

Gideon Foundation on the Radio

August 4, 2011 at 8 pm

Purpose of 3rd visit to Delta:

- to let victims/survivors of human sacrifice know that the Gideon Foundation is here
- to start a dialogue with radio listeners about how people and communities view human sacrifice so that they too can begin to question the practice and to encourage people from specific groups to call in (district officials, witchdoctors, police officers, affected families)
- find more affected families

RADIO TALK SCRIPT:

1. **[DOROTHY]** Dorothy introduces herself and explains that she will be translating the talk into Ateso.
2. **[JENIFER]** My name is Jenifer and I am from the United States. I have been volunteering with the Gideon Foundation Against Child Sacrifice for the past few months. This organization is currently based in Nakatunya and I was connected with the Gideon Foundation through another organization called the Advocacy Project. The Advocacy Project is based in the United States and it is an organization that sends experienced students to volunteer with organizations that are working on issues that are not normally heard; the role of this volunteer is to let others know what this organization is doing and thus my role at the Gideon Foundation has been to bring awareness to their efforts to end child sacrifice and to bring awareness to the act of human sacrifice.
3. **[DOROTHY]** To those who are not familiar with the issue, human sacrifice is the act of killing another human being or taking their body parts in order to please gods or because they think it will bring them riches. Usually in acts the person is beheaded or the body parts for example the tongue or the genitals are removed. These acts are usually performed because the person was told by a witchdoctor that it would bring them riches or the person is doing it for money itself and there are people who sell and buy these body parts.
4. **[DOROTHY]** The Gideon Foundation Against Child Sacrifice was established in 2007 by Santos and Leah Labeja after their son, Gideon, was murdered in an act of child sacrifice when he was 4 years old. Santos and Leah Labeja decided to start an organization that is fully dedicated to putting an end to child sacrifice and that seeks to advise and advocate for affected families. The Gideon Foundation Against Child Sacrifice is the only organization in Uganda and in the world that is fighting human sacrifice.

5. **[DOROTHY]** This is the third time that the Gideon Foundation has spoken on Delta and we are here again because we wanted to again let victims and survivors of human sacrifice know that there is an organization out there that is fighting human sacrifice. We wanted to let these families know that the Gideon Foundation Against Child Sacrifice is here to help and to guide you so that your human rights are respected and also so that you do not just sit and accept what happened; to help you to deal with your loss and to channel your frustration and anger into something positive.
6. **[JENIFER]** We are also here to continue our discussion about human sacrifice with you. When the Gideon Foundation was on Delta radio last time we asked you, the radio listeners, questions about human sacrifice and many of you called in. We are here again to continue this discussion so that people can begin to question the practice of human sacrifice and also to try and see how some people already view human sacrifice so that the Gideon Foundation can see where it should concentrate its efforts.
7. **[JENIFER]** Just to give you some background on what I've done with the Gideon Foundation: Thus far, we have conducted interviews with 9 families from communities throughout the district of Soroti who are either a victim or survivor of human sacrifice. We have also interviewed police officers, district officials and elders as well. The responses that I received in these interviews have left me with many questions and I would like to talk about this with you, the radio listeners. Right now I am going to ask you some questions and if you have something to say then please call in. We are also encouraging police officers, district officials, elders, witchdoctors and victims and survivors of human sacrifice to call in as well:
 - a. **[JENIFER] Question 1:** In my research I have found that most witchdoctors claim to be traditional healers. In most cases the person who committed the ritual murder was told by a witchdoctor to do so. My question is who do you think is a witchdoctor? How do you define what is a witchdoctor? Why are witchdoctors allowed to practice in any way that they want and do you think that this is ok? There are some witchdoctors that practice human sacrifice and who encourage others to do the same and so why does this go unnoticed? According to our research, the highest percentage of the perpetrators in human sacrifice were witchdoctors and so my question is why do people still go to them?
 - b. **[JENIFER] Question 2:** Since I arrived in Uganda, I have heard rumors that if you place the head or body of a human being in the foundation of a new house, or a new road, or any other new construction that it will help this construction to last. My question to you is— is this true and where does this belief come from?

- c. **[JENIFER] Question 3:** I have found that when a family loses a loved one to human sacrifice that they tend to give up on the case sometimes because of the expenses, or because of the many procedures that they have to go through or because the case takes a long time. So as a result families tend to give up and so the culprit is released. Who do you think should be responsible for following-up on these cases?
- d. **[JENIFER] Question 4:** In these interviews I have found that corruption and “lack of evidence” are common reasons as to why the culprits are released. I have also found that the police and persons of power do not particularly see corruption as an issue even though corruption is there. I have found that corruption enables human sacrifice; that corruption helps human sacrifice to continue. What do you think can be done to fight this?
- e. **[JENIFER] Question 5:** In these interviews I have found that persons of power tend to blame the families, that they say that human sacrifice is caused by child neglect or because people drink and smoke too much. But in these interviews with affected families I have found that this is not the case. Why do you think that some persons of power tend to blame the families? Do you think that it is their responsibility to do something about human sacrifice and if so what should they be doing?
- f. **[JENIFER] Question 6:** In this research I have found that some people from both the rich and the poor practice human sacrifice. In particular the wealthy, it is they themselves who practice human sacrifice or they hire someone else to do it. I have found that there are various reasons why those among the rich and the poor practice human sacrifice. I have found that human sacrifice is not always caused by poverty nor is it always caused by a lack of education. My question is what do you think are the reasons that human sacrifice is practiced in Uganda?
- g. **[JENIFER] Question 7:** In the interviews that I’ve conducted with affected families, I have found that they know what happened to their loved one from rumors that they hear. In some cases the suspects still live in the same communities as these affected families. Losing a loved one to human sacrifice is something that really haunts these families not only because their loved one was murdered in such a way but also because in most cases the killers are never caught. My question is if this happened to you what would you do?
- h. **[JENIFER] Question 8:** In these interviews I have found that people who condemn human sacrifice are usually the only ones doing so. Human sacrifice exists in Uganda but the Gideon Foundation is the only organization whose mission concerns fighting this practice. I have found that people fear talking about human sacrifice because they think that they will be implicated by the police, that they will be blamed for the act. They think that the witchdoctors will send some strong powers or spirits to beat them, called the “kifaro”. We, Dorothy and I as well as the other volunteers at the Gideon Foundation, have talked about human sacrifice and nothing has happened to us, so my question is if this is true?

Why is it believed that if you speak up about human sacrifice that you will be attacked by the “kifaro”?

- i. **[JENIFER] Question 9:** I have found that human sacrifice is not in the history of Teso and that in fact cultural leaders condemn it. Where do you think human sacrifice started? Where did it originate?
 - j. **[JENIFER] Question 10:** What do you think can be done to prevent human sacrifice?
8. **[DOROTHY]** The Gideon Foundation Against Child Sacrifice is still interviewing persons who are victims/survivors of human sacrifice. These interviews are being used to help raise awareness about human sacrifice and they’re also being used to help the Gideon Foundation to see where it needs to concentrate its efforts. If you are a victim or survivor of human sacrifice please call Santos Labeja at 07-72-45-17-10. We also wanted to mention that the Gideon Foundation has a website: www.gideonfoundation.com and that it is an organization that is known in Uganda and throughout the world.
 9. **[DOROTHY]** Dorothy gives some tips to prevent human sacrifice (for example that is doesn’t bring you riches, that if someone sees something to please report it, etc). Dorothy also explains again that the Gideon Foundation Against Child Sacrifice is here to offer psycho-social support for affected families and to let families know to speak up about their loss.
 10. **[JENIFER]** I would like to say that I will be going back to the United States soon but that I will continue to create awareness about human sacrifice. Also, the Gideon Foundation will still be here and will remain here in Uganda and they will continue to fight human sacrifice.
 11. **[JENIFER]** The Gideon Foundation and I would like to say thank you Delta FM for allowing us to speak on your wonderful radio station again and we would also like to thank you, the listeners, for your responses and for tuning in.