

The Lord's Resistance Army: Millennialism, Violence and the Timeless Dream

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This essay examines the history, strategy and tactics of the Lord's Resistance Army, a millenarian terrorist group that originated among the Acholi tribe in Northern Uganda. Today, its operations focus on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but it is active in Uganda, the Sudan and the Central African Republic. The LRA is composed of approximately 90% kidnapped child soldiers and as a result of its depredations, almost 90% of the Acholi and other northern Ugandan tribes live in squalid IDP (Internally Displaced Person) camps in Uganda. Children in villages and even from some of the so called protected camps, the so-called "night commuters," must trek as many as 20 miles each night into towns in order to avoid abduction. The article focuses in particular on the religious aspects of the LRA and on its metamorphosis from a local to a regional and ultimately into an international security challenge.

Key Words: Lord's Resistance Army, Joseph Kony, Alice Auma Lakwena, Child soldiers

It began with a crisis of existential proportions for the Acholi tribe in the 1980s. Draught, pestilence and war—a hopeless war in which the Acholi tribe of northern Uganda had no chance to prevail over its stronger and better armed opposition, the National Resistance Army (NRA) of Yoweri Museveni, who rose to power and recast the Ugandan national army from the core of his militia fighters. Frustrated in its aims and enraged at the lack of support they found among the Acholi, the militias claiming to fight in their name, the most notorious of which, was the Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDA), turned on their Acholi kinsmen. Robbery and rape were the various militias'

contribution to the crisis. For the Acholi in 1980s Uganda, despair and hopelessness became the ubiquitous coin of the realm.¹

Out of the depths of the crisis was born a dream—a timeless dream of hope and redemption, of triumph and power and the vengeance of a wrathful God.² The dream was articulated by a spirit—Lakwena by name—whose vessel was the prophetess Alice Auma, who would later take the name Lakwena as her own surname. Lakwena was the spirit of an Italian soldier whose biography is murky and changes often in the retelling. His appearances among the Acholi are rare, and invariably come in times of perceived crisis. In Acholi society, and in common with much of traditional African custom, a woman would have little voice in the affairs of politics and less in the field of military endeavors and security related issues. But a woman as the transmitter of Lakwena's directives is another matter, and Alice quickly ascended to the role of an Acholi soter.³ At the explicit direction of Lakwena, Alice and her father Severino Lukoya created the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) on May 15, 1985 (Behrend 1999, 30–32).

At first, the Holy Spirit Movement focused on a healing ministry; curing the physical ills of the Acholi—ills that ranged from AIDS to malnutrition (Westerhaus 2007, 590–605).⁴ Given the depth of the crisis, it was inevitable however that the overwhelming violence engulfing Acholiland would draw in the Holy Spirit Movement. The HSM after all was led by the spirit of an Italian soldier, and thus a military response to the violence was logical enough. This, in August 1986, Lakwena via Alice set about the process of raising a militia wing of the HSM, which was to be called the Holy Spirit Mobile Forces (HSMF). By then, Lakwena had recruited a multinational contingent of spirit guides who would become functional commanders of the various wings of the HSMF. These included Wrong Element (a US spirit who headed a company of troops known as Rankie which was responsible for Intelligence and medical needs), Ching Po (a Korean who was responsible for all things mechanical, ranging from weapons to transport), Franco (from Zaire who was in charge of C Company and responsible for provisions which included food, uniforms and soap), Nyaker (an Acholi spirit with no specific responsibility, which was a telling glimpse into

the self-view of the beleaguered Acholi of the time) and a group of Islamic fighters (with no specific names, which is a telling view of how many of the world's most embattled peoples view with hope and envy the power of that faith in the face of the overwhelming military might of the Western powers) (Behrend 1999, 1, 51).

When the Holy Spirit Movement Mobile Forces grew overambitious and suffered catastrophic defeat, the timeless dream was distorted into a nightmare of unprecedented proportions. The disgraced seeress Alice Lakwena fled to Kenya, becoming a bar girl in Ifa and living in a refugee camp for the last 20 years of her life; sending letters to President Museveni that were at time proud and defiant, at other times placating and conciliatory. All were pleas to be allowed to return to Uganda and all were dismissed as meaningless. Without the power of Lakwena, after all, Alice was merely a woman in the patriarchal world of African power politics. She died in Kenya in 2007, barely 50 years old, having known only a single year of glory in her short and tragic life (*Times Online*, 2007).

With Alice's departure from the scene, the timeless dream congealed into a nightmare from which the Acholi have yet to awake. Joseph Kony, a relative of Alice Lakwena whose original request to join the HSMF was rejected by Alice/Lakwena in strong and public terms, gathered the detritus of the movement and, after several changes of name and of tactics as well, created the violent millennialist terrorist movement known today as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The LRA today, having ravaged northern Uganda and forcing some 90% of the Acholi population into IDP (Internally Displaced Person) camps (Finnström 2006, 203; cf. International Crisis Group 2007, 2) moved to South Sudan when international pressure forced the Ugandan government to move in force against them. When their Sudanese patrons crafted an agreement with the Ugandan government to cease supporting each others' rebels, the LRA trekked to the last bastion of freedom of action for some of the most violent armed groups in Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo.⁵ It was there that the newly stood up US Africa Command (AFRICOM) backed a contingent of Ugandan, Congolese and South Sudanese troops in an attack attempting to put an end to the threat of the LRA once and

for all (Reuters, 2008).⁶ They met with, to put it generously, a marked lack of success, and the LRA continues to ravage the Congolese villages in their area of operation (MacFarquhar, 2008).

In a special issue focused on religion and security, no better case study might be offered than the evolution of the Lord's Resistance Army from its beginnings in Alice Lakwena's Holy Spirit Movement to the present day—a day in which some 90% its forces are composed of kidnapped child soldiers (Talwar 2004, 10). So ubiquitous has the kidnapping of children for military and sexual purposes by the LRA become, that a recent study "...of the three most war affected districts in Northern Uganda estimates that a sixth of all female youth and a third of all male youth between the ages of 14–30 have been abducted at one point by the rebel Lord's Resistance Army" (Mazurana and Carlson 2008, 6). What makes the case so compelling is not merely the magnitude and forms of violence employed by the group—terrorist violence so extreme that it has ceased to have any discernable message content beyond a mere affirmation of being, an assertion that "I kill and rape, and therefore I am"—but in the remarkable fact that the LRA is a fully developed archetype of a broad array of primarily African movements whose family resemblance is so strong that they may be analyzed together as what I have argued elsewhere constitute a distinct Fifth Wave of modern terrorism (Kaplan 2007, 545–570).⁷ Key variables in this wave are shared by the pre-state Khmer Rouge, the Interahamwe in Rwanda, the Janjaweed in Sudan, and very likely the Serbian militias during the civil war in former Yugoslavia. The sections to follow will examine the rise and fall of the Holy Spirit Movement and its militia wing the Holy Spirit Mobile Forces (which it cannot be emphasized too strongly *was not* a terrorist movement) and the rise of Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (which it cannot be emphasized too strongly *is* a terrorist movement) to become today Africa's longest running terrorist campaign. No better case study may be offered of the intersection of crisis driven religious fervor and the challenges that such movements can pose to national, regional, and, given the reality of globalization and the industrialized world's ceaseless quest for raw materials and mineral wealth, global security alike.

Alice Auma Lakwena and the Holy Spirit Mobile Forces

As noted above, violent millenarian movements are often ignited, or intensified, by a sense of perceived crisis. The political crisis dubbed, in the words of Gersony, “the ghosts of the Luero Triangle” has been noted already (1997, 9; cf. Jackson 2002, 36–37; Lomo and Hovil 2004, 14; Doom and Vlassenroot, 1999). Much less attention has been given however, to the ecological crisis that was taking place as the civil war raged and the militias of the Acholi people turned inward to consume their own young. The worst effects of the draught that had plagued northern Uganda were ironically not in Acholiland but in the lands of the Karamojong, a fierce cattle raiding people noted, like the Acholi, for their prowess as warriors.⁸ The privations that resulted for the Karamojong naturally motivated them to return to cattle raiding, their traditional way of life, to the cost of their neighboring tribes in northern Uganda. Grace Akallo, a member of the Luo tribe (a Nilotic tribal group closely related to the Acholi and the Dinka of Southern Sudan who will play a considerable role in the history of the LRA), recalls the terror she experienced as a child during a Karamojong raid on her village:

We [Grace and her family] hid in a bush near the small forest. After about two hours, the awaited visitors arrived near our hiding place. They were completely naked. I had never seen a big person naked. I was used to seeing only my brother., so this was strange to me.

...My brother and I moved near this man, but he ignored us because we were just children. He undressed all the women he got from their hiding places. He beat and raped some. It seemed like hell. My mum survived this. She was not found, so she was not undressed like the other women...Thank God, he did not kill anyone.

From there on, I hated the Karamojong.

(McDonnell and Akallo 2007, 67–68)⁹

What is most striking to the reader of this and similar accounts is the relatively low level of violence employed by the Karamojong. Grace’s grandfather was in fact beaten and would later die as a result, and the cattle and other portable wealth of the village was taken. Rape was an

unusual innovation in an inter-tribal cattle raid.¹⁰ But nothing here would compare with the violence of the Acholi militias against Acholi villages, and even that paled in comparison to the depredations of the LRA. Yet the draught and the violence that would grow out of the sudden competition for resources would be a critical factor in the atmosphere of violence that led to the creation of the LRA as well as other violent “Fifth Wave” movements. The case of the Sudanese Janjaweed is perhaps the most telling case in point (De Waal 2005, xiii–xix).

This backdrop of disasters—natural disasters, disease, and the disaster of militia violence—made the emergence of a movement such as Alice Auma Lakwena’s Holy Spirit Movement all but inevitable.¹¹ The initial success of the HSM, and the group’s militia arm the Holy Spirit Mobile Forces HSMF, was built on the power of faith and Alice’s ability to mobilize her followers around a heady syncretism of Acholi traditional magic, spirit religion and Christianity. With the decision of Uganda People’s Democratic Army’s Lt. Col. Stephen Odyek (Ojukwa) in October, 1986, to put 150 of the soldiers from the UPDA’s splintering militia under her command, the Holy Spirit Mobile Forces gained the nucleus of what for a time would be a remarkably successful militia (Behrend 1999, 26).

Alice’s first order of business was to perform rituals to purify her new soldiers, all of whom carried the weight of the unappeased spirits of those killed on both the battlefield and in raids on defenseless villages (Behrend 1999, 43–45).¹² Once purified, HSMF recruits went through a second set of rituals intended to protect them from bullets (a common feature of nativist movements from the Native American Ghost Dance to the Mahdist uprising in the Sudan). With this ritual rebirth complete, the newly minted HSMF soldiers were ready for battle. Each battle was deemed in HSMF parlance a “preliminary Last Judgment” in which the fighter, even if he were to fall, would be assured of resurrection and immortality after the final victory of the HSMF (Behrend 1999, 45–46). This in itself provides an outstanding example of the degree of syncretism that Alice had adopted in her blending of Christianity and traditional Acholi magical and spiritual beliefs. All of these practices would be adopted *en toto* by Joseph Kony

and his Lord's Resistance Army.

The core beliefs of the HSMF were embodied in the "Twenty Holy Spirit Safety Precautions," which constituted the HSMF rules of engagement. In the Safety Precautions, Christian theology as derived from a literal reading of the Bible and Acholi tradition reached its most complete and complex synthesis. Jospheh Kony would adopt these too, but would gradually move away from them as his Lord's Resistance Army became increasingly distinct—and distinctly more violent—than Alice's HSMF. The biblical rules were followed with proof texts, while the purely Acholi contributions were left unadorned. According to Heike Behrand (1990), these state:

The causes and the solutions of all the problems of Uganda can only be biblically explained and resolved by turning to our Lord Jesus Christ and becoming God-fearing people. See: Jo.14, 1.5-6; 14,12-21 [Josh. 14: 1, 5-6, 12-21]; 2 Cor. 5: 11-21, 6: 1-18, 7:1; Prov. 17: 11, 14-17, 21: 24; Eccl. 7: 1, 8-14; Prov. 1: 7; 1 Cor. 1: 18-31; Ex. 23: 20-22 [Exod. 23: 20-22]" (Francis Ongom).

As a result the chief commander, his holiness the Lakwena, issued the holy spirit safety precautions which are 20 in number:

1. Thou shalt not have any kind of charms or remains of small sticks in your pocket, including also the small piece used as a tooth brush. (Lev. 19: 4, 31; Isa. 3: 18-20; Ezek. 13: 17-23).
2. Thou shalt not smoke cigarettes. (1 Cor. 3: 16-20)
3. Thou shalt not drink alcohol (Prov. 21: 1, 23: 20-21; Isa. 5, 11-12, 20-22; Num. 6: 1-4)
4. Thou shalt not commit adultery or fornication (Deut. 5: 18; Gal. 5: 19)
5. Thou shalt not quarrel or fight with anybody. (Prov. 17: 12-13)
6. Thou shalt not steal (Lev. 19: 11; Deut. 5: 19; Rom. 13: 9)
7. Thou shalt not have envy or jealousy (Lev. 19: 17; Prov. 27: 3-4)
8. Thou shalt not kill (Lev. 19: 16; Deut. 5: 17; Rom. 13: 9)
9. You will execute the orders and only the orders of the Lakwena (Deut. 5: 7)
10. Thou shalt not carry any walking stick in the battle field.
11. Thou shalt not take cover on the ground, in the grass, behind trees, ant-hill or any other obstacle there found. (Deut. 7: 21-24, 9: 1-3; Exod. 23: 27-28)

12. Thou shalt not pick from the battle field any article not recommended by the Lakwena. (Deut. 5: 21, 6: 25-26; Josh. 7: 10-11, 19-26)
13. Thou shalt not kill prisoners of war. (Lev. 19; 18: 33-34; Matt. 6: 14-15)
14. Thou shalt follow the right words of command, and never argue with the commander. (Lev. 19: 2-4; Deut. 5: 20; 1 Cor. 4: 1)
15. You shalt love one another as you love yourselves. (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22: 37-39; Rom. 13: 8-10; Gal. 5: 14-15)
16. Thou shalt not kill snakes of any kind. (Exod. 7: 8-13, 8: 1-4)
17. Thou shalt not eat food with anybody who has not been sworn in by the holy spirit.
18. Thou shalt not branch off to any home or shake hands with anybody while on route to the battlefield.
19. Thou shalt not eat pork or mutton or oil of the same. (Exod. 12: 14-18; Lev. 1: 10-11, 7: 11, 19: 26; Luke 8: 32-33).
20. Thou shalt have two testicles, neither more nor less

(Behrend 1999, 46-47)

The Safety Precautions sound amusing to Western ears in the context of a militia fighting armed foes, but in religious and cultural terms, they resonate to Acholi. Moreover, although some of the Safety Precautions would appear to be distinctly inimical to any hope for battlefield survival, the HSMF did enjoy a good deal of success in battle. At least at first. Thus they would warrant a closer examination.

There are three strands of belief that run through the Twenty Holy Spirit Safety Precautions: Traditional Acholi beliefs, the Bible and thus a fundamentalist form of Christianity¹³ and an idiosyncratic vision of what constitutes a healthy (and this moral) life style.¹⁴ If a fighter accepts in his heart and executes under the pressure of battle with perfect faith each and every one of these mandates, he is guaranteed to survive the encounter, or at least to have a portion of the inevitable HSMF victory when the fighting ultimately ends. It is important to emphasize that with only a single exception (the twentieth and final Precaution), there is considerable overlap in that any single Precaution would have applicability to Christianity, Acholi tradition and healthy living.

In military/security terms, the novel HSMF approach to battle is what inevitably first draws attention to the movement. It should be

noted however, that this novel tactical guide has been attempted many times in the last several centuries; similar tactics resulted in victory for the Sudanese Mahdi, and with catastrophic defeat when employed in the second wave of the Ghost Dance in the United States (Nicol 2005; Hittman and Lynch 1997). Recall that after the second set of HSMF rituals and the application of a sacred paste (shea butter paste and ochre) to make them immune from bullets, HSMF soldiers were ready for battle (Behrend 1999, 56–62). Once the battle was engaged, the HSMF fighters were neither to aim their weapons lest they violate the prohibition against killing (#8), nor were they to take cover under fire (#11). Both of these counterintuitive tactics were backed with biblical proof texts, and each proof text was applied to the rule through hermeneutical legerdemain. To take but one example, rule 11 forbidding HSMF fighters from taking cover claims as its biblical foundation Deuteronomy 7: 21–24 which the American Standard Bible renders as follows:

- 21 Thou shalt not be affrighted at them; for Jehovah thy God is in the midst of thee, a great God and a terrible.
- 22 And Jehovah thy God will cast out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee.
- 23 But Jehovah thy God will deliver them up before thee, and will discomfit them with a great discomfiture, until they be destroyed.
- 24 And he will deliver their kings into thy hand, and thou shalt make their name to perish from under heaven: there shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have destroyed them.

(American Standard Bible, 307–308).

The passage is one of the more controversial when applied to the post-1967 growth of Israel following the Six Day War, but would appear to have little to do with avoiding flying bullets. Deuteronomy 9: 1–3 similarly speaks of victory and territorial aggrandizement, but nowhere seems to say “duck and cover”:

- 1 Hear, O Israel: thou art to pass over the Jordan this day, to go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fortified up to heaven,

- 2 a people great and tall, the sons of the Anakim, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the sons of Anak?
- 3 Know therefore this day, that Jehovah thy God is he who goeth over before thee as a devouring fire; he will destroy them, and he will bring them down before thee: so shalt thou drive them out, and make them to perish quickly, as Jehovah hath spoken unto thee. (*American Standard Bible*, 309–310)

While Exodus 23: 27–28 too provides a great deal more insight to Israel's settlement activities than to the elementary safety precaution of hugging mother earth when the bullets begin to fly.

- 27 I will send my terror before thee, and will discomfit all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee.
- 28 And I will send the hornet before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee.
(*American Standard Bible*, 132)

Be this as it may, the 20 HSMF Safety Precautions do cover all of the Ten Commandments, as derived from Exodus 20: 3–17:

- ONE: "You shall have no other gods before Me."
- TWO: "You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth."
- THREE: "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain."
- FOUR: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."
- FIVE: "Honor your father and your mother."
- SIX: "You shall not murder."
- SEVEN: "You shall not commit adultery."
- EIGHT: "You shall not steal."
- NINE: "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."
- TEN: "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."
(*"Ten Commandments: God's Standard"*, 2009).

The presence of these commandments are the basis for the oft stated claim that Joseph Kony's sole comprehensible aim for his fanciful objective of taking power in Uganda is to institute a government and legal system based on the Ten Commandments.¹⁵ For Alice Lakwena's HSMF, the simplicity of the Ten Commandments more than made up for the tortured hermeneutics from which the Christian elements of the Holy Spirit Safety Precautions were legitimized. The Acholi elements were as important as the Christian elements, but to non-Acholi ears some ring as an amusing puzzle. Boundary setting mechanisms such as the prohibitions against deviating from going to the battlefield by visiting or shaking hands clearly refer to the magical protections given fighters before battle (Precaution 18) while the prohibition against eating with non-HSM members (Precaution 17) is clearly aimed at isolating HSM/F members from the contamination of outsiders. The prohibitions against charms (Precaution 1), against the consumption of pork or mutton, and the demand that fighters "have two testicles, neither more nor less" (Precaution 20) all reflect Acholi traditional beliefs.¹⁶

The appeal of this synthesis of Christian and Acholi beliefs is intellectually obvious, but an intellectual analysis of the Safety Precautions ignores the realities of African bush warfare where chaos reigns supreme and in which it seems that all participants are in such constant motion that one suspects that deaths and injuries are more accidental than premeditated and often the result of friendly fire rather than enemy action. In such a chaotic battlefield environment, the expectation that HSMF soldiers neither aim their weapons nor take cover to avoid enemy fire is not as suicidal as it sounds to western ears. Better, the faith that an HSMF bullet fired wildly will be brought to its target, thus relieving the soldier from the spiritual consequences of killing resonated deeply with the beleaguered Acholi, and this cultural resonance would motivate first Alice's father Severino and then Joseph Kony to adopt in full both Alice's spiritual and tactical innovations as embodied in the HSMF.

Cultural resonance and legitimacy are two very different issues however. In Acholi belief, the legitimacy needed to conduct a war is embodied in recognized tribal elders conferring the War Blessing

(*lapii*, lit. “fire sticks”). Alice Lakwena made the claim to having the *lapii* for her HSMF (Behrend 1999, 39), but her movement’s meteoric rise and sudden collapse in the wake of the disastrous march on Kampala meant that the question was of little real import.¹⁷ Her father Severino’s attempt to reconstitute the HSMF under his leadership was even more short lived (January 1988–August 1989), making the issue of the *lapii* even less of a factor (Gersony 1997, 34). Indeed, the rapid collapses of both the HSMF and Severino’s HSMF II would suggest to Acholi observers that neither father nor daughter possessed the *lapii*. Joseph Kony’s Lord’s Resistance Army however, organized at the same time Severino was trying to reconstitute the HSMF under his leadership (Gersony 1997),¹⁸ has been going strong for more than two decades, however the popular belief that his war is unsanctioned probably played a considerable part in his failure to attract a significant number of recruits. This failure as we have noted prompted his vow to create a new Acholi people, making the issue of great importance in order to understand the near genocidal (or more accurately, self-genocidal) nature of the movement. Indeed, with perhaps 80–90% of the Acholi in IDP camps and in limbo is eerily parallel to the Palestinians’ plight in which the camps became permanent addresses. This outcome is likely given the fact that much of the land which Acholi families have fled appears to have been sold as abandoned lands to “developers” from southern Uganda.¹⁹ Even many of those who were able to remain on their lands are obliged to send their children, the so called “night commuters,” to towns in which they sleep on the floors of schools and churches so as not to be abducted by the LRA (Amnesty International, 2005).²⁰ In a very real sense, Kony’s vow to destroy the Acholi has already come to pass.

The final section of this paper will examine the LRA in three key respects. First, an examination of Kony’s claim to traditional Acholi legitimacy—a claim that can be dealt with quickly enough. Second, we will consider the efficacy of the LRA’s strategy and tactics. Finally, in keeping with the theme of this volume, the discussion will consider the security implications of Kony’s LRA as it grew from a Ugandan “problem” to a regional irritant, as it accepted the patronage of the

Sudanese government and moved to South Sudan where it proved to be an extraordinarily ineffectual counterweight to the Dinka led Southern Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA). Finally, we will note the emergence of the LRA, now based in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as a "global" issue in which its leader, Joseph Kony, faces an International Criminal Court (ICC) warrant for genocide²¹ and where, as we have seen, it has drawn the attention of AFRICOM. It is an epic history, and one which has stimulated a growing literature in both the academic and popular presses (with Christian devotional works constituting a significant portion of the latter category). To humanize a movement that has been notably inhuman in their operations and practices, much of this story will be told through the perspective of the youngest adherents—child soldiers who have escaped from the LRA—and in particular, through the singular voice of Grace Akallo, who was an unwilling soldier of the IRA during the key period in which it operated out of southern Sudan.

Joseph Kony and the Lord's Resistance Army

Success in the context of a terrorist group is not easy to measure, and this is especially true in the case of the Lord's Resistance Army. So shunned by the Acholi people for whose interests the group claims to fight that approximately 90% of its fighting forces are of necessity composed of abducted children,²² the LRA's success is an enigma. It has succeeded in surviving, its leader Joseph Kony has proved adept when necessity warrants at the art of regional power politics, and it has all but destroyed the fabric of traditional Acholi society, making way for the new Acholi whom Kony believes will ascend to power under his divinely inspired leadership. Given these circumstances, surely Kony's claim to the *lapii* must be considered more credible than that of Alice or her father Severino. Nothing however, could be further from the truth. How much further is graphically demonstrated by Finnström (2006, 210):

Yet Joseph Kony and other senior rebels claim that the Acholi population have themselves to blame, after a prominent elder in Gulu town allegedly turned the blessing into a curse by ritually displaying his

penis while condemning the rebels. His wife is alleged to have displayed her breasts. By these acts, they were asking how the rebels could turn against the parents who had once brought them into life. Imagined kinship was made most real. This older man is alleged to have voiced his frustrations over the increase in violence directed at the civilian population, saying, "If these children who are in the bush originate from my penis, I curse them" (see also Dolan 2005, 110).

As p'Bitek (1971, 149–150) notes, this is the gravest curse known to the Acholi. As with the warfare blessing, it cannot be retracted easily. Even if it had not been made in this particular instance—something that was contested by many informants—the mere rumours of the curse may well have encouraged the rebels to increase their violence against elders, healers and other arbitrators of Acholi cosmology.²³

Clearly, Kony is not going to win any popularity contests personally, and the appeal of the LRA to its Acholi constituency is nil. But from its formation in late 1987 as the Lord's Salvation Army and later as the United Christian Democratic Army before emerging in 1992 as the Lord's Resistance Army,²⁴ Kony and his movement have proved resourceful, adaptable and utterly ruthless, evolving to a level of violence so extreme that the violence has lost its message content. Violence of the type practiced by the LRA (and I would argue other "Fifth Wave" Movements) is simply an affirmation of being—a way of life. It states "we kill, therefore we are" and little else (Kaplan 2007, 545–570). Yet to think of the LRA as simply a band of sociopaths would be to miss its efficacy—its unceasing efforts to create the new Acholi tribe—which by 2009 is at the heart of the soteriological quest of Joseph Kony. At its core, the LRA is a children's crusade²⁵ made up of two layers. The outer layer—expendable and utilitarian in the extreme, are the children kidnapped by the movement to fill its ranks as male child soldiers and young girls of reproductive age who fulfill the twin functions of child soldiers and child brides, producing the children born into the movement and thus uncontaminated by contact with the outside world. This inner core of "golden children" are, in the words of Grace Akello, "never touched" (Grace Akallo interview with Jeffrey Kaplan, 2009). They are the literal embodiment of the new Acholi.

During the biblically resonant seven year period spanning its forma-

tion and triumph over the challenge of the hapless Severino for the remnants of the HSMF until the 1994 move to the Sudan, the Lord's Resistance Army underwent a period of dazzling change, expansion and remarkable adaptation to unfavorable circumstances. Kony's ability to reconstitute the HSMF and turn it into the Lord's Resistance Army, a deadly force that has survived and even thrived to the present day, may be explained on two levels; that which is apparent to western researchers and that which is obvious to the Acholi. For the Acholi, there is a universal belief that Kony controls (or is controlled by) spirits (or to some Acholi, demons). That Kony possesses (or is possessed by) spiritual power is unquestioned in Acholiland, doubted by virtually no one inside or outside the movement. Grace Akallo talks of the futility of trying to escape because she believed implicitly Joseph Kony's oft-stated claim to be able to see inside her head and thus to know in advance when she was thinking of escape.²⁶ The view is echoed by a Human Rights Watch interview with Peter O., an LRA child soldier for several years who in Gulu in 2003 recalled:

He (Kony) is not a Muslim, or a Christian, he is his own religion. He can sit and then talk from very far away and give orders. And then he can look at you and tell you he knows what you are thinking. Everybody is afraid of him. But we all admired him. He promised us that he will take over the government and then we would be able to live in big houses and drive cars. We were forced to watch those who wanted to escape being killed. Nobody wanted to escape then.

(Human Rights Watch/Africa 2003, 24)

This universal Acholi belief in Kony's spirits leads to a deeper internal discourse in Acholiland over how Acholi spirits who are supposed to be benign in their relations with the Acholi could be co-opted or overcome by malign "foreign spirits" who are seen to guide Kony and the LRA:

...many people in Acholi question Kony's spiritual and military objectives, although they believe that he possesses a powerful spiritual power.

But some Acholi people believe that Kony's spirits are foreign and evil and are beyond Acholi comprehension. Some assert that these spir-

its are violent and cannot therefore be of Acholi origin because there are no such violent and militant spirits or powers in jogi [plural of jok-spirit or god] according to Acholi cosmology. Their argument is also based on the observation that Acholi spiritual powers in jogi are targeted by the Kony rebels, just as they were also targeted during the Alice Auma and Severino's rebellions but with a difference as already noted. This shows the dangerous nature of Kony's spiritual adventures to the Acholi society because, although he may be using them to transform the present Acholi society, the cost to Acholi society is too high because of the very destructive implications for the entire Uganda society. (Human Rights and Peace Centre (HURIPeC) and Liu Institute for Global Issues 2003, 44–45).²⁷

This Acholi belief is taken into account by foreign observers, who add on a more mundane level that Kony had some considerable experience in Acholi resistance movements, having served as a spiritual advisor to the UDPM/A, which also gave him some experience in preying on the Acholi people (Finnström 2006, 209). He is a master of bush warfare, well able to play the game of power politics when it serves his ends, and has through the abduction and manipulation of child soldiers, found an almost bottomless well of completely expendable recruits. It is that recruitment technique that Kony and the LRA have perfected, and it is the abduction of children into essentially a children's crusade that made Kony known outside of northern Uganda. This international fame, or more accurately, infamy, was late coming and was the result of the October 10, 1996 LRA raid on the St. Mary's College boarding school in which thirty girls were kidnapped and dragged into the bush by LRA child soldiers. The "Aboke Girls" as the thirty girls, including Grace Akallo, who were kept by the LRA came to be called, thrust the LRA for the first time onto the world stage. To put it mildly, the LRA and its messianic leader were surprised by the reaction and were definitely not pleased with its results. The kidnapping began the chain of events that would send the movement into exile in South Sudan where the Sudanese government sought a counterweight to Ugandan support for the SPLA and would lead Kony to ask constantly of the girls why they were so special, and treat them with a special cruelty as a result of their unknowing role in his sudden notoriety. It would be no exaggeration to

say that the first step on Kony's road to indictment by the ICC was taken on October 10, 1996—the day of the raid on St. Mary's.²⁸

While the seismic impact of the raid on St. Mary's would prove to be a turning point for the LRA, its method was little different from any of the countless raids on villages or towns undertaken by the LRA. In a village raid, there would be the violence against adults—killings with machetes or bullets, rape (including forcing boys to rape their mothers or sisters as family members looked on helplessly). Often villages were burned, or left to survive to sustain the supply of child soldiers and "wives." The children were taken, tied into a chain and led out into the bush at a very rapid forced march. Anyone unable to keep up or trying to escape would be killed—most often by the other children being abducted who would act under threat of death themselves. Rape was sometimes a feature of this act, as would the ritual killing of one of the abductees. Typical of this experience is Susan, a sixteen year old LRA abductee who vows to conduct the traditional death rites to absolve her of the blood debt she was forced to incur:

One boy tried to escape, but he was caught. They made him eat a mouthful of red pepper, and five people were beating him. His hands were tied, and then they made us, the other new captives, kill him with a stick. I felt sick. I knew this boy from before. We were from the same village. I refused to kill him and they told me they would shoot me. They pointed a gun at me, so I had to do it. The boy was asking me, "Why are you doing this?" I said I had no choice. After we killed him, they made us smear his blood on our arms. I felt dizzy. There was another dead body nearby, and I could smell the body. I felt so sick. They said we had to do this so we would not fear death and so we would not try to escape.

I feel so bad about the things that I did.... It disturbs me so much that I inflicted death on other people.... When I go home I must do some traditional rites because I have killed. I must perform these rites and cleanse myself. I still dream about the boy from my village who I killed. I see him in my dreams, and he is talking to me and saying I killed him for nothing, and I am crying.

Susan, sixteen (Human Rights Watch/Africa 1997, 1)

The incredible degree of brutality displayed in LRA raids is not however simple sadism. Rather, it is a canny perception of human psychol-

ogy and Acholi culture. Once an Acholi spills blood, as noted already, he or she takes on a spiritual burden that makes reintegration into Acholi society problematic. Moreover, a girl losing her virginity or, worse yet, having a baby fathered by LRA fighters creates a level of shame on her family and clan that makes reintegration virtually impossible.²⁹ This is how Grace Akallo recalls the attack on St. Mary's and the subsequent move from Uganda to southern Sudan. It should be noted that the LRA was strikingly unsuccessful in fighting the Dinka led SPLA. The Dinka are a tall, strong, imposing people and it was decided early on that Dinka children would not make good candidates for abduction and recruitment. Grace Akallo and other sources interviewed who were with the LRA in southern Sudan all attest to the fear that the LRA had of the SPLA and of the Dinka themselves. Yet the international pressure on the Ugandan government to finally do something about the disastrous situation that was applied in the wake of the St. Mary's attack made the move to Sudan necessary, and Grace's account of the events should be read as a microcosm of the LRA's move from a purely Ugandan problem to a regional actor playing a hand of some importance to the Central Africa security puzzle:

Well that night... I remember waking up bundling myself with a blanket that I had on myself and throw myself down after I heard ...the breaking of the windows because... I was quite confused. I didn't know what was going on and so when I fell down I found my friends under the bed shaking seriously and I asked them "what's going on" and they did not answer me but the body, the way their body was shaking just told me the truth... Their voices were all over the place asking us to open the door, telling us that if we didn't open the door they were going to throw in the bomb inside and blow us up. So we got out of the bed and started running from one side to another trying to hide ourself, we didn't want to open the door. It actually went for quite a long time before one girl decided to open the door because she thought if they throw the bomb here nobody's going to escape but if I open the door maybe some people will be able to escape. The moment she opened the door they slapped her with a machete and then she fell down and you can imagine how crazy the place was. All the girls were screaming and the rebels just rushed in the dorm and tied all of us

and they say “lift the rope, if you miss the rope you’re not going to miss the machete.” and so I was among the first people to get tied, five of us were tied together with the rope. So, they tied me on my waist so my hands were free so I helped tying my friends in the fear of them getting macheted. So I...I getted close and just even if I don’t tied pretend like I’ve tied it and then they pushed us out through the dorm into the cold night...

I don’t know how far it is but we walked the whole night and sister caught up with us in the morning around eight...She was following the candy wrappers and the foot prints and jam because that day you know, Independence Day they had given us, sister had given us a lot of food to eat. Because as always if it is holidays they give us a lot to eat and celebrate and dance and everything so she had given us a lot and so when the rebels came they actually had a feast because they had to take all those that we had...they were young, really. The one who was hustling us and pushing us and he was like ten years old and one of my friends was like “if you didn’t have a gun I would have just hold you in my little hand and just throw you out”...

Sister Racquelli when she came in I thought what has gone on, what’s going on because the way she was. Her eyes were red she was swollen, the...the face was swollen crying all day and all night even when she was walking and she appeared with one of our teachers. She came with one of our teachers and I thought this teacher is crazy why would he risk himself to come here. But, and then they made the teacher to cover dead body and sister Racquelli started pleading the rebel commander. When they first appeared they pointed guns at them, then the commander ordered people to stop pointing the guns at them. The sister started pleading she even offered like money, she offered medicine to them and the rebels refused the medicine, they refused the money. No, they took the medicine but they didn’t take the money. They said “we’re not fighting for money, we’re fighting for power” and so, but sister did a lot like trying to clean up the...the wounded and that we were moving because there were people who were wounded there...They were being carried on stretchers by the captives and so sister helped to clean up the wounded, treated them, and in the hope of getting her girls back and they told her to remove the veil because the veil was white and she had to walk in the bushes just like us pleading and crying until in the evening that they she... they sat us down a certain tree like on the banana plantation and they started select-

ing us one by one, and they took sister away from the group when they were selecting the group sister was sitting with the commander Lageera and then they brought her back after they finished selecting the girls and she told us, she told the thirty of us who were going to remain she said “girls I am so sorry that I’m going to leave you here now but I promise you I’ll never leave you, I am coming back.”³⁰ The moment she say that we started screaming louder and the rebels as if they were waiting for us to scream they came jumping on us, all over the place. Jumping on our backs, hitting us and sister was like “why do you want to kill them when I’m still here why don’t you kill me instead of them or just take me and let them go?” And they told her if you don’t leave with the 109 we are going to take them all now and so she couldn’t risk leaving 109 to be taken again so she left with them...

...after a month in Uganda wondering around fighting with the... Uganda army government and then we were taken to Sudan and we saw Kony for the first time. After a month of abduction in Sudan, not in Uganda...

It took us four days and four nights walking [to get to Sudan]. Walking which is not walking, running. We all always run in the bushes, it’s like I need to see you in a straight line. If you cut that straight line then you’re dead. You have to be on the straight line and not cut it, like no making a gap. You have to follow someone otherwise they will shoot you and on the way to Sudan when you get weak they ask you ‘uh are you tired’ if you say yes and then they say “do you want to rest,” you say yes then they will kill you. Rest is killing you. They don’t leave you to sit there to be found.

Author: The LRA is famous for when they first kidnap either an individual or a group before they go very far they have them do something, like kill or rape to break the connection [to Acholi culture].

Grace: Well, first they do a ritual which is like smearing people with sheanut oil. And that’s the first day that you’re abducted and after you’ve walked away from the...from where they abducted you from and they smear you with sheanut oil and then the next step they make you, within the week they make you beat someone or kill someone and actually they beat you first before they make you beat someone. They put on the forehead putting a sign of the cross and then the arms and legs and put it on your chest as a sign of the cross. [Girls] have to remove their tops to put, yeah.”

Well, I didn't really believe in anything that they were doing at all. I...I was like "I don't believe in this" because especially when they put a circle, they drew a circle and put the potions in and they told us to stand on it. And they used ash mixed with water and they dip an unbroken egg inside and they draw a sign of the heart on our chest and on our backs and a sign of the cross on our foreheads and our hands. I didn't believe it I kept in my mind I was like "this is it, just ridiculous, this is not true" and I would not believe in it. Not going to believe in it because they were saying if, if that thing the ash that they had smeared on our chest and our back wears out before three days that means you're planning to escape or you're a witch yourself and so they will kill you and so we had to stay bare chested for three days, that they would watch us too, and even without showering... They say it's... for protection ... if it wears out that means you're a witch or you're planning to escape or you're planning evil against the rebels... imagine you being taken...your top taken off in front of everyone. Then you have to walk for three days without the shirt on, it's embarrassment the shame...

[The first time I had to kill was while we were still in Uganda]...this young girl was she tried to escape three times and then the fourth time they got her. She was hiding in somebody's house because we had set her down in that village to stay overnight and then cook our food before leaving...walking away. So, she hid in second nun's house and this nun had a pregnant woman and the rebel commander Lageera was like because this girl was staying in this camp. In the rebels group we also have small, small groups that people are divided into so she was staying in the rebel commander's camp and the rebel commander discovered she was not there and so they ordered for search and they found her inside this man's house, this man had covered her with a papyrus mat and put her under the bed to try to help her out and when they found her they threw the man and the childrens' mother who was almost due, she was very pregnant... she was almost due. They killed all of them and they forced us to beat this girl to death. They beat this woman who was pregnant and you could see the baby was moving around trying to run away from the beating and so...they beat them to death... all the Oboke girls. The thirty of us they called to do this plus the other kids that had been abducted that same day, that same week... but for us the Oboke girls they put us in front to start first because they knew we were scared to touch anybody.

Well, I picked a very small stick to start with and that was the wrong idea according to the rebels because I picked a very small stick and then I stood at the ...feet of the girl and I was beating the feet not the leg and a rebel hit my head hard, by the time I woke up the girl was gone... that was in the beginning. They forced us to do a lot more after that...

When we cross over Sudan the rebels, the people who had been in Sudan before told us that we are in Sudan because of the landscape. It changed it was different from the one from Uganda and you know hilly, dry and kind of rocky and it was the hardest part to walk on because it was rocky. Every part you step is rocks and so, but we reach the camp in Sudan the camp that was [an] Arab camp. We called them Arabs but the Al-Bashir soldiers' camp and we heard them speaking different language, speaking Arabic and so we knew we were in Sudan...

...it was the first time [I saw Kony]. I didn't even know him actually, I had never even seen his pictures either. I had heard of him as monster killing... cutting people's noses, cutting people's lips but I'd never seen him not even his picture. So, the first time he came to address us he talked in the third person term and he was saying please this Kony, he is praising him but I've never seen him why is he keeping us here and so, I asked one of my neighbors who is this Kony and she was like "hush um that...you don't know that is Kony" he said *Ladit* because that's what they say the name Acholi language. "That's *Ladit* talking." I...I shrunk back and I was like oh my God I could be dead anytime because of even doing this and so, he talked that day and I realized he was the one. He was very...he was very slender, small body and he was very like dressed up...very much dressed up and very much if he was not heading the army you'd not know what character he has, you'd think he was a very good guy because he was always smiling...laughing like a good person.³¹

(Grace Akallo interview with Jeffrey Kaplan, 2009)

By 1994, following failed peace negotiations, the LRA was operating fully out of the Sudan,³² waging a cross border battle with Ugandan troops (occasionally) and raiding villages (frequently). While in the Sudan, Kony added such Islamic elements to his already rich mixture of Christian apocalypticism and messianic claims, Acholi traditional spirit beliefs with edicts mandating that those found guilty of raising pigs would be killed, and those caught working on Fridays were to have an arm amputated.³³ Peace talks would be a continuing hallmark

of the movement, with Kony dangling initiatives, and once going so far as to meet with South Sudan's Vice President Rick Machar, but these have yet to bear fruit (Mawaniki and Wepundi 2007).³⁴ The only real impact on the movement came with the controversial Ugandan Amnesty law which did have some effect in bringing commanders out of the bush and assuring child soldiers that, contrary to Kony's claims, children would be welcomed home rather than being put to death as Kony had convinced many of them to believe.³⁵

The 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the SPLA and the Sudanese government³⁶ effectively ended the welcome accorded to Joseph Kony and the LRA in the Sudan. In a very real sense, the subsequent agreement between the Sudanese and Ugandan governments to stop aiding each others' rebels was superfluous. Events on the ground in both countries had effectively rendered the "covert" actions moot. The LRA, like the Sudanese government itself, found it impossible to defeat the SPLA under the leadership of soon to be Sudanese Vice President John Garang. The LRA suffered a devastating defeat at the hands of the "Dinka" and escaped capture only by the intervention the Sudanese army, who drove him to Juba and safety (McDonnell and Akallo 2007, 139). With Sudan and Acholiland effectively closed to him, Kony followed the path of other down on their luck "Fifth Wave" movements such as the Rwandan Interahamwe and moved to the "wild west of Africa," the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In the Congo, Kony's movement was able to carry on their campaign of terrorizing villages, raping and slaughtering their inhabitants, and kidnapping children to fill their ranks. There is greater military pressure on the LRA than there was before, but Kony and his millennialist children's crusade seem not only undaunted, but have kept the initiative and show no signs of giving in. According to the *Christian Science Monitor* report based on UN statistics:

Since Dec. ...Ngamu and hundreds of other fighters from the LRA have butchered, bludgeoned, and burned their way across an area the size of Belgium. More than 900 people are estimated to have been killed, most of them hacked to death with machetes or beaten by clubs. Hundreds of children have been abducted and 133,000 people have fled their homes, the UN says. (Delany 2009)

What are the LRA's prospects in Eastern Congo? According to Gérard Prunier, a top tier Africa scholar, they would seem rather bleak:

...The LRA is a "cultural" guerrilla force, the product of Acholi alienation from the mainstream of Ugandan social evolution since 1986. Poisonous as its military can be, it has no capacity for spreading beyond its initial social group; particularly in the DRC, it is a kind of rootless "Thugs Without Borders" outfit, moving aimlessly between the province of Western Equatoria in the Sudan, the Southwest of the Central African Republic, and the Geramba game Park in the Congo. Even though it will die kicking, its days are numbered...President Museveni periodically threatens to cross the border and hit the LRA inside the Congo. This is most likely motivated by his irritation at still having to deal with an armed opposition that has been around for twenty-one years and one that Museveni's rational nature completely fails to understand. These angry presidential outbursts are more a sign of frustration than a political response to a real threat.

(Prunier 2009, 321–332)

Perhaps Prunier is right, but one wonders. A coalition of forces has crossed the Ugandan border with the logistical support of AFRICOM, and the LRA is still standing. On a purely rational military analysis, the LRA should not have survived southern Sudan, much less the no man's land of Eastern Congo. Yet today the LRA operates in four countries: Uganda where the "night commuter" phenomenon testifies to the continued presence of LRA forces (Amnesty International 2005), the Sudan, the DRC and the Central African Republic. Contra Prunier, it has no capacity for spreading *within* its own social group, and never has. Save for the brief period following the fall of Severino's tragicomic attempt to reconstitute the Holy Spirit Mobile Forces under his command (Behrend 1999, 174–178) barely pubescent Acholi have had to be dragooned into the movement. No one else wanted any part of it. Yet in the children of the territories under its control, and those born into the movement who today would be in their late teens or early twenties—prime fighting age—and who have been raised on the mother's milk of Joseph Kony's visions, the movement needs to appeal to no other constituency. In this way, the LRA defies Prunier's rational calculus no less than it does President Museveni's. Moreover, the for-

tunes of the Ugandan President and those of Joseph Kony appear to be less antithetical than they would seem on first glance.

Catherine, seventeen:

We would walk through villages where the civilians had fled we would sleep in deserted villages, and eat and stay in the houses. Sometimes there were villagers who had stayed behind the rebels would accuse them [of supporting the government]. One day, they found a man riding a bike. They just cut off his foot with an ax. When his wife came out of the house, they told her to eat the foot. I turned away not to see what happened. (Ehrenreich 1997, 23)

The LRA defies rational calculus, and shows every sign of carrying on its millenarian quest until such time as its prophet, Joseph Kony, either dies or triumphs.

Notes

1. For a good analysis of the militias in Uganda, see Francis (2005, 213–330). The same volume has a cogent argument on the relevance of the threat of African militias to Western security (117–130). For a view of the crises through Acholi eyes, see Behrend (1999, 22–35), and for a political analysis, see Lomo and Hovil (2004).
2. Millenarianisms are frequent responses to perceived crises in Western societies. The Ur text of this arcane field is Cohn (1970). For updated discussions of the phenomenon of revolutionary millenarianism see Barkun (1986, 1996); Kaplan (1997, 2002); Newport and Gribben (2006); Robbins and Palmer (1997); Thrupp (1970); Walliss (2004) and Wessinger (2000a, 2000b).
3. The definitive work on Alice Auma Lakwena is Behrend (1999).
4. The infection rate in 1986, the year of the creation of the Holy Spirit Mobile Forces, was up to 29% in the urban areas. See AVERT, 2009. For a good glimpse of the human scale of the epidemic in Uganda, see Eckholm (1990).
5. The most notorious of these groups, the remnants of the Interahamwe—the group that carried out much of the Rwandan slaughter, thrives today in the Congo, operating not far from the LRA contingents. For a good overview of Congo's plight in the context of its implications for regional and global security, see Prunier (2009).
6. In this article, DRC foreign minister, Alexis Thembe Mwamba, proclaimed "...this week that he expected to be 'totally rid' of the rebels within days." His optimism proved to be premature.

7. The wave theory refers to the work of David Rapoport, whose Four Wave theory is now widely accepted among scholars of terrorism. Rapoport argues that there are four distinct waves of modern terrorism: the Anarchist wave, the anti-colonialist wave, the leftist wave and the current religious wave. Each wave had a precipitating event and each lasted for approximately forty years or one political generation as defined by Arthur Schlesinger in his generational theory of American politics. See respectively Rapoport (2004, 46–73); Schlesinger (1999).
8. By 2007, the draught in Karamoja had effected 500,000 people and created 182,000 refugees. See Department of International Development (DID) (2007); Relief Web (2007); Onencan (2009).
9. The traumatic impact of this event was underlined in my interview with Grace and in subsequent conversations (Grace Akallo interview with Jeffrey Kaplan, 2009).
10. What facilitated the escalation of violence in Karamojong cattle raids was the new ease of availability of the AK-47 or Kalashnikov, either in its Russian version or cheaper Chinese imitations. See Carr (2008, 70–73).
11. For a good discussion of the impact of militia formations in Uganda in this period, see Rukooku (2005, 213–330).
12. For an outstanding discussion of the traditional religious *zeitgeist* upon which Alice's ritual cleansing process was created, see Finnström (2006).
13. The label "fundamentalist" is not applied to the HSM or HSMF in a polemic sense. Rather, the Christian aspects of their belief system adhere quite closely to the pure case typology of fundamentalist traits offered by Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby in the first volume of the University of Chicago's Fundamentalism Project's series (Marty and Appleby 1991, 817–833).
14. Health and lifestyle issues such as the prohibitions against smoking and alcohol (Precautions 2 and 3) are offered with biblical proof texts, and are thus "Christianized" to a degree.
15. Kony himself confirmed this objective in a 2004 interview in the Sudanese Magazine *The Referendum* in which he stated: "...[the LRA] is fighting for the application of the Ten Commandments of God and we are also fighting to liberate people living in occupied Northern Uganda" (Vinci 2007, 342).
16. Pork is considered unclean by the Acholi while mutton is reserved for sacrificial use. A male with more or less than the standard issue two testicles (a *lalwe* in Acholi) is considered to be a bringer of bad luck, and as an unintended witch as well. The fear of witchcraft is common to both the HSM and the Lord's Resistance Army, as well as to Acholi society generally (Behrend 1999, 15–16, 65–66).
17. For a fuller discussion of the issue of the War Blessing, and a fine account of the fiasco of the march on Kampala, see Behrend (1999), Chapters 4 and 6.

18. Many disgusted with Severino's leadership defected to Kony. Gersony (1997) states in this regard: "His activities are remembered for some poorly planned attacks on Kitgum town in which many of his followers were killed, and after which some of the survivors defected to Joseph Kony's group."
19. That these new landholders are relatives or supporters of President Museveni is widely accepted by many Ugandans, but as yet is unproven.
20. For a video depicting these children, see NBC Nightline, 2005.
21. The issues growing out of the arrest warrant are complex, effectively barring Kony from reaching an agreement with the Ugandan government which would end the violence under the amnesty program which has been relatively successful at bringing some senior LRA leaders out of the bush (Ochowun and Onyalla 2005). So contentious was the decision that a group of Acholi elders were invited by ICC Chief Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo to discuss the matter. See the ICC Press Release, 2005. Finally, for an emotional defense of the decision, see the interview with Moreno-Ocampo in the video documentary "Invisible Children" (2009).
22. The 90% figure, as well as the estimate of some 30,000 children abducted, is agreed upon by all sources. See for example, United Nations Top Ten Stories, 2009.
23. The author's references in text are to respectively Dolan(2005) and O. p'Bitek (1971).
24. For a good capsule history of the LRA, see Gersony (1997, 36–52). Cf. Human Rights and Peace Centre (HURIPEC) and Liu Institute for Global Issues, 2003.
25. The reference to the thirteenth century Children's Crusade is not made lightly. The similarities are there, and are of some considerable interest to any who believe that only in modern Africa have the phenomenon of child soldiers suddenly appeared in the world. See Volume III of Runciman's (1951, 139–144) magnificent history.
26. This is a universal finding of all who have interviewed Acholi, from the people in the camps and villages to soldiers or former soldiers in the LRA (Grace Akallo interview with Jeffrey Kaplan, 2009).
27. The source for this analysis is Finnström (1999).
28. On the role of St. Mary's in bringing the LRA to world attention, see the Grace Akallo interview with Jeffrey Kaplan (2009) and McDonnell and Akallo (2007, 23). On the Aboke girls more generally, see the faith testament, Temmerman (2001).
29. For a well written and accessible discussion of all of these issues, including some key interviews, see Eichstaedt (2009). The problems inherent in the re-integration process of child soldiers from the LRA is examined in a good study

by Veale and Stavrou (2003). In a conversation with Grace Akallo on March 5, 2009, it was noted that girls returning from the bush *with the significant exception* of the Aboke Girls faced three possible fates, which in order were prostitution, suicide or returning to the bush to take their chances with the LRA policy of killing escapees on sight. The Aboke girls were different. Their plight was so widely known that their parents formed a western style support group (with significant western assistance) and they did take back some of their daughters when they escaped, including Grace (Grace Akallo interview with Jeffrey Kaplan, 2009 and Thernstrom 2005, 34–39).

30. True to her word, Sister Racquelli publicized the plight of the Aboke girls in Europe, from which the story hit the international headlines. She complained loud and long, going daily to the President's office. Frustrated with her, President Museveni had her deported from Uganda, which only magnified her voice in Europe.
31. Grace herself escaped after seven months, essentially walking away from a battle. African bush skirmishes were described earlier, and in the chaos, Grace, exhausted and sickened by all that had happened to her as a child soldier and a junior wife of a senior commander (she recalls that both the "husband" and the senior wives beat her on a daily basis, such was the ethos of violence within the LRA ranks), simply sat under a tree and after a time noticed the battle had rolled past her. Convinced that Kony could read her thoughts, she gave no thought to escape, but merely kept walking. She was shot in the back, but the bullet glanced off the metal pot strapped to her back. With this proof of God's love and guidance, she kept walking. She would eventually find eight other girls and convince them to walk with her. Several LRA boys declined to come, not wishing to be thought of as following a girl. They were eventually picked up by an SPLA patrol and taken to a camp in a Dinka village. To their surprise, they were well treated, nursed back to health, and eventually driven to the Ugandan border and turned over to the Ugandan military, among whom was one of Grace's uncles. From there she was eventually reunited with her family, though the transition was difficult. She was not the same innocent fifteen year old school girl that they knew as their relative anymore (Grace Akallo interview with Jeffrey Kaplan, 2009; McDonnell and Akallo, 2007).
32. Of a good analysis of the Sudanese period, see Doom and Vlassenroot (1999, 28–34).
33. Doom and Vlassenroot (1999, 25).
34. On religious peacemaking attempts, see Ochola (2006).
35. For the full text of the Amnesty Act of 2000, see "The Amnesty Act, 2000," www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/northernuganda/documents/2000_Jan_The_Amnesty_Act.doc. Subsequent revisions of the law had increasing success,

but were highly criticized abroad for allowing senior commanders guilty of heinous crimes to return from the bush without fear of prosecution (Amnesty International, 2006).

36. For full text copies of all of the relevant documents constituting the agreement, see the homepage of the United Nations Mission to the Sudan (United Nations Mission to Sudan, 2009).

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