kill two more people with her witchcraft. The family had planned to kill her but a friend disclosed it and advised her to return to Nairobi. The mother-in-law cursed her saying: “You, what you have done, God has seen. It will come back round, what goes round comes back round.” The sisters-in-law were texting threatening messages. In an interview, Gathoni made the following statement:

They (Gathoni’s mother-in-law and the sisters’ in-law) were just killing me. They were going to pray with these people (*mgangas*). They will pray and they will kill me and they will kill my son and they will make sure that we are all dead. They were calling me a witch saying that I have come to spoil their family. “You have killed our brother and you want to kill another two people” (Interviewee 2014).

Gathoni prayed earnestly that these two recover, otherwise “the *rungus* and the *pangas* (big sticks for beating people and machetes) are the ones that will kill me and my son. So I am fighting for this one not to die. I tell you, I went on my knees telling God, ‘you know the truth that what they are saying is not true, please don’t let these ones die.’” Gathoni narrowly escaped, though not without horrendous social stigma.

### ***Case 2: Shosho***

Shosho lost her husband early before she could bear him children, and she was said to have been barren as well. According to local practice, she married a bride (this practice means that Shosho who is in the place of “husband” found a young man to sleep with her “wife” in order to have children. The children will legally belong to the woman who is the “husband” in this relationship and these children will inherit from their legal “father.”) to bear her children in order to sustain the name of her late husband. This wife bore her two sons who then bore her grandchildren.

There was a land boundary dispute between Shosho and another family which resulted in quarrelling and enmity between the families. Kamau (a son of the opposing family) was in a house of his friend with a group of his friends when Shosho called him. She (50 years at this time) offered him a cup of tea, but on returning to his friends he began shaking and hiccupping nonstop till he was unable to stand. His friends raised the alarm, and the mother in whose house they were gathered rushed out. On hearing the story and seeing Kamau helpless on the ground, she called the villagers together to begin searching for Shosho, who left after Kamau had left her home. Kamau was carried into the room while the youth went on a rampage in search of Shosho to kill her, but the chief and elders halted them. Eventually Shosho was found (six hours after the event) at the bank of a river hiding; she was carried home where Kamau was lying sick in bed. The elders told her that she must cure the boy; if he died his corpse would be cut in pieces for her to eat. It was told that it was not known what Shosho did but Kamau became well and stood up. The youth were breathing fire and ready to kill Shosho but the elders objected, deciding instead to take her to Motomo to a witch doctor who would cleanse her of witchcraft.

The villagers contributed money that night but it was insufficient, so the elders sold one of the cows belonging to Shosho’s sons in order to raise the money. The following day Kamau, his parents, the chief, Shosho, and her two sons with their wives went to Motomo, a

six-hour drive from the homestead. The team waited for two days before it was their turn to see the *mganga* due to the long queue. The *mganga* gave Shosho and her first son (who is supposed to inherit the witchcraft at the death of his mother) water to drink in order to cleanse them of witchcraft. She was warned not to practice again, otherwise she would just die.

On arriving home Shosho and her household were avoided by others, despite the cleansing.

As we were growing up we were not passing that way, that road, and that side because we knew that if we do we could get something either you die or you fall ill. Their family was outcast, separated from other families, even her sons and their wives were no longer welcomed, and people were suspicious of them. Our parents warned us to keep away from her grandchildren who were our friends. We stopped interacting with them even in school they were excluded [Interviewee 2014]. *This interviewee is a friend and classmate of Kamau who was also with Kamau when this incident occurred.*

Shosho and her household lived in their community like strangers.

### ***Case 3: Sarah***

Sarah is a mother of four kids (who only studied till Form Four) with land, crops, homestead, and cows. They lived with other neighbours up country upcountry in Kisii. While in Form Two, Malika, the only learned person in that homestead, had a strange experience. He would start studying and would hear noises outside: sand falling on the roof, someone calling his name, and knocking on the door and whenever he came out to check, he would see no one. Malika was a very stubborn child who gave his parents a hard time to the extent that they told him he must have been bewitched. Because there was no graduate in this family Malika was working hard to succeed, but with these strange experiences he believed someone was bewitching him. He believed it was Sarah. Earlier Malika had a rift with Sarah because he believed his presence was hindering her from accomplishing her evil plans in his homestead. According to Malika, Sarah's evil plan was to frustrate his effort to acquire university education, because none of Sarah's children went beyond secondary school. He attacked Sarah with his friends, uncles, and the youth of the village because he believed she was trying to cut his future short.

Sarah fought back with her children and friends, throwing stones at her attackers, beating them with big sticks, as well as involving the police. She fought back in order to defend her family and property including farm crops. Malika and his friends burned her homestead down, and her crops were utterly destroyed. Their plan to kill and feast on her cows was thwarted by the intervention of the police who took Malika and his friends to the police station. They stayed only a few hours at the police station and were discharged. These families have become great enemies, are not in talking terms, and have remained suspicious of each other.

### ***Examination of these Cases***

Let us now examine these cases using the systems of systems theory. This means that one problem can have many causes (spiritual, bio-physical, personal, economic, social, and cultural) that are connected. But, people might only pay attention to one of the causes.

#### ***Spiritual System***

In Gathoni's case, the in-laws explained Mark's illness as spiritual because they could not understand his constant loss of blood. The family interpreted this as witch-related activities where Gathoni and her son drained his blood in order to enhance their businesses. Ferdinando rightly observed that witchcraft belief enables people to explain why bad things happened to them. For certain people, scarcely any misfortune or death can be explained apart from witchcraft (Ferdinando 2007:429).

In the second case, Kamau's family believed that his situation was caused by Shosho, who must have bewitched the tea she served the boy. Because they could not understand why the hiccupping and the sudden change in his health commenced after he returned from Shosho's house, they concluded it was witchcraft. People explain why things happen to them using different causal ontologies. In this case, they resorted to the interpersonal causal ontology, in which malicious persons are understood to cause the misfortune (Gibbs 2015:8). Hiccupping can be caused by several different things, like sudden temperature changes – whether inside the body (like when drinking hot tea) or outside the body (like when going outside in the snow). But the cause was interpreted as witchcraft.

The distraction Malika experienced during study time was explained as witchcraft perpetrated by Sarah in order to terminate his academic progress so he would not excel above her children. Such a motive is understandable considering the soured relationship existing between them. People utilize witchcraft as an opportunity to gain attention, express their pain, and humiliation, and communicate their dissatisfaction in coded terms. Malika is using an accusation of witchcraft in order to vent his anger on Sarah with the support of the community.

From the above cases, we may conclude that other systems were involved other than witchcraft, but witchcraft was used as an acceptable means to express jealousy, hatred, and anger. It is also evident that Satan and his demons are provoking fear and hatred in these people using their beliefs about witchcraft to sow discord and enmity among them. Furthermore, these people are at the very least very immature believers, and perhaps they simply have no real relationship of faith with the Lord Jesus Christ and therefore need to be evangelised. Their accusing of each other and living in fear of witches portrays this point. They are not trusting in the good news of Jesus' victory over all the powers. They are not living by faith in him. It looks like they do not have much of a personal relationship with Jesus. If they did, they would not have given way to fear and mutual accusation.

### *Bio-Physical System*

There was bio-physical system involved in the first two cases. Gathoni's brother in-law died of HIV/AIDS contracted through extra-marital affairs. Kamau's hiccupping can be explained medically because hiccupping may occur when there is a sudden temperature change, (like when drinking hot tea) in Shosho's house. Hiccupping can last for about 20–30 minutes, and this may explain why Kamau recovered when Shosho came. It was not revealed what Shosho did to cure Kamau, but hiccups eventually go away on their own, and if they persist for long, there could be an underlying medical problem such as nerve damage.

Malika's case could be explained as a natural occurrence. The noises he heard could be from voices of children playing outside or adults chatting, considering the fact that he was in his homestead and it was in the day time. Regarding hearing his name being called and the fact that he found no one at the door, this could be explained by the possibility that someone might have been tricking him with an aim of distracting his concentration.

### *Personal System*

There were psychological and emotional aspects for the individuals involved in these cases. For example, fear seems to be a dominant motif in these stories. Mark's family members were afraid of the constant blood loss as well as the fear of losing him. The same fear of losing Kamau and bewitching other community members was exhibited by the villagers in Shosho's case which is portrayed in their action of conveying her and her household to a *mganga* for cleansing.

Malika was equally afraid of those occurrences while he studied. He said that he heard someone knocking, but when he went to open the door no one was there. Maybe someone had just wanted to distract him, but since he did not see the person he concluded it was witchcraft. The case of someone unseen throwing sand on the roof could be an attempt to distract him, and this too was quite scary to him. Kamau's mother had refused taking him home after he recovered for fear he might die at night in her home and she would have no evidence against Shosho. She preferred her son to pass the night in the home of the incident instead of taking him home.

Anger is another emotional aspect of the individuals involved. Kamau's family had a land boundary dispute with Shosho's family, so this incidence afforded opportunity to vent her anger on Shosho. Malika could no longer take in the disturbance he had during his study, so he angrily attacked Sarah, with whom he already had a bad relationship. His anger (and fear) made him do something that was out of proportion. He heard noises and dirt in the ventilation, so he went and yelled at her and accused her, and eventually burned down her house and crops.

Jealousy is observed in Gathoni's accusation. The in-laws were jealous of her business progress and her son's business trips abroad. Apparently, they were not as prosperous as she, so they chose to accuse her instead of taking responsibility for their financial status. Witchcraft accusation can emanate from jealousy (Evans-Pritchard and Gillies 1976:271-271) and the scapegoat psychology, both of which are quite obvious in this case.

### *Social System*

To be labelled a 'witch' carries grave social consequences. In traditional logic, witchcraft is an anti-social act that attracts to itself the greatest social sanction: public humiliation and the loss of one's rights. This is quite true of the experiences of women accused in this paper. In Gathoni's experience, the accusation brought a prolonged enmity between her and her in-laws. She only escaped death through the help of her friend who was aware of the plan to eliminate her. Witchcraft beliefs, accusations, and fear lead to broken relationships, not reconciliation.

They were just killing me. They were going to pray with these people (*mgangas*). They will pray and they will kill me and they will kill my son and they will make sure that we are all dead. They were calling me witch saying that I have come to spoil their family. 'You have killed our brother and you want to kill another two people'; those are now the text messages (Interviewee 2014).

Shosho, her two sons, and their wives were forcefully taken to the witch doctor to drink cleansing water. She was harassed by the village youth who would have eliminated her if not for the intervention of the elders. A cow belonging to her firstborn son was sold without even his consent to generate the money needed for the trip. Imagine the trauma Shosho and her household went through. The stigma continued even after she was cleansed of the so-called witchcraft. Her entire household including grandchildren were socially affected by this accusation. As Kamau's friend and classmate testified,

As we were growing up we were not passing that way, that road, and that side because we knew that if we do we could get something either you die or you fall ill. Their family was outcast, separated from other families, even her sons and their wives were no longer welcomed, and people were suspicious of them. Our parents warned us to keep away from her grandchildren who were our friends. We stopped interacting with them even in school they were excluded (Interviewee 2014).

Sarah was not exempted. Malika, in collaboration with his uncles and the village youth, tried to expel this woman and her family completely from the community: they burnt her house and crops, and everything was destroyed.

We burnt, we burnt her houses, the crops, and we terribly destroyed. It was at night but we spared the cows because we wanted to slaughter them during the day, the following day and celebrate. We destroyed everything. Ah!, it was terrible. Yeah it was terrible (Interviewee 2014).

Malika and the community punished this family by utterly destroying their houses and crops. The social effects of witch accusation are horrendous and devastating.

### *Economic System*

The economic system is also involved in the accusation. From the interviewees, land, houses, properties, crops, and cows were at stake. One of the cows of Shosho's first son was sold to pay the witch doctor and convey nine persons from the community to Motomo. The witch doctor also benefited economically from this case. Each consultant paid lots of money for the service and for the water given. Witch doctors enrich themselves via witch accusation as they claim to possess power to cure the witch or diagnose hidden truth.

### *Cultural System*

Strong community solidarity is present in all these cases. When the community suspects or receives an accusation of witchcraft, they team together to attack the accused witch by burning her possessions, stoning her to death, taking the witch to a witch doctor, or banishing the person as the case may be. Shosho's case depicts this vividly. When the community learnt of Kamau's incidence, they all gathered together to find a solution to his problem and the problem of witchcraft as well. It was considered 'our' problem not 'their' problem. Each elder contributed money for the trip, and one of them bought the cow in order to get the amount needed.

The in-laws of Gathoni brought together the villagers to harm her. The community of Malika also joined in attacking Sarah without even hearing her side of the story. This community solidarity enhances witch accusation, as the accuser is backed up while the accused becomes so vulnerable and defenceless. There was the feeling of anger from the community and feeling of despair from the accused as they faced isolation, exclusion, rejection, and ostracism, and their families were avoided too.

In African culture, it is believed that there is a reason for every misfortune or occurrence in life. Therefore, people use various causal ontologies to explain why bad things happen. The most common ontology used is interpersonal in which a malevolent person is understood to cause the problem via witchcraft. The incidents above reinforce this cultural idea that a malevolent person is understood to be responsible for the problem of the accuser. For example, Gathoni is accused of killing Mark.



The ways women were treated in these cases depict the cultural idea and value of women in this society. They went through traumatizing and intimidating experiences. For instance, Shosho had to go through the pain of ‘marrying a wife’, that is, getting another woman and finding a young man to sleep with this woman in order to bear Shosho children to sustain the name of her late husband. This has to be done for Shosho to be accepted and remain among the family she is married into. Also, having no husband to protect and defend her, some relative began disputing for land belonging to her late husband. Her entire family including grandchildren was ostracized by the community despite being cleansed of witchcraft.

The cultural belief in witchdoctors as healers and revealers of hidden truth comes into play in these incidents. When Mark died, a witchdoctor was consulted who revealed that Gathoni was responsible for the death. A witchdoctor was equally consulted to heal Shosho of witchcraft. These witchdoctors end up draining the people of their resources, instilling fear in them, and manipulating them.

Witches are usually tortured, banished, cleansed, or even killed. It is believed that the family or community is under a threat if the witch is not dealt with. In fact, this has to happen in order to stop the harm or misfortune the witch causes. However, witches who are cleansed or banished, but later brought back to the community, are usually isolated and avoided as no one wants to associate with them for fear of being bewitched. Once a witch, always a witch. This cultural belief is found in Shosho’s case, where she and her family were avoided by the community after her cleansing by the witchdoctor.

### ***Response to What Is Happening***

How do we as Christian leaders respond in situations like those described here? I would like to suggest several ideas for consideration—responses that as Christians we should keep in mind, put into practice, and teach as we come face to face with issues of witchcraft in our families, neighbourhoods, or churches.

First, we need to insist on the value and sacredness of human life. The Bible teaches that human life is sacred and that no one should be allowed to take it away. God punished Cain severely for killing his brother, Abel, out of jealousy (Gen. 4:8-10). God cursed Cain and the work of his hands, and he became a wanderer because he killed his brother. Violation of God’s law attracts suffering, and instead of repenting we seek someone to accuse and kill. Their blood will continue to speak against us like that of Abel.

Second, we must protect the vulnerable. God also admonishes us to care for widows, the fatherless and orphans (Ex. 22:22), but we kill them. God will ensure that orphans, widows, and the fatherless receive justice. Why do we take life we did not create? Why do we destroy life made in God’s image? We need to start living right to enjoy God’s blessings.

Third, we need to love our neighbours like ourselves. The accusations were the result of envy, jealousy, hatred, and anger. Where there is agape love, these sinful acts are absent. Love does not envy, it does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it does not delight in evil, and it protects (I Corinthians 13:4-8).

Fourth, we need to understand that the church has an important role to ensure that both social and religious rights of God’s people are not violated. The alleged witches are God’s people created in the image and likeness of God. The church needs to be empowered to combat the evil of false witch accusation through proper theological training, awareness of the social effects of witch accusation, and seminars. The church is situated within the community, so she needs to educate the community elders on how to protect accused witches

rather than taking the law into their hands. In Joshua 20:-1-6, God provided a legal system and procedure where those who kill others unintentionally can be protected from extrajudicial killings. The elders in our communities are to protect the accused from extrajudicial killing until their cases are given a fair hearing instead of endorsing their killing or punishment. It is not enough for the church to provide victims who live in isolation with social services. The church should also be a voice for these voiceless victims. It should confront the legal or political systems in order to stop the suffering and the killings of the accused of being witches without any legal reprieve.

The church is to preach against this false accusation in the societies, and play its role in discipleship of its members to be rooted in the knowledge of God's word about demons and witchcraft. Many profess Christianity but lack the knowledge of the Christian truth; this is why when they are confronted with sicknesses, and pains, their culture and the old nature comes up and force them to consult witchcraft.

Fifth, governments are put in place by God, and they have a duty to protect all the people. Due to the nature of witch accusation, dealing with it might be challenging for the government but they do little or nothing.

Actually the government does nothing, it does nothing. Once you have been suspected, the villagers come and they storm your house, they kill you, they burn your houses, nothing happens. Nothing happens. Nothing happens. Sometimes the police officers can come for peace purposes but once the villagers hear the police are on their way, they disappear. So, who will you accuse? Who will you arrest? Yeah, there's nothing that they can do (Interviewee 2014).

Witchcraft beliefs have permeated government circles such that it may be tricky defending the accused. In Kenya, during elections, politicians are said to visit witches and graves in order to win elections. However, they need to fulfil their obligation to the citizens of Kenya by laying aside their subjective beliefs in witchcraft and protect the vulnerable from mob attacks. Christians ought to support government officials and encourage them to fulfil their responsibility toward all citizens, including those accused of being witches.

Lastly, our society, culture, and explanation systems need to be reshaped deep down by Christians who do not look for scapegoats for their problems but take responsibility for their misfortunes. The Gospel must be contextualized in such a way that it affects the deep seated worldview of Kenyans.

## **Conclusion**

From the foregoing, it is clear that there are many explanations for problems that people experience, not just witchcraft. Witch accusation in these cases emanates from jealousy, envy, anger, and hatred, and witchcraft is utilized to harm vulnerable people, especially women. Women are often the targets of witch accusation because they are powerless and cannot defend themselves in a male dominated society that endorses the attacks on them. We must look at our relationships to see whether that might be the reason for the problems. We must also ask whether accusing someone else will bring more problems into the world. This is how God will deliver us from evil.

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