

AFRICA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

SOCIAL OUTCOMES OF CHILD-WITCH ACCUSATIONS IN MALAWI:
AN INVESTIGATION OF DISCOURSES AND PRACTICES
OF ABUNDANT LIFE CHURCH MINISTERS

BY

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SOCIAL OUTCOMES OF CHILD-WITCH ACCUSATIONS IN MALAWI:
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I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other College
or University for academic credit

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of Africa International
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ABSTRACT

There has been a resurgence of witch accusations in Malawi which in its new form includes child-witch accusations. This research secured detailed information on social outcomes of child-witch accusations by studying the discourses and practices of Abundant Life Church Ministers. The paper argues that the practices and discourses of the church ministers in dealing with child-witch accusations have to some extent contributed to the negative social outcomes. While this study considers cultural and sociological explanations of the child-witch accusations, it does not intend to discount the religious values on belief in witchcraft.

This study used an ethnographic approach to arrive at the findings. I applied anthropological research methods in collecting data including; interviews, participant observations and a small survey.

The most profound findings of the study were that exorcism on the accused child by church ministers at times confirmed to the community that a child is a witch, resulting to a child living with a “witch” label for life. Secondly, suffering and evil in the Central Region of Malawi is majorly attributed to interpersonal causal ontologies of which child-witchcraft is primary.

The foundations for child witch accusations majorly included; social-economic factors, rumors and suspicions, behavior of the child, series of misfortunes following a child or community, and incurable sicknesses. The social outcomes of child-witch accusations included; banishment, teasing and bullying, stigmatization, increased child-witch accusations, mistreatment of the child, rape, insecurity of the community, lose of trust in church ministers and at a very small scale there was an indication of conversions.

This research is important because it seeks to address the issue of child-witch accusations from an African worldview level—as Samuel Kunhiyop rightly noted, “Although many Africans are Christians, their worldview has not been transformed” (2008, 385). Therefore, the research came up with recommendations; first, a comprehensive exegesis and contextualization of scriptures addressing witchcraft is needed. Secondly, the doctrine of suffering and sin should be adequately addressed in Bible studies and pulpits, as the research indicated that there is a correlation between suffering and child-witch accusations. Thirdly, advocacy and social actions in protecting the accused children is urgently needed in the central region of Malawi.

TO

To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen (Jude 1: 24-25).

And

To the late VC, Dr. Moses Douglas Carew who went to be with the Lord in the period I was writing my thesis proposal at AIU

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To Beatrice my wife, Farai my daughter and Joseph my son who endured my absence from home as I continually buried myself in books in the Tony Wilmot Memorial Library at AIU.

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TABLE OF CONTENT

ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vi
ILLUSTRATIONS	xii
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS.....	xiii
CHAPTER 1.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background to the Research Study.....	2
Research Concern	2
Research Question	3
Sub-Questions.....	3
Purpose of the Study.....	3
Significance of the Study.....	4
Delimitation	5
Limitations.....	6
Operational Definitions of Terms.....	7
CHAPTER 2.....	11
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	11
Lilongwe and Dedza Districts	11
Pentecostalism in Malawi	12
History of Abundant Life Church.....	13
Do Witches Exist?	14
Review of Witchcraft Theories.....	15
Origins of Witchcraft in Africa	17
The Dynamic Nature of Ufiti Witchcraft in Malawi	20
Involvement of a Sing’anga Diviners and Pentecostal Ministers in Child Witch Accusations.....	22

Traditional Versus Christian Worldview Regarding the Source of Evil	23
Child Witchcraft	24
Witchcraft Fantasies and the Other World	25
Causes of Child-Witchcraft Accusation	26
Witchcraft Act in the Constitution of Malawi	27
Media Report of Child-Witch Accusations in Malawi	27
Town Based Child-Witch Accusations.....	29
Social Outcomes of Child Witch Accusations.....	30
The Role of the Church in Witch Accusations	31
CHAPTER 3	34
METHODOLOGY	34
Methods of Data Gathering	34
Selection and Description of the Site.....	36
Management Plan, Timeline, Feasibility	36
Ethical Consideration	36
Data Analysis Strategies	37
Coding and Usage.....	37
Explanation of Codes, Themes and Sub-Themes	37
Illustration of Usage of a Code.....	38
Methods of Achieving Validity	40
Analysis of the Data	41
CHAPTER 4	42
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	42
Introduction	42
Demographics.....	44
Informants.....	44
Survey Participants	45
Summary of Findings of a Small Survey at Abundant Life Bible School.....	45
Interpretation of Survey Data	49
Factors Contributing To Child Witchcraft Accusations	50
Poverty	50
Rumors and Suspicions.....	50

Behavior of the Accused Child	50
Misfortune.....	52
Sickness	52
Relations between the Accused and the Accuser	53
Who First Identified the Witches?	54
Witchcraft Tools	55
Nyanga.....	55
Snakes and Needles	56
Hammers.....	57
School of Thoughts on Child-Witch Accusations	57
Pastors.....	57
Social Workers.....	58
Distribution of Child-Witch Accusations	60
Village Based.....	60
Town- based.....	62
Child-Witch Accusation outside Abundant Life Church.....	63
Case Study of Child Who Claims Deliverance from Witchcraft at Fellowship	63
Social Outcomes of Child-Witch Due to the Way Pastors Handled the Cases.....	65
Case Study of Banishment.....	66
Teasing and Bulling	68
Stigmatization	68
Increase of Child-Witch Accusations	69
Mistreatment of the Accused Child	69
Rape	70
Insecurity of the Community	70
Loss of Trust in Church Ministers	70
Acceptance.....	72
Conversion	72
CHAPTER 5.....	75
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	75
Summary of Key Findings.....	75
Research Question	76
Sub-Questions.....	76
Conclusion	79
Missiological Implications	79
Recommendation for Action against Child-Witch Accusations in Abundant Life Church	83
Recommendation for Further Studies.....	84

REFERENCES	86
APPENDIX 1	90
INTERVIEW GUIDE IN ENGLISH FOR CHURCH MINISTER/SOCIAL WORKER	90
Introduction to Asking Permission to Interview a Person	90
Guide for the Church Minister/Social Worker	90
APPENDIX 2	92
INTERVIEW GUIDE IN ENGLISH FOR THE ACCUSED CHILD.....	92
Guide for the Accused Child	92
APPENDIX 3	94
INTERVIEW GUIDE IN CHICHEWA FOR CHURCH MINISTER/SOCIAL WORKER	94
Introduction to Asking Permission to Interview a Person	94
APPENDIX 4	96
INTERVIEW GUIDE IN CHICHEWA FOR THE ACCUSED CHILD	96
APPENDIX 5	97
WITCHES AND SUFFERING.....	97
Analysis of Data of a Survey Conducted in Lilongwe Malawi at Abundant Life Bible School	97
APPENDIX 6	101
THE WITCHCRAFT ACT OF 1911- CAP 7.02- VOL. 2.....	101
APPENDIX 7	103
RECOMMENDATIONS IN CHILIMAMPUNGA AND THINDWA’S REPORT	103
APPENDIX 8	104
DATA	104
Research Question	105

ILLUSTRATIONS

Tables	Page
1. The Interviews Listed by Code Number and Providing Information about the Interviewees	38
2. Shows a Summary of Themes and Sub-Themes.....	39
3. The distribution of Interviewees according to Social Roles and Gender.....	45

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

A	Accused child
AIU	Africa International University
AR	Accuser
ALC	Abundant Life Church
ALBC	Abundant Life Bible School
CM	stands for a church minister in Abundant Life Church,
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSO	National Statistics Office
PA	stands for the parent of the accused child.
STO	meant the interview was intended to collect a story
SW	social worker
SRQ	Sub-research question,
Th	Themes [when used in the presentation and discussion of findings]
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It has been claimed by many scholars that the center of gravity of Christianity has recently shifted to the global South. Philip Jenkins says that Christianity is no longer a western religion—a foreign religion to Africans, “far from being an export of the capitalist West, or a vestige of Euro-America imperialism, Christianity is now rooted in the Third World, and the religion's future lies in the global South” (Jenkins 2002, 1). But the question is: What type of Christianity are we talking about here? Observers have described Christianity in Africa as a river wide and an inch deep. I see the shallowness in depth reflected in how the African church has continually undermined or paid little attention to some of the crucial issues affecting the well-being of the ordinary Christians. Such issues include the ever-increasing child-witch accusations. Harriet Hill observed, “Missionaries to Africa have long ignored the problem of witchcraft, feeling that it is simply superstition that would evaporate in the face of modernity. Instead, witchcraft activities have not only persisted, but they seem to be on the increase” (Hill 1996, 323). As Hill has observed, the church seems to have preached a gospel that inadequately addresses witchcraft (Hill 1996, 324). Miller has recently registered concern about witchcraft violence in the “born again” Christian churches and among some extreme Islamic sects in East Africa (2012, 213). Have exorcisms by the church in child-witch accusation cases been effective? What social outcomes have resulted from the way church ministers handled child-witch accusation cases? In this research, I seek to answer some of these questions and attempt to provide a missiological response.

Background to the Research Study

This study focused on examining social outcomes of child-witch accusations resulting from the way church ministers of Abundant Life Church (ALC) in central region of Malawi handled child-witch accusation cases. ALC is a Pentecostal church and has approximately two thousand members. Malawi has been traditionally known as a Christian country by the fact the eighty percent of the population claim to be Christian. The majority of Malawians including a majority of Pentecostals in Malawi believe in witches including child-witches (Chilimampungwa and Thindwa 2012, 19).

Research Concern

Witchcraft has been defined by many Africans as “too sensitive a topic” and “too political and potentially embarrassing” (Miller 2012, 214). Ernest Wendland observed that an African scholar of religion from Malawi, Patrick Kalilombe, did not even mention the subject of witchcraft in his article “outline of the Chewa Traditional Religion” (Wendland and Hachibamba 2007, 215). Charles Chilimampungwa from the Sociology Department, Chancellor College, University of Malawi, and George Thidwa from the Association for Secular Humanism (2012) observed that child-witchcraft belief is widely accepted and that children suffer from witch accusations yet no systematic research study had been done to determine the extent and nature of witchcraft-based violence against children. Meanwhile, thousands of innocent children in Malawi have fallen victim to accusations of witchcraft practices. Many simply accept it, either out of fear or to please the perpetrators. Chilimampungwa and Thidwa contend that confessions by adult and children witches can be misleading since admissions by the accused are sometimes made under duress (2012, 11). This ethnographic research is aimed at investigating the social outcomes of child-witch

accusations due to the way church ministers of ALC have handled these cases. The researcher also seeks to understand how the Pentecostal ministries respond to the plight of the accused children.

Research Question

What do church ministers in Abundant Life Church say and do in cases where children are accused of being witches and what social outcomes have resulted?

Sub-Questions

1. How do church ministers in Abundant Life Church respond to child-witch accusations?
 - a. Who was the child accused?
 - b. Who accused the child?
 - c. How did the minister respond?
2. How did the accuser ascertain child-witchcraft practices?
3. What beliefs are reflected in these discourses and practices?
4. What social outcomes resulted from child-witch accusations due to the way a church minister handled the case?
 - a. How did the community (family members, neighbors, church) treat the accused child?
 - b. How did the accused child respond to the accusations?

Purpose of the Study

This research was aimed at understanding the social outcomes of child-witch accusations in the Abundant Life Church— a Pentecostal ministry in Malawi. While there is a considerable amount written on child-witch accusations in Malawi

(Chilimampunga and Thindwa 2012; Mgbako 2011), it has not been brought together systematically. It is therefore illuminating to begin doing so for several reasons: Firstly, child-witch accusation cases are being reported all over the country including in the evangelical churches. Secondly, child-witch exorcisms have sometimes been administered by amateurs or crooked pastors. There has been an outcry from human rights activists, government agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations and anthropologists that many pastors and church leaders have not only enjoyed their position but abused it (Gram 2011; Powles and Deakin 2012). This research serves as a partial fulfillment of a recommendation for further study on social outcome of witch accusations by Dr. Steve Rasmussen's research study, "*Illness and Death Experiences in Northwestern Tanzania: An Investigation of Discourses, Practices, Beliefs, and Social Outcomes, Especially Related to Witchcraft, Used in a Critical Contextualization and Education Process with Pentecostal Ministers.*" It is also a recommendation for in-depth research on child-witchcraft in Malawi following a research study on witchcraft based violence by Dr. Charles Chilimampunga and Mr. George Thidwa (2012).

Significance of the Study

Child-witch accusations have increasingly become rampant in Malawi (Chilimampunga and Thidwa 2012, 11). Yet there has not been a significant evangelical church response on the issue contrary to what has been reported in other countries like Democratic Republic of Congo and other parts of Africa (Phiri 2009, 1). Samuel Kunhiyop has rightly observed that "there are no checks and controls to curb the modern mass hysteria of belief in and practice of witchcraft" (2008, 384). John Selfridge contends that witchcraft is a slavery from which the Malawian society has found no release (Selfridge 1976, 7). By 2008, cases of witchcraft stormed the

Malawi Police Service in hundreds a week such that the Police Commissioner confessed that they had failed to handle them (Gondwe 2008, 1). Chilimampunga and Thindwa noted that in a study by National Statistics Office (NSO) conducted in 2008, 76% of sampled Malawian households said that they knew witches in their community, and 62% said they knew someone accused of witchcraft (2012, 9). Semu Banda contends that there is a connection between illiteracy and belief in witchcraft. He observed that forty percent of the adult population of Malawians were illiterate and believed in witchcraft (Banda 2009, 14). However, I differ with him because most Malawians, regardless of age, education or social position hold the belief that witchcraft exists (Chilimampunga and Thindwa 2012). Breugel, writing in *Chewa Traditional Religion*, sheds some light on the persistence of witchcraft belief in Malawian culture, “witchcraft is related to social conflicts inherent in the Malawian culture” (2001, 212).

The present research is meant to assist church leaders and Non-Governmental Organizations to consider taking proactive steps in protecting the children accused of witchcraft. Secondly, the present research will serve as one of the pioneer academic researches on child-witch accusations in Malawi as recommended by Chilimampunga and Thindwa (2012). Finally, the research will help respond to Frank Dimmock’s question on how to mobilise the Body of Christ in Malawi to respond appropriately and compassionately to child-witch accusations (2011).

Delimitation

Despite the fact that this research was dealing with social outcomes of child-witch accusations, the research did not cover women or elderly witch accusations in Malawi. Furthermore, in dealing with child-witch accusations, the research only

focused on one Pentecostal church and three other institutions that deal with child-witch accusations in Central Region of Malawi.

Limitations

The constraints that limit the scope of the research are as follows: Firstly, the researcher spent only thirty days in collecting data and worked without an assistant. This was so because I am a student in Kenya and had only a one-time opportunity to travel to Malawi during the July-August (2012) summer holiday. Secondly, some child-witch accusation cases were sourced outside the Abundant Life Church despite my intention and design to focus on ALC. Thirdly, the research focused in the urban areas of the central region of Malawi, because this is where I spent most of my holiday, despite the fact that there were equally child-witch accusation cases in the rural areas. Fourthly, though with some added advantage, was language barrier as most of the data was in Chichewa—my mother tongue. Nevertheless, it was partially advantageous because the interviewees understood exactly what I was looking for but disadvantageous when it came to translating the same data into English. Out of the twenty two interviews only two were in English and the rest were in Chichewa. To transcribe the data into English was a challenge as some local expressions could not be properly translated into English. Ngugi wa Thiong'o was right to pose questions of translatability:

Is complete translatability possible between two languages? Can any two distinct social-cultural and linguistic traditions be completely commensurable? Is it possible to completely understand or represent one culture and language fully in terms of another-without a certain amount of distortion, incompleteness, betrayal, unnaturalness, etc? (Wendland and Loba-Mkole 2004, 5)

Chinua Achebe was also no doubt aware of the uphill task of translation (Wendland and Loba-Mkole 2004, 5). These and more are questions that reflect the

limitation on my data. Despite the limitations above, the researcher collected very reliable and valuable data.

Operational Definitions of Terms

Some pertinent definitions are provided for technical terms used in this thesis. There are some vernacular terms I have attempted to define but it is questionable whether my English can carry the weight of my mother language.

1. *Ufiti* Witchcraft

Most Malawians believe that some individuals or families have the ability to cause harm to others using secret powers either inherited or purchased. I will use the word *ufiti* witchcraft referring to an art of practicing witchcraft while *mfiti* witch referring to a person who practices witchcraft. While Azande witches of northern Central Africa, including northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Central Africa Republic perform no rites, utter no spell, and possess no medicine (Evans-Pritchard 1937, 21), Malawian “witches” do so. Chilimampunga and Thindwa’s report provide an emic understanding of what witchcraft is:

Witchcraft entails *evil* things that some people do *invisibly like strangling enemies at night, eating dead bodies at graveyards, dancing naked around one’s house at night and slapping enemies while they are asleep at night* (49 year old married woman, Form 2) (Chilimampunga and Thidwa 2012, 35).

Witchcraft is an evil practice which is achieved in a magical way and it is done in two ways: (i) killing of a person or bringing problems to other people in such a way that the culprit cannot be traced; (ii) protecting one’s body so that it is not tampered with by other people (Chilimampunga and Thidwa 2012, 35).

“Witchcraft is the act of using a woven basket as an aeroplane that flies at night” (14 years old Standard 7 boy) (Chilimampunga and Thidwa 2012, 36).

2. Child

A boy or a girl aged less than 18 years.

3. City of refuge

These were towns in biblical times where offenders in the Jewish communities would run to for refuge. In the present research it will mean a home where an accused child is referred to and will become a member of this center until its community graciously accepts it.

4. *Ana otamba* Child- witches

It is a belief that a child, including the ones still in the womb, can be taught witchcraft by either relatives or strangers. Once taught the child causes harm such as murder, diseases, infertility or accidents (Chilimampunga and Thidwa 2012, 19).

5. *Matsenga* Magic

Magic is a chief foe of witchcraft (Evans-Pritchard 1937, 387). It is good or evil powers triggered by means of the intentional manipulation of concrete symbolism, either analogous or associative, on the part of the ritual specialist (Wendland and Hachibamba 2007, 179). The emic perspective of Malawians is that there is a thin line between *ufiti* “witchcraft” and *matsenga* “magic” and all magicians who also are in the family of herbalists are superior to witches (Chilimampunga and Thidwa 2012, 35).

6. *Sing'anga* Diviner

Is a consultant for those who seek help with good intentions or vengeance and those who are jealous of others and intend to harm them.

7. *Wanyanga* Sorcerer

An advanced witch also called *muthu wo khwima* a fortified person. He is secretly but famously gossiped by the community as a consultant for witches. The

researcher will use this word to mean “an individual, usually a male who deliberately chooses to consciously acquire a wicked occupation typically utilizing objects and actions to harm designated individuals in the community either for personal reasons or on behalf of others” (Wendland and Hachibamba 2007, 179). In Malawian culture, the word *mfiti* witch and *wa nyanga* sorcerer are used carelessly or interchangeably. Such a discrepancy is common in many places (Rasmussen 2008, 52; Priest 2012). The general knowledge of most Malawians is that, *wa nyanga* sorcerer unlike *mfiti* a witch has vast knowledge of witchcraft and a witch might not be a sorcerer.

8. Fellowship

Unregistered organization composed of Christians from different denominations who meet usually during the week or weekends and sometimes Sunday afternoons. The meetings are more charismatic as compared to normal church services. Loud prayers, exorcism or deliverance, speaking in tongues, prophecies and evangelism are of highest priority in a Fellowship service.

9. *Nyanga*

Nyanga is a container the witches store their charms for practicing witchcraft. It is made from a horn of an animal. Inside this horn are all sorts of concoctions used to manipulate spiritual power to harm others through magic. The horn is decorated with beads. The most sophisticated *nyaga imapuma* breathes.

10. Consanguine

Consanguine is an adjective referring to the property of being from the same kinship as another person.

11. Exorcism

The term exorcism has been used to mean casting out of a demon in the name of Jesus. In this paper, this term can also substitute what others call deliverance.

Witchcraft is a complex phenomenon. It is therefore my hope that the above definitions will be helpful in shedding more light in understanding the emic perspective of child-witch accusations in the Malawian culture.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This review will begin by describing the geographical position and ethnic identity of the people of Lilongwe and Dedza districts— the districts where the research was based. Secondly, a brief background of Pentecostalism in Malawi has been provided—as Abundant Life Church is a Pentecostal denomination. Thirdly, a brief history of ALC has been made available. Finally, the phenomenology of child-witch accusation in central region of Malawi has been discussed—tracing its originality, theories, prevalence and its social outcomes.

Lilongwe and Dedza Districts

Malawi is in southern central Africa, bordered by Tanzania to the north, Zambia to the west, and Mozambique to the east and south. Malawi has 28 districts. Lilongwe and Dedza are neighboring districts in the central region of Malawi. Abundant Life Church has a majority of her branches in these districts. The two districts cover an area of approximately 10, 000 square kilometers and have a population over 2,000,000 people. Dedza Township is located on the main road-one, 85 km south of Lilongwe. The natives of these two districts are Chewa but recently due to urbanization all the fifteen ethnic groups of Malawi can be found in these two districts—especially Lilongwe the capital city. Nevertheless, Chewa is the dominant ethnic group.

Pentecostalism in Malawi

The early Christian missionaries of Malawi arrived in the nineteenth century (Mulwafu Wapulumuka 2004, 300). David Livingstone was one of the earliest missionaries to visit Malawi. The Presbyterians who have three large synods exercise considerable influence on the national life (Ross 1995, 32). The three Presbyterian mission teams came in between 1875 and 1891 and these are; the Livingstonia Mission of the Free Church of Scotland, the Blantyre Mission of The Established Church of Scotland and finally the mission of the Dutch Reformed Church of Cape Province, South Africa (Weller 1984, 112). Pentecostalism in Malawi came in much later and is now on the rise as it builds on the foundations of the earlier mission work. There has been a debate in establishing when Pentecostalism came to Malawi. As John Easter rightly observed, there is little historiography of Pentecostalism in Malawi (2011, 112). Ulf Strohhahn contends that Apostolic Faith Mission was the first Pentecostal church in Malawi established in 1931 (Easter 2011, 1). However, other Pentecostal historians in Malawi dispute Strohhahn's claim (Easter 2011, 111). Malawi has an estimate of over 200 Pentecostal/Charismatic denominations and organizations (Easter, 2011, 1).

Pentecostalism in Malawi has been commended by John Easter as a movement that has “bridged tribal, racial, and social barriers (2011, 112)” He also argues that Pentecostalism has provided for the felt-needs of Malawians in a holistic way: spiritual, physical, and emotional (Easter, 2011). He says,

The added dimension of power encounter provided inroads into the hearts and minds of the people who lived in fearful bondage to tormenting ancestral spirits believed to be demons. Pentecostalism in Malawi introduced a religion of power. As a result, scores of Malawians turned to Pentecostalism perceiving the relevancy of its message and experience for their daily lives (Easter 2011, 112).

Today the mother church, Apostolic Faith Mission, is counted as one of the minor Pentecostal denominations in Malawi and this is the church where Abundant Life Church, the denomination in which the present research has focused, originated from.

History of Abundant Life Church

According to urban contemporary models of church planting, ALC follows in the category of church split model. It was born in March 2005, after breaking away from Apostolic Faith Mission. The church was co-founded by Bishop Abraham Somba, Reverend Isaac Chiumia and Pastor Chrispine Banda Katiyi. The church started in Lilongwe with two congregations, one in Chilinde and another in Area 49. The two congregations had about 250 members. On January 26, 2006, the church acquired its registration from the government of Malawi. Currently the church has grown to about 2000 members. It has spread from the capital city of Malawi to as far as Zambia and Mozambique. Meanwhile the church has a total of nineteen Pastors. The vision of Abundant Life Church is to preach the gospel worldwide. The vision is being realized by training leaders and sending them to different places to preach and establish churches. However, as self-governing, self-propagating and self-supporting church, Abundant Life Church faces a lot of financial challenges. They, therefore, invite prayers and support from the corporate body of Christ. Meanwhile, the church has only one semi-permanent church building at its headquarters in Lilongwe, Chilinde. The rest of the branches meet in government schools classrooms and in homes. In Mozambique the church has no infrastructure while in Zambia it has three church buildings. The educational ministries of Abundant Life Church includes; Abundant Life School of Ministry, youth ministry, women's ministry and widows and orphans programs. The researcher is a member of the Abundant Life Church. This made it possible for the researcher to collect data.

Do Witches Exist?

Witchcraft is a controversial subject and offers multiple opportunities for misunderstandings (Behringer 2004, 10). In discussing whether witches do exist or not, Hiebert, Shaw and Tienou contends, “observers from cultures that do not believe in witches may hold whatever theory they want, but to many people witchcraft is an urgent reality” (Hiebert, Shaw and Tienou 1999,148). Harriet Hill observed that many scientists do not believe in the reality of a spiritual or psychic world, yet this is reality in the African cultures (1996, 325). Nonetheless, Wendland and Hachibamba doubts if there is such a thing as “witchcraft” which seriously influences everyday life in Africa. To him what kills people is fear. He goes ahead to refer to such terrorized people as “psychological patients of witchcraft”—brain-washed by their traditional religious beliefs (2007, 191). Wendland and Hachibamba therefore contends that “some very sophisticated counseling techniques are to be applied, or are yet to be developed by and for the African church” (2007). I think Wendland and Hachibamba have over-generalized their assertion in concluding that “there is nothing such as witchcraft” (2007, 325). This is because there are people who claim to be witches whether by motivated or forced confession (Gram 2011, 27–28). Samuel Kunhiyop states that “the first response to the question above must be that it is impossible to deny the existence and reality of a belief in witchcraft ” (2004, 379). I suggest that Wendland should have been skeptical on whether witches really do what they claim to do as Kunhiyop argues, “confession only prove the suspect tried to bewitch and believes it effective not that it is effective” (2004, 380). Witchcraft belief is widespread in Malawian cultures. Margret Ali of Save the Children (Malawi) thinks government should acknowledge the existence of witchcraft and take a leaf out of the

books of other countries that confront the issue through proper legislation (Gondwe 2008, 1).

Review of Witchcraft Theories

It would be surprising to find any society that does not have its mythology of inhuman or superhuman malefactors—spirits, abnormal humans, or monsters—beings in whom some people may believe while others doubt or wonder (Ferreiro and Russell 1998, 92). There are many theories that guided me in understanding other people’s phenomenology of witchcraft. In the present research I reviewed the theories of witchcraft proposed by various authors and researchers including Evans-Pritchard (1937), Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew Strathen (2004), Harriet Hill (1996), Steve Rasmussen (2009) and Banda (2008).

Among the Azande, witchcraft provides them with a natural philosophy by which the relations between men and unfortunate events are explained (Evans-Pritchard 1937, 63). To a Zande “Witchcraft explains *why* events are harmful to man and not *how* they happen” (Evans-Pritchard 1937, 72). However, “they do not attempt to account for the existence of phenomena, or even action of phenomena, by mystical causation alone” (Evans-Pritchard 1937, 67). Evans-Pritchard argues that, “What they explain by witchcraft were the particular conditions in a chain of causation which related an individual to natural happenings in such a way that he sustained injury” (1971). Therefore, a particular unusual misfortune demanded an explanation. When a boy knocked his foot against a stump and was cut, that was obvious. However, why on this particular occasion the person should have been so careless and, then, why it should refuse to heal made people to suspect witchcraft (Evans-Pritchard 1937, 67, 68). Likewise, most Malawians explain all their puzzling misfortunes to witchcraft. Banda noted that others theorize that witchcraft

accusations occur as a result of repeated illness, for example, malaria from birth and still others point to the close and intimate nature of African families, living in close quarters under the stress of poverty (Banda 2008). My research finding supports Banda's theory. All the theories I studied seem to point to witchcraft as a cause of all major misfortunes in life. Steve Rasmussen rightly observed that in Northwestern Tanzania, a neighboring country to Malawi, "beliefs in witchcraft are a significant way that people understand and use to respond to suffering" (Rasmussen 2008, 53). Pamela Stewart and Andrew Strathern witchcraft theory is that contemporary witchcraft accusations function in much the same way as witch trials did in Europe and North America in the seventeenth century (Stewart and Strathern 2004, xi). They assert that witchcraft is based on gossip and rumor. They found these two playing an important part in the processes leading to "wrongdoing" such as child-witchcraft accusations. Their theory contends that, "When witchcraft is not obviously at work, rumor and gossip may work as a secret form of witchcraft leading to conflict, violence and scape-goating" (Stewart and Strathern 2004). This social scape-goating has been described by Hiebert, Shaw and Tienou as "an explanation, in part of the cyclical nature of fear and accusation in those societies" (1999, 151). Secondly, witchcraft suspicions according to Stewart and Strathern emerge into specific accusation in response to rising interpersonal tension and are colored by broad historical circumstance. The two assertions above are in agreement with my findings as reported in the presentation and discussion of findings section (Chapter 4). Thus, gossip and rumor have been mentioned as factors contribution to child-witch accusations. However, gossip and rumors are not the only factors leading to child-witch accusation as Stewart and Strathern seems to suggest. I have discussed the other factors in Chapter 4.

Stewart and Stratherns go ahead to suggest a third aspect of their theory of witchcraft and this is the ups and downs of fear of witchcraft. They contend, “ Fear of witchcraft may reach a crescendo, only to die away and later recur (Stewart and Strathern 2004, xi). I think this is what is now happening in Malawi concerning child witch accusations. Tom McCaskie noted that the trend of basic African traditional witchcraft belief which was there for the past hundred and fifty years has simply resurrected and reconfigured (Ranger 2007, 279).

Harriet Hill theory of witchcraft lean more to spirituality than to psycho-social factors. She argues that some humanistic theories do not allow any spiritual reality. These include: stresses on society, social structure, psychological causes and simple superstition. Her own theory which that witchcraft is “a neutral psychic power” (Hill 1996, 337). To the contrary, Harriet’s theory does not properly feet into the Malawian understanding of witchcraft as was originally Malawian witchcraft was believed to be an art that was learnt and passed on. Nevertheless, the above theories simply agree that most African societies explain evil as what Richard Shweder calls “interpersonal causal ontologies” – ontologies assuming that misfortunes are caused by other human parties acting through evil occult means (Shweder 2003, 76–86).

Origins of Witchcraft in Africa

Norman Miller was interested to find out about the origins of witchcraft beliefs. His informant James Kirkman, a well-respected archaeologist, sheds more light on the origin of witchcraft practices: According to Kirkman, the Paleolinguists traced the words ‘witch’ ‘witchcraft’ ‘bewitch’ found in proto-Bantu, language family that was around before Bantu — called the Benue Kwa (Miller 2012, 14). Kirkman found that the Bantu emerged around 3500 BC in West Africa. He thinks the word witchcraft would have come across Africa with the Bantu immigrations. According

to Kirkman, a few pre-historians claim to see evidence of witchcraft in language and ritual items at around 5000 BC. Kirkman's guess is that the idea of witchcraft started when early hunter-gatherers settled and began to domesticate and build villages around 9500 BC for Africans. He thinks, "witchcraft was needed by leaders to accuse someone of evil, of being a traitor; they would call him a witch" (Miller 2012, 14). It might have been an early form of power and control of very early government (Kim 2012; Miller 2012, 14). In the Bakongo traditional beliefs witchcraft may have been born out of their belief in "spirits" "Spirits" (Priest 2012, 3). In his article *The Witchcraft Understanding within African Cultures*, Joseph Mavinga writes:

"Spirits," [spirits] in the Bakongo beliefs, are mediators between human and supra-natural being. In this connection, people in Africa (the DRC) seek to relate to these "spirits" in order to acquire great power that could help them to control or subdue people's life in the community... All these spirits in my view had been different manifestations of witchcraft among the Bakongo people in various areas... (Priest 2013, 5).

Many Malawian societies believe witchcraft exists. Yet the contemporary child-witchcraft in Malawi is a recent phenomenon. My observation as a pastor and a citizen of Malawi was that cases of child-witch accusations became common especially after Malawi attained a multiparty system of government in 1994. The underlying factor for this was probably socio-economic. This has resulted to most middle and low class Malawian societies struggling to take good care of their families. It was not surprising to notice that some women would shift the blame of their family economic hardships on children. Furthermore, the inroads of Nigerian Nollywood movies and new wave of charismatic ministers seemed to promote child-witch accusations (Wilson 2011, 89). A research on new issues in refugee situations contends that "The Nigerian film industry, or Nollywood, has produced a number of films that are widely perceived as exacerbating the phenomenon of accusations of

witchcraft against children, with their vivid depictions of them communing at night and eating the flesh of their adult victims” (Powles and Deakin 2012, 17).

Furthermore, religious leaders have also been associated with promotion of child-witch accusation, as Powles and Deakin noted:

Some of the criticisms made against diviners have also been made against the charismatic pastor-prophets of a number of African revivalist churches. In their sermons, witchcraft is equated with the devil and his forces of evil, conspiring to bring about disorder, misfortune, hardship and unhappiness. Harnessing the power of the Holy Spirit through the leader’s orchestration of collective prayer and ritual intervention are stated to be the only way to combat these forces. Such churches have become extremely popular across Africa and in Diaspora communities, helping to create the spiritual insecurity that they then claim to allay. In her report for UNICEF, Cimpric (2010, 34) identifies pastors as playing an essential role in accusations against children in several western and central African cities as well as in their Diasporas around the world, either by making or confirming an accusation. Afuilar-Molina describes a ‘profit-making frenzy’ amongst pastors in the Democratic Republic of Congo who invariably make money out of performing deliverance ceremonies at parents’ request (2005, 28). La Fontaine explains that the ordeals and violence sometimes used in exorcism rituals can be an attempt to either make a child confess, or to force the evil spirit out of the child’s body (2012, 17).

Prior to the introduction of the multiparty system of government in Malawi, witchcraft was associated with adults, though in rare cases children were included, as witchcraft was basically considered to be effective on people of the same lineage or origin. Recently child-witch accusations have been rampant in towns and cities of Malawi. Chilimampungu and UNICEF 2010 argues that the increase in child-witch accusation is attributed mostly to incidents of jealousy arising from increased gaps between the poor and the better-off (Chilimampungu and Thidwa 2012, 11; Cimpric 2010, 33).

Meanwhile no single missiological research has been conducted on child-witch-witch accusations in Malawi. Thus, most of the literature reviewed in the

present research has been on witchcraft in general and some written from a secular point of view.

The Dynamic Nature of *Ufiti* Witchcraft in Malawi

Africans do not all see things in the same perspective (Priest 2012, 4). Opoku Onyinah observed, “Interestingly in Africa, the fear of witches differs from one country to another (Priest 2012, 1). In order to understand *ufiti* witchcraft in Malawi, one needs to understand the dynamic complex of spiritualism, magic and taboo that constitutes the central African region in which Malawi is part of. Wendland and Hachibamba suggests that, a closer examination of distinct but related concepts, just mentioned above, within a wider context of manifestation of good and evil in society may help to clarify how the notion of *ufiti* witchcraft fits into the total picture (2007, 178). It is commonly said that in African cultures, there is no separation between secular and divine. Hence the “real person” is considered to be the one who is able to “relate to an all-encompassing cosmos of forces which governs the entire scope of existence from birth to well beyond the grave” (Wendland and Hachibamba 2007, 178). This person does not exist alone but as part of the clan members in what is generally perceived as a potentially hostile environment (Wendland and Hachibamba 2007). Paul Hiebert drives home this concept by his observation that “worldwide humans use analogies from everyday experiences to provide a picture of the nature and operation of the larger world (Hiebert 1994, 194).” Therefore, Hiebert came up with two basic analogies: (1) organic analogy — sees things as living beings in relationship to each other (2) mechanical analogy — sees things as inanimate object that act upon another like parts of a machine (Hiebert 1994). Thus, members of a clan must be aware of the major concentration of potency that has the capacity to improve or impair their lives as a clan or as an individual. These are spiritism, taboo,

witchcraft and magic (Wendland and Hachibamba 2007, 181). The medicine-man is a shield, protecting man from outside forces which may either work for his good or evil (Wendland and Hachibamba 2007, 182). Wendland and Hachibamba have observed that the Chewa society's fundamental beliefs about the supernatural tend to focus on the negative features of human existence. They live in fear of witches and witch doctors (2007, 199). Thus, Wendland assert, "anxiety and uncertainty become a more or less permanent part of the average person's outlook on things" (2007, 199). Their diagram figure below explains the unbroken chain of misfortune that operates in the traditional systems of the Malawian cultures.

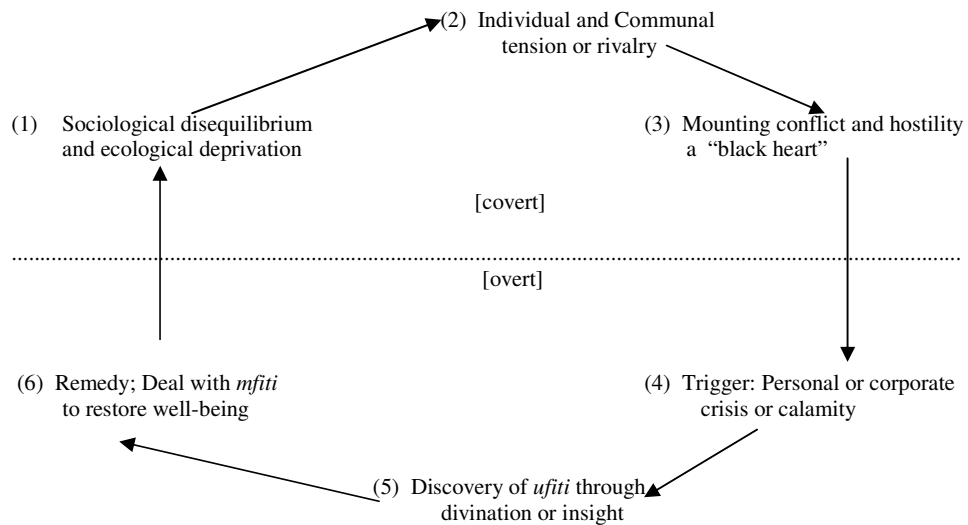


Figure: The Relentless cycle of Witchcraft (*Ufiti*)

Witchcraft accusation is a poison, "the minute it gets into a family, the family bond breaks down. Automatically it contaminates relationships no matter how strong they were. It automatically turns a child into an enemy. Not just an ordinary enemy, an enemy of the most vicious kind" (Miller 2012, 89). The present research agrees with Stewart and Strathern's theory that in small community-level context, gossip

about neighbors, tinged with hostility arising from specific incidents of conflict and misfortune, or jealousy and resentment of the fortune of others, has led to accusations of witchcraft (2004, xii). Within this line of thought, Harri Englund described witchcraft as a flipside of kinship (2007, 296).

Involvement of a *Sing'anga* Diviners and Pentecostal Ministers in Child Witch Accusations

Diviners and Pentecostal ministers are known to be in the forefront in witchcraft exorcisms. To the contrary, Chilimampungu and Thindwa observed that none of the household heads interviewed (who happened to be Christians or Muslims) mentioned that it was their religious leaders who identified the witches (2012, 41). In fact, “most religious leaders did not indicate that they are able to identify witches but that people bring suspects to them for prayers and counseling, and that most of the suspects are children who are brought to them by their parents and guardians” (Chilimampungu and Thindwa 2012,41). However, this does not dismiss completely the diviners and religious leaders as perpetrators of witch accusations. A twenty-four years old woman pastor in Dedza district who claimed that she had ever been bewitched claimed, “Witches are identified during deliverance in the middle of our services when all those who possess evil spirits are exposed by the power of God. For example, witches confess and sometimes they behave the way they behave at night” (Chilimampungu and Thindwa 2012, 41). In Malawi, it is common for people to ask a diviner [and church ministers] to identify witches (Chilimampungu and Thindwa 2012).

Traditional Versus Christian Worldview Regarding the Source of Evil

Paul Hiebert suggested that “as we study a people’s culture, we must infer their basic assumptions from their beliefs and practices” (Hiebert 1985, 112). With this view in mind anthropologists Wendland and Hachibamba argue that witchcraft has thrived in the Malawian cultures because their oral traditions did not know of a “Satan” in the biblical sense. Before the coming of Christianity to Central Africa, “moral judgment of the power was not normally based on whether the power was thought to come from God or Satan” (2007, 175). Wendland argues that this is the reason why in the African cultures, all misfortunes in life are left primary within the human sphere—“the result of what people themselves have done and hence a problem which society alone has to face” (2007, 175). In south central African cultures, (here Malawi follows), in substitution to the supernatural devil, another personalized agency which is designated as being the instigator of most misfortunes and wickedness is sought. This refers to a certain malevolent, antisocial individual who has gained access to formidable powers or forces which other mortals do not have - called a witch (Wendland and Hachibamba 2007, 175). Wendland and Hachibamba observed that in south central Africa there was no death or even a serious illness that was purely natural without the involvement of witches. Only rarely would a certain death (passing of a very old person who quietly and without suffering succumbs to a traditionally recognized incurable disease) be attributed to an act of God (*imfa ya kwa Mulungu*) (2007, 177). This helped people make sense of their experiences (2007, 176). In Tanzania a bordering country with Malawi, when someone dies of Malaria a question would still be posed: “Who sent the mosquito with the malaria parasite and prevented treatment from being effective so that my child died?” (Rasmussen 2008, 312). Priest contends that under Christian understandings it was often felt that any

genuine supernatural power must be either of God, and thus good, or of Satan, and thus intrinsically anti-God and anti-good (2012, 1). This is how Priest culminates his argument:

... the traditional image of the witch was easily understood as associated with Satan since both were understood as evil. Indeed, since indigenous languages usually lacked words that closely fit the idea of Satan, it was often words associated with human witches or witchcraft that were used to translate the idea of Satan, as with the *Adioukrou* of Côte d'Ivoire, where the indigenous word for "witchcraft," *agn*, is now used by Christians for "the devil" <http://www.missiology.com/rpriest-articles/> (accessed 14th June, 2012).

Thus, the traditional witch belief became more evil and more powerful when identified with Satan through the influence of Christian teaching (Priest 2012).

Stewart and Strathern contend that while a witch is understood as the source of evil or wrongdoing, it is the accusers who can be seen as playing the aggressive role (Stewart and Strathern 2004, xii).

Child Witchcraft

In the past, child-witchcraft was not considered as a study on its own but it is only recently that scholars and international organizations have shown interest on the subject— especially because of its social outcomes. Van Breugel's discussion on who a real witch is (*mfiti yeniyeni*) in the Chewa culture is different from what the contemporary society in Malawi defines as a witch. Formerly witches killed only their relatives (Breugel 2001, 214). To the contrary, nowadays witches claim to kill those from a different ancestral lineage, furthermore, Obji argues that nowadays 74% across Sub-Saharan Africa believes even young children can be witches (2011, 1). Originally a real witch (*mfiti yeniyeni*) was someone who as a practitioner from childhood was driven by "meat hunger" (*nkhuli*), and whose characteristic activity was exhuming dead bodies (Wendland and Hachibamba 2007, 187). Today,

Malawian children who claim to be “witches” seem not to be primarily driven by “meat hunger” (*nkhuli*) but other factors. I have discussed some of those factors in chapter four.

Witchcraft Fantasies and the Other World

A common phenomenon in children accused of witchcraft is confession. Aleksandra Cimpric of UNICEF, Dakar, observed that testimony of children accused of witchcraft reveals the importance of the second world when they describe their night-time activities (2010, 25). Abandoned children have a hard time finding their place in the visible world. They therefore take refuge in the second world where they become someone “important”. In their world of fantasy, the children do not have the same age, they are able to satisfy their needs (they can eat as much as they want, even though it is human flesh), and they have the power to kill. Their power is used against those who have influence in the visible or real world, whether they are rich people or relatives who they do not get on with (Cimpric 2010, 25). Danielle Gram’s study on child witches in Democratic Republic of Congo also found the idea of “second world” in the testimonies of many street children that self-identify as witches (2011, 14). In her assessment of child-witch fantasies and the other world Cimpric concluded:

Witchcraft is dangerous because it makes the impossible and the forbidden possible. It offers the expression of a successful individual venture; it opens the doors to consumerism and the “modern” world, and allows children to express their own wishes. The fact that they do so through such confessions, a risky undertaking in the current climate, reflects the degree of despair of abandoned and abused children (2010, 25).

Causes of Child-Witchcraft Accusation

In an attempt to find out the cause of the resurgence of contemporary child-witch accusations, Kunhiyop study attributes it to the steady disintegration of traditional structures and values. This is how Kunhiyop argues:

The disintegration of traditional structures and values has destroyed the control and restraints that once surrounded the practice of witchcraft. In traditional African society, one could not simply claim that someone was a witch or wizard. The elders exercised control and were the interpreters and judges of who practiced witchcraft. The collapse of authority of the elders has contributed to the breakdown of order, and today even children and young people claim to be experts in witchcraft” (2008, 385).

Adinkrah, Mensah argues that in across Sub-Saharan Africa, children from underprivileged backgrounds who sometimes exhibit symptoms of autism, are often labeled as witches or wizards, and victimized – poisoned, drowned, hacked to death with machetes or buried alive in an attempt to deliver their soul from the snare of the ‘devil’ (Adinkrah 2008, 35). Writing on what Autism is Obji Ori Konye reported:

Autism, is a “complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and affects a person’s ability to communicate and interact with others”. But in countries like Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana, Malawi and Uganda, many churches organize fellowships and revival meetings to cast out the demons of witchcraft in children who exhibit such characteristics. (<http://eldritchmisc.wordpress.com/2011/07/24/child-witchcraft-of-autism-symptoms-africa/> accessed June 26, 2012).

Other identified symptoms of child-witches include crying and screaming in the night, hallucinations which sometimes arise from a high fever or other illness involving a fever, and worsening health. Konye contends that these symptoms are common among many children in an impoverished region with poor health care (Konye 2011). In Gambia, Forrest’s research study found out that people who run mad were thought to have been bewitched (Forrest 2010, 51). Most of the assertions for considering one a witch above identifies with witchcraft beliefs in Central Region of Malawi.

Witchcraft Act in the Constitution of Malawi

John Mbiti contends that although we are in the twenty first century, yet in many parts of Africa, people do not bring the suspects of witchcraft before the count of law (Mbiti 2012, 376). However, this is not the major concern in Malawi, as recently there were many witchcraft cases in the law courts. The problem is that the courts do not comply with the witch act. This resulted in imprisonment of many elderly men and women as suspects of witchcraft. The Constitution of Malawi does not mention the word witchcraft in any of its Provisions (Chilimampunga and Thidwa 2012, 9). However, Chilimampunga and Thidwa (2012) noted that the Constitution “provides for the fundamental right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought and belief” (Section 33, Constitution of Malawi). Their report also stated that “while the Constitution allows the right to belief, it prohibits any criminal activity or harm to anyone as a result of belief” (Chilimampunga and Thindwa 2012, 9). Witchcraft Act was enacted in Malawi Constitution in 1911 and inherited wholesale by government at independence in 1964 (Chilimampunga and Thidwa 2012, 32). The Act states that any person accusing any other person of being a witch or with practicing witchcraft or names or indicates any person as being a witch or wizard will be imprisoned for 5 years or pay a fine of £25 (refer Appendix 5). The Witchcraft Act is being reviewed by the Law Commission (Chilimampunga and Thidwa 2012, 19). Research by Chilimampunga and Thidwa revealed that most of Malawians do not know what the law says about witchcraft and this explains in part why violence against suspects is accepted by many Malawians (2012, 32).

Media Report of Child-Witch Accusations in Malawi

As stated earlier on that phenomenon of child-witch accusation is on the increase in Malawi, I found many media reports on this. For example, in Northern

Region of Malawi, Mzimba District, police had to rescue a family from mob justice by a community. “The incident occurred when five children of between the ages of two and eleven of the same family, claiming to have been involved in a witchcraft plane crash, were found naked outside their home while bleeding profusely from their genitals in the wee hours of March 25 2007” (Gondwe 2008, 1). The children claimed to have been taught witchcraft by a retired civil servant, Medson Kachilika aged 77 years, who admitted to the police that indeed he practices witchcraft and he had been teaching over hundred children around the area. The mother of the children said she never suspected that her children were being taught witchcraft, let alone flying at night. “Every night I used to sleep in the same bed and sharing beddings with my smallest daughter, Clemencia, who passed away in the crash and never for once observed anything strange,” said the dejected mother (Gondwe 2008, 1). This needs a critical follow-up to understand of witchcraft practices in Malawi and might not be simply brushed off as the police and the hospital personnel acknowledged admission of the accused children.

In another scene, an elderly widow called Zuwana Kampalira went on trial for practicing witchcraft. Richard Wilson reported:

The judge heard evidence that Kampalira had taken a young girl on a magic plane to the village where her grandfather lived. There she pressured the girl to kill her grandfather with a magic hammer. When the girl refused, Kampalira allegedly sought to persuade her to murder her father. The defendant initially denied these charges, but later changed her plea on the advice of the police. The court took a dim view, sentencing her to 30 months imprisonment with hard labor (Wilson 2011, 1).

Kampalira was sentenced to imprisonment contrary to the Malawi constitution’s stand that accusing a person as a witch or wizard is an offence worth imprisoned for five years or payment of a fine of £25. In another development Chi Mghako Human Rights Professor at the University of Malawi who runs a legal clinic

reported the story of Selene's nine year-old daughter—Emma (Mghako 2011, 1). According to Selene, the mother, the young girl began waking up every morning and saying that witches were taking her to the woods at night to teach her witchcraft. Selene, a gentle farmer in rural Malawi soon noticed that Emma was also experiencing weight loss, mood swings and chronic morning fatigue. According to the report, “determined to help her daughter, Selene tried to save enough money to bring Emma to a powerful witchdoctor” (Mghako 2011, 1). She later on brought her child to mobile legal clinic where both the mother and the daughter were counseled. The clinicians managed to convince mother and daughter that the daughter was not a wizard. Since then Emma stopped experiencing her nightmares. Eye of the Child Executive Director, Maxwell Matewere, said traditional courts should curb the malpractice and child-witch accusation must be considered as a case of urgency especially looking at the increasing number of children reportedly being taught witchcraft in Malawi (Gondwe 2008).

Town Based Child-Witch Accusations

Valuable data for the present research was collected in Likuni, Chinsapo Township in Lilongwe district. Banda observed that, “most of the witch-hunting activities are occurring in towns and cities where most people are educated” (Banda 2008). Englund did his research in Chinsapo in an attempt to understand witchcraft and the limits of mass mediation in Malawi. According to Englund “with over 30,000 residents, Chinsapo township became the most populous area of the capital in the late 1990s, and the vast majority of its population are first-generation migrants who constitute, in the eyes of the city authorities, a squatter settlement (Englund 2007, 299). Most of the old settlers are the Chewa whose culture is deeply rooted in the belief of witchcraft. Most residents make their living as traders, semi-skilled workers,

and low-ranking civil servants, commuting virtually daily between the business centers of the city and their socially diverse neighborhoods (Englund 2007). Englund contends that, “arguments about witchcraft are one potent medium through which township dwellers come to know the limits of their social world. For example, the fear that children may become witches appears to have captured the imagination of many residents in Chinsapo Township” (2007, 300). He also quotes De Boeck who affirmed that, “fears about children turning into witches have also been observed in other urban areas in Malawi and elsewhere in Africa” (Englund 2007).

Social Outcomes of Child Witch Accusations

In every culture, the community (social system), not just the individual, use the options within their culture to diagnose what is really wrong and work to remedy it (Rasmussen 2008, 28). Unfortunately, instead of remedies bringing about the intended outcomes, the culprits suffer injustice. In cases of child-witch accusations the accused children face lots of negative social outcomes. I can only highlight a few. Erwin van der Meer reports, “Children subjected to the cruel horror of child abuse develop the wrong belief that they must somehow be responsible for the terrible things that are done to them by the powerful people in their world” (Meer 2012, 89). Chilimampungwa and Thidwa observed that the accusations can result in the suspect becoming mentally disturbed and others commit suicide (2012, 13, 20). Gondwe’s research found out that children believed to be practicing witchcraft were either chased from their homes or ostracized by their community while some endure physical abuse that included beating even to the point of death (Gondwe 2008). In Blantyre, a city in the Southern Region of Malawi, an aunt killed her niece and nephew during an exorcism attempt (Gondwe 2008).

Furthermore, parents live in fear of chances of their children being taught witchcraft without them knowing. Gondwe's research noted:

... in low income cosmopolitan residential areas, which are full of strangers and poverty, parents live in fear that their children may be taught witchcraft by neighbors who most of the time are strangers. Speaking in low voices and glancing at the houses near, some informant told Gondwe that all children, from toddlers to adolescents, male and female, stand the risk of being bewitched. When their parents are asleep at night, children are taken by witches to a graveyard or the bush, where they are taught witchcraft (*ufiti*) (Gondwe 2008, 1).

There appears that despite the children suffering from social outcomes of witch accusation some member of the community benefit out of it. Banda noticed that despite witchcraft being a social problem, "there are those who profit out of it and seek its continuance" (Banda 2008, 1). For example, traditional healers, known to have powers that can rid people of and fight witchcraft are the obvious benefactors. Others could include pastors, the traditional chiefs, and the police. Banda argues that when pastors and traditional healers, provide services, they "provide legitimacy to witchcraft claims, and exacerbate witchcraft accusations among a desperate and scared populace" (Banda 2008, 1). Obji argued, "exploitative pastor-prophets claiming to be able to identify witches and offering exorcisms provide additional legitimization for witchcraft accusations" (2011). He observed that their lucrative vocation complements the work of traditional healers, for example, in Nigeria, "Bishop" Sunday Ulup Ay in Akwa Ibom state in the South East made a personal fortune through exorcisms, charging \$261 per child (Obji 2011). Sexual abuse and murders are the most heinous social outcome of child-witch accusation.

The Role of the Church in Witch Accusations

Harriet Hill observed that, "missionaries to Africa ignored the problem of witchcraft, feeling that it was simple superstition that would evaporate in the face of

modernity. Instead witchcraft activities have not only persisted, but they seem to be on the increase” (1996, 323). Research shows that the Catholic Church in Malawi has lost some of its members to other churches because it has failed to accept the existence of witchcraft thereby failing to help the Christians “that have been haunted by it” (Banda 2008, 2). Reverend Father Stanislaus Chinguo, chairman of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in the Blantyre Archdiocese, said in an interview that the church is working on solutions to witchcraft for its followers. “[Witchcraft] is a real challenge to the church and we have to face it head on. We are looking at a number of solutions and one of those is exorcism” (Banda 2008). However, as much as exorcism seems to be an option, yet in many cases it has ended up promoting witchcraft accusations. In Nigeria for example, 31% of the cases children were labeled witches or wizards after being identified as such by a pastor (Waal 2012, 1). Meanwhile some African countries are still reluctant to tackle child-witch accusation seriously. For example, in 2004 a promising project to find ways to control religious violence was frustrated by the government of Uganda and Kenya (Miller 2012, 213). This poses questions on the effectiveness of the methods and worldview assumptions the churches have taken on the matter. Harriet Hill’s research reported how Africans view Christianity. Her informant told her that they felt that Christianity was a good religion because it is the religion of Europeans and they had obviously prospered under it. “But since the church does not deal with African issues, and since they must protect themselves and their children from spiritual attack, they are in a double mind and feel they must resort to traditional practices not approved by the church to survive” (Hill 1996, 325). Thus, Hill urges that if Africans are to receive the good news into their reality, then witchcraft must be addressed (1996, 325). Nevertheless, there is hope for Africa as other countries like Ghana and South

Africa have developed some anti-witchcraft policies (Miller 2012, 213). It has been reported that Angola has been proactive in shutting down witch hunting operations by Christian churches (Banda 2008, 1).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The selection of a research method is very critical in research. Edgar Elliston states that a research method chosen determines the collection and analysis of data (Elliston 2011, 55). In this qualitative research, ethnographic research methods were applied. The research was systematic, evidence-based and empirical. Such method of study was used because very little research has been conducted specifically addressing child-witchcraft in Malawi. Therefore, the researcher studied people's actions and interacted with child-witches with an ultimate goal of developing a theory about child-witchcraft in Malawi. In this research, participant observation, interviews, observations, questionnaires, and a small survey on witchcraft and suffering were used. Furthermore, articles, electronic journals, witchcraft related websites, books, and two key witchcraft- based research studies were reviewed.

Methods of Data Gathering

The methods designed in this qualitative research are the ones that fit the ethnographic approach. The selected sight was the Central Region of Malawi, of where the dominant tribe is Chewa. As suggested by Creswell, a qualitative research is designed to understand a particular social situation, event, role, group, or interaction (Creswell 1994, 161). In my case, my particular social situation of study was the church. The researcher investigated the social outcomes of child-witchcraft accusations that resulted due to the way church ministers handle the cases. As a qualitative researcher,

using an ethnographic process to collect data, several methods as suggested by Creswell (1994, 149) were employed.

Participant observation techniques were used. Field notes were compiled by observing and listening to child-witch accusation cases. For example, field notes were been taken while participating in praying and counseling the accused children and accusers. These opportunities arose as church ministers were dealing with child-witchcraft cases. Observation technique was mainly applied in church services (what the choirs were singing about, gestures and prayers and sermons). Secondly, unstructured interviews were conducted with the pastors of ALC whose members were accused of child-witchcraft or accused children for bewitching them or a member of their family. The researcher also interviewed parents/guardians and children who were implicated in witchcraft or families that allegedly accused others for child-witchcraft. In all the interviews and church services, a tape recorder was in use. In interview, the researcher would first of all seek the consent of the interviewee in order to record the conversation. However, in unstructured and informal interviews the researcher would hesitate to record so as to allow a natural and undisturbed flow of the conversation. In church services where the researcher was the preacher, Farai, the daughter helped in recording. All formal interviews were recorded. Soon after each interview and church service, I transcribed the interviews and the relevant portions of the church service. One archival material was made available by an informant. The researcher was accepted by people to access data because he is the Principal of Malawi Abundant Life Bible School where some of the pastors interviewed graduated from. The researcher have also been a pastor of the same church for over five years, thus most of the people had confidence in him.

Selection and Description of the Site

The research was conducted in Dedza and Lilongwe district, Central Region of Malawi. The sites were sampled purposely because they are the districts where Abundant Life Church has many branches. In the two districts mentioned above the study sites were Dedza town council, Lilongwe City residential areas in Chilinde, Likuni- Chinsapo, Area 49, Mgoni, Alimaunde, and Chagamba. In Lilongwe, the city center was strategic as this is the place where social justice office sampled and the children's home is located.

Management Plan, Timeline, Feasibility

Collection of Data was done from 15th July to 20th August 2012 in Malawi. The researcher started off from Nairobi by bus on 5th July and arrived in Lilongwe, Malawi on 9th July 2012. The journey proceeded to Dedza to on 21st July in order to collect data from Dedza Abundant Life Church. However, it was in Lilongwe where I spent most of my research time visiting the five local churches of Abundant Life Church, meeting with the pastors and the concerned members in the cases of witchcraft accusations. One Children's Home was visited where valuable data was collected. The researcher also visited Evangelical Association of Malawi (EAM) where data was sourced from one of my key informants. In the last days of data collection, I finally visited the officers of Association of Secular Humanism (ASH) in Area 47, Lilongwe city centre, to meet Mr. George Thidwa, the man behind the lobby against witchcraft accusations in Malawi.

Ethical Consideration

The Bible School students in the small survey and all key informants participated in this study voluntarily. Utmost confidentiality was treated in all

information disclosed in this research. In cases where the informant accepted his or her name to be documented, I did so, otherwise to protect my participants, titles, positions and names of organizations of informants interviewed have been concealed.

Data Analysis Strategies

Quantitative data from Bible School survey was analyzed manually. The qualitative data was preliminarily processed manually and followed by a deeper analysis using computer software called WEFT QDA. The program helped me come up with themes for my research. It was through analyzing of these themes that I came up with my findings.

Coding and Usage

After concluding interviews, I transcribed and organized the interviews into themes and sub-themes and assigned codes to various categories generated. Coding according to Margaret D. LeCompte and Jean J. Schensul, “involves organizing data into categories related to the framework and questions guiding the research so the they can be used to support analysis and interpretation” (LeCompte 1999, 45). Hence, I have organized my data according to research sub-questions and themes. Some data appear more than twice because of their relevance to the sub-questions and themes. To talk about analysis process, a vocabulary is needed that permits discussion of the movement from concrete to more abstract description of the phenomena in the field (LeCompte 2010, 204).

Explanation of Codes, Themes and Sub-Themes

Table one on page 38 list the interviews and their description. They are classified according to the role of the interviewee. (SRQ) stands for sub-research question, (A) stands for an accused child, (AR) stands for the accuser, (STO) means

the interview was intended to collect a story, (CM) stands for a church minister in Abundant Life Church, (SW) stands for a social worker, and (PA) stands for the parent of the accused child. Table two on page forty shows a summary of themes and sub-themes. The themes are abbreviated as (Th) when used in the presentation and discussion of findings section. The themes and sub-themes have been given Roman numerals. There are six themes with each theme having not less the one sub-theme.

Illustration of Usage of a Code

In chapter four, when the researcher cites a quotation or an idea using a code, for example, (Th4.3/CM 002), it means that he is referring his reader to theme number four found in appendix number eight. The number decimal-point three in this code means sub-theme three in theme number four. CM 002 means church minister number two in theme number four. Whenever several informants agrees on a specific ideology, then the code becomes multiple and looks like this: (Th5.9/CM 004/CM 008/CM 005/CM 002, Th 4.3/PA 002)

Table 1: The Interviews Listed By Code Number and Providing Information about the Interviewees

Interview no.	Description of the Residence of Interviewee
A 001	Member of a Fellowship, boy from Lilongwe City- Dubai
A002	Member of Abundant Life Church from Lilongwe- Mgon
A003	My relative from Lilongwe Rural West
AR 00 1	Leader of a Fellowship from Lilongwe City-Dubai
AR 002	Chief from Lilongwe, Likuni-Chinsapo
SW 001	Social Worker in a Children's Home, from Lilongwe City center
SW 002	Social Worker in a Children's Home, from Lilongwe City center
SW 003	Social Worker human rights activist, from Lilongwe City center
CM 001	Church minister from Lilongwe City center
CM 002	Church minister from Lilongwe City- Mgon

CM 003	Church minister from Lilongwe Rural East
CM 004	Church minister from Lilongwe City-Area 49
CM 005	Church minister from Dedza
CM 006	Church minister from Lilongwe City-Area 49
CM 007	Church minister from Lilongwe Rural West
CM 008	Church minister from Lilongwe Likuni-Chinsapo
STO 001	Cousin of the accused girl from Dedza
STO 002	Bible school student from Lilongwe City center
PA 002	Parent of the accused-girl from Lilongwe Likuni-Chinsapo
STO 003	Exorcist from Lilongwe Rural South

Table 2: Shows a Summary of Themes and Sub-Themes

Theme	Sub-theme
1. Foundations for Child-Witch Accusations	(i). Rumors and Suspicions (ii). Behavior of the a child (iii). Misfortune (iv). Sickness (v). Confession (vi). Relationships
2. School of Thoughts on Child-witch Accusations	(i). Social Workers (ii). Church Ministers (iii). School students
3. Witchcraft tools	(i) Hammer/Bullets (ii) Snakes/Needles (iii) (<i>Nyanga</i>) horn for storing witchcraft concoctions
4. Location of child-witch accusations	(i) Town based (ii) Village based (iii) Period of accusation

5. Social Outcomes of child-witch accusations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Banishment (ii) Teasing and bullying (iii) Stigmatization (iv) Mistreatment of the accused Child (v) Insecurity of the community (vi) Killing (vii) Increased accusations (viii) Dropping from school (ix) Insecurity of the community (x) Acceptance (xi) Conversions
6. Prayer and Exorcism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i). Prayer (ii). Exorcism
7. Diviners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i). Loss of trust in church ministers (ii). Syncretism

Methods of Achieving Validity

No hearsays were relied upon; hence pastors, family members, experts and social workers who directly handled child-witch accusation cases were consulted. The qualitative component required a more and in-depth probing. This helped the researcher in achieving validity and in-depth understanding of the nature of social outcomes that resulted from the way church ministers handled child-witch cases. The social justice institutions in Malawi were relied upon to provide additional evidence of child-witch accusations—which they did.

Analysis of the Data

“It is notoriously easy to manipulate data during the analysis phase to push certain conclusions or agendas” (Wise GREEK 2012, 1). The above insight pushed the researcher to think critically about the data and the conclusions reached in this research. Creswell says that processing of data analysis involves making sense out of text and image data (2003, 190). Following Creswell’s steps of analyzing data, transcription and organization were the first things to do. Secondly, I read through all the data. Finally, a detailed analysis of coding using the WEFT QDA software program was done. Detailed analysis entails “taking text data or pictures, segmenting sentences or images into categories, and labeling those categories with a term, often a term based on the actual language of the participant” (Creswell 2003, 192). I later used the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis (Creswell 2003, 193). The last but-one step was to provide description and themes. At the end, the researcher made an interpretation on meaning of the data as commended by Creswell (2003, 194). I also used Dr. Steve Rasmussen’s insight of involving other people in proofreading (2008, 75). In this case, fellow missionaries and my wife were involved.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter, the main findings of the study that are relevant to the research concern have been presented. The demographic characteristics of the sample has been given first before discussing the practices, discourses, beliefs and the social outcomes of child-witch accusations that were seen and heard from children, pastors and social workers. Focus of the study was on Abundant Life Church in Central Region, however, at some point, researcher was pulled out of the catchment area to other relevant areas like fellowships, Children's Homes, Social Justice Organizations and other Pentecostal churches where valuable data was equally collected. As a recap, the meanings for the abbreviations used in the citations in this chapter can found on pages 37 to 39. The themes and sub-themes have been given roman numerals. As noted earlier, there are seven themes with each theme having not less the one sub-theme.

As data was being collected, it was observed that most of the child-witch accusations happened not less than two years prior to the present data collection (Th 4.3/CM 002/CM 005/CM 007). One informant said that he had been in Dedza district for not less than two years but such cases had in the recent years subsided, therefore he had to share with me some stories of child-witch accusations he encountered some years back (Th 4.3/CM 005). Nevertheless, there were several fresh testimonies that were collected (Th 1.3/A 001). The fact that many of the

informants were not very open to share their experiences, it indicated that recent incidences were more traumatizing and difficult to share than the past incidences (Th 5.4/SW 003). In the 2012 research on witchcraft-based violence done by Chilimampunga and Thindwa (2012, 76), their report gave an impression that witchcraft accusations were increasing and that most of the witchcraft-based violence was recent. However, my impression is that child-witch accusations are slowly declining. A good number church ministers interviewed also felt so. The president of Abundant Life Church, Bishop Abraham Somba felt that such a positive indication of the decline might have come by the recent government intervention and intensity of prayers by the church (Th 5.8/MC 001). Chilimampunga and Thindwa's report might have reflected an increase in witchcraft-violence because their data was collected from July to August 2011, furthermore, Government intervention seemed to have been enhanced by their published report (Thindwa 2013, 5). No wonder, meanwhile the witchcraft Act is under review. On January 6, 2013 George Thindwa reported in a Malawi local newspaper *Sunday Times* that "Witchcraft accusations declined in 2011 and 2012. The reason he suggested were three. Firstly,

... people realized that using children to accuse others on the pretext of children being taught witchcraft, was putting their children at risk of arrest and prosecution. Accusations emanating from children thus declined ... This meant reduced cases of witchcraft being handled by police involving children and the elderly (Thindwa 2013, 5).

The second important event was to an extent reducing witch based violence according to Thindwa was the launch of their research report done in July 2012 (Thindwa 2013, 5). Finally, witch-based violence was declining due to improvement in the implementation of the witchcraft law by the police and the judiciary (Thindwa 2013). Thidwa might have exaggerated the gravity of the impact of their published

report but the good news is that there is hope for eradication of witch accusations in Malawi.

Demographics

Thirty-one informants were interviewed, taping twenty-eight and transcribing all the tape recorded. On average, one hour was spent for each interview. Prior to the interview in Lilongwe district, the researcher did a small survey at ALC Bible School simply to complement an earlier survey on witches and suffering done by Dr. Steve Rasmussen and Dr. Robert Priest at Africa International University, Byang Kato Chapel in 2012. The survey at Abundant Life Bible School (ALBS) helped the researcher break the ice in introducing the research to the church— as witchcraft issues remain a private and sensitive subject in the church and the community as a whole. The survey also provided the researcher a big picture of the worldview of ALC leadership on child-witchcraft.

Informants

Twenty two informants were interviewed. These included male and female adults ranging from the age of 30 to 55 years and boys ranging from the age of 9 to 17 years. All the interviews were one-on-one based.

Table 3: The distribution of Interviewees according to Social Roles and Gender

Type of key informant	Male	Female
Pastors	8	3
Church elders	1	1
Parents of the accused	1	2
Accuser	1	1
Social workers	1	1
Child witches		2
Totals	12	10
Grand Total	22	

Survey Participants

Nine students from Abundant Life Bible School (ALBC) participated in a small survey. Out of the nine, four were female and five were male. Their average age was forty-three. All of the students were married except one who was divorced. The survey was conducted using a questionnaire whereby each student answered the questions on questionnaire as I read them out for them, for clarity, from my personal copy. However, the small survey had some aspect of focused group discussion as some students engaged me or their fellows in some discussions as they answered questions of the survey. This helped us to learn from one another.

Summary of Findings of a Small Survey at Abundant Life Bible School

As stated earlier on, I conducted a small survey at ALBS. The survey was important as it helped me break the ice as witchcraft issues are a taboo. The survey

also painted a big picture of the perspectives of the church ministers on child-witch accusations. Nine adults whose average age was 43 participated. They were all Malawian by nationality and of mixed gender. In the report below the researcher has used percentage to explain response of the nine participants. Therefore, each time a percentage is used, it is been converted into units out of nine into a percentage. In reference to the questionnaire used, refer to Appendix 5.

1. How many friends, colleagues, relatives, or neighbors have personally told you that they suspect someone has harmed them through witchcraft?

- a. 33% had one or two of their friends, colleagues, relatives, or neighbors who personally told them that they suspect someone harmed them through witchcraft.
- b. 22% had none of their friends, colleagues, relatives, or neighbors who personally told them that they suspect someone harmed them through witchcraft
- c. 11% had three or more of their friends, colleagues, relatives, or neighbors who personally told them that they suspect someone harmed them through witchcraft

2. How many times have you experienced a problem that you suspect someone caused through witchcraft?

- a. 44 % indicated to have not experienced a problem that they suspect someone caused through witchcraft?
- b. 44% indicated to have experienced a problem that they suspect someone caused through witchcraft?
- c. 11% indicated to have experienced three to five times a problem that they suspect someone caused through witchcraft?

3. Read the following three statements and check the one that is closest to what you believe.

- a. 67% believed some people have the supernatural ability to kill other people through witchcraft.
- b. 11% were not sure but suspected some people have the ability to kill through witchcraft
- c. 22% were not sure but doubted that any human being call kill another person through witchcraft
- d. 1% believed no human being has the supernatural ability to kill other people through witchcraft

4. How many friends, colleagues, relatives, or neighbors have you personally known that were accused by others of harming someone else through witchcraft?

- a. 56% had friends, colleagues, relatives, or neighbors they have personally known that were accused by others of harming someone else through witchcraft.
- b. 22% indicated that none of their friends, colleagues, relatives, or neighbors were accused by others of harming someone else through witchcraft.
- c. 11% knew of one of their friends, colleagues, relatives, or neighbors who was were accused by others of harming someone else through witchcraft.
- d. 11% knew eleven to twenty friends, colleagues, relatives, or neighbors who were accused by others of harming someone else through witchcraft.

5. How many colleagues, relatives, or neighbors have you personally known that were accused by others of killing someone through witchcraft?

- a. 44% knew one or two of their colleagues, relatives, or neighbors who were accused by others of killing someone through witchcraft.

- b. 23% knew six or more than eleven of their colleagues, relatives, or neighbors who were accused by others of killing someone through witchcraft.
- c. 22% knew none of their colleagues, relatives, or neighbors who were accused by others of killing someone through witchcraft.
- d. 11% knew three to five of their colleagues, relatives, or neighbors who were accused by others of killing someone through witchcraft.

6. Have you ever known a child that was accused by others of killing someone through witchcraft?

- a. 44% knew of a child that was accused by others of killing someone through witchcraft?
- b. 44% knew more than one child that was accused by others of killing someone through witchcraft?
- c. 22 % knew none of a child that was accused by others of killing someone through witchcraft?

7. Have you ever known a pastor that was accused by others of killing someone through witchcraft?

- a. 45% knew no pastor that was accused by others of killing someone through witchcraft.
- b. 33% knew one pastor that was accused by others of killing someone through witchcraft.
- c. 22% knew two to three pastors that were accused by others of killing someone through witchcraft.

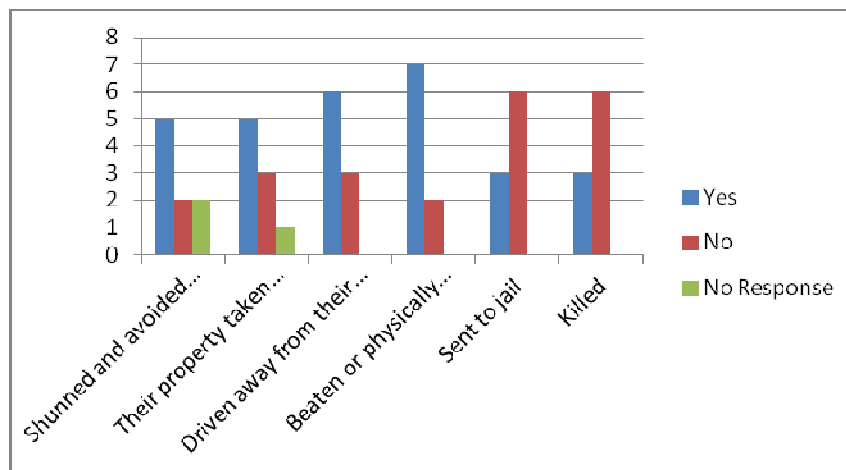
8. Have you ever known anyone you suspect was wrongly accused of harming someone through witchcraft?

- a. 33% knew someone they suspect was wrongly accused of harming someone through witchcraft.

- b. 22% knew none they suspect was wrongly accused of harming someone through witchcraft.
- c. 45% knew two or more than four people they suspect were wrongly accused of harming someone through witchcraft.

In the cases where you have personally known an individual accused of harming others through witchcraft, which of the following happened to the accused person?

9. He or she was shunned and avoided by other people Yes (6) No (2)
10. He or she had their property taken or destroyed Yes (5) No (3)
11. He or she was driven from their home or community Yes (6) No (3)
12. He or she was beaten or physically attacked Yes (7) No (2)
13. He or she was jailed Yes (3) No (6)
14. He or she was killed Yes (3) No (6)



Interpretation of Survey Data

Reading from figures in questions nine to fourteen above, it is justifiable to conclude that most of the accused suffered from mob justice. This means whenever one is accused of witchcraft in Malawi, there is a high probability that the person will

suffer from mob justice. These findings assisted me in interpreting the overall research data. After the survey, the researcher got engaged in collecting data through one-on-one interviews with his 22 informants and came up with the findings below:

Factors Contributing To Child Witchcraft Accusations

Poverty

Socio-economic and physiological factors were prevalent in all the accusation stories. In all the churches that I surveyed, members of the church tend to be of low socio-economic status. These places were Chilinde, Likuni-Chinsapo, Area 49-Dubai, Mgoni, Alimaunde, Chagamba and Dedza town council.

Rumors and Suspicions

Rumors and suspicions were enough evidence for child-witch accusations. Culturally this is supported by a proverb that says that *utsi sufuka popanda moto* (smoke doesn't come out where there is no fire). An accused man who was suspected of teaching his neighbor's son said, "He made this boy spread rumors that I was teaching him witchcraft, as a result, I was later on summoned to stand in a court" (Th 1.1/A 002). Rumors and suspicion were the bases for child-witch accusations in Lilongwe West, South, Lilongwe City Centre, Dedza, and Likuni-Chinsapo (Th 1.1/CM 007/STO 001/STO 003/CM 005/PA 002). This is in agreement with the finding by Chilimampungu and Thidwa on identification of witches (2012, 11).

Behavior of the Accused Child

The behavior of the child contributed to the allegation of witchcraft. Such behaviors included rudeness, stealing, stinginess, stealing and day dreaming (Th 1.2/MC 007/PA 001/PA 02). In Nkhota-kota, children who were found sleeping

outside on the verandas during the day were likely to be suspected of being witches. Nkhota-kota is a lakeshore area and hot. A church leader from Lilongwe City who had ever lived in this area said, “Some of these children would be found lying down in their parents’ verandas fast asleep possibly during mid day. When confronted the children revealed that this was the time their souls would be taken away for witchcraft” (Th 1.2/CM 006).

An accusation for child-witchcraft on the bases of stinginess was reported in Likuni-Chinsapo:

She baked *chigumu* African cake. Now my sister and some of my close relatives asked her to share but she turned them down. With a lot of ridicule and bitter words she was told that she was a witch and that was why she could not share her *chigumu* African cake (Th 1.2/PA 001).

In the case above, it is believed that what caused the girl to fail to share her *chigumu* African cake was her wickedness—a special characteristic of a wizard. Another accusation based on behavior took place in Lilongwe City Centre. Daniel a 15 years old boy was suspected to be a witch because of his naughty behavior. He told me that there was a time when he would become so naughty to his parents and this provided for the basis for the parents to suspect him of being a witch. He also thought so, as he believes there were some evil powers that were forcing him to behave rudely (Th 1.3/A 001). This finding is in agreement with a Malawian-based research by Chilimampunga and the UNICEF research by Aleksandra Cimpric which found that the most frequent ways by which people identified witches were on the basis of revelations, the behavior of the person, witchdoctors’ diagnosis, suspicion and rumors (Chilimampunga and Thindwa 2012, 11, UNICEF, April, 2010, 35).

Misfortune

I found out that in some cases guilt over consecutive occurrences of misfortune made the children believe that they were witches. One child now living in a Children's Home in Lilongwe concluded that he was a witch after witnessing traumatizing deaths of his mother and father concurrently. This is how the social coordinator narrated the boy's story:

One child claimed to be a witch. So I took time to listen to his story. The boy is around 10 years old. He told me that he is a witch and can turn into a lizard or any other small animal. When I told him to showcase his witchcraft so that I can believe him, he told me that may be it would not work in the Children's Home. He believed he was a witch because of the two major tragedies that took place in his life. He told me that he used to look after his sick mother who eventually passed on. At that time, they were in Mozambique. He said the last time he spoke to his mother was when she asked him for a cup of water. However, he did not provide it immediately as he went out to play with his friends. When he returned from where he had gone he found his mother was dead. He felt responsible for his mother's death. He thought maybe he hardened his life by not providing his mother a cup of water because he was a witch. Soon after the death of his mother, his father decided to relocate to Malawi. So, they started off from Mozambique to Malawi. On the way, they came across a flooding river which had no bridge. They attempted to cross the river. His father held him by one hand as they crossed the river. Unfortunately, the father slipped and was swept by the flooding river. He was left alone wondering what also might have been the cause of this misfortunate apart from his witchcraft power. This was another evidence for him to believe that he was indeed a witch — he had first killed the mother and now the father (Th 2.1/SW 002).

Sickness

Sicknesses were another factor for child-witch accusations (Th 4.1/CM 001/003/004/PA 002). In Lilongwe City, a child who had been sick for a long time said that her grandfather was taking her out for witchcraft at night. Later on the child passed on but the family was left shaken as the mother accused the husband of having the husband's father bewitch their child (Th 1.4/CM 004). The second story the same informant shared was of a family whose ten-year-old boy got sick. The parents brought the child to church minister's house. The father alleged that their child had

been bewitched and was being taught witchcraft, so this is why he was sick (Th 1.4/CM 004). My informant told me that by the time the child was brought to church for prayers, he had already become mad. Soon he passed on. In both cases, there was no physical attack on the children by the community as there was a sense of sympathy specially that the children looked very sickly denoting that they were forced into this practice. Moreover, the community was aware that the church took the proactive role of praying for these children (Th 6.1/CM 004). Above all the community accepted the two children because they felt they were innocent. However the adults alleged to be teaching them witchcraft.

In the same area, a woman was banished for being accused of teaching witchcraft to a child whose mother was sick. Some close relatives of the child told my informant, “The child is revealing that Mrs. C teaches her witchcraft” (Th 5.1/CM 004). A student at ALBS told me that her observation was that most orphans are accused for the death of their parents. In most cases, these parents might have died from HIV but the kids are seen to be the cause of the death (Th 2.1/STO 002). Not only were parents’ sicknesses associated with witchcraft, even the children’s sicknesses were also associated with witchcraft. In this study, I came across several stories of children whose sickness and deaths were attributed to witches (Th 1.4/CM 004/PA 004).

Relations between the Accused and the Accuser

What type of relationship do the children accused of witchcraft and their accusers have?

Who First Identified the Witches?

Step-mothers of the children, exorcists in fellowships and fellow children were the first to identify “witches” in the cases reported to me. Diviners and pastors were in all the cases studied respondents to child-witch accusations. Mothers, especially those who were not biological, often suspected their children of witchcraft (Th 1.1/MC 005, Th 1.3/PA 002,). Exorcists were likely to get a revelation of witchcraft as the cause of the problem in their clients (Th 6.2/AR 001). Another informant told me, “What happened was that the child revealed he was a witch after the prayer warriors probed him. At first the child would deny but he finally accepted” (Th 1.4 MC 002). In several occasions, church ministers reported that children who were suspected of witchcraft upon confession revealed that other children in their neighborhood were also being taken out for witchcraft at night (Th 1.4/CM 002, Th 1.4/PA 002, Th 1.4/A001). In my research no single church minister in ALC was the original accuser of the child.

Most of the accused and the accusers were close relatives ranging from son/daughter, cousin and step-mother (Th 1.1/PA 001/CM 005/CM 003/AR 002/ Th 1.2/CM 006/PA 002). Very few cases involved people of no blood ties (Th 1.7/CM 007). Children whose mother was divorced or deceased and were being raised up by step-mothers or foster parents were likely to be the ones accused of witchcraft. The boy, whose story has been captured as a case study one, is one example. In most of the stories the accused and the accuser were consanguine, meaning that they came from the same ancestor (Th 1.1/PA 001/MC 001,003, 004, 006/A 002, Th 1.2/AR 001). In consanguine child-witch accusations there was a correlation between the socio-economic status of the family and reason for the child-witch accusation. The boy, whose story is in the case study, and the case of a daughter of Chief Chipeta in

Likuni, came from economically challenged households. In both cases food was a challenge in these families (Th 1.2/PA 001/Th 1.3/A 001). I found that most of the accused children were allegedly taught witchcraft with an exception of few cases (Th 1.3/A 001/CM 004/Th 4.1/MC 004). The fate of the accused was majorly banishment (Th 4.1/MC 004/MC 001). A remarkable case study of children who claimed to have been witches from birth was sourced in ALC of Lilongwe city north. Two children came to live in the neighborhood of a concerned pastor. They were living with their close relatives. Soon they were accused of being trained in witchcraft by certain woman in this new community. Surprisingly the children confessed that they are witches and claimed that even the woman who was being accused of training them was only taking advantage of their inborn witchcraft (Th 4.1/MC 004).

Witchcraft Tools

Nyanga

The research found that some of the accused children were allegedly accused by their mothers, of being found in possession of *nyanga* (a horn for storing witchcraft concoctions manufactured by a witch or *sing'anga* witchdoctor used for causing harm to others or to make one get rich) (Th 3.1/CM 001, 003, 005/A 003). In all these cases, the mothers seem to have no tangible empirical evidence of the *nyanga*. They never showed the *nyanga*. Anyone found in possession of *nyanga* in Malawi is considered a *mfiti* witch. This is because there is no good and bad *nyanga* as it is with magic-white or black. In Lilongwe rural east, my informant had a child in her church who used to be a witch. The girl got saved at a crusade. Upon hearing the gospel preached, the girl was convicted of her witchcraft. This is what my informant said:

She called us to help her stop witchcraft. She said, “I keep my witchcraft tools in the stomach.” People prayed with her and we prayed with her until she vomited. She said this is not enough so she took us home and when we were there, she went to the bed room and came out with a pot and some of her *nyanga* tools (Th 3.2/CM 003).

Apart from the stories above, several other stories were also collected where children claimed to have possessed *nyanga* intended for killing their parents or claimed to have used it to kill their parents (Th1.4/CM 001, Th3.2/MC 005). One of such stories was reported by a pastor of ALC in Dedza town council. A step-mother came to him with her boy aged ten claiming that the boy had bought *nyanga* from a friend in order to kill her. The mother said the accused child told her that his friend told him to be giving him some money in installments so that in the end he would be given *nyanga* (Th 3.2/MC 005). In another church in Lilongwe city centre, the pastor prayed with a step-mother and her two boys who came seeking for prayers. The mother had earlier on suspected the children of witchcraft. After prayer, the boys confessed to their step mother that they bought a *nyanga* in order to kill her. This is because the boys felt they were being mistreated by their step-mother. The pastor said to me, “The children spread rumors that they were responsible for their mother’s sickness. The children claimed to have hit their mother with a magic hammer in order to kill her” (Th 1.1/CM 001). Meanwhile the mother’s health was poorer each day. To the contrary, the pastor told me that he was aware that the mother was HIV/AIDS positive. Later on, the mother passed on (Th 1.1/CM 001).

Snakes and Needles

Apart from *nyanga* child-witches were alleged to be in possession of magical snakes and needles. A female exorcist who by revelations identifies child-witches said that the children who come to her Fellowship for prayer sometimes bring with

them snakes and needles. With all conviction the exorcist told me, “As I pray for these children, they sometimes start throwing snakes and needles on me. I discern they are throwing needles when I start feeling pneumonia in the course of prayer” (Th 6.2/AR 001). She believes the children are given snakes and needles to fight back during exorcism (Th 6.2/AR 001).

Hammers

The researcher noted that a magical hammer was one of the tools the accused children claimed to have been given by the adult witches to kill their parents, or other relatives. One child said to my informant, “We used a hammer to hit mum on the head, this is why she is sick” (Th3.1/MC 001). An accuser who exorcised witchcraft from children believed they would accept to hit their parents with magical hammers because they see how their parents use hammers in their day-to-day house chores (Th3.1/AR 002).

School of Thoughts on Child-Witch Accusations

Pastors

Pastors in ALC had different worldviews on child-witch accusations. There were some who strongly believed that a child could be a witch (Th 6.1/CM 002/CM 003) and those who were skeptical (Th 1.1/CM 001/CM 004/CM 005). A pastor from ALC in Lilongwe city contended, “Witchcraft is real and is still being practiced in our culture” (Th 6.1/CM 003). A pastor from ALBS said she was not sure if the accusations were genuine (Th 1.3/STO 002). However, one common thing was that all church ministers I interviewed in ALC had once or more either exorcised witchcraft, prayed for an accused or accuser or counseled a child-witch accusation based case (Th 6.2/CM 001, 002, 003, 004/Th 6.1/ 005, 007, and 008). Despite the

evidence that there is a consensus in occurrences of child-witch accusations in ALC the leadership has not considered it as an issue to merit group discussion or joint effort. Thus there is no forum where the issues has been raised and discussed.

Nevertheless, most of the pastors have used child-witch accusation cases to lead the accused or accuser to faith in Jesus Christ (Th 6.2/CM 008, 005, 004). A church minister explained:

People come to the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus through witchcraft cases. Some do not really know the truth about witchcraft. They suspect they have been bewitched but when we explain the gospel message, they realize that it was just a lie from the devil and the best way out of their calamity is to run to Jesus. So, we simply introduce them to the cross. The chief who is now the member of my church came to the Lord because he was invited to the deliverance that involved some of the children of his village. He finally was amazed to witness the manifestations of the evil spirit and decided to give his life to Jesus. Today if cases of witchcraft are brought to his attention, he simply refers the cases to me and we exorcise (Th 5.9/CM 008)

The sentiment I got from ALC pastors was that they feel the ALC and the Evangelical churches have done little in addressing child-witch accusations. A pastor in Lilongwe was very analytical on how child-witch accusations are handled. He thought more needed to be done about it. This is how he argued:

I think we shall know it all when we go to heaven. Child-witchcraft is a complex phenomenon. Whether it is real or not God knows. But we can see its fruits. It is on the deeper worldview level of most Africans, this I know. The way people have interpreted their Bible is far more influenced by their world view (Th 2.3/CM 008).

Social Workers

My three key informants outside ALC were social workers and a human rights activist George Thidwa, the Chief Executive Officer of the Association of Secular Humanism in Malawi. All of them do not believe in child-witchcraft and work for organizations that do not believe in the existence of witchcraft. With this background,

their organization works to protect the accused from violence, discrimination and abuse of any kind against children, women and the elderly. One of my informants, a social worker, did not want her organization or the names of the accused child-witches to be identified as she felt witchcraft was a too sensitive issue to be discussed and published. This is also a policy of their organization. This is how she presented her thought and the position of her organization on child accusation:

I prefer that whatever I share with you be confidential because we are here to protect the rights of the children. I would not want to see what I will share with you published in the press. Okay, this is ... children's home. Most of the children you have seen outside have run away from their homes because they are accused of witchcraft or are self-proclaimed witches. The communities are afraid of them, so one of the ways to get rid of them is to mistreat them to a point of the children leaving their home for streets or dumping places. Our organization does not believe in witchcraft, so we listen to their stories. We adopt them because their homes are not ready to listen to them, but we do. We interrogate them to establish the cause of their predicaments. Most of the time after listening to them and establishing the source of the contention, we take them back to their villages and try to reason with their parents or guardians to convince them that the children are not themselves witches as they claim or as the community has labeled them. As I mention earlier on, witchcraft accusation is in two ways. On one hand, a child may claim to be witch, and on the other hand, children are accused of being witches. To the contrary, we believe for every behavior there is a background cause so we listen to them and go and talk to their parents or community. If they consent we leave the children with them, if they don't we take the child back to the centre (Th 2.1/SW 003)

Mr. Thindwa shared with me both his rationale for not believing in witchcraft and stories of the accused (Th 2.1/SW 003). George is the first Malawian to come out publicly and declare his position that he does not believe in witchcraft. George and his association do not believe in either God or witchcraft. He has gone ahead to challenge Malawian witches to bewitch him and if they succeed they will be given a gift of about \$1000 (Thindwa 2011). The response of the Association for Secular Humanism on witch accusation has mainly been to lobby with the courts of Malawi to

release those who are in prison on the basis of witchcraft accusations. From the stories Thidwa shared with me, here was one of his sentiments: “I have an experience where children accused a neighbor of their house for teaching them witchcraft. The case was taken to police and then to court. But the court’s verdict was that the accused was innocent” (Th 2.1/SW 003).

Distribution of Child-Witch Accusations

Village Based

A good number of stories were collected in ALC village churches located in Dedza and Lilongwe Rural West (Th 1.2/CM 007/STO 001). In Lilongwe, two children who confessed that they are witches were from the village but came to live in Lilongwe city with their step-mother. The children claimed a woman in their neighborhood was training them in witchcraft. Later on, when their mother fell sick, these children claimed to have bewitched her. My informant said, “The children claimed they were witches from the village and the neighbor who was teaching them witchcraft in town was just taking advantage of their expertise” (Th 1.5/CM 004). One moving story of child-witch accusation was collected in Abundant Life church of Dedza. The incident took place in a village where one of the members comes from. One Sunday, this pastor prayed for a young lady whose petition was to pray for her cousin at the village who was accused of witchcraft. The researcher followed up this lady at her place of work to collect firsthand information. Here is what she said:

I had a female cousin aged ten years. Rumors spread in our household and later in the whole community that she was a witch. The village implicated her in many of the deaths and sickness that had happened in the village. I decided to take her out of the village to live with me here in Dedza Township. It is a disgrace to have a member of your family accused of witchcraft, so I never told anyone about it. Later I realized that this was weighing me down. I felt I needed to bring the issue to the attention of my pastor. So, one day when the pastor was praying for people at the end of the sermon, I took a bold step to go

in front and present my prayer petition. He prayed for me and later prayed for the girl. For some reasons the girl went back to my village. My village is right here in Dedza. At home and in the village nobody liked the girl, so she lived as foreigner in her own motherland. The girl was isolated from the relatives and lived in her own hut. I had shared with the relatives concerning prayers that the pastor offered for her but nobody cared. Sadly, one gloomy night some relatives and villagers plotted to kill her. That night, some people reported to have just heard an agony of a loud cry coming from the direction of the house the girl was living. It was later on discovered that, that night, some men went into her house, raped her and beat her to death. The following day the police came to collect the body to the hospital for postmortem. She was later on buried and the police are still investigating the matter. The suspects have already been identified. Unfortunately one of them is her cousin (Th 4.2/ST 001).

In Malawi most of the police officers believe in witchcraft and tolerate the culture of killing of witches (Chilimampungwa and Thidwa 2012). Thus, when an individual is murdered on the basis of witchcraft my experience is that sometimes the police deliberately delay investigations of the case as they feel the community helped them in eradicating witchcraft. A familiar accusation of a village-based child-witchcraft took place in ALC in Lilongwe Rural West—a church which has rented a government primary school block for Sunday services. The ALC church elder in this area told me of a story of children who claimed to have been taught witchcraft by the wife of the village Headman (where the government primary school is located).

Narrating the story my informant said,

Rumors have gone out that the children of the Headmaster, including some two children of the teachers at the staff houses, were involved in witchcraft. The children were pinned down to reveal their witchcraft practices, they confessed that it was the wife of the chief who was teaching them (Th 1.1 CM 007).

There is a tendency of the adults to believe the word of children as children are assumed to be innocent souls. Unfortunately, some children were coaxed by the adults to claim that someone was teaching them witchcraft (Th 1.2/A002/Th 2.1/SW003). Several other cases took place in Lilongwe Rural South and Lilongwe Rural East (Th 1.5/CM 003).

Town- based

Another vulnerable area for child-witch accusations was found in low-income cosmopolitan areas (Th1.1/PA 002, Th1.2/CM 002/AR 001, Th4.1/CM 002). ALC in Central Region has churches in such areas. The most vulnerable areas suspected of child-witch accusations included Likuni-Chinsapo, Mgoni, Alimaunde, and Area 49-Dubai. When I visited Chinsapo ALC, the pastor's office was clouded as five parents were ready to share their stories of how their children were either suspected of being "witches" or were bewitched (Th5.8/PA 001/Th1.1/PA 002,CM 008/AR 002). This many parents came because prior to the visit I had arranged with the pastor to inform the church of my visit and reason for the visit. Amongst these informants, one father who is also happens to be one of the chiefs in Chinsapo shared with me how as a chief he had been handling cases of child-witch accusations. Unfortunately, one of the cases involved his own daughter of around twelve years old. The genesis of her accusation was that some children in his constituency had been claiming that they were being taught witchcraft by one of the adults in their neighborhood. These children claimed that his daughter was amongst the children that were being taught witchcraft. As a father, he believed the accusation because earlier on he had noted some strange behavior in the girl. On the other hand, he told me that he was not hundred percent sure that his daughter was really a witch despite her name being mentioned by other children who confessed that they were witches. Here is what the father told me:

We are perplexed by her nightmares. She has some strange behavior which makes us suspect her as a witch. Sometimes we find her behaving as if she is having sex with a man. I tend to believe that she has a spiritual husband. Sometimes she just wakes up at the middle of the night and when I ask her where she is going she does not answer me. I am looking forward to a day when I will catch her red-handed practicing witchcraft (Th1.1/PA 001)

The father showed me his daughter at a distance, as she was in church that day, but I could not talk to her as she appeared to be very shy. Typically, in Malawian culture, a father and a daughter do not open up or share sexual matters. She could only be masturbating but then I did not get that in the father's line of thought. In the case of sleep walking, the father told me that he could later on ask her what she was doing at night but the daughter just kept quiet.

Child-Witch Accusation outside Abundant Life Church

Church ministers of ALC also handled child-witch accusation cases from people outside this church. A Case Study (1) below describes my first hand testimony from a child from the outside ALC who believed he had been practicing witchcraft.

Case Study of Child Who Claims Deliverance from Witchcraft at Fellowship

DL (Concealed Name)

District: Lilongwe; Place; Area 49-Dubai; Age: 15; Sex: Male; Ethnicity: Chewa; Religion: Christian; Education: Primary

On 6th August, 2012, the researcher visited a ladies' Fellowship in Area 49-Dubai after being referred by a pastor of Area 49-Apostolic Faith Mission. The Fellowship meets on Mondays and Wednesdays but I visited the place on Tuesday. The leader of the Fellowship was in the past a member of the church I was once a pastor, so it was easy to introduce myself and the reason for my visit. The leader said that I had just missed a deliverance session where a lady was being exorcised of witchcraft. Nevertheless, she introduced me to a boy who identified himself as DL. She told me he was once a witch but was delivered and was now part of the exorcists who prays for child-witches who come to the Fellowship every Mondays and Wednesdays. I did not want to miss the opportunity, so I took him aside for a talk. I introduced myself to him and skillfully created an atmosphere where he would open up. He told me that he lives in Area 25 sector 8, about 5 Km from the place of Fellowship. His mother passed away and was now living with a step-mother and biological father. According to his explanation I noted that he was coming from a

very economically challenged family. This is how he narrated the whole story of his life and practice in witchcraft:

The genesis of my witchcraft story is that my parents tattooed me because of their suspicion that I might be a witch. It looks like I was born with witchcraft. But it all began one day, while I was coming from school—Mkomachi Primary [this school is in the same area I met DL]. I met a *mzungu* white-man who offered me some sweets. After eating those sweets I just started feeling like someone was chasing me and that the soil was falling on me from the back. Then I started seeing that white-man in my dreams forcing me to do all sorts of evil. At night, I would find myself in wonderland, a place where all things looked fantastic. I was even given responsibility to be in charge of other children that were found in that wonderland. Some of the children I met there I would recognize them but some were strangers to me. The old people I found in this wonderland would sometimes whip us if we did not obey their orders. During the day, I would play with the kids that I met at night but we were not discussing our night experiences. I guess each child simply knew that we meet at night in the wonderland. During the day, I am miserably mistreated by my parents for my small mistakes. Many times, I am not given food. This is why I also spend most of my time here at the Fellowship because the women in the Fellowship feed and dress me. At home, I am not also given enough support to pursue education. However, I want to proceed with my education so that I can help my biological young brothers and sisters who are also suffering. I meet all sorts of problems in this life. Not many people know of my predicaments or witchcraft practice. Only my closest relatives know. They keep it secret as this is embarrassing to the family. I was recently to be sent to the village to be cleansed of witchcraft by a witch doctor but I declined. This has worsened my relationship with my father. My parents think I am rude and naughty especially that I spend most of the time here at the fellowship praying. My other relatives think I am a threat to them and fear that one day I will kill them (Th 1.3/A 001).

The researcher finished his conversation with DL by encouraging him with scriptures and praying with DL. I told him that one day God will send him angels to minister to him more than I had done. He looked secured in the care of the Fellowship although he was not sure if he would never go back into witchcraft. I did not go back to observe the prayer and exorcism, as I did not want to raise some suspicions, especially that I was tape recording the conversations. Furthermore, the researcher noted that some members of the fellowship were already becoming uncomfortable after the third visit.

Social Outcomes of Child-Witch Due to the Way Pastors Handled the Cases

My informants observed that the way pastors handled the witch accusation cases either perpetrated the practice or discouraged it. I will firstly report my findings by highlighting the negative social outcomes followed by two positive social outcomes.

Banishment

A common social outcome of child-witch accusation was banishment. In Lilongwe city some the communities were aware that the ALC ministers had been praying for the accused children in the area but they went ahead to demolish the houses of the “child-witch teachers.” The accused children and their teacher were banished from some the communities. My informant who is a pastor of ALC in Dubai said, “The community did not receive these children well. Meanwhile the children have been chased and sent back to the village. The woman who was teaching witchcraft has been chased away from Dubai. Her house has been demolished by mob justice” (Th 5.1/CM 004).

Later, I was tipped by a social worker on where I could personally find some of the kids that had been banished. So I was told to go to the major dumping site for the Lilongwe City Council, a place called Nchezi. There I found a good number of banished kids. This social worker, who is a coordinator of one of the major children’s homes, told me to go to Nchezi and look for a boy called Henry whom she thought would be open to share with me his life story. When I reached the dumping site, I found some six kids lying along the main road. They were very closed and defensive in their dialogue. They told me that some of them lived with their families in a village close to the dumping site. But their looks betrayed them. They appeared to have not taken a shower or changed their cloths at least for a year. They later revealed to me

they were there because their village disowned them. However, most of them had their parents, either biological or adopted alive. When I asked about where Henry was, they told me he had boarded a lorry which had gone to collect *njerwa* burnt bricks for building houses. When I told them the reason why I was looking for Henry they laughed and pointed one of those six kids—about 12 years old, who they claimed was banished from home due to witchcraft. So, I interviewed the kid. He was not ready to share his story with me but kept on telling me that he was not a witch. Some of the kids in that group asked me if I was going to pay them for sharing their stories. Banishment was a common social outcome in most of the child-witch accusations. The Case Study 2 below describes the experiences of a child in another area who was banished from her community and is living in a hut outside the village alone.

Case Study of Banishment

MCY (Name Concealed)

District: Thyolo; Age: 14; Sex: Female; Ethnicity: Lomwe; Religion: Christian; Marital status: Single; Education: Primary

In the morning of 8th August 2012, the researcher visited the Evangelical Association of Malawi offices in order to meet Mr. Chibisa, an eye witness of the story of a girl called MCY who was pronounced as a witch by her village. She now lives alone in a hut outside her village. Here is how Mr. Chibisa narrated the life story of MCY:

I came to know about MCY when I visited the Ministry of Gender to book for a venue for our overnight of prayers. Then I noticed that there were some children in that compound. So I asked one of the staff, “Why are these children here?” I was told, “These are the street kids.” They are here so that we may provide them shelter, food and some basic necessities of life. These are the needy children in the city; we are obligated to provide all their social needs as a ministry. I asked him, “What else do you provide for these children apart from their social needs?” The man quickly responded, “Nothing.” I followed up with another question, “Do you know that these kids are

susceptible to other evil factors like bad people such as rapists, robbers and thugs? I feel you need to give them a spiritual food as well.” I was told that was important but the government could not hire a chaplain for them but he concurred with my thoughts. I volunteered to start a ministry there, so I was given access to start ministering to these kids. This is how I came across cases of child-witchcraft. Amidst listening to the children’s stories, I came across child-witch accusation stories. So I came across the stories of MCY the witch. I started following the story. She is a 14 years old girl. I was told by the social worker this little girl came from Thyolo district. The social office in Thyolo failed to rehabilitate this girl and was referred to Lilongwe District Social Welfare. In Thyolo Social Welfare Centre she could not stay with her fellow children because of her witchcraft. At her village, her community pledged that they will never accept her. The story says that she was taught witchcraft when she was very young. In Thyolo Social Welfare Centre, she had started polluting other children with her witchcraft. Hence, the girl was transferred to Lilongwe Social Welfare Centre. Since then, the Lilongwe social welfare has been giving counseling to this little girl but no change has been realized in the life of MCY. When I started serving the Lilongwe Social Welfare, I also started ministering to her. One day I was told by the social welfare, “Do you know that the other kids have changed due to your ministry but not with MCY? Do you know that apart from being a witch, she is also raping other girls and also coercing boys to sleep with her? Worse still she is HIV positive. We are now afraid that the other children may also be affected by HIV so we have decided to send her back to Thyolo.” The next time I went there to minister to the children I was told, “MCY has been taken back to Thyolo.” The following week when I inquire about the whereabouts of MCY, I was told she was denied access to the village because the whole village did not want to see her again. The District Commissioner and the Police intervened but the whole village denied her. Finally the village chief said, “Maybe I will talk to few people in the village who can volunteer to be looking after her.” So the villagers built a little hut out of the village so that the MCY can live there.” The chief said he was ready to accept her but the relatives were not. When the chief was asked by the Social Welfare office about the condition of MCY, he reported, “A village woman volunteered to be feeding her from a distance.”

Mr. Chibisa wearing a sad face looked at me and said, “She is now staying alone in a hut and fed like a leper of the Bible days.” Commenting on the consequences of action taken against her, Mr. Chibisa said, “I know she may not want to go to the hospital in fear of people. So far, I cannot visit her again because of transport cost. It means she is cut off from spiritual food. She is exposed to evil spirits if she will continue to live alone (Th1.1/SW001).

Teasing and Bulling

Another social outcome of child-witch accusation was teasing and bulling. It was noted that the accused children suffered intimidation from their peers. A student at ALC said, “At school the accused are called all sorts of derogatory names and their rights are not protected” (Th5.2/STO 002). In Lilongwe City, Mgoni slum, my informant bemoaned, “Unfortunately instead of the child having peace of mind because he/she revealed that he was a witch, people start castigating the child, and at school peers mock or bully them” (Th5.2/CM 002). In this case confession did not lead to sympathy or less accusation. Some accused children were given derogatory names. The Bishop of ALC said, “They are given all sorts of derogatory names and their rights are not protected” (Th 5.2/CM 00 1). In two locations, an accused child would be mocked with this jeering by his or her peers, “*Mfiti! Mfiti! Wizard! Wizard!*” (Th 5.2/CM 004, Th5.2/PA 002).

Stigmatization

When pastors acknowledged cases of child-witchcraft brought to their attention and having prayed or exorcised the witchcraft, in many cases the child and the family of the accused child/children became a laughing stalk. The experience of a church minister in Lilongwe City ALC was that, despite being prayed for or exorcised witchcraft, the accused child continued to live with the witchcraft label. She reported of a case where a child was labeled a witch and died with that label. Her parents loved her and showed love but the other people including her peers stigmatized her. My informant said, “The community thought she was a witch and dangerous” (Th5.5/CM 004). Her peer were laughing at her and segregating her (Th5.3/CM 004). This made her school life hard. In other reports, the accused children failed exams due to absenteeism or psychological upset. Dr. Caleb Kim, in

his lecture of Power Encounter class at Africa International University, noted that African culture is a culture of shame (Kim 2012). Therefore, no peer would want to identify with the accused children. In many cases association with the accused implied that you are also a witch.

Increase of Child-Witch Accusations

The fact that the pastor prayed for the child or exorcised witchcraft, justified the fact that the child was a witch. I found out that there is a growing interest in child-witchcraft in ALC because pastors acknowledge its existence. A pastor in Alimaunde said, “I strongly believe that witchcraft exists” (Th6.1/MC 003). In another area, a pastor opened an exorcism center for the accused children. He noted that parents kept on suspecting more and more of their other children of witchcraft. Pastor Henry acknowledged, “The number kept increasing as parents would continually bring in children they suspected they practiced witchcraft” (Th1.5/006).

Mistreatment of the Accused Child

The researcher observed that the accused children were not properly fed, clothed, or sent to school by their parents or guardians. A seven year old boy in Likuni-Chansapo who has been living with the label of a witch for a number of years spent most of his time at the market dumping site because his parents do not want to see him playing with his siblings. He told the researcher,

This is why I also spend most of my time at the dumping site as sometimes business people throw away good bread and other foodstuff that we eat. Other goodwill people also come here to feed us and dress us. I am not also given enough support to pursue education (Th5.4/MC008).

Rape

Sexually related violence was not commonly mentioned by my informants, but it seemed to be one of the social outcomes of child-witch accusations. In the case stated earlier on, the girl in the Dedza case was raped before being murdered by her accusers. My informant reported, “It was later on discovered that, that night, some men went into her house, raped her and beat her to death” (Th4.1/STO 001).

Insecurity of the Community

The most common response of the ALC ministers to child-witch accusation was exorcism (Th 5.5/ CM 008). Whether the exorcism was successful or not, the Bishop of Abundant Life Church observed, “the community felt insecure so they sidelined the child or children” (Th 5.4/CM 001). Another church minister who sensed the feeling of insecurity in his community despite his exorcisms on the accused children said, “Most people believe in pastors, so they confirm the child was really a witch when they hear that I had been praying for it” (Th 5.4/CM 001). An elder of ALC told me, “Witches never surrender. Once you expose them, they look for other sophisticated means to harm the community. There was a time when people stopped walking at night because there is a rumor that witches are planning to revenge for being exposed” (Th 6.5/MC 008).”

Loss of Trust in Church Ministers

My informant from a church in a low-income cosmopolitan area in Lilongwe City told me that sometimes nobody cares that the pastor prayed for the accused child. He said, “People are losing trust in exorcists and this is why they go to witchdoctors” (Th2.1/SW 002). A social worker who was also my key informant at one of the children’s home was skeptical about inviting church leaders to their organization to

pray for the accused children because she thought most of the children were formerly labeled by church ministers to be witches. She argued, “How would we trust that they would keep secrets of the children and the organization if they are the same people who keep accusing children of witchcraft?” (Th 2.1/SW 002). Two key informants observed that upon the child being prayed for by pastors, some parents live in denial. They never come back to the pastor for further assistance or give feedback to the pastor if the child is delivered or not. However, there may be several reasons why the parents of the accused behaved so. Sometimes parents would just lose confidence in the church minister because the exorcism seemed not to work. So, they simply leave the situation unresolved and proceed with life. The way pastors held the cases determined whether the community would have confidence in them or lose it. In Mgoni, the father and other relative secretly took their child to a witchdoctor after feeling that the pastor had not removed the witchcraft. My informant said, “Taking the child to the witchdoctor hampered the power of the prayers. I later on learnt that the parents took the child to the village to consult a witchdoctor but the child ended up running mad” (Th 5.10/MC 002). Thidwa, who observed an exorcism in Lilongwe City, told me that he was not happy with the way the exorcist handled the accused kid. He said, “I did not like the exercise because the child was held tightly and you would see that the child was in panic. The girl was really traumatized and I did not want to talk to her” (Th 2.1/SW 003). Despite all the negative social outcomes of child-witch accusations that occurred due to the way church ministers of ALC handled the cases of accusation, I observed two positive social outcomes. These were acceptance and conversion.

Acceptance

One of the positive social outcomes of child-witch accusation due to the way church ministers handled the child-witch cases was acceptance. Depending on the situation and the nature of the witch accusation, sometimes the community would acknowledge the intervention of the church minister and warmly accept the child back into the community. In many stories that I came across, the biological parents stood with their accused child and provided psychological and emotional support. The community would also in this situation consider the issue as a misfortune. They believed the child was practicing witchcraft out of ignorance. Most of the community members who would be aware of the accusation were closer relatives to the child. I think this contributed to the reason for the sympathy. In another case where the accused child was accepted, my informant suggested, “I think it is because the accusation had not spread, only few and closest relatives knew about it, they all were sympathetic with the boy knowing that he was doing it ignorantly” (Th 5.8/CM 004). Furthermore, in other cases once a pastor prayed for the accused, the community became composed and was less afraid of the accused child, as they believe that the situation was in control. My informant in Lilongwe, Alimaunde said, “Because we had prayed for the accused child in the church, she was accepted into the community. We made it a point that other children welcomed her into the church and later on the community at large” (Th 5.8/CM 004).

Conversion

The second positive social outcome of child-witch accusation was conversion. Exorcism of witchcraft has been used as a tool not only for setting the captive free, but also for soul winning. A good number of people are claimed to have joined ALC upon attending the exorcism services that pastors of the church conducted. Four

church ministers testified to me on how their churches received new members from their community after they had either gone into their communities or the community brought to them accused children or the accuser to be prayed for or exorcised (Th 5.9/CM 004/CM 008/CM 005/CM 002). A pastor in Likuni-Chinsapo whose church has members who attend the church after their children were prayed for said, “The members who joined the church as a result of exorcisms, refer any witchcraft related case to me” (Th 5.9/CM 004). The same church minister shared with me several cases where child-witch accusers and the accused find their way into church:

The accusations have at the same time become a blessing in disguise as many people come to the Lord through the exorcism services. I remember of an overnight prayer session we had last year at the house of our church elder where we prayed for a kid who was practicing witchcraft. During that night, neighbors brought their children whom they suspected of practicing witchcraft. We have always emphasized in our exorcism service that the first step to deliverance is giving your life to Jesus. In this case we first explain the gospel to the clients, followed by exorcism. One of the members of our church is a family that came to this night of prayer who upon witnessing the deliverance of their daughter from witchcraft gave their life to Jesus and decided to join Abundant Life Church (Th 5.9/CM 008).

Another informant in Dedza had a similar experience of conversion and flocking of people coming to join the church. He noted that parents come to the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus even through witchcraft cases. “They suspect their children or themselves have been bewitched, but when we explain the gospel message, they sometimes realize that it was just a lie from the devil and the best way out of their calamity is to run to Jesus” (Th 5.9/CM 004). In the same area, the chief, who is now the member of ALC came to the Lord because he was invited to the deliverance that involved some of the children of his village. The church minister said that he was amazed to witness the manifestations of the evil spirits and decided to give his life to Jesus (Th 5.9/CM 004). Some church leaders believed the devil was being used by God to bring good out of evil. They find in scripture many cases

where the devil ignorantly did an evil act that ended up glorifying God. A key informant whose church had two cases of child-witch accusation said to me:

The devil is a liar. The children he intends to steal, kill and destroy are the children today God is using in the church. Once these kids know the truth, it sets them free. Some of these children have gone ahead to invite their close relatives to church after being exorcised. They are grateful that the Lord has set them free. They no longer dream flying in their dream. They detest whatever stood on their way of salvation (Th 5.9/CM 007).

It was interesting to learn from pastors how many people had given their lives to Jesus out of exorcism sessions. A Dedza church minister told me that exorcism demonstrated the power of God over evil spirits (Th 5.9/CM 005). Exorcisms, not only of witchcraft, but other forms of bondage and faith healings, are conducted during Sunday services in ALC (Th 5.9/CM 001/C005).

I noted that the positive outcomes of child-witch accusation were at a surface level as it was noted earlier on that sometimes the accused children lived with the label for life despite being exorcised. Furthermore, despite the fact that pastors reported that exorcism of the accused children paradoxically won souls to Christ, there is a possibility that it also motivates pastors to do more of these exorcisms in order to gain converts and grow churches.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of the study was to examine the social outcomes of child-witch accusations resulting from the way Malawi Abundant Life Church ministers handled the cases. This study arrived at its findings by investigating the discourses, practices, beliefs of Malawians, first in Abundant Life Church, and the communities where members of the church live.

Summary of Key Findings

1. The prevalent social outcomes for child-witch accusation in communities where ALC has branches were beating, banishment and stigmatization.
2. The participation of ALC ministers on the child-witch accusations either through prayer or exorcism at times promoted child-witch accusations in a community. Despite the exorcisms, prayer and counseling of the accused by the church ministers, most communities continued to discriminate against the accused children.
3. The social outcomes of child-witch accusation resulting from the way church ministers handled the case contributed to lost trust and confidence of communities in church ministers.
4. The wide range of child-witch accusations indicated that a reasonable number of children in Central Region of Malawi have in one way or another suffered from witchcraft related violence.

5. Churches including non-Pentecostal and non-Evangelical are in a small way responding to child-witch accusations by setting up homes for the vulnerable children in the society. One Catholic-sisters children home even tries to return rejected children to their families.

Reflection of the Research findings based on my Research Question and sub-research questions

Research Question

What do church ministers in Malawi Abundant Life Church say and do in cases where children are accused of being witches, and, what social outcomes have resulted?

Sub-Questions

1. *How did church ministers in Abundant Life Church respond to Child witchcraft accusations?*

Most often, church ministers would hesitate to brush off the accusations based on their presupposition that “witchcraft is real.” Rather, they would go ahead to pray with the accused child or the accuser and if necessary exorcise witchcraft from the accused child. When the accusation is not convincing the accused or the accuser would only be counseled and prayed for.

- a. *Who was the child accused?*

The accused were mostly children who were being raised by step-mothers upon the death of their biological mothers. Rarely were children being raised by both biological parents accused.

a. *Who accused the child?*

The children were in many cases accused by their step-mothers, close relatives, Pentecostal/charismatic exorcists, and peers.

2. *How did the accuser ascertain child-witchcraft practices?*

There was diversity in ascertaining child-witch accusations. The most prevalent assertions included: the unruly behavior of the child, rumors and suspicion by the accusers, day dreaming or sleep walking of the child, confession by the accused child, revelation of fellowship exorcists, divination and sickness of either the accused child or the accuser. Sometimes the accused child fell sick because the older witches decided to kill the “child-witch” for failing to repay the human meat eaten. Such a child would eventually die.

3. *What beliefs are reflected in these discourses and practices?*

The beliefs reflected in the child-witch accusation were majorly deep-seated at a worldview level of both the accused and the accusers, as witchcraft belief are prevalent in many Africa Traditional Religions, especially amongst the Chewa of Central Region of Malawi, with which most of the members of ALC come from. Furthermore, when the parents of the accused child noted that the exorcisms administered on their child would not remove the witchcraft, the tendency was to secretly consult a *singa'anga* diviner.

4. *What social outcomes resulted from child-witch accusations due to the way a church minister handled the case?*

Children accused of witchcraft were banished, stigmatized, mocked by their peers or relatives, mistreated by their parents or guardians, especially by being denied food, clothing, text book, exercise books and pencils and pocket money such that other child-witches dropped from school. They were also deprived from social

services, for example, medical care, school and church. In other situations, the child was beaten to death, raped, and left to live with a label of a witch. Others were caged. On the other hand, the community felt insecure as long as the accused child lived in their vicinity. There was an increase in child-witch accusations as long as church ministers continued to administer exorcism to the accused children. In some cases, church ministers claimed that child-witch accusations which were followed by exorcisms contributed to increased membership as the victim would end up in their church after experiencing the power of God to deliver the accused children or accuser. In other cases, church ministers noted that their involvement in child-witch accusations was at the expense of their trust as the community was likely to lose their trust depending on the way they handled a child- witch accusation case.

4. *How did the community (family members, neighbors, church) treat the accused child?*

The accusation received mixed reactions. In some cases the accused child received sympathy from the members of his or her family or community either by being protected from the accusers or being referred to exorcists or diviners. In another case, to a larger extent, the family members mistreated the accused child and did the violence mentioned in the sub-question four above. Church ministers were more receptive to the accused child as they believed the power of Jesus was able to set the “child-witches” free. Furthermore, church ministers believed the power of witchcraft is inferior to the power they have in Jesus Christ.

5. *How did the accused child respond to the accusations?*

Many of the accused children believed they might really be witches. Hence, they looked forward to their deliverance and reunion with their beloved. As a result, there was tendency for the accused children to confess that they were indeed witches,

looking at the misfortune that came their way. Dreams, behaviors and revelations of the exorcists led the children to believe they were witches. Rarely would a child deny the accusation and stand his or her ground.

Conclusion

The social outcomes of child-witch accusations resulting from the way church ministers handled the cases are more on the negative side than positive. Children accused of witchcraft face punitive measures in their communities. However some members of the community where Abundant Life church has branches (though not many), are skeptical of child-witch accusations hence sympathize with the accused children than the accusers. Depending on the heinousness of the accusations and the accusers, whether in the church or outside the church, the accused children suffer from physical, social, emotional, psychological and economic abuses. These include: banishment, being stigmatized, teasing and bullying, isolation, lack of medical care, scolding, not being sent to school, being used for cheap labor—especially in the lakeshore areas by fishermen, and denial to spiritual food. In extreme cases, there are attempts to murder accused child. Despite the much gloominess of the social outcomes of child-witch accusations, some ministers felt there were some positive social outcomes due to the way pastors handled child-witch accusations cases. These include the opportunity to share the faith to the accused and the accusers—as a bridge is created to evangelize to the concerned communities.

Missiological Implications

The anthropological approach taken by the present researcher was the best means to approach this subject of child-witchcraft, as it is very secretive and sensitive and this is why at all cost names of the informants have been concealed. The study

reaffirmed the value of anthropological research methods to church leaders and missionaries. As Paul Hiebert noted, anthropological study is the best means to “make the gospel relevant to our listeners” (1985, 15).

This study has revealed the need for the ALC to revisit her belief and actions in child-witchcraft. It was evident in this study that the belief in child-witchcraft is at the deeper worldview level of the Malawian cultures as all the communities where ALC has branches had child-witch accusation cases. This means that Malawian Christians—the Chewa in particular (as this was the dominant ethnic group in the areas where the study was conducted), operate at their worldviews level in dealing with child-witch accusations in the church. Through this research, I observed that the church ministers simply put on Chewa worldview glasses when looking into scriptures to interpret what the scripture has to say about child-witchcraft. The result of this approach is that members of ALC to perceive child-witchcraft the same way the Chewa culture does. The problem with this approach is that critical contextualization never takes place. Hill has recommended that, “for Africans to receive the good news into their reality, witchcraft must be addressed” (Harriet Hill 1996, 325). She goes on to argue that “given the importance it has in African societies, clear contextualized teaching is a must” (Harriet Hill 1996).

Perhaps what is happening in Malawi is an outcry of the Lord to church and communities in Malawi through prophet Hosea, “... my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge” (6:4). The church was supposed to be a place where the accused child would find refuge according to the command of the Lord in James 1: 27, “... pure and lasting religion in the sight of God our Father means that we must care for the orphans and widows in their troubles, and refuse to let the world corrupt us” (NLT). The prevalence of child-witch accusations in both the church and outside the

church in Malawi is an indication that there is need for openness and dialogue in the church and community as a whole. The church will be the best organization to spearhead this process as it is deeply involved in child-witch accusations and its social outcomes. To cultivate the momentum in spearheading dialogue on child-witch accusations, the education ministry of the church should be revisited. Otherwise, very few Malawian churches have taken church education seriously. The neo-Pentecostal churches (including ALC) which are booming at a terrific rate seem to have nothing on their agenda related with critical examination of child-witch accusations, except employing exorcism. As noted in my research, this approach has failed to eradicate child-witchcraft. Time has come for the church in Malawi, and the rest of Africa, to accept the reality of child abuses that follow due to the way church leaders handle child-witch accusations.

Witchcraft, including child-witch accusation, is a phenomenon that has persisted under the sun from age to age. It was once prevalent in the West, promoted by the Catholic Church, but later on was outlawed by their governments (Ferreiro and Russell 1998, 109). Today it is slowing down, becoming part of Western history, though in other places we still get reports of its activities. Unfortunately, both the church and the Malawian cultures are not ready to learn from the experience of Europe and her abolition of witchcraft. I only hear some Africans complaining that the Westerners are failing to understand those African cultures which still believe in witchcraft. However, my conviction and research findings are that the phenomenology is the same. What worked in the west to eradicate witchcraft may, if contextualized, also work in the global south. The best way to get rid of child-witch accusations in Malawi and the rest of Africa is to be humble and listen to those who overcame the problem. Rasmussen observed, “Witchcraft belief in the west died

slowly after witch accusations and confessions were not accepted.” He proposes that reducing accusations (and thus stories and confessions and rumors) is key towards ending witch accusations, even if people do not quickly change their belief that witches can cause harm. If not, child-witch accusations will continue despite the fact that witchcraft acts in Malawi and other African countries are being reviewed.

The church in Malawi should be reminded that the devil is a liar and a father of all lies. He was a liar from the beginning and continues to expand his kingdom through lies (my own paraphrase of John 8: 44). If the church will take child-witchcraft as a lie from the devil, it will change her approach to child-witch accusations. In an in-depth study of the lies from the Devil, Robert Priest contended,

Again and again when scholars have carefully tracked the direction of accusations they find self-interested accusations which reflect hostility, guilt, and hatred on the part of accusers towards the accused. In short, the very act of accusing someone of being a witch is itself a harmful, malicious and self-interested act. The accusers are themselves sinning in the very act of accusing. According to theologian René Girard (1977, 1986, 1987, 2001), it is not the individual being accused, but the whole community of self-righteous accusers, who most exemplify the attributes of Satan – the great accuser (Priest 2012,2).

This is why I have recommended promotion of the educational ministry of the church for it is in such forum that child-witch accusations should be discussed in detail I recommend a special curriculum on witchcraft and African cultural issues to be developed for the church and if possible be taught in primary and secondary schools of Malawi. Furthermore, I also recommend the government of Malawi to implement the recommendations on addressing witchcraft proposed in Chilimampungwa and Thindwa’s report (Refer to Appendix 6).

Recommendation for Action against Child-Witch Accusations in Abundant Life Church

I appreciate the exorcisms, counseling and prayers that the ALC does to address cases of child-witch accusations. However, bearing in mind that child-witch accusations have continued to emerge in this church, I recommend some new approaches to ALC about the problem. Firstly, I recommend a comprehensive exegesis on scriptures addressing witchcraft. As Kunhiyop rightly observed,

The Bible is often used merely as a source of proof text to support our traditional opinions and beliefs. However, when properly interpreted, the Bible does not support the kinds of doctrines of demons, evil spirits and witchcraft that are supported, nursed and propagated in Africa. Though African experiences and stories are relevant and should be interacted with, the truth we believe should be based *solely* on Scripture (2008, 382).

Furthermore, the doctrine of suffering and sin should be adequately addressed in Bible studies and pulpits. Kunhiyop argues that the resurgence of belief in the power of witches and wizards among Christians in Africa today is firstly that church leaders have not given an adequate explanation to evil nor answered the question; “What is the ultimate cause of misfortune, sickness and death?” (2008, 383). As my research has found out that there is a correlation between suffering and child-witch accusations. Secondly, I recommend the ALC to establish a city of refuge. This will be a center where children who have been accused of witchcraft and are susceptible to the abuses discussed earlier on will be raised to the point where their community or relatives are ready to accept them as guilt free citizens. Thirdly, every year a workshop on child-witch accusation should be organized to monitor and evaluate the prevalence of child-witch accusations in ALC and its neighborhood. Finally, ALC should seek to establish partnership with other organizations that are dealing with child-witch accusations or witchcraft in general. In Malawi the church can partner

with the local NGOs such as, Mobile Legal Aid Clinic, Association of Secular Humanism and international NGOs such as Stepping Stones Nigeria—a UK-based charity that defends and upholds the rights of children in the Niger Delta.

Recommendation for Further Studies

Following my initial research, surely an in-depth ethnographic study on social outcomes of child-witchcraft due to the way church ministers handled the accusation cases is still required if ALC is to find a lasting solution to the problem facing accused children and their families. The ideal approach would be to continue interviewing church leaders, social workers, the accused and the accusers. However, the range should be broadened to include, the most popular witchdoctors dreaded and respected by Malawians, such as Chikanga, and Central Region renowned herbalist, Simbazako, police officers, magistrates, the chiefs, and the elders who are the custodians of the Malawi oral culture. In order to work towards arriving at the solution to child-witch accusation in Central Region and the rest of Malawi and Africa as a whole, I recommend that an in-depth study of the same research be done. This time it should be done with an inclusion of a critical contextualization process which answers questions like, “What should people do with their old cultural ways when they become Christians, and how should the missionary respond to these traditional beliefs and practices” (Hiebert 1985,171).

Secondly, further research should be done to investigate the Malawian Christian interpretation of biblical passages on witchcraft because, as Hiebert noted, “people will understand the gospel from the perspective of their own world view” (1985, 21). I noted that the biblical understanding of witchcraft of the authors of the Bible is different from the Malawian understanding of witchcraft. It will be illuminating to fully understand what the Bible means by witchcraft and sorcery. For

example, children are nowhere in the Bible portrayed as witches. The closest that they got to witchcraft in Old Testament was in cases where they were sacrificed to idols in demonic heathen worship, as in Lev 18:20; 20:2–4; 2 Kings 23:10; and Jer 32:35. In the New Testament, the closest case is that in Acts 16:16 about the slave-girl “who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling.” However, these passages are not discussing child-witch accusation as understood in the Malawian cultures hence cannot be used to justify child-witch accusations. Thirdly, the present research only concentrated in one Pentecostal denomination but a future research should encompass all Pentecostal churches and charismatic ministries because it is in such settings where child-witch accusations and exorcisms are prevalent.

Some ALC ministers are torn between two worldviews, one believes that child witches are harming many people and another says there are no witches who can harm others secretly Nevertheless, in between is “God’s worldview revealed through scripture” which is different from both of these worldviews. Dr. Rasmussen contends, “So we must not choose between them, but follow God and his revelation,” (informal conversation 2013). I wish it was true that witchcraft does not exist than if it really exists. Dr. Rasmussen argues that the error is not in the believing that there are witches, but in blaming everything on witchcraft (2008, 119). Finally, I recommend a further study on the relationship between psychiatric cases and child-witch confession cases, for in my present study I saw some correlations. I trust the findings in this research will be a highway towards a lasting solution to negative social outcomes of child-witch accusations in central region of and the rest of Africa.

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APPENDIX 1

**INTERVIEW GUIDE IN ENGLISH FOR CHURCH MINISTER/SOCIAL
WORKER**

Introduction to Asking Permission to Interview a Person

The goal of the research is to find out the social outcomes of child-witch accusations as a result of how church ministers of Abundant Life Church handled the cases. Therefore, I approach you in order to draw from your experiences in ministry on child-witch accusations and myself as a learner. In this regard, feel free to teach me and forget about my academic advancement.

This information is for academic purpose, though the commendations and findings will later be shared to Abundant Life Church leadership for future ministry planning of the church. Be assured that I will not share your confidential views about witchcraft if you feel it might jeopardize your ministerial or membership position in the church. Wherever necessary, the researcher will use part of your story in the data analysis. Feel free to tell me whether you would like your name to be mentioned or remain anonymous.

Guide for the Church Minister/Social Worker

Tell me a story (or more than one) of a case you ever handled related with child-witch accusation. Tell me much about the situation as much as you can remember. Here are some questions to help you remember, though you do not need to answer all of them:

1. Where and when was this case handled? How old was the accused Child/accuser? What was your relationship with the person? How were you involved? What was the accused child's relationship with the accuser or the other people involved?
2. How did the parents of the child accused respond?
3. Were the parents biological or not?
4. What was the response of the child accused?
5. What was your response when the case was brought to your attention?
6. What evidence did the accuser have that the child was practicing witchcraft?
7. What has been the social outcome of the case due the way you handled it?

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW GUIDE IN ENGLISH FOR THE ACCUSED CHILD

The goal of the research is to find out the social outcomes of child-witch accusations as a result of how church ministers of Malawi Abundant Life church handled the cases. Therefore, I approach you in order to draw from your experiences on child-witch accusations. Hence, as you share your experience, remember that I am learning from you. In this regard feel free to teach me and forget about my academic advancement.

This information is for academic purpose, though the commendations and findings will later be shared to Abundant Life Church leadership for future ministry planning of the church. Be assured that I will not share your confidential views about witchcraft if you feel that might jeopardize your ministerial or membership position in the church. Wherever necessary, the researcher will use part of your story in the data analysis. Feel free to tell me whether you would like your name to be mentioned or remain anonymous.

Guide for the Accused Child

Tell me a story (or more than one) of how you were accused of witchcraft. Tell me much about the situation as much as you can remember. Here are some questions to help you remember, though you do not need to answer all of them:

1. How did you respond to the accusation?

2. If you accepted/admitted that you are a witch, did you really believe it?
If so, what evidence is there that makes you believe you are a witch?
3. How did your parents respond to the accusation?
4. How did the church handle your case?
5. How did the community and church members respond to your situation?
6. What circumstances followed as a result of how a church minister handled your case?

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEW GUIDE IN CHICHEWA FOR CHURCH MINISTER/SOCIAL WORKER

Introduction to Asking Permission to Interview a Person

MAWU OTSOGORERA POPEMPHA MWAYI WO YANKHULA NDI A BUSA

KAPEN MUNTHU WA NCHITO YA CHITUKUKO

Cholinga cha kafukufukuyu ndikupeza zotsatira zomwe zimachitika a busa kapenanso atsogoleri a Abundant Life Church atatha kuweruza mirandu ya ufiti wa ana. Ine ndabwera kuti ndidzaphunzire kuchokera kwa inu, kotero kuti masukani kundiphunzitsa posasamala za maphunziro anga.

Zotsatirazi ndikufuna kulimbikitsa a tsogoleriwa kuti aunikenso njira zomwe akugwiritsa ntchito komanso kuzindikira, kuyamikira ndi kusintha zina mwa njira zomwe akugwiritsa ntchito kuti athe kutenga nao mbali pa nkhani yoteteza ndi zolimbikitsa ufulu wa ana. Kafukufukuyi nthito yake ndi thandizira maphunziro, palibenso nthito yina pambali pa iyi. Dziwani kuti dzina lanu ndidzalisunga mwachinsinsi pozindikira kuti mwina zikhoza kudzetsa mavuto mu mpingo ngati m'tumiki komanso ngati membala, ngati ndikofuka kutero, ndidzagwiritsa nthito zina mwa zomwe tikambirane ngati mbali ya kafukufuka wanga. Kotero kuti ndinu womasuka kundiuza kuti ndikagweritse ntchito dzina lanu.

Chotsogozo cha mafunso (kwa a busa)

Tandiuuzani za momwe mudaweruzira khani zomwe zimakhudzana ndi zophunzitsa ana ufiti? Kodi mungafotokoze momwe zidakhalira? Ndiri ndi mafunso mwina atha kukumbutsani zina zomwe mukhoza kuiwala ngakhale simukuyenara kuyankha onse. adali ndi zaka zingati? Nanga padali ubale wotani ndi wodandaulayo? Kodi inuyo mukhudzidwa motani? Nanga anthu ena adakhudzidwa bwanji? Kodi padali ubali wotani pakati pa ana omwe amakhudzidwayo ndi ana a womwe amadandaula kapenanso anthu achibale a mbali zonse?

1. Kodi nanga makolo a mwana wokhudzidwa ndi ufitiyo anazilandira bwanji?
2. Nanga mwana yemwe amakhudzidwayo adazirandira motani?
3. Nanga anthu amati chiani makamaka pa nkhani ya ubale pakati mwana wokhudwidwa ndi ufiti ndi abale ake, anthu woyandikana nawo, magogo, mizimu, milungu, afiti, matemberero, tchimo komanso khani za imfa.
4. Kodi anthu a m'mudzi amati chikanachitika ndi chiani poyankulapo pa za nkhaniyi?
5. Kodi inu munatiponji poyankhapo nkhaniyi yitakupezani?
6. Kodi wodandaula adali ndi umboni wotani kutsimikiza kuti mwanayu amatamba?
7. Kodi ndizotsatira zANJI zidaoneka nkhaniyi yitatha kuweruzidwa?
 - a. AChristu adakamba zotani?
 - b. Nanga anthu achikunja adatinji?

APPENDIX 4

INTERVIEW GUIDE IN CHICHEWA FOR THE ACCUSED CHILD

(CHITSOGOZO CHA MAFUNSO (KWA MUNTHU/MWANA WOPEZEKA NDI

MILANDU YA UFITI)

- A. Tafotokozani za momwe zidakhalira pamene mudakhudzidwa ndi mlandu wa ufiti wa ana?
- B. Kodi mudayakhapo bwanji pa nkhaniyi?
- C. Nanga makolo anu adatiponji pankhaniyi?
- D. Nanga kodi anthu a mm'udzi komanso ampingo adatiponji pa za nkhaniyi?
- E. Nanga zotsatira za mlandu wanu zidali zotoni?

APPENDIX 5

WITCHES AND SUFFERING

Analysis of Data of a Survey Conducted in Lilongwe Malawi at Abundant Life Bible

School

NUMBER OF STUDENTS:	9
AVERAGE AGE	43
NATIONALITY:	Malawian
DENOMINATION:	Pentecostal

1. How many friends, colleagues, relatives, or neighbors have personally told you that they suspect someone has harmed them through witchcraft?

None	2
1-2	3
3-5	1
6-10	1
11-20	1
21 or more	1

33% have friends, colleagues, relatives, or neighbors who have personally told them that they suspect someone has harmed them through witchcraft.

2. How many times have you experienced a problem that you suspect someone caused through witchcraft?

None	4
1-2	4
3-5	1
6-10	0
11 or more	0

44 % have experienced a problem that they suspect someone caused through witchcraft.

3. Read the following three statements and check the one that is closest to what you believe.

Some people have the supernatural ability to kill other people through witchcraft (6)

No human being has the supernatural ability to kill other people through witchcraft (0)

I am not sure but I suspect some people have the ability to kill through witchcraft (1)

I am not sure but I doubt that any human being call kill another person through witchcraft (2)

Conclusion:

67% of the participants believe some people have the supernatural ability to kill other people through witchcraft.

4. How many friends, colleagues, relatives, or neighbors have you personally known that were accused by others of harming someone else through witchcraft?

None	2
1-2	1
3-5	5
6-10	0
11-20	1
21 or more	0

56% of the participants have friends, colleagues, relatives, or neighbors they have personally known that were accused by others of harming someone else through witchcraft.

5. How many colleagues, relatives, or neighbors have you personally known that were accused by others of killing someone through witchcraft?

None	2
1-2	4
3-5	1
6-10	1
11 or more	1

44% have colleagues, relatives, or neighbors who were accused by others of killing someone through witchcraft.

6. Have you ever known a child that was accused by others of killing someone through witchcraft?

None 2
 Yes 1
 Yes 2-3 4
 Yes 4 or more 1

44% know of a child that was accused by others of killing someone through witchcraft.

7. Have you ever known a pastor that was accused by others of killing someone through witchcraft?

None 4
 Yes 1 3
 Yes 2 or 3 2
 Yes 4 or more 0

44% know a pastor that was accused by others of killing someone through witchcraft.

8. Have you ever known anyone you suspect was wrongly accused of harming someone through witchcraft?

None 2
 Yes 1 3
 Yes 2 or 3 2
 Yes 4 or more 2

33% know someone they suspect was wrongly accused of harming someone through witchcraft.

In the cases where you have personally known an individual accused of harming others through witchcraft, which of the following happened to the accused person?

- | | | |
|---|---------|--------|
| 9. He or she was shunned and avoided by other people | Yes (5) | No (2) |
| 10. He or she had their property taken or destroyed | Yes (5) | No (3) |
| 11. He or she was driven from their home or community | Yes (6) | No (3) |
| 12. He or she was beaten or physically attacked | Yes (7) | No (2) |
| 13. He or she was jailed | Yes (3) | No (6) |
| 14. He or she was killed | Yes (3) | No (6) |

78% know an individual accused of harming others through witchcraft, who was beaten or physically attacked

15. What ethnic group are you from?

Chewa	4
Yao	1
Tumbuka	1

44% of the participants were Chewa

APPENDIX 6

THE WITCHCRAFT ACT OF 1911- CAP 7.02- VOL. 2

The Act

1. This Act may be cited as the Witchcraft Act.

Prohibitions

2. Trial by Mwabvi or any concoction that is likely to result in death or injury is prohibited.

i) Any person who directs and controls or presides at any trial by ordeal which is prohibited by this Act shall be liable to imprisonment.

ii) Any person who is present at or takes any part in any trial by ordeal which is prohibited by this Act shall be liable to imprisonment.

iii) Any person who sells, collects, makes or assists in any poison is liable to imprisonment.

Any African found in possession of Mwabvi or other poison commonly used for witchcraft trial shall have committed a crime.

Charging person with witchcraft

Any person accusing any person with being a witch or with practicing witchcraft or names or indicates any person as being a witch or wizard will be imprisoned for 5 years or pay a fine of £25.

Employment of witch finder

Any person who employs or solicits any other person to name or indicate by the use of non natural means any person as a perpetrator of any alleged crime or other act complained of shall be imprisoned for 5 years or be fined £25 .

Pretending witchcraft

Any person who by his statement represents himself to the DC, police or authorities to be a wizard or a witch or having or exercising of the power of witchcraft shall be fined £50 pounds or imprisonment for 10 years

Chiefs, headmen permitting, etc, prohibited trials by ordeal

Any chief and headmen who directly or indirectly permits, promotes, encourages or facilitates any trial by ordeal which is prohibited by this Act or intends trial and does not report the same to the District Commissioner of the district in which such trial has been and intends to be held shall be liable to imprisonment for 5 years or to a fine of £25. Every chief or Headman within whose territory or village any prohibited trial by ordeal takes place shall be deemed to have committed an offence under this Section, unless he shall prove that as a matter of fact he was justifiably ignorant of such trial or intended trial.

Profession of witchcraft illegal

The profession of calling of witch finder or witchdoctor or of professional maker and or mixer of poison is hereby declared to be illegal calling and every person exercising or pretending to exercise such calling or profession shall be guilty of felony and shall be liable to imprisonment for life.

Any person who shall use or assist in using any lot or charm with a view to the commission of any unlawful act shall be liable to a fine of £5 or imprisonment of 1 year.

Nothing in this Act shall affect the liability of the death penalty of any person who under a pretence trial by ordeal or of using any lot or charm commits willful murder.

The Minister shall have powers to make Rules for the better carrying into effect of this Act and such rules may impose fines not exceeding £5 or imprisonment exceeding one year.

APPENDIX 7

RECOMMENDATIONS IN CHILIMAMPUNGA AND THINDWA'S REPORT

The following are the recommendations made based on the findings of this study, aimed at eliminating cases of witchcraft-based violence:

- The Ministry of Local Government (in liaison with Ministries of Elderly and Women with relevant stakeholders) should take a proactive stance to sensitize on regular basis T/As and DCs regarding their responsibilities to enforce the witchcraft law.
- Other state institutions like the police should be reminded to enforce the law and apply it correctly without fear or favor.
- Conduct country-wide public awareness meetings to familiarize community and religious leaders and the general public with the provisions of the Witchcraft Act and to make people aware of human rights. Radio adverts are also recommended as the appeal directly to the general public.
- Support initiatives aimed at building capacities for organizations that have shown leadership in the campaign against witchcraft based violence towards children, women and the elderly like ASH.
- Develop measures that ensure that those accused or mistreated in the name of witchcraft are able to report, come forward and speak out of injustices to police, DCs or relevant NGOs. Establishment of temporary shelter, hotline and legal support would be in order.
- Campaign for a new revised Witchcraft Act protects human rights by continuing to decriminalize witchcraft and criminalizes accusations from all corners of society. It should ensure that Malawians are not harmed in the name of witchcraft accusations.
- Strengthen measures to protect and support victims of witchcraft-based violence by building the capacity of other offices such as Social Welfare Offices, the police especially Victim Support Unit, and relevant NGOs.
- Train people at village level in holistic counseling. The people to be trained must include traditional leaders, religious leaders, and teachers.
- Conduct a research study focusing on the violence that children suspected of practicing witchcraft are subjected to, and the impact of such violence on the children's health and socio-psychological life. This should also investigate sexual violence the children are subjected to by witchdoctors and religious leaders.

APPENDIX 8

DATA

This appendix carries data I extracted from interviews and primary data source. I have organized my data according to research sub-questions and themes. Refer to Chapter three, subtitle, Coding and Usage on page 38 and 39 for explanation of technical terms.

Copy of Table 1. The interviews listed by code number and providing information about the interviewees

Interview no.	Description of the residence of Interviewee
A 001	Member of a Fellowship, boy from Lilongwe City- Dubai
A002	Member of Abundant Life Church from Lilongwe- Mgoni
A003	My relative from Lilongwe Rural West
AR 001	Leader of a Fellowship from Lilongwe City-Dubai
AR 002	Chief from Lilongwe, Likuni-Chinsapo
SW 001	Social Worker in a Children's Home member, from Lilongwe City center
SW 002	Social Worker in a Children's Home, from Lilongwe City center
SW 003	Social Worker human rights activist, from Lilongwe City center
CM 001	Church minister from Lilongwe City center
CM 002	Church minister from Lilongwe City- Mgoni
CM 003	Church minister from Lilongwe Rural East
CM 004	Church minister from Lilongwe City-Area 49
CM 005	Church minister from Dedza
CM 006	Church minister from Lilongwe City-Area 49
CM 007	Church minister from Lilongwe Rural West
CM 008	Church minister from Lilongwe Likuni-Chinsapo
STO 001	Cousin of the accused girl from Dedza
STO 002	Bible school student from Lilongwe City center
PA 002	Parent of the accused-girl from Lilongwe Likuni-Chinsapo
STO 003	Exorcist from Lilongwe Rural South

Research Question

What do church ministers in Malawi Abundant life Church say and do in cases where children are accused of being witches and what social outcomes have resulted?

SRQ 2: How did the accuser ascertain child-witchcraft practices?

Theme 1: FOUNDATIONS FOR CHILD-WITCH ACCUSATIONS

Sub-theme 1.1: Rumor and suspicion,

- PA 001 In the case of my girl, we just wonder what she does. She has some strange behaviors which makes us suspect her as a witch. Sometimes we find her behaving as if she is having sex with a man. I tend to believe that she has a spiritual husband. Sometimes she just wakes up at the middle of the night and when I ask her, she doesn't answer. I am looking for a day when I will myself catch her red-handed practicing witchcraft.
- A 002 We were neighbors, I came before them in that area. You know that in our Malawian culture the chief is automatically the person who was the first resident in an area. So, by virtue of coming first in that area I became the chief. Now it happened that my neighbor was richer than I. He built his mansion adjacent to my house. But, unfortunately he started encroaching into my plot. So I complained to him and we almost picked a fight after exchanging some bitter words. Now it happened that he had a child aged between 12 and 14 years. Because of the issue of land, I guess, his parents made this boy spread a rumor that I was teaching him witchcraft? I was later on summoned and stood in a court of law. The parents claimed that they had invited a pastor who came to pray for the child in the house and removed and burned the witchcraft tools I had given their son. I asked them to call for the pastor but my accuser said he was not ready to bring the pastor forward.
- CM 007 Rumors have gone out that the children of the headmaster, including some two children of the teachers at the staff houses, were involved in child-witchcraft. When the children were pinned down to reveal their witchcraft practices they said it was the wife of chief C who was teaching them.
- CM 005 The mother and father said, "We are happy that the kids have confessed because we were suspecting the children of witchcraft because of their rude behavior".
- PA 002 One night when we were asleep our child, Faith, started crying saying, "I can see a cat coming through the window." The other night the same thing happened, so I and my husband started praying about it. At

times we could hear strange noise from the roof at night. So, we suspect it from witches who come to take our children out.

- CM 005 There are many things pastors talk about, however, I will speak about myself. I know many kids are accused of witchcraft. I really would not judge the kids. I think some do really practice witchcraft but others are falsely accused. When parents bring their children to my attention I definitely pray for the kids and the parents. Nevertheless, rarely will an adult come to claim that he or she has been bewitched by a particular kid. Most of the time it is the parent coming to reason with me upon suspecting that their child is being taught witchcraft or is being played around by witches at night.
- STO 001 I had a female cousin who was 10 years old. Rumors spread in our household, and later on the whole community, that she was a witch. The village implicated her in many of the deaths and sicknesses in the village. I had lived with this girl for some time. I later felt I needed to bring the issue to the attention of the pastor. So, one day when the pastor was praying for people at the end of the sermon, I took a bold step to go in front and present my prayer petition. He prayed for me and later prayed for the girl. For some reasons the girl went back to my village. My village is right here in Dedza. At home and in the village nobody liked the girl, so she lived as a foreigner in her own motherland. The girl was separated from the relatives and lived in her own hut. I had shared with the relatives concerning prayers that the pastor offered for her but nobody cared. Sadly, one gloomy night some relatives and villagers plotted a coup. That night some people reported to have just heard an agony of a loud cry coming from the direction of the house the girl was living. It was later on discovered that, that night, some men went into her house, raped her and beat her to death. The following day the police came to collect the body to the hospital for postmortem. She was later on buried and the police are still investigating the matter. The suspects have already been identified. Unfortunately, one of them is her cousin.
- CM 003 The child had ever stayed with her grandmother who was suspected to be a witch. After some time the grandmother died. You know a witch cannot just die without passing on. The community suspected that the child might have since then inherited the witchcraft. Surely, it did not take another two years before the mother of the kid started getting sick continually. Who else apart from the little girl would people suspect? The mother of the kid passed on and the kid was an orphan. Since that time, the close relatives were afraid to adopt this girl. This is how she ended up staying alone in a house that the mother left for her and her brother. Later on, the brother was hired by a man who came to the village to look for tenants to work in his tobacco farm in Kasungu. The poor girl ended up staying alone, of course with some relatives who used to visit her.
- CM 001 Later on, the mother fell sick. The children spread rumors that they were responsible for their mother's sickness. They claimed to have

used a witchcraft hammer to hit their mother's head and this is why she was sick. The mother was a Christian—of course not a member of Abundant Life Church. She brought the children to my attention and we started praying for the children and the mother.

- CM 006 Nobody liked the children. They suspected their parents could also have been involved. The children were sure they were practicing witchcraft, as some claimed if they were not ready to go out that night they would next time be punished at the graveyard by dashing them to the tomb stones and whipping.
- AR 002 Witchcraft issues are private issues. It is not always obvious that people will get the news. We do it in private; we do not share the stories. You will be interested to note that most of the cases are not known to the public except by us who are chiefs. Thus, in this case the general community did not know which children are witches. However, in the case of this girl, I am sure if witchcraft is real, then this girl has been damaged. When you meet her, you will find her sometimes talking to herself. There are times I have found her just crying and if you ask her what the matter is, she just run away. I believe the child has been badly damaged by her witchcraft.
- AR 001 I believe witchcraft is real but it is unfortunate that the government of Malawi does not believe in witchcraft despite all the testimonies that are given by children. Children are hone; they cannot lie.
- STO 003 When I just came to this place one of the nights I just sensed that there was a minibus outside the house because I noticed a beam of light splashing through my bedroom window. So, I woke up, opened the door, and went outside. I realized that the light was coming from the headlights of a minibus which had park right outside my door. However, the Costar had no tires. This was around 2 AM. Inside the minibus were some whitemen and women. So, I wondered and asked myself, "What's happening?"

Sub-theme 1.2: Daydreaming

- CM 006 Nkhota-kota is lakeshore and hot. Most of these children would be found lying down in their parents' verandas fast asleep possibly during mid day. When counseled or confronted, the children revealed that this was the time they would be in spirit taken away for witchcraft.

Sub-theme 1.3: Naughty Behavior,

- MC 007 In Lilongwe Rural West, the children who were accused of witchcraft were naughty as far as their behavior is concerned. They also accepted that some people were taking them to graveyards to practice witchcraft.
- PA 002 I have another teenager. He is very naughty, and he does not obey us. I have never seen a useless boy like our son, and we suspect he is a

witch. Who knows? May be he has a plan to kill us, but the devil is a liar. We continue to pray for his salvation

- PA 001 At home if she makes a mistake, my mother speaks badly at her and also my sister. They ridicule her, telling her, “This is why people teach you witchcraft and we are sure you are a witch.” However, when I hear such stories, I become mad to the point of beating them, but my father stops me. My family members know that I am short tempered and dangerous to live with. As I am talking, I have taken out all my father’s harvest ready to sell so that my relatives may know that I am a no nonsense guy. Interestingly, this child wizard is the most intelligent and wise in our compound. She is the one that prepares food and house chores for the family. Another incident of child-witch accusation of my child is when she baked *chigumu* African cake. Now, my sisters and some of the close relatives who live in our compound begged her but she turned them down. With a lot of ridicule and bitter words, she was told she was witch that is why she could not share the cake. Another time when my child wanted to use the communal birth tab she was told, “You are a wizard. You want the birth tab so that you put a spell in it.” She cried heavily. When I heard about the news, I was very mad. I shouted at my sisters and my mother and told them that I will never allow my children to call my mother their grandmother because she was only a step- mother to me. This was that triggered the whole idea of selling the bags of maize. I threatened them that I will tell the child to stop respecting them as my relatives but as far distant relatives. I did it deliberately in order to demonstrate to them that I care for my children.

SRQ 4b: How did the accused child respond to the accusations?

Sub-theme 1.4: Confession

- CM 004 The children claimed that they were born witches because they could not remember when they started practicing witchcraft
- A 001 I said earlier on not many people are aware that I am a witch. However, this has made my parents believe more and more that I am a witch. My behavior was naughty. I think the spirit of witchcraft makes you behave strangely. I have also become a threat to them as they fear one day I will kill them. That is a sad story.
- CM 002 What happened was that the child revealed he was a witch after the prayer warriors probed him. At first the child would deny, but he finally accepted.
- MC 001 Well, when the mother was taken to the hospital, she tested HIV positive and had lots of opportunists diseases including chronic headache. However, the children insisted to have used a witchcraft hammer to hit their mother’s head and claimed this is why she was sick. Later own the mother passed on.

- A 001 The genesis of my witchcraft story is that my parents tattooed me because of their suspicion that I might be a witch. It looks like I was born with witchcraft. However, it all began one day, while I was coming from Mkomachi Primary School (this school is in the same area I met DL). I met a *mzungu* whiteman who offered me some sweets. After eating those sweets, I just started feeling like someone was chasing me and the soil was falling on me from the back. Then I started seeing that whiteman in my dreams forcing me to do all sorts of evil. At night, I would find myself in wonderland, a place where all things looked fantastic. I was even given responsibility to be in charge of other children that were found in that wonderland. Some of the children I met there I would recognize them but some were strangers to me. The old people I found in this wonderland would sometimes whip us if we did not obey their orders. During the day, I would play with the kids we met at night, but we were not discussing our night experiences. I guess each child simply knew that we meet at night in the wonderland. During the day, I am miserably mistreated by my parents for any small mistake. Many times I am not given food. This is why I also spend most of my time here at the Fellowship because the women in the Fellowship feed and dress me. At home, I am not also given enough support to pursue education. However, I want to proceed with my education so that I can help my biological young brothers and sisters who are also suffering. I face all sorts of problems in this life. Not many people know of my predicaments or witchcraft practice; only my closest relatives know. They keep it secret, as this is embarrassing to the family. I was recently to be sent to the village to be delivered of witchcraft by a witchdoctor. I have declined and this has worsened my relationship with my father. My parents think I am rude and naughty, especially that I spend most of the time here at the fellowship praying. My other relatives think I am a threat to them and fear that one day I will kill them.
- AR 002 There was another person who was teaching children witchcraft. I was involved in trapping the man. Even my own daughter was involved. The children confessed that they go out at night to practice witchcraft. Most of the children claimed to have debt. This is why most of them had been sent to kill their parents in order to settle the debt accumulated. One kid confessed, "My mother is sick because of my witchcraft." Therefore, as chiefs, we went to capture the person. She accepted but suddenly slipped from our hands and ran away. The patient was taken to a witchdoctor and the witchdoctor confirmed the person was bewitched. Child was taken to the village to be removed witchcraft but never returned to town.
- CM 003 The other story I know is of two children who accepted that they were witches. They claimed another woman (whom I know) was teaching them witchcraft. "The woman takes us out in witchcraft to places like South Africa, and United States of America." claimed the children. So, I prayed for the kids and went ahead and met with their parents. The mother and father said, "We are happy that the kids have

confessed because we were suspecting the children of witchcraft because of their behavior of rudeness and arrogance.” So we prayed for the children and the woman who was teaching them witchcraft passed on. I believed this was the punishment from God. But the parents of the kids all got saved and joined the church

- SW 003 Another story is of a woman who claimed to have taught some kids witchcraft and that she had put some maggots into the kid’s heads.
- A 002 I was an expert in witchcraft. There was a time I decided to *nkhwima* ‘fortify my life’. I went to one very well-known and dreaded herbalist who initiated me into witchcraft. What I really wanted was to prosper in this life. As a young man, I wanted to find a shortcut to prosperous life. This witchdoctor assured me that he had the answer. So he tattooed me so that I could be initiated into the secret society. It happened that since that time I became a very dangerous man. I could fight with a person to death. I have stories of people I have killed through fighting and magic. Not only did I conquer people through magic, I also would propose to any lady I wanted and she accepted me. Right now, I am on separation with my family because of the way I used to play around with women. You see pastor, in those days; no one was able to say no to my proposal. My wife has many times left me. Pastor, I have many fearful stories of what I used to do. I would just mix some leaves and find myself change locations. If police wanted to arrest me, my *nyanga* would alert me so I knew the right time to relocate. I lived that life in my teenage time until I felt bad of what I was doing. It was this time when I met the pastor of this church who shared the faith with me and introduced me to the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- CM 006 When counseled or confronted, the children revealed that this was the time they would be in spirit taken away for witchcraft. They would go to the graveyard and play with passersby. The funniest play they would enjoy was calling names of the people passing by the graveyard that they knew. The passerby would look back to see who was calling them and see nothing. Then the children would laugh and to them this was fun. They loved practicing witchcraft because it was fun. The other funny part of it was that some of the kids reported that there was a certain fun man in the neighborhood whom they bewitched. This time the children would in their witchcraft go to this man at night and start jumping on his stomach. This was funny but the fat man became sick. He could not be treated at any hospital. He would sometimes get better if the children stopped jumping on his stomach. However, whenever they started jumping on the stomach the man would fall sick again.
- CM 004 It was the first time to meet with a case of child-witch accusation in our ministry. The daughter’s name was Princess. She was around eight years when she passed on. The child was saying that at night people used to take her out to practice witchcraft. The child had complications in her stomach and this never healed and took her life.

Sub-theme 1.5: Sickness

- CM 004 Another case is of Mr. and Mrs. K. These are members of ALC. They brought their child to our attention because witches were teaching him witchcraft. When the parents brought him here, the child had already become abnormal. The child was 10 years old. Nevertheless, the community had not problem with him, I think because the problem had just started. Eventually the child passed on.
- CM 004 The child was becoming sicker and sicker. When asked what was wrong with her, she would say that at night her grandfather was taking her out for witchcraft. Due to her sickness, her school attendance was also very poor. A story says it was her grandfather who was teaching her witchcraft. This also caused quarrels in the house as the wife thought the husband might have also been involved.
- MC 001 Well, when the mother was taken to the hospital, she tested HIV positive and had lots of opportunistic diseases including migraine headache. To the contrary, the children insisted to have used a witchcraft hammer to hit their mother's head and claimed this is why she was sick.
- CM 004 The child had complications in her stomach and this never healed and took her life.
- SW 003 The father remarried and did not like the kids he brought with. The kid was not provided for and it developed hallucinations.
- PA 002 What I and my husband was experiencing with the deceased daughter was that, at night the child would leave her place of sleep and find herself somewhere or in another position different from the one we laid her. Another day the child started becoming more and more restless. When we asked what was wrong, the child would just point in the mouth. The following day the child was so sick that we took her to the hospital. The child was taken to the hospital but in the morning the child passed away. The following night the child's father dreamt about dreadful animals. We interpreted them as the animals the deceased child was turning into at night. Then we moved the place to another location in order to run away from the witches and wizards who were taking our children out for witchcraft. However, at the place we went we didn't spend a lot of time before we lost another child. There was another evening my husband went to the market but coming back he felt there was someone escorting him—it was a witch. That night footsteps of witches were heard from our roof. My child Lorene who is fourteen years was taught witchcraft and she confessed the witchcraft. My child who is two years would most of the time cry out, "Mum, they have come!" "who?" I would ask her. "Witches!" she would respond. Since then we have been praying for her. My other boy who is about four behaves like a witch. He is naughty and sleeps outside without any fear. I believe in the witch camp children are taught bad manners. I wonder why children prefer to continue

practicing witchcraft. There is nobody in my family who has been known for witchcraft, neither at my husband's side. This is just a contemporary phenomenon; it used not to be there. So far the community suspects that we might be involved in witchcraft, but, thank God, the pastor keeps on mentioning in the church and also in funeral services that nowadays other people are teaching other people's children witchcraft. That is why we are safe despite the fact that our children were implicated in witchcraft cases.

- CM 003 Because his mother was very sick, he finally admitted that he had bewitched the mother and the mother was going to die. The child had debt in the witchcraft camp so he wanted to settle the debt. Witches bewitch relatives, not outsiders. I don't know how they do it but these stories are real. However, witchcraft stories are difficult to prove and the Malawi constitution doesn't recognize witchcraft. The truth is that, witchcraft is real, because children acknowledge that they were sent to kill their parents. Children are very much involved than the adults for they are taught by adults.
- CM 004 Her story came to the climax when another child fell sick. The mother of the child found out that the child was being taught witchcraft by Mrs. Chimbalanga

SRQ 4a: How did the community treat the accused child?

Theme 2: School Of Thoughts on Child-Witch Accusations

Sub-theme 2.1: Social Workers

- SW 001 I feel this is a sad story because we don't know what is happening to the life of MCY I wish there were other options. If MCY was to be taken to Mpemba boy's home, she would end up victimizing all the boys because what she is doing is a spiritual warfare. The communities are closed to such children. One may pray for MCY but the community has shut up. Only God can help her. Thanks for your story of MCY I hope as I write my thesis people and the church will read the story of MCY and take a step into curbing child-witch accusations. I would like to appreciate your initiative in taking up the child-witch accusation as your topic of study. I think witchcraft is real and if Gorge Thidwa who claims there is no witchcraft would have one of his children implicated in witchcraft, he would then acknowledge the existence of witchcraft. I think the evangelical church has been silent and has done little or nothing in regard to child-witchcraft. The church has to bring the message of hope to people living in sin by showing them love. And that love is Jesus.
- SW 002 I prefer that whatever I share with you be confident because we are here to protect the rights of the children. I would not want to see what I will share with you published in the press. Okay, this is T children's home. Most of the children you have seen outside have run away from their homes because they are accused of witchcraft or are self-

proclaimed witches. The communities are afraid of them. So, one of the ways to get rid of them is to mistreat them to a point of the children leaving their home for streets or dumping places. Our organization does not believe in witchcraft. So, we listen to their stories. We take them in because their homes are not ready to listen to them, but we listen to them. We interrogate them to establish the cause of their predicaments. Most of the time, after listening to them, and establishing the source of the contention, we take them back to their villages and try to reason with their parents or guardians to convince them that the children are not themselves witches as they claim or as the community has labeled them. As I mentioned earlier on, witchcraft accusation has two ways. On one hand, a child may claim to be a witch, and, on the other hand, children are accused of being witches. We believe for every behavior there is a background cause. So, we listen to them and go and talk to their parents. We believe those who claim to be witches only do so due to the trauma they have experienced. Let me give you one example: A child claimed to be a witch and I took time to listen to his story. The boy is around 10 years. He is originally from Mozambique. He told me that he is a witch and can turn into a lizard or any other small animal. When I told him to do so that I can see, he said may be it would not work in the children's home. He believes he was a witch because of the two major circumstances that took place in his life. In the first place, he remembers of a time he used to look after his sick mother who eventually passed on. He said the last time he spoke to his mother was when she asked him for a cup of water, but he did not provide it immediately as he went to play with his friends. Then next time he came back home his mother was dead. He felt the responsibility for his mother's death and thought he had harden his life because he was a witch. It didn't take time after this incident when his father decided to reallocate to Malawi. For sure they one day started off from Mozambique to Malawi. On the way, they came across a river which had no bridge. As they were trying to cross the river, the father held him by one hand. Unfortunately, he slipped and was swept away by the flooding river and died. This was the second time to witness the death of his beloved parents. This was another evidence for him that he was a witch: he first killed his mother and now his father.

SW 0003 I have an experience where children accused a neighbor, a man, of teaching them witchcraft. The parent of the kids took the case to the police. The man was taken to court and charged. It looks like the parent put some words in the children's mouths because the children kept on changing statements. However, after the court determination, the man was found not guilty.

SRQ 1 a: Who was the child accused?

Sub-theme 2.2: Bible School Students

STO 002 I am Mrs. X. I work for an organization that works with children who have been denied by their families or community. Most of these kids

are denied on the allegation that they have been practicing witchcraft. However, our organization does not believe in existence of witchcraft. This is a big organization of Catholic Sisters. It is also in Kenya. I am a driver of an organization called TCH. The organization takes care of children that have been rejected by their communities. Our organization does not believe that witchcraft exists. So, we fight for the kids that have been accused. Most of the kids accused suffer from denial, and some are injured in many ways. So, we take these kids to the hospital and afterward look after their social welfare. Most of these kids were dumped in the street for being suspected of practicing witchcraft. I will introduce you to the social coordinator who will be able to give you more stories of these children. These kids suffer a lot. They are given all sorts of derogatory names and their rights are not protected. Most of these kids are orphans and are accused due to the death of their parents. In most cases, these parents might have died from HIV but the kids are seen to be the cause of the death. I think pastors and the evangelical church has not done much to curb the malpractice but in fact fuel the practice due to the way pastors and church leaders believe and handle and believe in church witchcraft in church.

ST0 002 Children are mostly accused by adults. The accusers are the parents and the neighbors. The children are mistreated and some openly chased from homes. They end up in streets. Most of them are not given opportunity for school. They are neither listened to nor sympathized with. Because of the trauma they pass through most of them end up being naughty or highly aggressive children. It is interesting that to notice that most of the witchcraft cases are used to manipulate situations. People claim to be witches in order to gain power over others. I know one child to whom I will refer you. He lives at the dumping site because he does not have parental care. He is not the only one at Nchezi city council dumping site.

SRQ1: How did church ministers in Abundant Life Church respond to Child witchcraft accusations?

Sub-theme 2.3: Church Ministers

CM 002 Witchcraft is real and is still being practiced in our culture. So, what happens is that, these children are used by witches, and, most of the time, without the children knowing. But, as they grow up they start realizing that they are witches. Most of the time child-witches are ignorant that witchcraft is an abomination. When the child realizes that what he is doing is wrong she or he comes to the open to proclaim that he or she is a witch. The child lacks freedom so that at the time he or she is tired and overwhelmed, it shares with others of the witchcraft practice. Unfortunately, instead of the child having peace because he has revealed, people start castigating him or her. At school, peers mock or bully them. The child is weak because of not sleeping the whole night. This affects the performance at school.

CM 003 I think we shall know it all when we go to heaven. Child-witchcraft is a complex phenomenon. Whether it is real or not, God knows. But, we can see its fruits. It is on the deeper worldview level of most Africans; this I know. The way people have interpreted their Bible is far more influenced by their worldview.

SRQ 3: What beliefs are reflected in these discourses and practices?

Theme 3: Witchcraft Tools

Sub-theme 3.1: Hammers, Snakes/Needles

CM 001 Later on, the mother fell sick. The children spread rumors that they were responsible for their mothers' sickness. They claimed to have used a witchcraft hammer to hit their mother's head and this is why she was sick.

AR 002 Hammers are commonly used in sharpening hoes, pangas and also roofing iron sheet houses. They see them every day. So, they accept to hit their parents with hammers because they see how the parents use hammers in their day-to-day house chores

Sub-theme 3.2: (*Nyanga*) a horn for storage of witchcraft concoctions.

CM 003 Witchcraft is real and people practice it. I am saying so because of what happened at Apostolic Faith Mission. I was a choir member and an intercessor. One time we went to a place to preach. At the place where we were preaching, there was a child who was a witch. At the end of the sermon, a child called one of us and narrated her witchcraft experience. But now, after hearing the word of God, she wanted to stop and this is why she had called one of us. She said, "I keep my witchcraft tools in the stomach." People prayed with her, and we prayed with her until she vomited. She said this is not enough. So, she took us home, and when we were there, she went to the bedroom and came out with a pot and some of her *nyanga* tools she was using for witchcraft. This is how I came to know there is witchcraft.

A 003 Because the pastor acknowledged that I was a witch and prayed for the boy and burnt my so-called *nyanga* witchcraft material, everybody believed I was a witch. This is why the ruling was that I vacate the village.

CM 005 The mother said that a friend of her child told her, "Give me money and I will sell you *nyanga* (a horn for storage of witchcraft concoctions).

CM 001 A certain lady came to see me and my wife with a problem of her child who was being taught witchcraft. Fortunately, she came to me with the child. The child told me that he had a friend who promised to sell him *nyanga*. The mother accused her boy of stealing money from her to

pay for *nyanga*. The aim of the witchcraft instrument was to kill her mother, who was her step-mother. When the mother heard about it, she was frightened by the story and brought it to my attention.

SRQ 3a: What was the response of the accused to the church minister's response?

THeme 4: Location of Child-Witch Accusations

Sub-theme 4.1: Town based

CM 002 A parent came to me and told me that their child needed prayer because a neighbor and his grandparents were taking him out at night to teach him witchcraft. The parent had earlier on taken this child to witch doctors and many other places but the witchcraft would not be removed. The child would some days reveal that the previous night they went to such and such a place to practice witchcraft. So, I started to pray for him. Unfortunately the father and others relative would secretly take the child to witchdoctors. This hampered the power of the prayers. Finally, the parents took the child to the village but at the village the child ran mad. Since then I have not followed up the case. I remember, after praying for the child, that evening the child would sleep peacefully. I remember this is a story of witchcraft that I have ever prayed for. The child would explain it all without hiding anything.

CM 003 Because his mother was very sick. He finally admitted that he had bewitched the mother and the mother was going to die. The child had debt in the witchcraft camp so he wanted to settle the debt. Witches bewitch relatives not outsiders. I don't know how they do it but these stories are real. However witchcraft stories are difficult to prove and the Malawi constitution doesn't recognize witchcraft. But the truth is that witchcraft is real because children acknowledge that they were sent to kill their parents. Children are very much involved than the adults for they are taught by adults.

CM 004 Another case was of Mr. and Mrs. K Now these are member of Abundant Life Church. They brought the child to our attention because witches were teaching her witchcraft. When the parents brought her here and child had already become very sick and behaved abnormally. The child was 10 years old. The community was in good books her because it had just started witchcraft.

Sub-theme 4.2: Village based

CM 005 Well the village believed this mother was a witch so she taught the child-witchcraft, for in our village witches are in the business of spoiling children. They are dangerous and not to be accepted in the community. So, this child was discriminated against. However, after prayers, people were a bit receptive of the kid as they believed he was set free.

- CM 005 A sad incident happened in the village of one of my church members. For first-hand information, let me take you to the lady who has the story.
- MC 004 The community did not receive these children well. Meanwhile the children have been chased and sent back to the village.
- SW 003 Other cases you will find them in our handbook. What is happening is that the kids go for prayers. In very extreme cases they are chased from home into the streets. So, this is what happens. There are many cases, but maybe I am just lazy to follow up. The most serious case is the one that happened in Dowa. And, there is another kid here. This kid is an orphan but claimed he has been taught witchcraft.
- ST 001 The village implicated her in many of the deaths and sickness that had happened in the village. I lived with this girl for some time. I later felt I needed to bring the issue to the attention of my pastor. So, one day when the pastor was praying for people at the end of the sermon, I took a bold step to go in front and present my prayer petition. He prayed for me and later prayed for the girl. For some reasons the girl went back to my village. My village is right here in Dedza. At home and in the village nobody liked the girl, so she lived as foreigner in her own motherland. The girl was isolated from the relatives and lived in her own hut. I had shared with the relatives concerning prayers that the pastor offered for her, but nobody cared. Sadly, one gloomy night some relatives and villagers plotted to kill her. That night some people reported to have just heard an agony of a loud cry coming from the direction of the house the girl was living. It was later on discovered that, that night, some men went into her house, raped her and beat her to death. The following day the police came to collect the body to the hospital for postmortem. She was later on buried and the police are still investigating the matter. The suspects have already been identified. Unfortunately one of them is her cousin.

Sub-theme 4.3: Period of Accusations

- CM 002 It happened in the village in 2010. What happened was that the child revealed he was a witch after the prayer warriors probed him. At first the child denied but he finally accepted.
- CM 005 Well, I have been here in Dedza for not less than four years but such cases have in the recent years subsided. But I will tell you some of the cases that I encountered a few years ago.
- CM 007 So far, there have not been stories of child-witch accusations in the Abundant Life Church as of late.

SRQ 4: What resulted due to the way a church minister handled the case?

THEME 5: SOCIAL OUTCOMES OF CHILD-WITCH ACCUSATIONS

Sub-theme 5.1: Banishment

- CM 002 When a child confesses that he or she is a witch, his or her rights are abused. The child has no freedom of association, no freedom of mobility and no freedom of education. In extreme cases, the child is caged.
- MC 004 The woman who was teaching witchcraft has been chased from Dubai. Her house has been demolished by mob justice.
- SW 001 She is victimized by witchcraft accusations. The Social welfare told me that the child if taken back to her parents she will only be abandoned by the community and thrown back to the streets. Another girl is girl 14 years old, her name is Mercy. I was told by the social worker that this little girl, Mercy, comes from Thyolo district. The social office in Thyolo has failed to rehabilitate this girl and has now been referred to Lilongwe. She can't stay with her fell children because of her witchcraft. Her community has pledged that they will never accept her. The story says that girl started witchcraft when so was very young. So the child was taken to social welfare but she started polluting other with her witchcraft. Hence the girl was to be transferred somewhere so the child was taken to Lilongwe social welfare. Furthermore, the police were involved in her transfer. Since then the Lilongwe social welfare has been giving counseling this little girl but no change has been realized in the life of Mercy. When I came in I also started ministering to Mercy. One day I was told by the social welfare, "do you know that the other kids have changed due to your ministry but not with Mercy? Do you know that Mercy apart from being a witch is also raping other girls and also entices boys to sleep with her? Worse still Mercy is HIV positive. We are now afraid that the other children may also be affected by HIV so we decided to send her back to Thyolo." The next time I went there to minister to the children I was told Mercy has been taken back to Thyolo. So I asked the following week about what has happened to mercy I was not told the details so the following week I followed up Mercy's story. I was told Mercy has been denied access to the village because the whole village has said Mercy is a dangerous fellow and cannot be accepted into the village. The DC and the police intervened but the whole village denied her. Finally the village chief said, "May be I will talk to few people in the village. So we will build little hut out of the village so that the child can live there." I am ready to accept Mercy but the relatives are not ready. So the chief organized a hut for her and one lady accepted that she will be feeding Mercy from a distance. So far Mercy is now staying alone in a hut and fed like a leper of the bible days.

Sometimes witchcraft that has been deposited into little ones is difficult to be delivered instantly. These children become outcast in their villages, they can't go to school and no one can like to live with them. The children are also denied access to social services like hospital. Mercy may not want to go to the hospital in fear of people. The other challenge is that like if no pastor will visit Mercy then she will be denied spiritual food. Mercy is exposed to evil spirits if she will continue to live alone.

- CM 004 Children were revealing that she was teaching them witchcraft. The husband is a chief and she is a witch. The lady has been chased from the Dubai but the man who is a chief is still around and serves as the chief. Interestingly Mrs. C was a Christian and a member of Church of Central Africa Presbyterian.
- A003 The court ordered that I leave the place for some time so as to protect my life from danger. But with the consent of my wife we thought that was stepping on slippery place because if we live the place, there were higher chances that the neighbor would continue to encroach into our territory. So we opted to sell the place and live for good. This is what we did and finally relocated to our home village
- CM 002 I cannot explain it all because the parents wanted the child to be assisted but the community was not ready to accept her.

Sub-theme 5.2: Mockery

- CM 005 Many people knew about the story because of parents. At school other children knew because the parents told the teacher. The teachers did not keep it a secret as a result his peer came to know the reasons for this child's absents. All over the community people would be pointing at her as she moved around. Some of her peers would shout at her "*mfiti! mfiti wizard! wizard*".
- PA 002 children face difficulties. The community laughs at them. Their peers ridicule them. Sometimes their peers shout at them "*fiti! fiti! fiti! witch! witch! witch!*". But I personally confront such people telling them that my children do this not on their own but other bad people take them out. As a concerned parent, I keep praying for my children.
- MC 007 The children became a laughing stalk. Their peers were laughing at them and segregating them. This made their school life hard. All of these children failed exams as the result of absenteeism due to fear shame.
- AR 002 She could not be heard by anyone. She ended up been confused, some time she could spend most of her day time crying. The more she cried the more other thought she is crying because she is regretting to have killed her parents. Not even once did she accept the accusations. But you know the community believes a female witch is the most wicked witch and this girl was therefore of that kind that is why she could not at any time tell the true. This is what the community believed.

CM 001 These kids suffer a lot. They are not given all sorts of derogatory names and their rights are not protected. Most of these kids are orphans and are accused due to the death of their parents. In most cases these parents might have died from HIV but the kids are seen to be the cause of the death. I think pastors and the evangelical church has not done much to cab the malpractice but in fact it fuels the practice due to the way pastor and church leader handle and believe in church witchcraft.

Sub-theme 5.3: Stigmatization

STO 003 the child was rejected by the community because knew it well that she was a witch. At school she was stigmatized. This was hurting the mother and the grandmother. Her fellow children were ridiculing her “Hey, we know you are a witch and we know you want to bewitch us.” This was commonly heard from children mouths.

CM 005 at first the children were being denied and stigmatized by the community. Everyone was saying, “hey this kid are witch and not good to befriend.

SW 003 Most of the kids that are accused of witchcraft are stigmatized and most of the kids run to the streets. These are the cases I have but I don’t have tangible evidences of these things. Some time the kids who are accused are the one taken care of the elder sisters or brothers. The data we collected on the children and women witch accusation found out that the children the family takes the issues as an internal matter in the family and so there is very little that goes out of the family circles.

CM 004 However this did not make the community accepted the children back. The result was that the children had to be taken to a boarding school that was out of reach.

CM 002 I cannot explain it all because the parents wanted the child to be assisted but the community was not ready to accept her.

Sub-theme 5.4: Mistreatment of accused children

CM 004 She lived a mislabel life.

A 001 Miserably, they mistreat me. Many times I am not given food. This is why I also spend most of my time here at the Fellowship because women in the Fellowship feed and

S 003 On Sunday’s most primary school classes are turned into churches. I happened to be invited to a deliverance service in one of those churches. I went there, and the child who was exorcised claimed had maggots in the brain. So the woman who taught the child-witchcraft was told to brow into the mouth of the kid so as to remove the maggots in the head. Look at the picture I took that day. This is the woman, the one down is the kid who is being exorcised and that one is the pastor.

The rest are members of the church. I did not like the exercise because the child was held tightly and you would see that the child was in panic. After the exorcism the kid went out and started crying. I did not go to talk to the kid because she was not in a mood of speaking to people. She was much traumatized.

- CM 006 They were outcast. Almost all of them had dropped from school because parents were not ready to support them. Most of the boy would just be looming around the lake shores and being hire as cheap labors by fishermen.
- SW 003 She was really traumatized and I did not want to talk to her. I knew the girl I could have talked to her but I let go the opportunity as to respect her rights.
- AR 001 They are the rejects, outcast of their own communities and families. That is why when after prayers a child admits that he or she is a witch, we order the parents not to mistreat them. Because there are many cases where children who admit that they are witches are after been taken home, are beaten or denied food. Most of them are treated as incomplete humans, no moral support, no clothes and school necessities, just to mention a few.
- CM 001 There were two orphaned children who were being raised up by a step mother. The mother was mistreating her so much that the children thought of killing their mother. So someone promised to teach them witchcraft so that they might kill their mother. The children agreed and bought the witchcraft powers.
- CM 001 People felt insecure so the sidelined the children. They were not given proper medical care, food and education.
- CM 001 O yes, and that also triggered the fire somehow. Most people believe in pastor and they confirmed the children were witches by the fact that I had been praying for them. But personally I was not sure of what the children were claiming because the hospital diagnosed the lady as HIV positive. And that explained the sickness to me.

Sub-theme 5.5: Feeling of Insecurity by the Community

- CM 001 People felt insecure so the sidelined the children. They could not come close to them. They were not given proper medical care, food and education.
- CM 005 Hey this kid was in trouble, people especially the neighbors felt insecure, fearing the she might also teach their children.
- CM 008 We have stopped walking at night because there is a rumor that witches are planning to revenge for being exposed. Witchcraft accusations create a lot of insecurity. In our areas people suspect the more you deal with witches the more you prove them. There is no end

to this. The fact that a church minister prayed for the child in relation to witchcraft, it confirmed that the child was a witch. It is interesting so I don't know what should be done about it.

Sub-theme 5.6: Killing

SW 003 The father was also planning to kill the kid because he was accused of witchcraft. The child was put in a bag and thrown into the river. Fortunately a fisherman found the bag and when he opened it the kid was still alive. The kid was taken to T Children's Home and was taken care of and the kid is still alive.

A 001 As I said not many people are aware that I am a witch. But this has made my parent believe more and more that I am a witch. I have also become a threat to them as the fear one day I will kill them.

SW 003 You can meet with Blessing M at Development House in City centre. Be bible says you should kill and stone witch. But these are our fellow human beings. So we don't support the Bible punishments.

Sub-theme 5.7: Increase in Child-Witch Accusations

CM 006 The number would kept increasing as parents would continually bring to my attention children the suspected of practicing witchcraft. When I left Nkhotakota for Blantyre I left the case with sister X whose house was the counseling and deliverance centre.

SRQ 4b: How did the accused child respond to the accusations?

Sub-theme 5.8: Dropping from School

No peace because of her feeling low. At home the parents wanted to help her but her peers would always mock her and label her a witch. This made her drop from school. By the time she was going to school her performance was extremely poor.

Sub-theme 5.9: Acceptance

CM 001 Now day the cases have dropped. People are either accepting the accused or neglecting the accusations. I suggested that it might have been so because recently the Government of Malawi outlawed witchcraft accusations and also because of church intervention especially through prayers

CM 004 Her parents loved her and showed love but the other people including her peers stigmatized her. She was a laughing stone. They thought she was a witch and dangerous. This caused her fell to perform well at school. Due to her sickness, her school attendance was also very poor.

A story says it was her grandfather who was teaching her witchcraft. And this caused quarry in the house as the wife thought the husband might also been involved.

- PA 002 I love them and I do not mistreat them. They are mine; I take them as my children. The community loves them and prays that they should be fully delivered. As parents we just pray for them and love them as our children. Witchcraft is rampant here in Likuni-Chinsapo; my case is not an exceptional.
- CM 005 Because this had not spread, only few and closest relatives knew about it. They all were sympathetic with the boy knowing that he was doing it ignorantly.
- PA 001 It's difficult to handle her case. I receive her as my own child. I don't treat her badly because she has a twin sister so I don't want to destroy the other.
- CM 005 I think the relative have now accepted the child as they are confident the child has stopped witchcraft. Most of the time show interest in learning more of Christianity because they know that in this world without Christ then witches will turn you into a play ground. However there is a growing interest in the area of child-witchcraft as people tend to believe in it as they see pastor praying for the child-witches. At the same time some will not believe the child has stopped the practice as they believe once you are a witch then there is no reverse gear for it. There has been a case where after exorcism the child kept reporting that the withes came to take him out

Sub-theme 5.10: Conversions

- CM 008 the accusation have at the same time become a blessing in disguise as many people come to the lord through the exorcism services. I remember of an overnight prayer section we had last year at the house of our church elder where we prayed for a kid who was practicing witchcraft. During that night neighbors brought their children whom they suspect of practicing witchcraft. We always emphasized in our exorcism service that the first step to deliverance is giving their life to Jesus. In this case we first explain the gospel to the clients a followed by exorcism. In church I have a family that came to this night of prayer who upon witnessing the deliverance of their daughter from witchcraft that they gave their life to Jesus and decided to join Abundant Life Church.
- CM 004 people come to the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus through witchcraft cases. Some do not really know the truth about witchcraft. They suspect they have been bewitched but when we explain the gospel message they realize that it was just a lie from the devil and the best way out of their calamity is to run to Jesus. So we simply introduce them to the cross. The chief who is now the member of my church came to the Lord because he was invited to the deliverance that involved some of the children of his village. He finally was amazed to

witness the manifestations of the evil spirit and decided to give his life to Jesus. Today if cases of witchcraft are brought to his attention he simply refers the cases to me and we exorcise.

- CM 007 the devil is a liar, the children he intends to steal, kill and destroy are the children today God is using in the church. Once these kids know the truth, it sets them free. Some have gone ahead to invite their close relatives to church after being exorcised. They are grateful that the Lord has set them free. They no longer dream flying in their dream. They detest whatever stand on their way of salvation.
- MC 005 But we me made it a point to see to it that the children are welcomed into the church without be segregated.
- CM 005 exorcism demonstrated the power of God over evil spirits. Not only of witchcraft but all kinds of demon possession. My church is distinct especially in this area
- CM 001 Because we have experienced people coming to Christ based on witchcraft accusations some of our church have two of our churches have thrived in this area. If fact as a Pentecostal church we have time for exorcisms, of all manners in our churches

Sub- theme 5.11: Loss of Trust and Confidence in Church Ministers

- MC 005 upon the child being prayed for by pastors, some parents live in denial. They never come back to the pastor for further assistance or give feedback to the pastor if the child is delivered or not. However, there were may be several reasons why the parents of the accused behaved so. Sometimes parents would just lose confidence in the church minister and they simply leave the situation unresolved and proceed with life. Since the time I prayed for the child the mother and the child have not come back to me.
- CM 002 father and other relative secretly took their child to a witchdoctor after feeling that the pastor had not removed the witchcraft. My informant said, "Taking the child to witchdoctor hampered the power of my prayers. I later on learnt that the parents took the child to the village to consult a witchdoctor but the child ended up running mad." Thidwa, who observed an exorcism in Lilongwe City, told me that he was not happy with the way the exorcist handled the accused kid. He said, "I did not like the exercise because the child was held tightly and you would see that the child was in panic. The girl was really traumatized and I did not want to talk to her.

SRQ 1: How did church ministers in respond to child-witch accusations?

THEME 6: PRAYER AND EXORCISM

Sub-theme 6.1: Prayer

- CM 004 The children being taught witchcraft were living with a step mother. This step mother was very committed Christian. He was praying for the kids until it was confirmed that the children were witches. The child claimed they were witches from the village but the neighbor was just taking advantage of the situation.
- MC 004 So far the community were less sacred of the children, as they are aware that the situation is been handled through spiritual means.
- MC 006 With much prayer and counseling the children stopped the practices and so far the community received them back. But this justified the fact that the children were witches. Most of the parents kept on suspecting more and more of their other children of witchcraft.
- STO 003 The mother took the child to witch doctors and many other places of prayer for the child to be prayed for, but to no avail. Later she met with my fellow pastor who took the child and was praying for her. It was evident that the mother and the ground mother were trouble but the ground father was not because he was involved in teaching this child-witchcraft. This is how my friend introduced the mother and the child to me. My fellow pastor reported to me that he was had been praying for this girl child and at times the child lived in his house. Interesting whenever the child was taken back home, the witches would come for her again. This is why my friend shared the story with me. So I and my fellow pastor started seriously praying and fasting for the situation. We prayed and fasted until in our minds were convinced to go. So we went as the mother provided transport, and food for us. As we were busy in prayer we were shown by the spirit that the child was not alone, there were other three or more children who were being taught witchcraft. The night of prayer was a wonderful because the chief and other neighbors came to witness the deliverance service. We prayed for the child that night up to past mid-night. The Chief was informed because he knew the story and had other kids also who were involved in witchcraft. No wonder he welcomed as warmly. We prayed for the whole of the night while women were out waiting to see what will happen. At mid night a small owl fell outside the house and the ladies who were out cried out and run into the house where we were praying. I went out and using my touch found out that what had fallen from the roof was an Owl. We met the father and of the child and confronted him of regarding being behind the child's witchcraft. He did not deny. He told us to go and break one of the corners of the house with a pick. Surprisingly we found out that beneath the floor was a hole and out of it came a hissing sound. We were about become too scared and give up but we encouraged one another. So we continued to dig and decided to deep our hands into the hissing pit. What came

out was a there was a cloth with black oil and bids. We took that out and burn it. We prayed for the grandfather and he finally gave his life to Jesus. The chief was happy and he told us that there are many people [including children] who were practicing witchcraft. So he asked us to come again. We exchanged phone numbers and since then we have been communicating with the chief and the mother. Since then the child has never been taken out by witches.

- CM 005 No, the lady was not a member of Abundant Life Church but came because she thought I was the nearest pastor in her neighborhood. So I prayed with the mother and she gave her life to Jesus. I went ahead prayed for the child until he was delivered since then, the mother has not come back to me.
- CM 006 With much prayer and counseling the children stopped the practices and so far the community received them back. But, this justified the fact that the children were witches. Most of the parents kept on suspecting more and more of their other children of witchcraft.
- A 003 He made this boy spread a rumor that I was teaching him witchcraft? I was later on summoned and stood in a court of law. The parents claimed that they had invited a pastor who came to pray for the child in the housed and remove and burn the witchcraft materials I had given their son. I asked them to call for the pastor but my accuser said was not ready to bring the pastor forward. This court ordered that I leave the place for some time so as to protect my life from danger. But, with the consent of my wife we thought that was stepping on slippery place because if we live the place, there were higher chances that the neighbor would continue to encroach into our territory. So we opted to sell the place and live for good. This is what we did and finally relocated to our home village
- CM 001 O yes! and that also triggered the fire somehow. Most people believe in pastor and they confirmed the children were witches by the fact that I had been praying for them. But, personally I was not sure of what the children were claiming because the hospital diagnosed the lady as HIV positive. And that explained the sickness to me.
- A 003 Because the pastor acknowledged that I was a witch and prayed for the boy and burnt my so called *nyanga* witchcraft material, everybody believed I was a witch. This is why the ruling was that I vacate the village.
- CM 002 I don't but of a child who was taught witchcraft. It happened in the village in 2010. What happened was that the child revealed he was a witch after the prayer warriors probed him. At first the child would denied but he finally accepted.
- CM 004 Our praying for the child helped the community appreciate that the child was simply a victim of circumstances and not a witch by choice.

Sub-theme 6.2: Exorcism

- CM 006 The deliverance cases I was doing were related to child-witch accusations. At one point I was counseling over twenty kids who were accused of child-witchcraft. The number would keep increasing as parents would continually bring to my attention the children suspected of practicing witchcraft. When I left Nkhota-kota for Blantyre, I left the case with sister Z whose house was the counseling and deliverance centre.
- AR 001 This is exactly what I am doing. Today you have found me busy because of the wedding of my daughter that took place last weekend. Dozens of children gather in this house every Mondays and Wednesdays to be delivered from witchcraft. Pastor Henock, witchcraft is real and it is there even if the government denies. The children who practice witchcraft and are accused of witchcraft come here in scores for prayers and exorcism. We have a fellowship that meets in my house every Wednesday and Friday. You are welcomed to witness what happens. Those with witchcraft in their stomach vomit. You know witchcraft has nowadays advanced. It is not just witchcraft but it has combined with Satanism. So witches practice witchcraft under the seas. Most of the children I minister to come with evil power to kill me. They are sent by the enemies. Some claim to have come with snakes which they throw at me in mysterious ways but, I intercept them in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Some bring with them needles, and like allows, they throw them on me. If this happens I feel like pneumonia in the course of prayers but we are more than conquerors in Jesus Christ. The devil does not fear the name of Jesus or Jehovah because in the darkness, they also have a Jehovah and Jesus. However, they fear the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.
- AR 001 They are the rejects; outcast of their own communities and families. That is why when after prayers a child admits that he or she is a witch, we order the parents not to mistreat them. Because there are many cases where children who admit that they are witches, after been taken home, they are beaten or denied food. Most of them are treated as incomplete humans; no moral support, no clothes and school necessities, just to mention a few.
- AR 001 Meet DL, he child was once a witch but has been delivered. He is ready to share with you his story. It all started with a white man who gave him sweets. “DL, feel free to talk to Henock about your experience about witchcraft. You can tell him everything.” In the case of identification of informant, I am not sure you should use my name but that it remains anonymous because the Government of Malawi does believe witchcraft is real and recently has declared that it will arrest anyone that implicates another in witchcraft. However, witchcraft is real. It’s just that you are late. We were praying for a mother who was saying in her stomach there is a pot and inside are snakes. You are late. If you were to come in the morning you should have met that person.

- CM 006 When I was in Nkhota-kota, many of the deliverance cases I was doing were related to child-witch accusations. At one point, I was counseling over twenty kids who were accused of child-witchcraft. The number would kept increasing as parents would continually bring to my attention children the suspected of practicing witchcraft. When I left Nkhota-kota for Blantyre, I left the case with sister X whose house was the counseling and deliverance centre.
- CM 006 Nkhota-kota is lakeshore and hot, most of these children would be found lying down in their parents' verandas fast asleep, possibly during midday. When counseled or confronted the children revealed that this was the time they would be in spirit taken away for witchcraft. They would go to the graveyard and play with passersby. The funniest play they would enjoy was calling names of the people passing by the graveyard that they knew. The passerby would look back to see who was calling them and see nothing. Then the children would laugh and to them this was fun. They loved practicing witchcraft because it was fun. The other funny part of it was that some of the kids reported that there was a certain man in the neighborhood whom they bewitched. This time the children would in their witchcraft go to this man at night and start jumping on his stomach. This was funny but the fat man became sick. He could not be treated at any hospital. He would sometimes get better if the children stopped jumping on his stomach. However, whenever they started jumping on the stomach the man would fall sick again.

CURRICULUM VITAE

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EDUCATION

2013:	Africa International University: Nairobi	Master of Divinity in Mission Studies
2004	African Bible College: Malawi	B.A Biblical Studies with minor in Christian Education
2009	Lilongwe Teachers' Training College	Primary School Teaching Certificate
1994	St John's Secondary School	Malawi School Certificate of Education

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

I began my life as a Government primary school teacher at Mzumanzi from 1994 to 1999. I later on upgraded myself and was posted to teach at Dzenza Secondary School from 2004 to 2008. In September 2008, I was employed by Development AID from People to People (DAPP) serve as a pioneer lecture of Agriculture and Religious Studies at DAPP Amalika Teacher Training College a position I held until 2010 when I left for further studies at African International University. As I served in the market place I have always seek to demonstrate professional, moral and spiritual integrity, pursue excellence, stewardship and conduct in his responsibilities. I communicate fluently in English and Chichewa and have some knowledge of Swahili.

MINISTRY EXPERIENCE AND VISION

I have always considered my teaching profession as simply 'tent making.' I was called into pastoral ministry in 2004. Therefore, as served the public sector, I was also serving as a pastor in Apostolic Faith Mission up to 2006. Later I was called to pioneer a Bible School for Abundant Life Church from late 2006 up to the time I left Malawi for Kenya.

Upon graduation, I will continue to serve as a Pastor and Principal in Abundant Life Ministries. My long term vision is to work with orphans and widows in Lilongwe Rural West.