WITCHCRAFT BELIEFS AND FEARS IN MALAWI: AN ETHICAL-THEOLOGICAL INQUIRY WITHIN THE CHURCH OF CENTRAL AFRICA PRESBYTERIAN BLANTYRE SYNOD

BY

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A DESSERTATION SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF THEOLOGY IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

IN THE

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

AT THE

UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

JUNE, 2015

SUPERVISOR: DR. REUBEN RASHE

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CCAP	Church of Central Africa Presbyterian
CHAM	Christian Hospital Association of Malawi
GAC	General Administration Committee
IGA	Income Generating Activity
MW	Malawi
MBC	Malawi Broadcasting Corporation
MCC	Malawi Council of Churches
NSO	National Statistical Office
PAC	Public Affairs Committee.

ABSTRACT

Fear of and beliefs on witchcraft have been a problem for many years in many societies throughout the world. This problem mainly affects old women and children as they are the ones accused of the practice of witchcraft in many societies. Witchcraft beliefs and fears are more of a problem in Africa than in Europe and America.

Although Malawi boasts that its population is 75% of Christians, witchcraft beliefs and fears still poses a big challenge. There are so many factors that contribute to these beliefs and fears in Malawi. Some of the major factors include; cultural, legal, religious, social and economic factors.

This study aimed at establishing a theological and ethical approach to witchcraft beliefs and fear within the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) Blantyre Synod in Malawi. The study established that old people particularly women and the children are largely the victims of witchcraft accusations in Malawi. This indicates that these victimised people need security support, spiritual support, economic support, legal support as well as social support. The study also established that those that were accused of witchcraft are stigmatized by the society as well as the church. As a result of this, there has been unnecessary loss of lives and property. Furthermore, those who are stigmatized stop going to church. The problem of witchcraft has influenced other people to resort to mob justice against the suspected witches.

Although the society has used other means to stop witchcraft beliefs and fear but it has failed to end the problem. The church has also used disciplining those suspected to be practising witchcraft among other ways but no solution came out of the problem. As a result, gossip, hatred, loss of trust, un-forgiveness spirit continued to prevail.

The data for this research came up with major themes as; cultural, social, religious, legal and economic problems. There was interviews from fifty individuals who were full members of CCAP Blantyre Synod in Malawi from the Presbyteries of Mulanje and Blantyre City with the purpose of getting views from rural and urban areas within the church.

In order to minimise or end the problem of witchcraft beliefs and fear, the study came up with other ways as follows: Sound Biblical teaching is needed, Deliverance prayers should be

introduced in the church, Building effective Sunday schools, intensifying counselling, lobbying Malawi Parliament to amend the Witchcraft Act and Provide financial support.

DEDICATION

This master's degree is dedicated to my mother Mrs Effie Makumba Chimenya and to my late father (May his soul rest in peace) Mr Elias Dinala Chimenya whose mentorship has contributed a lot to my achievements and humanity. My parents instilled in me the spirit of hard work and the love of God. Further, this degree is dedicated to my wife Gertrude Chimenya, our daughter Doreen Chisomo Chimenya, son Tony Chimenya and Tambudzai Chimenya and all family members for their prayers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the first place I give all thanks and glory to Almighty God for giving me the grace, mercy and favour to finish my Master's degree at the famous University of Fort Hare. I have every reason to thank God because throughout my study at Fort Hare University, He protected me, provided all my needs and sustained my soul. I would like to thank and appreciate all those people that God used to make my Master's degree come to completion.

I thank my supervisor Dr. Reuben Rashe who guided me throughout this project right from proposal. He was very generous with his time and skills that helped me to complete this dissertation on time. Dr, "My God Almighty continue to bless you abundantly".

I am also thankful to all the members of my family for their patience, encouragement, moral and spiritual support particularly the following: My wife Gertrude, Chisomo, Tambudzai, Tony, my mother, my two sisters Mrs Eunice Chimenya Ngwangwa and Mrs Elife Chimenya Botomani, my brother Kingsley Chimenya, nieces, nephews, uncles, cousins, in-laws, too numerous to mention.

Further, through CCAP Blantyre Synod, I would like to thank the Church of Scotland for awarding me the scholarship to study for this Master's degree at the University of Fort Hare in South Africa. I would like to express my gratitude to CCAP Blantyre Synod particularly the General Secretary the Rev Alex Maulana for allowing me to go to study outside Malawi and facilitating all arrangements for my study at Fort Hare University.

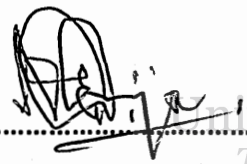
I would like to thank the University of Fort Hare for accepting me to study at this great University. Let me acknowledge the support and encouragement from Govan Mbeki Research and Development Centre (GMRDC), the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities and the department of Theology. Special thanks to Rev L. J.Bookholane, Prof Williams, Dr. Arnold Mwanza, Dr. Mupindu for their encouragement. Thanks to my colleagues: Rev Nzileni, Rev Putu and Mr Pongolo. Special gratitude also to Hlaliswa Benya, Admire Musimwa and Mr Nyoni for their prayers, support and encouragement.

Much gratitude should also go to all church members of Alice Uniting Presbyterian Church, too numerous to mention, **May God richly bless you all!!!**

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, Rev Austin Elias Chimenya, hereby solemnly declare that the work contained in this dissertation of master of theology titled, "Witchcraft beliefs and fears in Malawi: An ethical-theological inquiry within the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) Blantyre Synod", is entirely my own original work with the exception of such quotations or references that have been attributed to their authors.

This dissertation has not been submitted to and will not be presented at any other University for an equivalent or other degree award.

SIGNATURE:.....  .....

DATE: 14/09/2015

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CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY AND METHODOLOGY

1. INTRODUCTION

Witchcraft is a sensitive topic to discuss in many African societies. But over the years witchcraft has been posing a challenge in many parts of the world, Malawi included. This chapter introduces the topic and discusses the question as to why witchcraft has been a problem in Malawi. Since it is a research study, some preliminary literature discussion has been included with the aim of understanding the study topic. Further, a road map for this research project which can be called methodology has been explained in this chapter. This chapter has also discussed the significance of the study, the ethical considerations employed and limitations in the study.

1.1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Witchcraft has many differently definitions, but many dictionaries define it as the skill or art of using magic powers especially, evil ones. The belief in witchcraft is found all over the world. This belief and the practices associated with it are also found in most African cultures (Donavan 1996:310). In Ghana and Ivory Coast for instance, Parrinder (1963: 134) writes that, 'the Akan people of Ghana and Ivory Coast believe that witches change themselves into animals'. Similarly, 'in Sierra Leone, the Mende people believe that witchcraft is responsible for any unusual death'. In South Africa, Parrinder (1963:134) states that, 'In Lovedu of Transvaal they say all witchcraft is evil and anti-social as witches are believed to cause bareness in women, to destroy crop'. Malawi is not exceptional in the belief and practice of witchcraft as highlighted in this study. Witchcraft is a broad term and can be discussed or approached in different ways. Olukuyo (2004:14) asserts that, 'witchcraft is more complicated than we think.' This is probably because it cannot be proved scientifically and is mostly done in secrecy. It is against this introduction that this study research will approach the inquiry into witchcraft beliefs and fear from a theological perspective. It has

been observed that most people in Malawi have the belief that witchcraft exists and fear it; amazingly, these include even church members.

The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) Synod of Blantyre Report on witchcraft (2010:5) asserts that, "In Malawi, cases of witchcraft in the society as well as in churches are becoming rampant". The Church has also been affected by witchcraft beliefs and fear. Various cases of reports pertaining to accusations of witchcraft among the congregations have become a cause of concern. Church ministers have had difficulties in handling such cases. At some point some ministers were chased from the congregation for not handling the witchcraft cases properly. This prompted the entire Church of CCAP Blantyre Synod to deliberate on the issues of witchcraft within its members in several meetings. The Church resolved to set up a committee of three people; two church ministers and a church elder who was a lawyer by profession to conduct a research within its members. During those meetings and research it was discovered that, over 75 percent testified that witchcraft beliefs and fear was increasing in Malawi and it was affecting the church (BT Synod Minutes.2010).

The apparent increase in witchcraft beliefs and fear in Malawi had been greatly published by the media. One such media outlet was the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) through its radio station. The MBC radio 1 has since 1998, regularly broadcast every evening a popular news program in Chichewa (local language) the newscast is called *nkhani za m'maboma* (literally news from the districts) and it reports on occurrences from all districts in Malawi. This newscast was mostly dominated by reports of incidents of witchcraft and sorcery (MBC, *zam'maboma,* 2012).

Other media outlets that recently exposed the apparent increase in witchcraft beliefs and fear in Malawi were the two popular daily News Papers in Malawi, namely; The *Nation* News Paper and the *Daily Times* News Paper. One such publication by the *Nation* News Paper stated that, 'The Anglican Church in Malawi has asked parliamentarians to consider reviewing the witchcraft law to correspond with the reality on the ground. Much as the country's laws do not recognize the existence of witchcraft, but the reality is that witchcraft exist and it is time we reviewed some of these laws because one wonders why Malawian laws do not recognize witchcraft when we all know that it does exist" (The Nation, Jun

24.2014). Another report by the Eastern Division Police Headquarters of 2007 in Malawi recorded an increase in witchcraft related crimes (Sunday Times, February 24, 2008).

In Malawian civil courts too, cases of witchcraft had increased. This can be justified by the article which was presented during the police prosecutors workshop by Mr.T.C Nyirenda (2010:21) which states that,' the courts decisions dealing with the increase of witchcraft cases show that most convictions at magistrate level are not in line with the law'. One may wonder why some people have been jailed due to witchcraft practices in Malawi and yet the law does not support the existence of witchcraft. The Malawi Witchcraft Act (1963:6) stipulates that, 'Any person who by his statement or actions represents himself to be a wizard or a witch or as having or exercising the power of witchcraft shall be liable to a fine of 50 pounds and imprisonment for ten years'. Therefore, although the practice of witchcraft and making accusations was illegal in Malawi, many citizens believed that witchcraft was increasing in most parts within the country. The disparity between the Witchcraft Act and beliefs means that there was no legal means for solving the issue of witchcraft in Malawi.

The problem of witchcraft was seen to be a common problem in many African countries. One such nation was South Africa. According to Petrus (2009:4) he referred to the Witchcraft Act (No.3 of 1957) of South Africa which operated from a premise of denying belief in witchcraft but this Act had been heavily criticized. In Nigeria, the law on witchcraft states that, 'any person represents himself to be a witch or has the power of witchcraft is liable to six months in jail'. Similarly in Uganda, the witchcraft law threatens whoever holds himself out as a witch-doctor, witch-finder or practicing witchcraft with five year imprisonment' (Parrinder 1963:132). Other countries in Africa like Kenya and Tanzania had similar witchcraft laws that stipulated that witchcraft do not exist. These laws were formulated by Colonial masters but Africans do not understand them. One could therefore tell that the laws on witchcraft in Malawi and some African countries have gaps in solving the problem of witchcraft belief and fear.

In all the witchcraft cases exposed by the media and other sources in Malawi, one would hear such stories as, 'mysterious deaths, unknown illnesses, mob justices, violence, hatreds, ex-communication from the church, discrimination and migration. From this development

one would not hesitate to conclude that the impact of witchcraft practices in Malawi was so great. The fear of witchcraft in this situation can unquestionably be the end product as is the case on the ground' (Daily Times, 22 Oct, 2009). However, this report needs to be investigated.

In relation to the Church in Malawi, 'there have been accusations of witchcraft practice and such cases have been brought to church sessions. Sometimes the church sessions have dealt with such cases in a manner that is contrary to the witchcraft law or the Biblical scriptures. Some preachers have used pulpits to castigate suspected witches within their congregations but these castigations have not considered the rights of the suspect nor to the law of the land or even what the bible says about witchcraft. This has caused untold misery to the suspected witches and wizards who were also members of the same church. In some cases the suspected members may be totally innocent of these accusations' (BT Synod Minutes.2010:6). It was possible therefore that innocent victims had suffered beatings and death or destruction of property. This trend resulted in the loss of members of the church to other denominations or church members just stop going to church. All this happened because the society feared witchcraft.

The researcher looked at this issue as an ethical as well as theological problem which must be investigated. The church could not be silent on the challenge presented by the fear of witchcraft, but should rather endeavor to bring a theological response to the community it serves just as it had done in the past with challenges like poverty, HIV/AIDS and political dictatorship. Musopole (1993:1) asserts that: 'what Mbiti has said generally about the church in Africa as having no theology is particularly true of the churches in Malawi. They still live on "historical" confessions that were formulated, not only elsewhere but alas! A long time ago..... believing that the theological canon is fixed and the new theological insights have now ceased, the church has failed theologically to engage with the problems facing it now in a creative way.' The church should provide possible solutions to today's challenges including the fear of witchcraft. In this study, investigations be based on the understanding of witchcraft by people; their belief on whether it exists or not and, its source of power. The study also looks at the plight of people affected and more importantly the fear that was there. Finally the study should come out with recommendations that could assist in helping people to overcome the problem of fear of witchcraft in Malawi.

The enthusiasm for the subject came due to the nature of the researcher's work as a church minister where he encountered challenges faced by the people he was ministering. Among some of the issues raised by the people was the fact that there was so much fear of witchcraft, discrimination against those accused of witchcraft mostly elderly women was rampant. Hatred, gossiping and mistrust were the order of the day. This prompted the researcher to think of investigating the issue. One would wonder why issues of witchcraft were now common in Malawi; but the truth is that the belief in witchcraft had been there for a long time. This will be briefly discussed below.

The public discourse opened up to the public in Malawi because of the birth of democracy in 1993. Malawi adopted a New Constitution in 1994 after the one party dictatorial rule was abolished. Freedom of expression and human rights were enshrined in the New Constitution which opened up the media to report about witchcraft issues (Malawi Constitution 1995). The community was at liberty to debate on issues of witchcraft which shrouded in secrecy in the past. This did not bypass the church as people were free to discuss it.

In view of the fear of witchcraft in Malawi, the study dealt with inquiry as to why there was so much fear of witchcraft and tried to use an ethical and theological approach to get to the remedy for the problem. The researcher thought that this could be one way of protecting the victims of witchcraft as well as perpetrators of violence against people accused of practicing witchcraft.

1.2. PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

This is a systematic, explicit and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating and synthesizing the existing body of completed and recorded work produced by researchers, scholars and practitioners (Fink 2005:3). This literature review therefore attempts to defend this research study as it tries to explain what others have written before concerning this topic.

According to Wohlberg (2005:113) 'Witchcraft is real, non-fiction'. Some people do not believe in the existence of witchcraft on earth. But it must be stated that witchcraft is mystical and cannot easily be proved using scientific methods. This suggests that witchcraft

exists based on the teaching of the biblical scriptures. The bible clearly mentions the existence of witchcraft in several passages. In all those passages God forbids the practice of witchcraft. One such example is the book of Deuteronomy 18:10, where God commands that, 'let no one be found among you practicing witchcraft'. It would be absurd to forbid the practicing of what is not a reality. However, it was not in the interest of this study to dwell much on whether witchcraft exists or not but the interest was to conduct a theological and ethical investigation on the witchcraft beliefs which are leading to fear in Malawi focusing in the CCAP Blantyre Synod Church.

Mbiti (1969:197) asserts that, 'The whole psychic atmosphere of African village life is filled with belief in mystical power. African people know that the universe has power or force or whatever else one may call it, it is in addition to the living dead, spirits and the Supreme Being.' This is a cosmological belief of Africans. Petrus (2009:51) referred to Crafford (1996) who defined African cosmology as a unity, harmony and totality made up by the Supreme Being, spirits, people, animals, and inanimate objects. Life-force can be enhanced or diminished by magical activities'. Malawi was falling in this cosmological belief system as most people believe that witchcraft practice could harm others or make one to prosper in life. As this research study progresses, it will discuss why Malawians fear witchcraft. Witchcraft affects people in one way or the other and Malawians could not be exceptional which include church members as well.

Regarding mystical powers, Gehman (1990:71) comments that, 'Anthropologists have studied mystical powers under such topics as witchcraft, wizardry, sorcery and evil magic but they lack agreement in the use of words. It must be admitted that Africans do not make such theoretical differences. We cannot make a general statement and apply it to everyone because beliefs vary from people to people'. In Malawi anybody associated with sorcery was also associated with witchcraft. For the most part these terms were treated as the same. In witchcraft, the words "magic" and "sorcery" seem interconnected but in this study, they will be distinguished.

Evans-Pritchard (1937:21) states that; 'a sorcerer uses the technique of magic and derives power from medicines, while a witch acts without rites and spells and uses hereditary psycho-psychical powers to attain his ends. Both alike are enemies of men. Witchcraft and

sorcery are opposed by good magic.' What it means here is that sorcery uses black magic and medicines against other people while in witchcraft practices, the witch possess mystical and innate powers within himself as a person to conduct his evil activity. This is where witchcraft becomes so complicated as compared to magic alone. In the context of Malawi, anybody involved in magic and sorcery was regarded as practicing witchcraft and he/she was feared by people.

According to Gehman (1990:67), 'magic is the manipulation and use of impersonal powers through ritual and ceremony and it is classified into two, white magic also known as good magic and black magic or bad magic.' In order to distinguish between black magic and white magic, Parrinder (1974:116) explains that,' Good magic is primarily used for protection against the evil forces that are found everywhere, but black magic is secretly practiced without the approval of society and for evil purposes. Black magic is feared by people, and society opposes it as it is practiced at night.' This means that magic is a neutral term to refer to forces that people believe may exist. How these forces are used by humans determines whether they are used for good like traditional healers, or for evil intentions like witches/sorcerers. On the other hand, witchcraft is the evil use of magic. In Malawi witchcraft *(ufiti)* and sorcery (kukhwima) were not separated. One question of interest is whether the terms witchcraft, magic and sorcery could be found elsewhere in the world apart from Malawi and Africa.

Parrinder (1974:116) argues that, 'Issues of witchcraft, magic and sorcery are both among African peoples, Europeans and elsewhere'. In America for instance, Lehmann (1985: 274) states that, 'reports of nearly 200 cases of witchcraft in a three year period were recorded and this figure can double because witchcraft is generally a highly secretive in-group experience'. In Western Europe, Guiley (1989: 369) asserts that, 'The church both the Catholic and Protestants held determined campaigns to eradicate witches beginning at the start of the 13th Century'. Furthermore, in England according to Guley (1989), witchcraft was punishable by various secular and ecclesiastical laws as early as 668AD. This confirms that witchcraft is as old as the world itself and it had been a global challenge. The only difference was the location and intensity and how people had reacted to the issues of witchcraft globally.

When considering witchcraft, one would want to know how witchcraft could be acquired. Tukari (1999:195) asserts that, 'powers of witchcraft are mystical and innate or are granted by the presence of a familiar spirit. The possession of this power is hereditary or it can be acquired from a known or unknown source as a gift.' If what Tukari highlights is true then witchcraft can be practiced by any person regardless of gender, age, education, financial status or whether one is living in town or rural area. The gender bias, seems therefore unfounded as this refutes the notion that witchcraft generally is practiced by women.

Regarding to the question of location as to where witchcraft can be practiced for instance, In Malawi's commercial city of Blantyre Gondwe in his article (3rd February, 2008) writes that, 'the police locked horns with residents of the populous Ndirande Township who were being terrorized by witchcraft practices in the night. Further, Gondwe states that, students at Blantyre and HHI Secondary Schools between January and March, 2008 had continuously been attacked at night while in deep sleep by witchcraft practices in hostels while over 50 women have been raped and their faces mauled by unknown vampires associated to witchcraft practices'. Still in Malawi, another incident of witchcraft happened in the rural area of Mzimba in March, 2008 when scores of police officers had to be deployed to Mzimba district where people had taken the law into their own hands and started administering justice to a family suspected of witchcraft'. One man according to Gondwe's article admitted to the police that he was practicing witchcraft and had been teaching witchcraft to over 100 children in the area'. It can thus be seen here that witchcraft can be practiced anywhere and by anybody. This is discussed further in a later chapter while continuing on Malawians view of witchcraft.

Donavan (1996:310) states that,' witches are either born with these evil powers or get them by becoming part of the community of witches. Witchcraft is carried out unconsciously by the witch when he or she is asleep. The witch is believed to leave his or her body and fly about at night, seeking to eat human flesh and when the witch eats the flesh of a person, the person becomes weak and sick and finally dies.' This belief of flying at night and causing harm to persons was also common in many African cultures including Malawi and this could be one such a reason why witchcraft is feared so greatly even by some Christians. Parrinder (1963:133ff) mentions Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast as having these beliefs in witchcraft. According to Guiley (1989:172), in England and

Scotland, withes were believed to be ugly; they had the ability to fly through the air, they attend orgiastic Sabbaths, they possess the power to become invisible, they could metamorphose into animals and raised storms. But since witchcraft beliefs and fear was the center of this study, it was important to know how people understood about the powers behind witchcraft.

According to Nyirongo (1997:188) the witches believe that the ultimate source of all their powers is a great benevolent being or God. The witches believe that one cannot succeed in life without the powers of God. Nyirongo further comments that, 'indeed one is justified even to kill those contemplating one's down fall'. The understanding of those who practiced witchcraft was that God gave them magic powers to shield themselves from enemies. But the researcher's view was that this belief had lead many people in Malawi and elsewhere to syncretism. Syncretism refers to the mixing of idol worship and worshiping the Almighty God by the same person and thus breaking God's commandment; 'You shall have no any other gods than me' (Exodus 20:3). No wonder the African view of witchcraft was compromised and the fear of witchcraft had been seen to have no remedy. Can God be behind the powers of witchcraft? The researcher disagrees with this proposition. All evil powers are satanic as attested to by respondents as discussed in the research findings of this study.

In contradiction, Mbiti (1991:117) states that, 'the African view of witchcraft is not necessarily evil, but the practitioners' motives'. Mbiti, went on to make the claim that when a person uses witchcraft for protection or to prosper in life, for example, even to the point of killing others, the motives are good and one should not feel guilty. However, if the witchcraft is used to destroy innocent people, then the motives are bad.' This is a belief that was common in many African cultures. But this was contrary to Christian teaching and even those humanists who valued human life. Musopole (1993:348) comments that, 'In Malawian society, to be associated with witchcraft is not an honor, but an accusation of being a murderer who uses the occult powers and such persons are negatively viewed and regarded ant-social and ant-life'. This was what Malawians believe of those who were thought to practice witchcraft. Most Malawians viewed witchcraft as evil and anybody involved in the practice was an enemy of the society. But the big question that needed deeper investigation was what was it that made people to fear witchcraft and how it

affected them? Worse still, church members too, fear witchcraft yet they worshipped and believed in the Almighty God who is more powerful than the evil spirits that are behind witchcraft.

Donavan (1996:311) agrees that, 'Indeed, there is so much fear of witchcraft in Africa. The fear can be so great that a person can develop serious symptoms of physical or mental illness. We must not under estimate the power of fear itself whether there is actual witchcraft involved or not'. In Malawi some people resolved to move from one place to another because of fear of witchcraft. The fear of witchcraft has also made people to victimize each other. Petrus (2009:21) comments that, 'Over ten years there have been various reported cases of witch killings or violence towards suspected witches in the Eastern Cape of South Africa'. Some governments in Africa have taken a deliberate effort to combat the problem of fear of witchcraft among people. One such example was South Africa.

Ashforth (2005) notes that, 'witchcraft related violence had become important enough to be placed on the national government agenda after reports of such violence had arisen. Government established a Commission of Inquiry into witchcraft violence in the former Northern Province of South Africa'. The killings were done because people fear witches and so they believed the remedy was to kill all witches. Mbiti (1991:117) agrees with many authors that, 'the fear of witchcraft in Africa cannot be overemphasized since people believe that sorcery, witchcraft and magic cause death'. Since witchcraft was seen as the cause of death and much untold misery, it could indeed bring fear in peoples' minds and bodies. They are psychologically affected. In societies where issues of witchcraft are rampant one should expect persecutions, victimization, mob justice, hatred and mistrust among the people. This was the scenario in Malawi (Daily Times, 22 Oct, 2009). The incident that happened in Malawian district of Mzimba as mentioned earlier on can be one such example. However, the study uncovered the group of people which were believed to practice witchcraft.

Parrinder (1963:138) asserts that, 'the witchcraft belief of many African people is that the witch is generally female and that many practitioners are said to be women'. This was also a common belief in Malawi. Most old women were suspected of being witches and are victimized greatly. But the argument is if witchcraft is believed to be acquired through being

inherited, then it does not make sense to lay all the blame on females only and victimize them. It ought to include both men and women, educated and non-educated, urban and rural dwellers, young or old.

While the society in general fears witchcraft, how is it that there is also fear of witchcraft among church members? Is it possible for witchcraft to be present in church?

According to Itiola (2012.2), 'It should not be looked upon as unheard of when Satan and his agents gather together with God's people in church. It is a practice that has been there for a long time.' He refers to Jezebel who used food against unsuspecting church members in Thyatira in Revelations 2:20 for the initiation into witchcraft. When such stories are read one should expect some weaker Christians to have fear of witchcraft since even in the church setting you can find those who practice witchcraft. However, it takes boldness to bring the issue of witchcraft to the authorities, be it in church or to traditional leaders because witchcraft is held in high secrecy.

Lehman (1985:274) states that, 'witchcraft is generally a highly secretive in-group experience and because victims fear that witchcraft may not be accepted by professional health workers, it often goes undetected and unreported'. Many people in Malawi have decided to remain silent while victimized by issues of witchcraft because of professional science workers who don't recognize this, as well as the Malawi witchcraft Act, (No. 2 of 1963) and sometimes the fear of reprisals from witches.

1.3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The aim of the study is to conduct a theological and ethical inquiry into witchcraft beliefs which lead to the fear of witchcraft among church members of CCAP Blantyre Synod in Malawi as this had resulted into some church members leaving the church.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study intended to address the following questions:

(a) How is witchcraft defined in Malawi by CCAP Church members?

(b) How do congregants of CCAP Blantyre Synod view witchcraft?

(c) How is the prevalence of fear of witchcraft by the congregants in CCAP Blantyre Synod?

(d) What could the church do as a form of response to the fear of witchcraft?

1.5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study were as follows:

(a) To inquire about the understanding of witchcraft in Malawi by CCAP members?

(b) To assess the fears that CCAP Blantyre Synod church members might have due to witchcraft in Malawi.

(c) To recommend possible responses available, from a theological perspective, toward minimizing witchcraft beliefs and fears in Malawi.

1.6. THEORETICAL (CONCEPTUAL) FRAMEWORK

This research study is mainly theoretically grounded and premised on ethical and theological theories with special emphasis on Systematic Theology and Christian Ethics. This dissertation will use two influential theories namely Heinz Edward Tödt's theory of ethical decision-making and Dirk Smit's theory of Ecclesiological forms. The focus is the application of different forms of the church and six phases of ethical decision-making. The two theories were considered for this study for a good reason. Witchcraft is an ethical issue and most people in Malawi did not accept this belief and practice and there were signs that people feared it. This affected the church as well so that even some Christians fear witchcraft. This posed a critical question on church doctrines. Does theology have the potential to bring solutions to human sufferings of fear of witchcraft? The answer obviously should be "yes". This justified these two models or theories of ecclesiology and ethics. These two theories are very relevant to this study since the aim is to take ethics and relate them with faith

which eventually should produce good behavior or action in the people as argued for by Haselbarth (1976:2) that, 'In the way we lead our life is revealed by how much we have understood of our faith. In this sense Christian ethics is basically theology and not simply a Christian version of applied general science, like psychology, sociology or philosophy'.

A number of prominent theologians in South Africa have used these two theories and one such theologian was Rashe's (2008) where he attempted to respond to the issue of family violence in South Africa. The researcher's intent is to join these theologians in using Tödt's approach. The research also follows Tödt's approach of the process of ethical decision-making as explained and employed by Moulton in presenting the following findings of the research in the successive chapters of this dissertation. The six phases that Tödt used to analyze and describe the process of ethical decision-making were as follows: (a) Seeing, accepting and describing the problem. (b) Analyzing the problem (c) Considering the possible responses available. (d) Evaluating the responses in light of applicable norms and criteria. (e) Listening to other opinions. (f) Taking the decision (Edward 1998: 21-48).

In order for the church to understand clearly how it can respond to challenges of fear of witchcraft, Smit's explanation of ecclesiology is helpful.

In his paper on ecclesiology Smit (1996:15) deals with the following different forms of the church: Worship, Congregation, Denomination, Ecumenical Church, Believers and Volunteers.

This research therefore used two theories of Tödt on ethical decision-making as explained and summarized by Moulton and Smit's theory on different forms of the church. These two theories will be described in the subsequent chapters as they are applied

1.7. RESEARCH METHODS

The literature studied before the fieldwork was done for the purpose of complimenting the fieldwork and gaining understanding about the phenomena of witchcraft. The frame of reference where this study has been conducted is mainly a theological framework, with emphasis on Systematic Theology and Christian Ethics. Postcolonial literature on African witchcraft in other parts of the world, particularly in Europe where the CCAP church

originated and America was studied in order to acquire the foundational material for the study topic. Literature that discussed witchcraft laws in Europe and some African countries is also examined in order to compare it with Malawian witchcraft law alongside biblical scriptures. Media reports, articles, thesis and church documents have also helped the foundation of this research topic as well.

1.7.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

This research is a qualitative study where issues to be discussed are descriptive in nature. Qualitative methods are used since being a theological study, figures and numbers were mostly not used as would be the case with quantitative research (Multon 1988:155-156). Nachimias (1981: 29) asserts that, 'research design is the program that guides the investigator in the process of collecting, analyzing and interpreting observations'. This is the road map on how this research project was conducted.

1.7.2. QUALITATITVE APPROACH

According to (Drew 2008:19), qualitative studies use spoken or written accounts of events to describe situations. Bryman (2004:19-20) differentiates between qualitative method and quantitative method. Qualitative approach deals with finding the causes of phenomena and understanding people in the way they make use of their settings and experience. Unlike quantitative method which deals with figures. Research studies such as this one which deals with people can best be done using qualitative methodology which has so many strengths. Miles & Huberman (1994:10) note that qualitative data with their emphasis on peoples' lived experience is fundamentally well suited for locating the meanings people place on the events, processes and structures of their lives. This study therefore uses the qualitative method.

1.7.3. RESEARCH METHODS LINKED TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Maree (2007:33) asserts that, 'A paradigm is a philosophical basis of the study and is like a bed-rock on which to build the methodology of the research. The interpretive paradigm in

the research study provides that the world has multiple realities and seeks to get its picture using insiders'. This research mainly used qualitative methods to examine social and ethical realities because witchcraft is both a social and an ethical problem. In this researchs, interpretive paradigm was therefore relevant since only the insider views detailed what went on in a context as opposed to the outsiders view.

Blanche, Durrheim & Painter (2006: 6) explain that, 'Paradigms are all-encompassing systems of interrelated practice and thinking that define for researchers the nature of their enquiry along three dimensions: ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Ontology specifies the nature of reality that is to be studied, and what can be known about it. Epistemology specifies the nature of the relationship between the researcher or knower and what can be known. While methodology specifies how researchers may go about practically studying whatever they believe can be known.' Qualitative methods also provided in-depth knowledge of phenomena which created a holistic picture of the learning interactions of those who had lived the experiences (Corbin, Strauss 2008; 47ff). The aim of this research study therefore was to find out more about the feelings and fear of witchcraft among the church members of CCAP Blantyre Synod and sought views on how this problem could be resolved. Therefore, the qualitative method was appropriate. The researcher went to the field to collect qualitative primary data.

1.7.4. SAMPLING

Yegidis & Weinbach (1996:139) state that, 'Sampling is the study design that combines observation and behavior with observation of attitudes and perceptions of research participants'. In this research study, 50 people of different age groups within the church of CCAP Blantyre Synod were interviewed using semi-structured interviews and situation/case analyses. Miles & Huberman (1994:27) assert that, 'qualitative researchers usually work with small samples of people, nested in their context and studied in depth unlike quantitative researchers, who aim for larger numbers of context-stripped cases and seek statistical significance.' The 50 people were therefore chosen because qualitative sampling was being utilized.

According to Petrus (2009) semi- structured interviews which are formal and informal interviews are good because they provide both general and specific data relating to witchcraft beliefs. This research therefore used formal and informal interviews as well as situation/ case analyses (personal accounts of actual cases from informants) in order to get to the bottom of the issue. This was used bearing in mind that witchcraft is a sensitive matter and some people would not be comfortable to share their experiences if only one mode of structured interview was used. Semi-structured interviews were therefore used for the purpose of gaining specific issues on witchcraft and general information relating to witchcraft beliefs and fear.

Niewenhauis (2007:87) states that, 'semi-structured interview is a qualitative interviewing technique because it allows the researcher to see the world through the eyes of the participant and helps the researcher to gain an understanding of the participant's construction of knowledge and social reality'. Since this research is qualitative, it was vital to use semi-structured interview approach.

Interviews were done in two presbyteries namely Blantyre City and Mulanje. The two presbyteries were chosen for a good reason, since they represented views of urban people and the views of rural people. Mulanje is located in a rural area about 70km away from Blantyre which is a commercial city in Malawi. The people that were interviewed included; two church ministers from each of these two presbyteries because they were policy makers; also included were three church elders from these two presbyteries who represented the ruling class in Presbyterian set up. Another group that was interviewed was a group of five youth (ages 18-21) each one a member of one of the two presbyteries. These youths were engaged in the interviews because they were a group that was very active in the church. There was two officials (session clerks) that were interviewed; each from one of the two presbyteries, and represented the management or administrators of the church. The sampling also included women guilds (*mvano)* from these two presbyteries each comprising of five members as the most organized group in CCAP Church. The interview also included five male ordinary members of the church in order to get information from the group that was not well organized in the church. Finally, there were interviews of five ordinary female church members aged from 30 years representing the group that was mostly accused of practicing witchcraft in Malawian society. The outcome represented the picture of the

congregations and presbyteries in the entire CCAP Blantyre Synod because the synod was made up of presbyteries and all the information at synod level came from presbyteries that looked after congregations.

The sampling was limited to Church members of CCAP Blantyre Synod in Malawi and were to be in the church for more than three years. This was done so to avoid information that was not experienced in those localities or congregations. Secondly, the interviews were limited to Africans and not someone from outside Africa who only congregated with the Church of CCAP Blantyre Synod in Malawi. The purpose was to get data that was the lived experience of Malawians (Africans) who belonged to CCAP Church. But it must be emphasized that Blantyre city Presbytery is located in urban area while Mulanje Presbytery is in a rural area. Below is a table summary on how the interviews were sampled.

TABLE- A

NAME OF THE PRESBYTERY	TARGET GROUP	NUMBER	REASON (S)
Blantyre City	Ministers	2	Policy makers/teaching elders in the church
	Church elders	3	Ruling elders in the church
	Female members	5	Mostly accused of witchcraft
	Women guild *(mvano)*	5	Most organized group in the church
	Youth association group	5	Most active group
	Ordinary male members	3	Not well organized group in the church
	Officials(session clerks)	2	Church administrators
Mulanje	Ministers	2	Policy makers/teaching elders in the church
	Church elders	3	Ruling elders in the church
	Ordinary female members	5	Mostly accused of witchcraft
	Women guild *(mvano)*	5	Most organized group in the church
	Youth association group	5	Most active group in the church
	Ordinary male members	3	Not well organized group in the church
	Officials(session clerks)	2	Church administrators
TOTAL		50	

1.7.5. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Maree (2007:33f) asserts that, 'research instruments are specific practical measures and tools employed to access or generate data through forms of interaction'. This study utilized a number of different methods data collection such as using the Synod data on witchcraft that was collected in 2010. Minutes of the church sessions from congregations, church reports, church policy documents as well as the interviews of 50 people from the two Presbyteries of Blantyre City and Mulanje were used to ensure measures of reliability, validity, and trustworthiness.

1.7.6. DATA COLLECTION

In this research study data was collected through the use of the internet; through relevant books on theology and Christian ethics in the libraries of the following institutions: University of Fort Hare, the University of Malawi- Chancellor College, the Blantyre Synod Resource Center, Zomba Theological college, Church documents, News Papers, and journal articles were also utilized. These comprised the secondary data, but the primary data was the original information that was collected from the field relating to the issue of witchcraft through interviews, and traditional narratives. According to Creswell (2009:175), in qualitative research, data collection involves being at the site where the researcher approaches the participants in their own setting because this is where the experiences and the issues understudy are located. Normally, information is gathered through talking directly to the people and seeing how they behave and act within their context. In this study, face to face interviews were used in collecting primary data. However, both primary and secondary data complemented each other in enriching the arguments that were developed in this research project.

1.7.7. FACE TO FACE INTERVIEWS

In this research study, face to face interviews and semi-structured interviews were used. According to Sellitz (1951:241) 'Interviews have the advantage because they can be used with all segments of life.' This approach has the advantage because it is easy to use and can include educated or non-educated, old or young people in the area understudy. Again,

Sellitz (1951) further maintains that semi- structured interviews are simple to use because the respondents just talk unlike the scenario where writing is utilized.

Silverman notes (2002:100), 'that for interviews in the interactionist tradition, interview subjects construct not just narratives, but social worlds. The primary is to generate data which give an authentic insight into people's experience.' Due to the nature of this study topic face to face interviews were well suited to be used. Furthermore, Silverman (2002:104) commenting on face to face interviews state that many of the respondents explicitly refers to their interviews as legacies since they are participating in this project despite the pain it might cause them because they believe the researcher will use their stories to help others. Thus they lay upon the researcher with the responsibility of giving meaning to their lives and their deaths. These face to face interviews had therefore an element of mutual trust between the researcher and those that were interviewed or respondents.

1.7.8. DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher analyzed both the primary data that was collected from the field as well as secondary data on witchcraft beliefs and fear from published and unpublished books, articles and thesis using the thematic approach. Analysis was done manually. The researcher developed themes based on similarities, differences, repetitions of words and familiarity of words (Benard and Ryan 2010:61). Two theories of ethical decision-making by Tödt and ecclesiological forms by Smit were used during the analysis. The analysis dwelt on witchcraft beliefs and fears in Malawi focusing on CCAP Blantyre Synod church members and the fellowship that ought to be there amongst believers so that non-Christians could emulate. Finally, analysis was done in order to find possible solutions to the problem of witchcraft beliefs and fears among Church members of CCAP Blantyre Synod with special attention to Systematic theology and Christian Ethics as the researcher's field of study.

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study intended to close the gap of lack of theological understanding that existed in trying to solve the problem of witchcraft beliefs leading to fear among CCAP church members in Malawi. The rampant increase of belief in witchcraft which was leading to fear not only for church members, but also for society at large in Malawi, needed a theological intervention. The reason was that the witchcraft law in Malawi seemed not to have solved the problem of witchcraft beliefs and fear. Theological terms like forgiveness, salvation and atonement are used in this research study to provide solutions to victims of witchcraft, perpetrators of violence, discrimination and those that were believed to practice witchcraft.

3. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, the researcher used different methods in collecting the data from respondents. Some were interviewed in church premises while others preferred their homes and offices. The reason being that witchcraft represented an issue that not many people can be comfortable discussing it openly. This made the researcher observe the research code of ethics as spelt out in the rules of the University OF Fort Hare particularly concerning the security of some of the interviewees who preferred to be anonymous in this study. Confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents were therefore guaranteed for the entire research study. Further, the researcher showed the letter of authorization from the University of Fort Hare to those to be interviewed as well as the letter from the General Secretary of CCAP Blantyre Synod. The researcher disclosed the topic, purpose and aims of the research study to the respondents so that informed consent to do the interviews was granted.

4. LIMITATIONS IN THE STUDY

Due to financial limitations and time the study focused within CCAP Blantyre Synod and in two Presbyteries of Mulanje and Blantyre only. This study simply provides an estimate of the prevalence of phenomenon Levin (2006). Therefore it is possible that these results could be different in the future researches depending on the times and coverage. Furthermore,

this study failed to cover the whole country of Malawi and provide the direction on witchcraft beliefs and fear. This is where further research studies could be done.

5. CONCLUSION

This chapter introduced the topic of witchcraft beliefs and fear as background to the research study and issues to be discussed in the following chapters. The chapter aimed to present the literature review relating to the topic of the current study, mentioning the problem statement, research questions and objectives. The chapter has also brought the theoretical framework, research methods and research design as a road map to the whole research project. In addition, significance of the study, ethical considerations and limitations in the study were discussed. The next chapter deals with the literature review of the study topic.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter introduced the research study topic and the background. The chapter also briefly discussed the methodology for the whole research study, two theories of Tödt's ethical decision-making and Smit's ecclesiological forms to be employed in this research study. Finally, the chapter came up with preliminary literature review.

The current chapter will endeavour to discuss witchcraft in relation to some of the literature focussing on what others have written about the meaning of witchcraft, the powers behind witchcraft, how one acquires it and which group of people is believed to be practising witchcraft. This chapter also discusses possible dangers of witchcraft and some of its positives if at all there are any. Further, the chapter discusses why witchcraft beliefs and practices still persist despite the presence of Christianity especially in Africa. In addition to the above, the role of the churches in the 18th Century in addressing witchcraft issues as well as how people are dealing with the problem of witchcraft in Africa are discussed. In conclusion, this chapter will look at witchcraft in the Biblical context and how other theologians have approached it in order to develop theological arguments; which is the centre of this research study.

2.2. HOW OTHERS HAVE DESCRIBED MAGIC, WITCHCRAFT AND SORCERY

According to Gardener (1959:12) there are three schools of thoughts regarding witchcraft. The first involves those who take the severely rationalist view that witchcraft was a kind of mass hysteria, arising from psychological causes. Then the second school involves those that maintain that witchcraft is real, and that it is the worship and service of Satan, in whom its devotees appear to be great believers. The third school maintains that witchcraft is simply the remains of the old pagan religion of Western Europe, dating back to the stone-age, hence the church's persecution of it, due to the perception that it was a dangerous rival. These schools of thought can describe where one belong. This describes witchcraft in Western Europe during stone-age, but how do Africans describe witchcraft at the moment? Which school as described by Gardener can Africa belong to? According to Petrus 2009:49 referring to Evans-Pritchard's study among Azande (1937) says that earliest studies of witchcraft and sorcery beliefs in African societies show a relationship that exists between

witchcraft and sorcery beliefs and the cosmological system inherent in the society. He adds that African cosmologies are also related to the religious organisations of African societies. Mbiti (1969:1) agrees that Africans are notoriously religious. He adds that wherever the African is, there is his religion. This suggests that Africans belong to the second school of thought as mentioned by Gardener (1959). According to Malawi National Statistics (2008), the statistics indicate that Malawi's 75% of Malawi's population are Christians. This shows that majority of Malawians are religious people and it can be suggested that it falls under the second school of thought by Gardener (1959) that says that witchcraft is real, and that it is the worship and service of Satan, in whom its devotees appear to be great believers.

In defining cosmology, Crafford (1996:9) views African cosmology as a unity, harmony and totality made up of the supreme-being, the spirits, people, animals, vegetation and inanimate objects. He adds that the supreme- being is the origin of the life-force, the spiritual realm and its mediators. It is thought to be made available in a limited way to people, animals, plants and objects. Life-force can be enhanced or diminished by magical activities. On the other hand, Bowie (2000:119) defines cosmology as a theory or conception of nature of the universe and its workings, and of the place of human beings and other creatures within that order. She adds that cosmology should be distinguished from cosmogony in the sense that cosmogony refers to stories, myths and theories relating to the origin of the universe, and human beings. Petrus (2009:51) comments that despite the various definitions of cosmology, most African societies have a cosmology for the specific purpose of establishing order in their societies. He adds that cosmologies therefore have a function in African communities. This suggests that Africans have their own understanding about witchcraft. However, Mathew (1994:13) cautions that cosmologies are conditioned by historical, environmental, technological, psychological and social factors. This means that it can vary with different factors. According to Hammond-Tooke (1974:335), magic becomes a significant factor in African theories of causation, constituting an alternative theory to the causes of evil, illness and misfortune. It is therefore important at this point to discuss the concept of magic in order to have a good understanding of witchcraft.

2.3. MAGIC

Gehman (1989:67) defines magic as the manipulation and use of impersonal powers through ritual and ceremony. He adds that magic has been classified into white magic also known as good magic and black magic. Mbiti (1969:198) distinguishes that good magic is openly accepted by the society and used for man's benefit while bad magic is secretly practiced without the approval of the society and is used for evil purposes. As for good magic, he adds that it is chiefly the specialists, the medicine-man, diviner and rainmaker, who use their knowledge and manipulation of this mystical power for the welfare of their community. Gehman (1989:69) comments that good magic is primarily used for protection against the evil forces that are found everywhere. In addition to protection, good magic may also be used to bring rain by the rainmakers and predict the future by the diviner. This suggests that Africans regard white magic helpful to their community. On the contrary, according to Gehman (1989:69) says black magic is associated with sorcery and witchcraft. He adds that both sorcery and witchcraft are most feared in many parts of African Traditional Religion. This implies that Africans fear black magic as opposed to white magic because of their different motives. Mbiti (1969:199) points out that a great deal of belief here is based on fear, suspicion, jealous, ignorance or false accusations which go on in African villages. Magic can therefore be termed as a force that people believe they use for good intentions or bad intentions. This implies that the use of it is what is regarded as witchcraft or *ufiti* by Chewa and Lomwe speaking people in Malawi. In this case, witchcraft belief is rampant due to jealous among people; and also due to ignorance about witchcraft and mere suspicion. These can also be the focus of attention as discussion about witchcraft beliefs and fear continues. Further, witchcraft cannot be mentioned without associating it with sorcery.

2.2.1. WITCHCRAFT

There is a difference between believing the existence of witchcraft and being controlled by witchcraft powers. This is completely different. Christians know that witchcraft exists based on the teachings of the Bible, but that does not mean that they are controlled by witchcraft. This is in agreement with what Wohlberg (2005:113) commented that witchcraft is real and non-fiction. But authentic witchcraft has disputed this. They say witches do not even believe

in the devil let alone invoke him (Gardener 1959:13). But generally, it has been observed that witchcraft involves magic and religion.

Many authors have given different meanings depending on their understanding of witchcraft and what it entails. As Gehman (1989:71) commented, witchcraft is associated with wizardry, sorcery, evil magic, fetishism and alike. The use of these words has led to some confusion. He further says that Africans do not make such theoretical distinctions. Beliefs vary from people to people and therefore it is difficult to come up with a general statement. These terms seem to mean the same thing but there are some distinctions. It is believed that only those people who practice witchcraft, magic, and sorcery would make distinctions. Mbiti (1969:54) suggests that this could be because witchcraft, magic and sorcery are associated with evil intention.

On the other hand, many dictionaries have defined witchcraft as the skill of using magic powers for evil intentions. But Cambridge International Dictionary (1996) has specified witchcraft as the use of sorcery or magic. But according to Parrinder (1974:116) says that there is a white magic and black magic which must be distinguished. He adds that both black magic and white magic are found among African peoples and Europeans. This suggests that belief in witchcraft can be found in Africa as well as in Europe. Therefore, this beliefs in witchcraft and sorcery is one way of explaining the inexplicable, controlling the uncontrollable, and accounting for the problem of evil (Nelson & Douglas, 1970). Many scholars have tried to distinguish between witchcraft and sorcery. Kombo (1988:71) comments that the distinction between a witch and a sorcerer is not always clear. This gives an impression that these terms are close to each other or that there is a relationship.

According to Middleton and Winter (1970:15) witchcraft is defined as a mystical and innate power which can be used by its possessor to harm other people. However, this definition excludes the use of external objects in the practice of witchcraft and expressly states that the intention of witchcraft is evil (Kombo 1988:74). But can one find the meaning of witchcraft in the African perspective? Some scholars have tried to define it.

Van Wyk (2004:1209) defines witchcraft in the African perspective as peoples with mystical ability to manipulate the forces of life to do harm to human beings or clearly a term used to describe evil such as persistent illness or bad luck that some people inflict upon others. The

definition suggests that witchcraft is mostly practiced with evil intention since the aim is to harm others.

Witchcraft in Africa is associated with older women (Stadler 1996:88). However, it is believed that very young girls could engage in witchcraft as well (Muller & Ritz- Muller 1999: 160-165). In this case Africans believe that witchcraft, whose purpose is to harm others is mainly practiced by women and very rare in men. But one would wonder why only old women are accused and yet the same African society believe that witchcraft is inherited? These are questions that need further research.

Mbiti (1969:202) asserts that witches are evil within themselves, and perform evil deeds because of a witchcraft substance within their intestines which can be seen and felt. Because of this physical feature, they are abnormal and prove to be a threat to everyone, not only their enemies. Van Wyk (2004:211) elaborates that the witches do not use any medicine as they perform their evil deeds but operate a more spiritual, more direct level or they operate with the help of animal familiars such as baboons, owls the lighting bird and cats. This implies that in some cultures they regard both the use medicines and familiars as witchcraft.

Parrinder (1963:134) states that, witchcraft is evil and ant-social because they are believed to cause bareness in women and cause many unusual deaths. The evil of witchcraft has been emphasised by many people particularly in Africa. According to Levack (2001:119) he comments that witchcraft is responsible for all troubles like nightmares, illness, bad luck, marriage problems, financial troubles, bad harvests, bad behaviour such as alcoholism and even sin. The definition of witchcraft by many scholars corresponds or agrees with what the Bible says about the evil of witchcraft and is condemned by God. However, the meanings show that witchcraft is not entirely bad but the motives behind it. Witchcraft is associated with sorcery. It is therefore necessary to look at the relationship between witchcraft and sorcery.

2.2.2. SORCERY

Evans- Pritchard (1937:21) defines sorcery among Azande people of Sudan as the use of black magic and medicines against others and can be practiced by any individual who buys specially prepared charms and places them near someone's house. Here is where witchcraft and sorcery are distinguished. A sorcerer according to Evans- Pritchard uses the technique of magic power while a witch acts without rites and performs her evil work because of her very nature and uses hereditary psycho-psychical powers or super natural powers to attain her ends. It is said that sorcerers do not possess the ability to leave their bodies as witches do. Theirs is evil intent and they kill and harm for a specific purpose and with full knowledge of their evil acts. A sorcerer therefore can stop being a sorcerer, but a witch cannot stop being a witch (Monnich 1967:71-78; Hammond-Tooke 1993: 169; Magesa 1998: 181; Magubane 1988:980). This implies that witchcraft cannot be stopped anyhow. This is perhaps the reason why Christians should use powers from God to counteract or remove witchcraft powers. This can also suggest why Christians should not go to witch doctors to seek help when they experience witchcraft problems just because witchcraft powers can only be removed by using the power of God. The Bible says that when Jesus died and was resurrected, he disarmed all powers of darkness (Colossians 2:15; Ephesians 1:21). Christians ought to rely on God by persistent prayer and fasting. This applies to all Christians despite their country, culture or status since Jesus died and was resurrected for all the people in the world.

2.2.3. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WITCHCRAFT AND SORCERY

Middleton (1963: 277-299) gives a distinction between witchcraft and sorcery and maintains that unlike witchcraft, anyone can practice sorcery because there is no act of unusual way one simply uses certain methods which enables him to accomplish his evil purpose unlike witchcraft where one must be born a witch or introduced to the secrete grouping of witches in order to perform his evil ways. This is where witchcraft is complicated as also attested to by Olukuyu (2004:14). It's no wonder that witchcraft cannot be proved scientifically. But both sorcery (kukhwima) and witchcraft (*ufiti)* are feared by Africans and other societies outside Africa. The researcher however, observed that from these explanations by different authors regarding witchcraft and sorcery, the similarity is that they all aim at evil intentions.

This could probably be the reason why Malawians do not make the difference between these two terms.

2.4. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AS WITCHCRAFT

In Africa the anti-social behaviour of normal people is also regarded as witchcraft (Muller & Ritz- Muller 1999:139). Olupona (1991:180) and Magesa (1988: 185-186) cite examples of anti- social behaviour as follows:

(a) People who contravene accepted norms and destroy the basic values of society such as rejecting respect for seniors.

(b) People who destroy the harmony in the society by destructing the normal and good in the society such as having intercourse with animals (bestiality) or with the same sex (homosexuality).

People who are guilty of incest, or who have incestuous dreams

(c) People whose actions are characterised by secrecy and loathsome behaviour.

(d) People who eat human flesh especially that of children.

(e) People who upset the balance of nature.

According to the Daily Times (October, 10, 2014) Malawian people who are found at the grave yard in the night are regarded as witches. Similarly, anyone found with human body parts is reported to be a witch. Mosopole (1993:351) comments that Malawians have the belief that anyone who does things that are outside the norms of the society is regarded as a witch. He adds that such people have been stigmatised, tortured and in some instances killed because they are regarded as enemies of the society. But if witchcraft is regarded as evil or bad, one question that is puzzling is how witchcraft can be acquired when man was created by God in His own image? At the same time nowhere in the Bible does it mention that God is evil or that man was created as an evil creature. The attributes of God are always good, contrary to man's behaviour. How is that God allows man to indulge in witchcraft yet God is *omnipotent* (all powerful), omnipresence (everywhere present) and *omniscience* (all knowing) as elaborated by (Milne 1982:66-67)?

2.5. HOW WITCHCRAFT IS ACQUIRED

There have been different beliefs on how one acquires witchcraft. According to Kombo (1988:74), it is believed that children acquire it by inheriting it from their close relatives. In most cases they may not know it. Some people may go and purchase it at the designated areas and the person who has bought it would eventually be able to possess the power of evil. He adds that there is a belief also that others may acquire it intentionally from the devil. Kombo (1988:75) further asserts that other societies believe that demons force it upon people and compel them to bring destruction upon their neighbours while others acquire witchcraft by swallowing the substance of witchcraft. This suggests that some people acquire witchcraft unknowingly with forces of demons while others get it with full knowledge. According to Gehman (1989:84), the most effective way of becoming a witch among Akamba people of Kenya is through inheritance. He adds that a male witch passes on his power to his son, while a female witch passes her powers on to her daughter. Turaki (1999:195) also comments that powers of witchcraft are mystical and innate or are granted by the presence of a familiar spirit. The possession of this power is hereditary or it can be acquired from a known or unknown source as a gift. Further, Donavan (1996:310) states that, "witches are either born with these powers or get them by becoming part of the community of witches". Here, it agrees that witchcraft can be acquired either hereditary or get it after birth.

Therefore, it can be seen that witchcraft is acquired in different ways, however, the belief of many societies in Africa is that most witches acquire witchcraft through inheritance. This implies that every person can practice witchcraft regardless of age, gender, education, status in the society and where one lives. But it must be emphasised that the belief that most old women are witches is consistently held in many African communities. However, a small number of people in African society oppose this notion. These societies still believe that witchcraft is practiced by men alone. But this comes about because in most African societies, envy arises in relationships between people of the same sex and not between men and women (Kombo 1988:9). We shall see how in Malawi witchcraft is believed to be acquired as we will be looking at the findings.

2.6. WITCHCRAFT BELIEF IN THE WORLD AND ITS IMPACT

Witchcraft beliefs have a worldwide distribution. This belief is there in America, Asia, Europe, Africa and elsewhere. Middleton and Winter (1963:1) assert that witchcraft beliefs have played important role in Western society until very recent times. The fact that most Europeans no longer hold these ideas, though, and the fact that they regard them as superstitions, products of ignorance and error, often hampers communication between Europeans and Africans. But the fact of the matter is that witchcraft beliefs are all over the world. The only difference is that in some societies they play a very minor role in the daily lives of people unlike other areas (Kombo 1988: 1). For instance, there is a belief in England and Scotland that witches are ugly, fly through the air, attend orgiastic Sabbaths and have power to become invisible and metamorphose into animals and raised storms (Guiley 1989:172). Many scholars have agreed that witchcraft belief is all over the world and nobody can dispute this fact.

2.6.1. WITCHCRAFT IN AMERICA AND EUROPE

In America, Lehman (1985:274) reports that nearly two hundred cases of witchcraft in three year period were recorded between 1969 and 1971. He adds that similarly, in Western Europe, the Church both the Catholic and Protestants held determined campaigns to eradicate witches at the start of 13th Century. In those years between 1450 to 1700 witchcraft in Europe was a matter of social, political and religious conflict. Therefore, hundreds of thousands of persons were persecuted, tried and executed as witches. It is reported that the most common form of execution for alleged witches in Europe was burning at stake. It is said that many witches were burnt alive especially if they recanted their confession at the last moment or were unrepentant of their crimes (Guiley1989:369).This suggests that even in Europe and America which are regarded as developed or more civilized have been experiencing the problem of witchcraft issues for a long time.

2.6.2. WITCHCRAFT IN AFRICA

Parrinder (1963:133) discusses African countries such as Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone that have the belief in witchcraft and how it has affected the societies. In Malawi, an angry mob set on fire twelve houses of people belonging to the people who were accused of practicing witchcraft at Mayani in Dedza district on 18th May, 2015. (Mphande-Zodiak, 2015). According to Church reports in Malawi, one congregation recorded seven witchcraft cases in 2013 alone (Church minutes 2013). This implies that witchcraft has affected the church as well. Still in Malawi, Gondwe (2008) reports that fifty women were raped and their faces mauled by unknown vampire suspected to be witches in Blantyre and the police were deployed to patrol in the area during night. This suggests that people were living in fear even in town due to witchcraft.

A report for the year 2007 for the Eastern Division Police Headquarters of Malawi recorded an increase in witchcraft related cases (Sunday Times, February 24, 2008). This suggests that witchcraft beliefs have been growing in recent years.

Another incident concerning witchcraft in Malawi involved five children between the ages of two and eleven from the same family claimed to have used witchcraft to cause a plane crash. They were found naked in the early hours of the morning outside their home and were bleeding profusely from genitals. When they were discovered, the children looked tired and confused. Their hands were lengthened out of the ordinary, mouth extended and lips dropping close to their chests with protruding bellies and buttocks. Two of the young girls died a few hours later and the three who were seriously injured were admitted at government hospital. When the children were questioned, they revealed that a neighbouring family was teaching them witchcraft. The accused instructor, (name withheld) admitted to the police that indeed he practiced witchcraft and had been teaching over 100 children in the area of Mzimba. He was forced by the police who were deployed there to transform the children back into normal beings which he did (Gondwe 2008:6). This implies that some people practice witchcraft. Musopole (1993:348) comments that most witches are regarded as murderers. But what can be seen to be true is that its impact is different from one area to the other. As has been discussed above, beliefs in witchcraft has brought accusations, fear, violence, victimization, killings, mistrust and hatred among the people in many societies including Africa.

In South Africa, according to Minnaar (1991:54) reports that in Limpopo Province alone, a total of 1,182 cases witchcraft were recorded and several people were allegedly killed as a result of witchcraft accusations in 1996 alone. Continuing with cases in the same South Africa, Niehaus (2001: 207) reports that in the province of Mpumalanga 21 witches were violently attacked between 1971 and 1985. These statistics highlight the enormity of the problem of witchcraft in South Africa just like any other part of the world.

2.6.3. THE IMPACT OF WITCHCRAFT IN EUROPE AND AFRICA

The impact of witchcraft throughout the world has been so devastating. Guiley (1989) states that in England, witchcraft was punishable by various secular and ecclesiastical laws from as early as 668 AD. Still in England, Levack (2001:22) asserts that witchcraft continued to be an ecclesiastical crime only in England for many years and was largely mixed up with charges of denying the existence of demoniacal agency; for the church said that denying a personal devil was equivalent to a confession of atheism and a denial of the Holy Scriptures themselves. This was merely victimization and accusations that could not be even proved. This is why Mbiti (1991:117) agrees with many authors that all this was a result of fear of witchcraft since it was believed that witchcraft, sorcery and magic cause deaths and many untold misery to people. Therefore, this suggests that the issue of witchcraft has been there for ages in most parts of the world. This should help us in finding solution to the problem of witchcraft killings, victimization, violence, accusations and even the practice of it.

Mbiti (1985:194) wonders why African scholars constantly complain about the ignorance prejudice and falsification that still emanate from modern books, newspapers and conversations on witchcraft by Europeans. To them the many distorted ideas that prevail among missionaries and European popular writers are annoying. According to Van Wyk (2002:98) states that such sensitivity is unfounded as witchcraft is not an African problem alone, but a universal one. What ought to be done is to allow people from different cultural backgrounds to work together to address the problem of witchcraft. This implies that witchcraft is problematic in societies where it constitutes the belief of the majority of people like in Africa unlike in Europe and America where only a small minority believe in witchcraft at the moment.

2.7. REALITY OF WITCHCRAFT

Some people have questioned the reality of witchcraft. According to Van Wyk (2004:1203) most Africans never ask such questions because to them witches and witchcraft are part of their everyday reality. Older and recent studies have reported extensively on the living reality of witchcraft or black magic (Campbell 1988:115-117). This corresponds well with the teaching of the Bible about the reality of witchcraft. Therefore, to deny the existence of witchcraft is like to question God's word that clearly says that witchcraft exists. At this juncture, it is necessary that we trace witchcraft in the Bible which contains the word of God.

2.8. WITCHCRAFT IN THE BIBLE

There is a mention of witchcraft in several passages in the Bible. The term witchcraft in the Hebrew Scripture (Old Testament) refers mostly to women who used spoken curses to injure other people or destroy their property. While in Christian Scripture (New Testament) witchcraft refers to murderers who use poisons to kill people (Komonchak 1988:828). Just like many cultures of the world, the culture of the Israelites acknowledges the belief and practice of witchcraft. One such instances is when the Israelites were in Egypt, the lawgiver commanded that all witches be killed (Exodus 22:18). The Bible portrays the existence of a personalized evil spiritual being called Satan. Satan is a fallen angel who rebelled of other angels against God but failed and was cast out of heaven (Ezekiel 28:11-17, Revelation 12:7-12). Satan has therefore set a kingdom of fallen angels that is in enmity with God and wages war against human beings (Ephesians 6:10-12, 1Peter 5:8). The Bible is explicit that both witchcraft and sorcery do occur and are a reality and is practiced by some people on earth.

Another instance where witchcraft and sorcery can be traced in the bible is in Leviticus 20:27. Here it says that a woman or a man who is a wizard should be killed at all cost. Again in Deuteronomy 18:10-12, "Let no-one be found among you who practices sorcery or engages in witchcraft". Further, King Manasseh in Jerusalem practiced witchcraft and sorcery and was condemned by God (2Chronicles 33:6ff). Here it was so disheartened that

instead that witchcraft practices could be occurring to other nations rather than Israel, but it was performed by the chosen people of God, thus Israelites and worse still by the king.

In the New Testament, Jesus was accused by the Jews that he healed people by the power of Beelzebub (Mathew 12:24). Here Beelzebub was regarded as the pagan prince of devil and they accused Jesus that he performed the healing under such powers of witchcraft. Such injunctions could not have been issued in vain. God had forbidden believers from time to time not to sacrifice to the devil. Therefore, God could not have commanded this if there were no evil spirits (Kombo 1988:73). Also in New Testament, Itiola (2012:2) comments that it should not be looked upon as strange when Satan and his agents gather together with God's people in the church. He refers to Jezebel who used food against unsuspecting church members in Thyatira for the initiation into witchcraft as recorded in Revelation 2:20.

The Bible has therefore several passages which portray the existence of witchcraft beliefs and practices. It is therefore absurd to doubt the existence of witchcraft and their activities. If the Bible mentions it and constantly condemns it, denying the existence of witchcraft could also mean denying God's existence and questionable faith in God. As a matter of emphasis, what should be clear is that if one acknowledges the existence of witchcraft as the Bible clearly stipulates, it does not mean that the person is under the control of witchcraft, neither does he fears it. It is like denying that Satan does not exist which would be heretical.

But the existence of witchcraft means that there must be some powers behind it. If God mentioned and condemned witchcraft in the Bible, Malawi though being dominated by Christianity cannot be separated from other nations to believe that witchcraft exists here on earth. The argument or question that could be relevant regarding witchcraft is how does an African understand the powers behind witchcraft? Are these powers evil or good?

2.9. AFRICAN UNDERSTANDING OF POWERS OF WITCHCRAFT

Many Africans have the belief that mystical powers exist in the universe which cannot be easily explained or ignored as superstitions. Mugambi and Kirima (1976) comment that persons who can manipulate these powers are sometimes said to have means of communicating with the spirits, ancestors and even God. According to Sebald (1978:38), a

witch stands between the victim and the supernatural power. His supernatural mediation is considered harmful. Therefore, they communicate to supernatural powers to bring disaster, death or fear to their victims. Belief in mystical powers is therefore part of an African.

According to Mbiti (1969:197) he states that, "the whole psychic atmosphere of African village is filled with belief in mystical power. African people know that the universe has power or force in additional to the living dead, spirits and the Supreme Being". The cosmological belief of Africans lies here. Further, Petrus (2009:51) referred to Crafford (1996) who defines African cosmology as a unity harmony and totality made up of the Supreme Being, spirits, people, animals and inanimate objects. Life- force can be enhanced or diminished by magical activities". Malawi being part of Africa fallows this cosmological belief hence the issue of witchcraft is understood in this way.

Kombo (1988:76) explains that, mystical power exhibits itself in six ways as summed up by Evance-Pritchard (1997), Parrinder (1958), and (Mbiti 1969) as follows:

(a) Power of the curse:

In African tradition, cursing involves the use of words or actions against an individual or group. Words indicating the misfortune one will suffer for engaging in particular words may be uttered.

(b) Power to change the self:

Some people have the mystical power to change themselves into life forms. For instance some people can change into animals.

(c) Power to cause confusion among people:

Some people possess the power of causing confusion in people. This power can also cause paralysis or even death to victims.

(d) Power of identifying witches:

While medicine men are generally understood to be a positive force in the society because they identify witches and sorcerers who engage in evil deeds, there are some people who have powers to identify other witches.

(e) Contagious power:

Mbiti (1969) cites James Frazer who uses the term "contagious magic" to refer to evil magic which is used to harm people by using objects closely related to the person, for instance hair, foot prints or other articles belonging to the person.

(f) Homeopathic magic:

According to Frazer (Mbiti 1969), homeopathic magic is evil magic used by a witch on a doll or an article resembling the intended victim. The evil action on the doll is supposed to affect the intended victim.

It is therefore undisputable for Africans to believe that witchcraft exists under the evil powers and this is why probably witches are feared by many people in African societies, Malawi included. This belief in mystical powers by Africans could be the reason why Evance-Pritchard (1961) and Magesa (1997) made a sweeping statement that every human being is potentially a witch. They say that witchcraft is inherent in people to cause harm to others through these hidden mystical powers. This potential is only actualized in a few people. This could be the reason why witchcraft poses threat to many lives. However, the researcher thinks that the statement that every human being is a witch needs further research by different scholars. But one would ask where could be the source of these powers?

According to Van Beek (1994: 197-207) the source of evil powers never lies with God or the devil but can be traced to humans themselves, but according to Nyirongo (1997:188)the witches believe that the ultimate source of all their power is a great benevolent being or god. He adds that the witches believe that one cannot succeed in life without the powers of God. This implies that the understanding of some witches and some people is that God gives the witches magic powers to kill or shield themselves from enemies. This can suggest one reason that lead many people to syncretism. Here I mean mixing of idol worship and worshipping the Almighty God by the same person and thus breaking God's commandment; "You shall have no any other gods than me" (Exodus 20:3). No wonder the African view of witchcraft is compromised and the fear of witchcraft has no remedy until now, although Christianity has been practiced for many years. Can God be behind the powers of witchcraft? The teaching of the Bible contradicts this in totality. All evil powers are Satanic and not Godly. To invoke the issue of good or bad motives when a witch is performing his deeds; in order to implicate or associate the source of powers of witchcraft with God; be it to kill or to protect himself from enemies as justification does not make sense. The Bible mentions in several passages that God cannot be the source of evil. He is always good.

2.10. DANGERS OF WITCHRAFT IN SOCIETY

As we have seen witchcraft is believed to pose dangers to people since it causes deaths, accidents and other misery in the society. This is bad to the development of any nation. Kombo (1988:77) comments that, "witchcraft creates widows, widowers and orphans. In such communities where such deaths occur, there is increasing fear and dependency among the population when people die mysteriously because of witchcraft. This leads to a state of confusion and suspicion." This could perhaps be the reason why in many societies, violence, killings, and victimization against suspected witches are rampant.

In Western Europe for instance, witches were hunted down and executed as heretics and most of the witch hunt were conducted by the Church, both the Catholic and Protestant (Guiley 1989: 369). But these people who were killed on suspected of witches or those that mysteriously die due to witchcraft were potential to the economy of their nations. The scenario in Malawi also shows that in societies where issues of witchcraft are rampant, one should expect persecutions, victimization, mob justice, hatred and mistrust among the people (Daily Times, 22 Oct, 2009). This retards the development of any nation.

Witchcraft also poses a danger of harassing those suspected to be witches. In Malawi (BT Synod Guide, 2010:6) states that there were problems in cases of witchcraft in congregations even in civil courts because those accused to be witches like to use children under 13 years of age in their practices. But the law of Malawi does not permit children under that age to be witnesses. As a result, suspected people are harassed, stigmatized and suffers ridicule although they may not be involved in witchcraft.

Witchcraft is also associated with backwardness and primitiveness (Kombo, 1988). In societies where the belief in witchcraft is widely accepted, such societies can be regarded as idol worshipers, uncivilized and living in the past. Such societies cannot be free to mix with others for business and other developmental activities.

The Bible verse particularly Deuteronomy 18:10 says that "Thou shall not suffer a witch to live", has been quoted as a justification of persecution by both old European and some modern African witch hunters including Christians. Parrinder (1963:16) wonders that, "how inappropriately the biblical evidence has been used! The belief in witchcraft is a tragic error, a false explanation of ills of life and one that has only led to cruel and baseless oppression in

which countless innocent people have suffered." Therefore, witchcraft has been seen as a dander to human lives as well as development. The danger has been caused by those who practice witchcraft as well as those who accuse others of witchcraft.

2.11. POSTIVE ATTRIBUTES OF WITCHCRAFT FROM THE AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

In the African setting, can one find some advantages of witchcraft? Some people have argued that there are some positive attributes of witchcraft from an African perspective.

According to Mbiti (1991:117) he asserts that witchcraft is used as a protection or a way to prosper in life. In this case one should not feel guilty when practicing witchcraft. This belief has been seen as a positive attribute to witchcraft. Witchcraft has also be seen as good given that fear of possible usage of mystical power by witches, sorcerers and diviners force the ordinary people to behave in socially accepted ways (Kombo 1988:780).

In societies where witchcraft beliefs and practices are rampant, people who follow the norms and incidents of crime like theft and immorality are rare. Kombo (1988: 78) has commented that incidentally some people including nominal Christians argue that without witches, their social world would lack a social control mechanism as witchcraft acts as a stabilizing agent.

Therefore, going by what has been written about many societies, including Malawi where witchcraft beliefs are high, the researcher may conclude that the crime rate is low, and peoples' morals are good to the extent that they even experience a low prevalence of HIV/AIDS. One can also expect an increased source of income for the witchdoctors who help people with their medicines. However, these cannot be justifiable reasons to indulge in witchcraft practices if people can be obedient to God or adhere to the norms of the society.

2.12. CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE OF WITCHCRAFT

Following the teaching of the Bible, the Christian church condemns witchcraft in all forms. The church believes that Jesus conquered Satan together with all powers of darkness as it is written in Gospel of Luke 11:14. If the powers of darkness were defeated by Christ through his death and resurrection therefore, witches cannot harm Christians. Kombo (1988:79)

comments that with Christ on their side, nothing can harm the Christians. It therefore follows that believing in witchcraft is an indication that one has not truly believed in the salvation that was brought by Christ's death and resurrection.

Witchcraft belief and practices are therefore seen by the Church as disobedient to one of the commandments of God that says, "You shall not kill" (Exodus 20:13). According to Mbiti (1991:117), people believe that witchcraft causes death, therefore, when someone has died people often try to find out who used sorcery, witchcraft or magic against a dead person. Someone is often blamed for it, and in some cases the suspect may be beaten to death. The beatings and killing are all sinful as believed by the Christians. The Bible totally condemns witchcraft because it has bad consequences to the society. Witchcraft in the Bible is placed along several sins like murder, adultery and idolatry. Christians are therefore warned to refrain from witchcraft (Revelation 21:8, Galatians 5:20).

2.13. WHY WITCHCRAFT STILL PERSITS IN THE WORLD?

The history of the Bible and the teaching indicate that Jesus defeated Satan and his evil powers over two thousand years ago. But the question one would quickly ask is why witchcraft still persists here on earth and continues cause problems to human race? In Malawi for instance, witchcraft influences many people and yet Christianity there boasts of over 75 percent. Magesa (1997) and Mbiti (1969) assert that every human being is a potential witch. That could perhaps be the reason why witchcraft still exists. Such reasoning is supported by Evance-Pritchard (1961) and Magesa (1997), who suggest that in some people witchcraft is active while others it lies dormant. A human being is neither innately good nor bad. His conduct determines whether the person is good or bad. Kombo (1988:80) argues that Christianity therefore has to compete with this deeply rooted belief in the moral order among Africans. Some Africans hold the view that an evil does not just occur but there are agents of Satan other than God that cause misfortunes. Therefore, this is the part that is seen to be done by witches.

It can therefore not be disputed that there are many Christians who do not believe in witchcraft after being converted in Malawi and elsewhere but it can also not be denied that there are some Christians who believe in witchcraft and are controlled by it. That is perhaps

why Christianity is like a journey where new experience or renewal of spiritual life is always needed.

2.14. DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM OF WITCHCRAFT IN AFRICA

In Africa and elsewhere the belief that there are witches who can harm others has been there for ages. The belief that jealous people always plan to harm others through witchcraft has always been there. In Europe we have seen that in 18th Century, the remedy to deal with witchcraft was witch-killings. According to Mbiti (1985:197-198) it is normal human behaviour to protect oneself against the attacks of evil- minded people. African people try to protect themselves against witchcraft by using herbal medicine as well as magic medicines that are stronger than the evil that threatens them.

There are different groups of people who provide medicine that counteract witchcraft. Campbell (1998:1) states that there are herbalists also known as primary health worker who provide medicine similar to Western medicines. These medicines can be used to heal or protect people against sorcery and disaster. Fourie (1921:81-82) and Mugabane (1998:6162) comment that these medicines are issued with the help of ancestors. These are people who belonged to the clan but died. Once these herbalists have been consulted they provide medicines to deal with their problem.

The other way Africans have tried to deal with the problem of witchcraft is to use herbalists or medicine men that are also called diviners, mediums, rainmakers and priests. These people have the knowledge to apply mystical powers to benefit the community. They are also called good witchdoctors or good magicians and usually are accepted by the community (Reyneke 1972: 146-147). According to Turaki (1999:193-195) these witchdoctors provide people with concentrated mystical power in the form of charms, amulets, powders and feathers. These objects filled with good powers are used for counteracting misfortunes, undoing curses and in destroying witchcraft. They are used to heal, protect, brings good fortune and even to take revenge against the evil people.

The belief in Africa is that only magic can be used in defence against the magic of another and nothing else. Africans would not mind even to pay huge sums of money to acquire magic potions also known as "muti" that would be strong enough to counteract the evil of

others (Mugabane 1998:113; Crafford 1996:16-17; Muller& Ritz- Muller 1999:143-146). The issue of paying money for many Malawians when it comes to dealing with witchcraft seems not to bother them much. They are only interested with a witchdoctor who can provide the solution to their problem of witchcraft. This is where Christianity still needs to do more work with the people of Malawi.

2.15. THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH ON WITCHCRAFT PROBLEM IN 18th CENTURY

From time in memorial churches have been blamed for not playing a big role in combating the witch-killings in Europe. Sometimes the churches both the Catholic and Protestant churches were even seen to be promoting witch- hunting and violence. Van Wyk (2004:1208) asserts that this was regarded as one of the big failures of the churches. However, he argued that the churches did play a decisive role in bringing an end to the accusations and killings of witches in Europe in the 18th Century.

Some of the roles the churches played to end witch-killings in the Europe included the development of theology and the spreading of the new understanding of man, sin, evil, God, grace and life (Van Wyk 2004:1209). In this sense the development of theological literature contributed to lessen the witch-killings but did not completely end it. It is also the researcher's view that the role played by the churches was not felt by many African societies since Christianity was not yet spread in many parts of Africa. Malawians feel the church played a little part because it was introduced to Africa as there is no witchcraft while the Bible mentioned it. Secondly, when Europeans brought Christianity to Malawi, it was as if witchcraft did not exist elsewhere in other parts of the world, and this was seen as a weakness on the part of the early church which limited its capacity to play this role. Eventually, many people in Malawi thought the Church was hypocritical on its role. But it is the belief of Malawians that practising witchcraft is against God and therefore a sin.

2.16. PRACTICING WITCHCRAFT IS SIN

In the gospels of Mathew, Mark, Luke and John, sin appears in the form of demonic human forces which oppose Jesus and his kingdom. Paul in Romans 5: 17, 21 also speaks of sin as an enslaving, deceiving force, a force that human strength alone cannot resist and it leads to

death. Driver (1986:7 6) comments that sin is inseparably connected with death. It is for this reason that all the people practising witchcraft are enslaved by Satan. But the Bible says that the wages of sin is death. Paul spoke of sin and death as reigning and having dominion (Romans 5:14-17, 21). Further, sin enslaves us and we can obey sin instead of Christ (Rom 6:16). That is why there are some people who indulge in witchcraft, but at the same time pretend to be Christians. In the Old Testament witchcraft is forbidden and if God condemns it, it is a sin. Sin is an active unfaithfulness and disobedience against God (Driver 1986:77). Why, then, are some people who also claim to be Christians practice witchcraft in Malawi and elsewhere in the world?

Macquarrie (1971:238) asserts that it was surely no accident, but a very profound truth about the human condition that caused to be placed first among the Ten Commandments the injunction; "you shall have no other gods before me". Alas! Some members of the church have trusted magic powers, witchcraft and other evil powers as their gods and yet the warning still stands; you shall have no other gods.

In the gospel of Mathew 6:24 it clearly says that it is not possible to serve or worship two masters at a time. The Bible therefore commands us to worship God only and by practising witchcraft it is automatically against God and therefore a sin. Looking at the scriptures, witchcraft, magic and sorcery are all sins and anybody involved in them is provoking the wrath of God. It is lack of theological knowledge therefore that makes some people still to be clinging to witchcraft and yet they claim to be Christians at the same time in Malawi. Witchcraft is associated with demon possession and Satanic influences. At this point, a look into demons, from a biblical perspective is warranted.

Wink (1986: 51) asserts that Satan is not an independent agent. He has his own demonic hosts. The Bible says that Satan is a prince of demons. The Bible has many examples of people who were possessed or influenced by demons such as in Mathew 17:18; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 22: 3; Acts 16:16-18. In some of these passages, the demon possession causes physical ailments, such as inability to speak, epileptic symptoms, blindness and other diseases.

In Acts 16: 16-18, a demonic spirit apparently gives a slave girl the ability to know things beyond her learning. In the Old Testament King Saul after rebelling against God, was

allowed to be troubled by an evil spirit (1 Samuel 16:14-15; 18: 10-11: 19: 9-10) with the apparent effect of a depressed mood and an increased and readiness to kill David.

Concerning the involvement of demons in the lives of the believers, Peter is an illustration of the fact that a believer can be influenced by the devil (Mathew 16:23). However most theologians believe that a Christian cannot be possessed because he has the Holy Spirit abiding within (2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5). It is indeed true that a true Christian can never be possessed by the demons because the Holy Spirit in him or her will always be the protection.

In Malawi, many people believe that witchcraft is sin based on the Biblical references. Since witchcraft is influenced by evil powers or demons, and If Christians live in fear of witchcraft then the cross of Jesus is meaningless. It must be appreciated that many people in Malawi acknowledge that witchcraft is sin but what is lacking is how to deal with it in a Christian perspective. As we discuss witchcraft beliefs and fear, we have seen that it is evil. One would ask why the evil is present alongside a good God.

2.17. THE PRESENCE OF EVIL ALONGSIDE A GOOD GOD

As it has been seen in the Biblical materials above, witchcraft is evil. One wonders why witchcraft is therefore present alongside God who is good. Can we say God allows it so that his people should suffer?

According to Helm (1993:49) the fact of the matter is that though witchcraft which is evil according to the Bible, such evil is present on earth alongside a good God, He remains good but human beings are resisting the grace of God (Acts 7:51) and rejecting the message of salvation (Acts 13:46) by indulging in witchcraft while belonging to the church. In this case evil is personal and God is not to blame for the evil that man does. The Bible mentions that rebellion against God is departure from his rule (John3:4). The mystery is that those whom God created as good voluntarily defected from that goodness. And the mystery deepens when it appears that human evil is itself instigated by satanic influence (Helm 1993:194). Here evil is a personal action and has nothing to do with God or anybody else. Man has chosen the evil although he was created good.

Another aspect to be known regarding the divine providence is that God gave man free-will. In endowing human beings with such free-will and placing them in a created order where evil forces are possible, God brought it about that whether or not there is moral evil in the world is not up to him, but up to the creatures' free-will (Helm 1993: 195).

Therefore, man cannot blame God for his evil deeds like being involved in witchcraft because despite the fact that God ordained or permitted evil for a good reason, He himself is good as per the teaching of the Bible. Man has chosen evil to be disobedient to God by doing evil deeds like witchcraft.

2.18. THE GOODNESS OF GOD

Erickson (1998:233) asserts that the goodness of God would seem to be among the highest of God's qualities. For, although we may respect and even fear God who can do all things and knows all things, presumably if we are to admire and love God, it must be because he is good. At times it appears that the goodness of God is in tension with some of other qualities which we generally attribute to God such as his power or his freedom.

Witchcraft which is evil seems to be in tension with the goodness of God. But the Bible has many passages that mention the goodness of God. For instance, God gifted us with power to do things freely but we are warned not to abuse such powers like practising witchcraft. Now the tension lies here that why did the good God and Almighty permit people to misuse the power that was gifted to man?

For instance, Joshua reminded the Israelites that God had done good and will do good to them in the future (Joshua 23:14-15). Also Psalms 199:68, says, "You are good and what you do is good; teach me your decrees". James assured us that every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the father of the heavenly lights who does not change like shifting shadows (James 1:7). The Bible contains many passages that encourages man to be good. The Gospel according to Mathew 5:16, Jesus said, "In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they see your good deeds and praise your father in heaven".

Erickson (1998:238) defines good as what is pleasant to God and evil as what is unpleasant. The Bible teaches that because of the fall of man, the creation was affected in ways that

now often cause pain and distress. However, some evils are the result of a particular sin. This means that disobedience to God has some bad consequences. Apostle Paul wrote that, "the one who sows to please his sinful nature will reap destruction: the one who sows to please the Spirit from the Spirit will reap eternal life" (Galatians 6":8).

The goodness of God is shown when he involved himself in bearing the pain of this world. God himself experienced the pain of this world when his son Jesus Christ came to die and bear the direct consequences of human sin so that the effects of evil are swallowed up(John 16:21, Romans 8).

According to Erickson (1998:239) comments that the goodness of God is also shown by the fact that life is not all there. There is life beyond this world with the time of judgement and justice. While we cannot see the administration of final good within this lifetime, and do not know all of the details of the life to come, we can understand God as good in terms of the final disposition of creation and of the human race. In this sense even though there is goodness of God, evil deeds like witchcraft is still present alongside the good God for this time but at the second coming of the son of God, it will climax the end of evil alongside the goodness of God.

While it is true that God did not create evil but ordained it he does not cause people to sin (Fedler 1998:71). Therefore there is no justification to blame God for witchcraft which is evil. According to Fedler (1998:72) states that nothing is to be feared. The book of Genesis chapter one says that we should worship nothing alongside of God. Peter in Acts 5:29 also says that we must obey God rather than human authority. Here, Peter is proclaiming the sovereignty of God. This means that witchcraft powers are powerless to those that are in Christ because of the goodness of God.

Erickson (1998: 241) further argues that the Bible teaches us that God is good and sows only good seed and not evil. God created all things well and good as we read in Genesis 1:31. It is obvious that man was created good, but he was not compelled to be good; rather he had the choice to become good or evil. This is why we have people who have chosen to be witches or wizards. Therefore, when one is practising witchcraft or doing magic he has chosen it by himself.

Parrat (1987:64) writes that Africans tend to approach God for earthly goods. This could help to remind Christians that all good things come from God and not from us and that these can be asked from God. In contrast, all witchcraft results in sufferings and the destruction of innocent people which is the work of the devil: stealing, killing, and destroying (John 10:10). Anything that is evil comes from Satan and all bad things like witchcraft, sorcery, and magic come from the devil who is also called the "Prince of this world".

The goodness of God can best be evidenced by the death of his only begotten son, Jesus Christ who died to liberate us from the bondage of Satan and his agents. That is why the death of Jesus and his resurrection is our victory. Christians are therefore more that conquerors because of this goodness of God through Christ.

2.19. THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST OVER WITCHCRAFT

The atoning death of Christ is at the heart of the workings of the rebellious principalities and powers, the demonic world headed by Satan. Here, the unity of Christ' death and resurrection are clearly demonstrated (Letham 1993:150). The victory of Christ according to the Old Testament in Genesis 3:15, when the curse was pronounced on the serpent, stating that the seed of the serpent would be dealt a crushing blow to the head by the seed of the woman was fulfilled by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Apostle Paul in Romans 16: 20, takes this to refer to Christ crushing Satan under the feet of the church. Paul also understands the serpent to represent Satan (2 Corinthians 11:3-4; 14-15).

The Biblical perspective on the atonement brings to light a number of important features. The shameful death on the cross, suffering and dereliction that occurred there, are not the end of the story. Jesus himself called his impending death as the father's glorification (John 12:27-33); 17:4). Secondly, Christ victory over Satan is decisive but in the context of Biblical eschatology, its full manifestation awaits his return (Letham 1993:151). This implies that Christ is supreme over witchcraft that is posing threat to humanity because of his death and resurrection. Anybody who received Jesus as his personal saviour was given powers to be a child of God (John1:12). If one believes in Jesus, there is no point of living in fear of witchcraft.

Apostle Paul in Romans 4:4; 10:4; Galatians 3:13 and Colossians 2:14 talks about the array of hostile forces which include the complex of demonic principalities, powers, thrones, dominions, which rule this present evil world (Galatians 1:4). MacDonald (1985:261) comments that Jesus Christ has prevailed over these too, meaning that it is the work of salvation. Here, Christ broke the power of evil and constituted the atonement between God and the world.

The Bible, especially in the book of Revelation contains many passages that sound the note of victory in Christ's conflict with the forces of evil while the literature of John gives the Biblical dualistic view of reality. The whole world is in the power of the evil one (1John 3:8). Christ's victory over the devil and all his hosts, assumes man's release from their tyranny. A human being is therefore free from the fear of witchcraft because of the one who is in him, Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:-10 makes the assertion that the evil powers will be brought completely under the headship of Jesus. According to Arnold (1992:69) the assertion of Ephesians 1:10 is presented as an essential future event when all humanity and the spirit world will be brought into complete subjection to the head of the Church, who is Jesus Christ. The supremacy of Jesus over his enemies is clearly seen here. This provides a complete response to believers having questions and needing instruction about the powers of witchcraft. Therefore, this should give hope to all believers that the death of Jesus and his resurrection has liberated all the fears of witchcraft in Malawi and the world at large.

Several passages in the News Testament describe the work of Jesus in terms of victory over evil powers. Such passages as; Galatians 4:3-9; Ephesians 1:19-22; Colossians 1:13-14; 1 Peter 3: 18-22. This is why believers should not fear witchcraft. Driver (1986: 71) asserts that a primary way by which the scriptures describe the work of Christ might be called the conflict-triumph motif whereby salvation occurs when God pours out righteousness, his own creation is delivered from the forces of evil and established in God's kingdom.

Prominent among Jesus' messianic activities were the healings and exorcisms which were seen as aspects of this conflict. Casting out demons by the power of God's Spirit was a sign that God's kingdom had come into their midst (Mathew 12:28), and the power to cast out demons was given to the disciples; hence a believer is in the kingdom. Therefore, every

Christian has been entrusted by Jesus with this power to cast out demons and witchcraft powers because evil powers are rendered powerless and Satan was destroyed (Luke10:19). When we say that Jesus is superior over witchcraft, it is through his death and resurrection.

The victory of Jesus over witchcraft can also be seen through incarnation. According to Aulen (1931:45) incarnation is essentially the indispensable basis on which the subsequent work of redemption rests. He adds that Jesus remained obedient throughout his life here on earth. By his obedience to God, Christ recapitulated and annulled the disobedience of mankind and paid the price (ransom). This suggests that the obedience is the means of his triumph.

Aulen (1931:46) comments that incarnation and atonement are therefore inseparable when we talk of the victory of Christ over witchcraft. He adds that Jesus has overcomes the devil that holds man in bondage by coming to the world of sin and dying so that he could reconcile man to himself. It is the love of God, *(agape)*, that removes the sentence that rested upon the human being. This gives us hope, protection and freedom. This implies that if people need real protection, Christ provides it to those that are ready for him; whether it is illness, or witchcraft Jesus provides divine healing and protection. In fact Jesus made a promise; "I will be with you till the close of the age", (Mathew 28:20). God is therefore faithful and just, and so there is no need to fear witchcraft.

2.20. THE CROSS AS VICTORY

Central to our understanding of spiritual warfare is the cross. In scripture the cross is the demonstration of victory through weakness. According to Wink (1992:142) the cross, Satan stands judged because he put Christ, God incarnate as perfect man, to death. He adds that on the cross, Jesus bore the sins of the world and triumphed over all the powers of evil. The strongest weapon in Satan's arsenal was not sufficient for conquering Christ. Neither will it prove sufficient for destroying his people. God publicly exposed the powers. The cross exposed the relative weakness of powers. Paul asserts that it was not through the resurrection that the powers were unmasked, but precisely through the cross. "And you were……unmasking the principalities and powers, God publicly shamed them, exposing them in Christ's triumphal procession by means of the cross (Col 2:13-15). Wink (1992:145)

further comments that because Jesus lived thus, we, too can find our own path. Christians therefore can suffer from the effects of witchcraft, but they will always emerge victorious because of Christ in them who conquered the powers of witchcraft on the cross and through his resurrection.

Jesus obedience until his death rendered powerless him who had the power of death, that is the devil (Hebrews 2:14). The resurrection of Jesus is the victory of righteousness over evil, of love over hate, of God's way over Satan's way. If our understanding of spiritual warfare does not see the cross as the final triumph, it is in an error. Therefore Jesus emerged victorious over sin (John 1:29), over death (1Corinth 15:54-57)) and also victorious over demonic powers (Luke 10:19). If such is the case why should Christians be controlled or influenced by the powers of witchcraft? The evil powers shall always be there but they are powerless to those that surrendered their lives to Jesus who defeated them on the cross.

2.21. VICTORY OF CHRISTIANS OVER WITCHCRAFT

The victory of Jesus Christ over demons as was demonstrated through his death and resurrection means that all those who believe in Christ can also conquer witchcraft. Although witchcraft seems to be a threat to our Christian life, Christians must know that they only fear things that were already defeated by Christ himself when he died on that cruel cross, and then was resurrected. The bible clearly mentions that, ''no one can enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strongman. Then he can rob his houses'' (Mark 3:27; Mathew 12:29). According to Arnold (1992:79) comments that Christ has come to engage this strong man and plunder his house; that is to release the captives in Satan's kingdom. He adds that Jesus came not only to deal with the problem of sin in the world, but also to deal with God's prime supernatural opponent-Satan himself. This suggests that Jesus defeated Satan and his activities like witchcraft hence Christians are liberated. This being the case Christian believers should not be afraid of witchcraft because many exorcisms done by Jesus Christ in the bible clearly demonstrate his power over the evil one. There are several passages that shows us that Jesus was in control over demons. For instance, Jesus commanded the demons to come out form a demoniac (Mark 5:1-20). Christians can therefore command in the name of Jesus demons or powers of witchcraft to come out of the person.

Another challenge that Christians face is fear of witchcraft. But the gospels are full of verses that teach against the spirit of fear. The bible shows that Jesus gave the disciples authority over demons as well as ability to heal in Luke 9:1-2 which says; "when Jesus had called the twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick". Further, Jesus gave his disciples authority even to trample on the snakes and scorpions" (Luke 10:19). This implies that snakes and scorpions which symbolized demons, believers can overcome them because they have appropriated the power of Jesus Christ. Arnold (1992:83) comments that Jesus procured the redemption of all who believe in him through his death on the cross and he now continues his redemptive mission to the world through the agency of the church. This suggests that Christians should not fear witchcraft because Jesus reaffirmed the disciples' authority over demons and their ability to heal. What a powerful message to take and trust in when it comes to fear of witchcraft!

Another area to look at is relating to witchcraft, the role that Christians play in victimisation of those that are practising witchcraft. Believers should not victimise those that practise witchcraft. Judgement should be left to God. The gospels of Mathew 24:30 and Luke 24:27 clearly say that Jesus will return and will gather his people from every part of the earth and inaugurate a time of judgement and condemnation upon all sinners (Mathew 25:31-46). If Christ emphasised the destruction of all the powers of darkness, then why should Christian believers be busy with victimising those suspected to be practising witchcraft? All those that are believed to be practising witchcraft should know that judgement will come at the second coming of Jesus and therefore they will be judged according to their evil deeds (Revelation 20:10). According to Wink (1984:48) all who are in Christ face every conceivable hostile power but believers are wrapped in the arms of the loving God forever. This means that Christians should certainly not fear witchcraft and be busy themselves looking for revenge. God will protect them as well as judge those who practice witchcraft.

2.22. CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed at length the issue of belief in witchcraft, the resultant fear of witchcraft, and the impact of such fear; first in Europe where Christianity originated and then on into Malawi. The chapter discussed the impact of belief in witchcraft in other parts

of Africa as well. The chapter has also tackled how Africans deal with witchcraft as compared to white people. The meaning of witchcraft, its source of power and the group of people who are generally accused were some of the areas the chapter explored. Further, it was necessary to discuss whether witchcraft has some positive or negative attributes in the society. Since this study is theologically grounded, we discussed how the church played its role in trying to end witch-killings around 18th Century. Finally, we discussed the passages in the Bible and what other theologians developed their theological arguments. The next chapter discusses the methodology particularly theories that the dissertation has employed.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH CONTEXT AND RESEARCH METHODOLODY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Having discussed literature review in chapter two, in this chapter, the researcher will mainly discuss four areas, namely: the context of research study site, research method, sampling, data gathering instruments and ethical consideration employed in this research study. We shall discuss how each of these is relevant to this study. The purpose for this chapter is to outline all the methods that were used in this research study.

3.2. Context of the study site

The context of this study is the Southern part of Malawi where CCAP Blantyre synod is located. In this section the discussion will focus on the demographics of the location, i.e.

population, social status and religious state of the community. The CCAP Blantyre Synod constitutes a part of this community and is at the centre of this research.

Malawi is a land locked country in South East Africa, it was formerly known as Nyasaland. On its North Western border is Zambia, Tanzania on the North Eastern side; and Mozambique covers the East, South and Western border. The country is separated from Tanzania and Mozambique by Lake Malawi. Malawi is over 118,000 square km with an estimated population of 16 million people (July, 2013 est).

Malawi was under the British colonial rule before independence in 1964. British colonialists settled in Nyasaland (old name for Malawi). At that time the country was already divided into three geographical social, political and economic blocks of the North, Central and South where each area had its own distinct tribes. These included; the Mbelwa Zwangendaba Ngonis, Tumbuka, Tonga, and Nkhondes in the North; Chewa in the Central region and Yawo, Lomwe and Mangánja in the South (Kayambanzinthu 1988:371). Malawi is therefore divided into three regions; the South, Central and Northern regions. Malawi has also three synods of Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) namely Blantyre synod in the South, Nkhoma synod in the Centre and Livingstonia synod in the North. This study is mainly focusing on CCAP Blantyre Synod.

The Presbyterian Church in Malawi has roots in the Reformed tradition of John Calvin brought by the Scottish missionaries with the Presbyterian form of government (Weller, Linden 1984:39). According to Ross (1996:17) the historical background of CCAP Blantyre Synod can be understood by dividing it into three eras: from 1874 when Dr John Macrae of Hawic first suggested the settling of the mission, until 1881 when it had to be re-constituted under Dr David Clement Scott; the second era was, from 1881 until 1898, when Scott left Blantyre for good; and third era was from 1898 to the beginning of the first world war in 1914 when the mission was led by Dr Alexander Hetherwick.

The CCAP Blantyre Synod was mainly established by the Scottish missionaries in the Southern Region of Malawi. But the CCAP is composed of five Synods namely Blantyre Synod, Nkhoma Synod, Livingstonia Synod, Harare Synod and Zambia Synod. However, the administration of each Synod is semi-autonomous despite the unity (Ross 1996:19).

Weller (1984:44) asserts that Dr Livingstone having discovered Lake Malawi in 1859, was the inspiration behind the naming of the synods. Blantyre Synod was named after the birth place of Dr David Livingstone in Scotland. The journey to Malawi by Dr Livingstone had three reasons: to abolish the slave trade, to spread Christianity and to bring development in particular, commerce. The CCAP Blantyre Synod and Livingstonia Synod adopted the name CCAP in 1924 while Nkhoma Synod which was established in Malawi by the Dutch from South Africa joined them later in 1926 (Ross 1996:14).

The CCAP Blantyre Synod which is located in the whole Southern Region of Malawi has grown to 18 presbyteries with 410 congregations and with a total number of 1.6 million full members (CCAP BT minutes 2014). A presbytery can be explained as an administrative district which has oversight over many congregations within its jurisdiction (CCAP BT Synod Constitution).

3.2.1. Demographics of the location

Malawi as a land locked country in Sub-Sahara Africa bounded by the three countries of Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique with an estimated population of 16 million people has a growth rate of 2.7% according to 2009 estimates. Malawi is a densely populated country with an average of 105 people per square kilometre (NSO, 2010). Out of 16 million people, it is reported that 8.9 million were females while 7.1 were males (MW Population Data Sheet, 2012). It is reported that the population in Malawi is projected to grow to over 45million people by 2050, nearly tripling the estimated 16 million in 2010.

Malawi being divided into three regions has 28 districts in total distributed as follows: The Northern Region, which has 6 districts, the Central Region, has 9 districts and finally the Southern Region has 13 districts. The Southern Region is the largest region in terms of population as well as geographical area (MW Demographic and Health Survey 2010:1). The Malawian population is therefore made up of Chewa, Nyanja, Tumbuka, Yao, Lomwe, Sena, Tonga, Ngoni and Ngonde native ethinic groups as well as population of Asians and Europeans. The Southern Region of Malawi has more people as compared to the two regions. This means that the Church as well as the government has the responsibility to

protect the masses in the Southern Region against victimizing each other because of witchcraft related issues.

The figure below shows the **map of Malawi**, its boarding countries, the regions and districts.

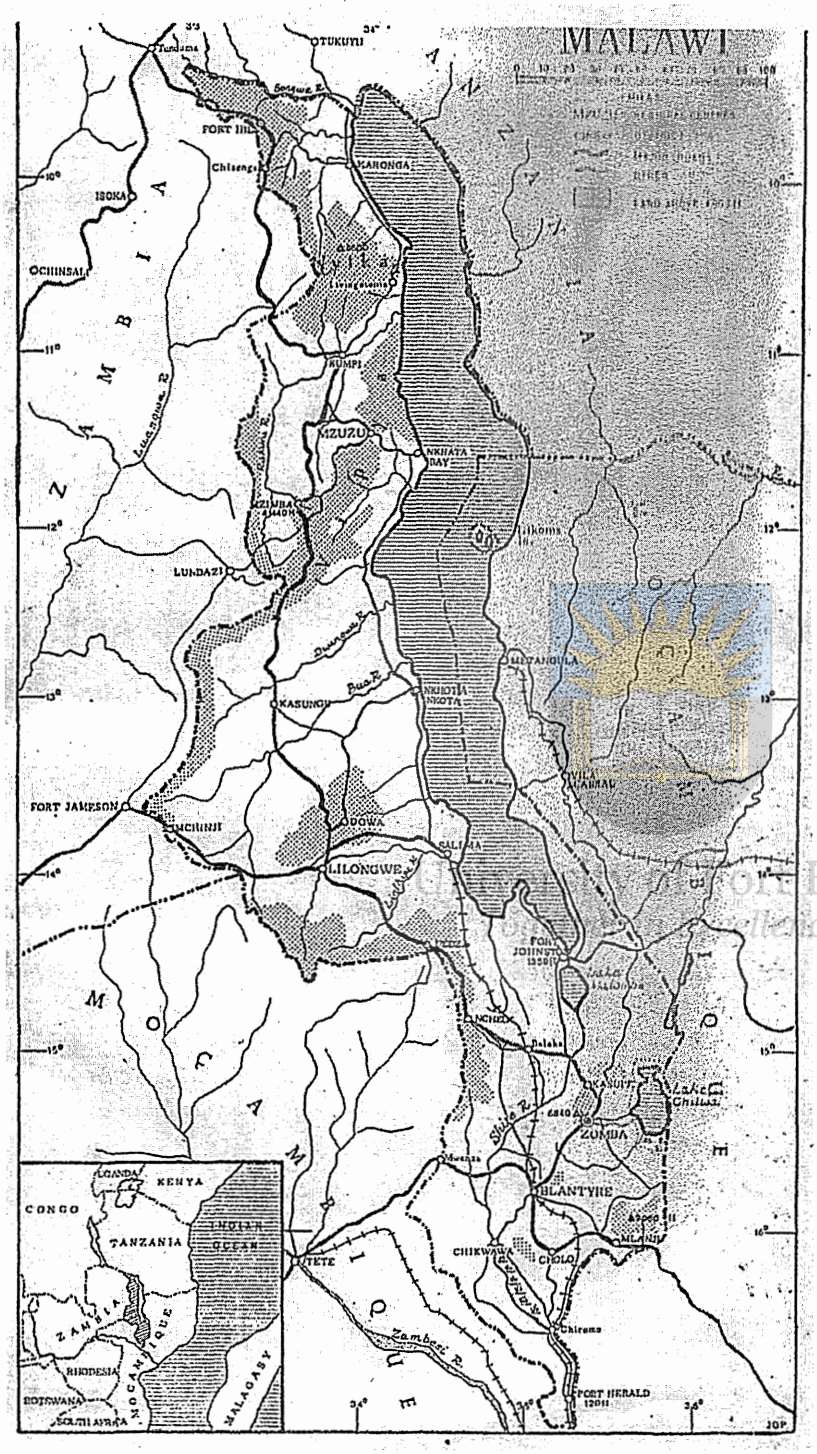

Figure 1: Map of Malawi

3.2.2. Population

According to Durrheim & Painter (2006:139), state that population is the larger pool from which our sampling elements are drawn and from which we want to generalize our findings.

The CCAP Blantyre Synod has a population of around 1.6 million members (Blantyre Synod GAC Minutes, 2014). The reports indicated that out of 1.6 million members in the church, 60 percent were females while 40 percent were males. This implies that there were more female church members than males. According to the Synod minutes (2014) the youths aged between 18 and 21 constitute to have the percentage of 35 percent of the population. In this research a total of 50 CCAP Blantyre Synod members were targeted within the two presbyteries of Mulanje and Blantyre City. These were all adults who were able to participate in Holy Communion within the CCAP Blantyre Synod.

3.2.3. Social Status

According to Alper (1972:168) and Pachai (1973:53) the Southern Region of Malawi has four major tribes namely; Yawo constituting 13.5% who migrated from Ruvuma and Rijenda Rivers in Mozambique, the Mangánja who constitute 10% of the population and who are the oldest tribe, as stated by Phiri (2004:32). The next tribe is the Lomwes at 17.6% of the population and lastly, the Sena who make up 3.6% of the population of the South and they are scattered in the whole Southern Region where CCAP Blantyre Synod is located. It can be suggested that Malawi is directly impacted by emigration and immigration of different tribes into and from neighbouring countries. Again this can suggest that even though these tribal groups found in Malawi may have different backgrounds, but what is common amongst all of them is that they are all Africans and witchcraft beliefs cannot be a new phenomenon and are not foreign to them. This is demonstrated by the recent survey conducted by the Association for Secular Humanism in Malawi that shows that 87% of Malawian population believes in the existence of witchcraft, which results into violence against suspected witches (George Thindwa March, 2014). This compels Malawi to find ways of eradicating violence and fear that emerge due to witchcraft related issues.

3.2.4. Religious State

Malawi is a country with religious diversity, and the following are religions that are practised there; Christianity which is the religion of the majority, along with a significant Muslim minority. Emphasis will be on the Christianity religion especially the Church of Central African Presbyterian Blantyre Synod. According to the Malawi Religion Project run by the University of Pennsylvania (2010), 82.6% of the population was Christian with 13% was

Muslim and 5% represented other forms of religion. The largest Christians groups in Malawi is the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP). There are also smaller numbers of Anglicans, Baptists, Evangelical and Seventh- Day Adventists. It is reported that atheists make up around 4% of the population although this number may include people who practice traditional African Religion. This being the case, Malawians were not supposed to fear witchcraft and victimize each other since Christianity propagates that Christ is more powerful than any evil forces. It is because of this thinking that this research study has selected the Christians of CCAP Blantyre Synod which has been in existence in Malawi over one hundred years as the subjects of study.

3.3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.3.1. Introduction

Following Tödt's theory of ethical decision-making in listening to the opinion of others, the researcher felt that it is important to outline the research methods employed in the study. This includes research design, theoretical framework, research setting, survey research, qualitative paradigm approach as compared to quantitative approach which has been used in this research. It has to be emphasised that this research used qualitative approach.

3.3.2. Research Design

In giving consideration to the research study, attention needed to be given to what kind of sampling strategy would be adopted; how the research data was to be analysed and finally how arguments will be made from the analysis. A research design is an integrated statement of and justification for the technical decisions involved in planning a research project (Blaikie, 2010:15). Nachmias (1981:29) contends that research design is a programme that guides the investigator in the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting observations. Durrheim (2006:34) maintains that research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research. In other words, it is a procedural plan for answering the research questions validly, objectively, accurately and economically (Kumur, 2011:94). One would say therefore that research design is a road-map to answering research questions in a systematic way.

According to Sarantakos (2005:105) research design entails two major stages: one is the stage of planning, and the other is the stage of execution. In this research both stages were used. Yin (2009:18) comments that many researchers have opted for case studies so that they understand a real life phenomenon in depth. This study uses the case study so that the research should go deeper in investigations of entities such as communities, individuals, families and organisations (Lindegger 2006:460-461). This study used the case study design for the purposes of getting real life situation on witchcraft in the study area. Again, since this is a qualitative study, it was worth to use research design, because designs are carefully constructed and more flexible than in quantitative research.

3.3.2.1. Qualitative research designs

There are many designs for conducting qualitative research. These designs include narrative research, case studies, grounded theory, phenomenology and participatory actions designs (Creswell 2007:21) According to Mwanza (2014:171) each design has distinct characteristic features, procedures for conducting research, strengths and weakness. It is up to the particular researcher to choose. In this research study, a case study was chosen with the aim of answering the research questions.

3.3.2.2. The case study design

There are varieties of definitions for the case study from the literature; but according to Yin (2009:18), a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real life context, especially when boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly known. Rule and John (2011:4) contend that this is a systematic and in in-depth investigation of a particular instance in its context in order to generate knowledge.

3.3.3. Research Methodology

Seal (2004:53) explains that a methodology is a general approach to studying a research topic. It establishes how one will go about studying any phenomenon. It is a strategy, plan of activity, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking

the choices and use of methods to the desired outcomes (Crotty 2003:3). According to Moyo (2004:61) research is the lynchpin of knowledge generation that the question of what counts as knowledge in research and how we acquire it touches on philosophical issues embodied in paradigms. Therefore, methodology specifies how researchers may go about practically studying whatever they believe can be known (Riet & Durrheim 2006:86). Methodology focuses on the best means for acquiring knowledge about the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:245). In this research it was worth to have a plan of studying witchcraft beliefs and fear within the CCAP Blantyre Synod.

3.3.3.1. Paradigm

The term paradigm refers to an encompassing system of interrelated practice and thinking that define for researchers the nature of their enquiry along three dimensions: ontology, epistemology and methodology (Terre Blance & Durrheim, 2006:5). However, (Denzin & Lincoln 2011:245) add that paradigm encompasses four terms including ethics (axiology) together with ontology, epistemology and methodology. In other words, it is a world view or a framework that guides research (Wills 2007:8). The three dimensions of a paradigm entail a set of beliefs, values and methods influencing what should be studied, how it should be studied and how results should be interpreted (Creswell, 2009:115, Bryman, 2008:79). The term paradigm according to Van Rensburg (2001:41) is used interchangeably with orientations, traditions, world views and frameworks. This study uses paradigm more frequently.

3.3.3.2. Ontology

This term refers to the study of being. It is concerned with what is, with the nature of existence, with the structure of reality as such. Ontology specifies the nature of reality that is to be studied, and what can be known about it (Riet & Durreim 2006:86). In research, ontological is concerned with the nature of social reality hence this research adopts this term.

3.3.3.3. Epistemology

This term comes from the Greek word episteme, which is the term for knowledge (Krauss, 2005:758). It is the study of how people or systems of people know things and how they think they know things. It is thus concerned with the nature of knowledge, what constitute valid knowledge, what can be known and who can be a knower (Ryan, 2006:15). Epistemology tries to give an understanding of what it means to know and it outlines the philosophical background for choosing what kinds of knowledge are legitimate and adequate (Gray 2005:16). The critical questions are; how can social reality be known or how can a researcher obtain the desired knowledge and understanding? What is the relationship between the knower and what is known? How do we know what we know? What counts as knowledge? (Krauss, 2005:759). However, each of the research strategies entails a particular combination of ontological and epistemological assumptions (Blaikie, 2010:92).

In research, epistemology is intimately related to ontology and methodology; as ontology involves the philosophy of reality, epistemology addresses how one comes to know that reality while methodology identifies the particular practices used to obtain the knowledge of it (Krauss 2005:758-759).

3.3.3.4. Interpretivism

This term refers to an approach that treats people as though they were the origin of their thoughts, feelings and experiences (Blanche, Kelly & Durrheim 2006:278).Willis (2007:6) comments that interpretivists argue that human beings behave the way they do because they are partly influenced by their environment. Gray (2005:16) agrees that interpretivism looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of social life-worlds. In other ways, an interpretivist researcher is concerned with the actions of an individual in order to make deductions.

3.3.3.5 Interpretative perspective

Oliver (2004:28) states that interpretivist researchers focus upon the way in which the research respondents view the world and the research issue in question. The provision of data by the respondents is not necessarily perceived as having a permanent nature. The

provision of data is always dynamic. In interpretivism, social reality is regarded as the product of its inhabitants; it is a world that is interpreted by the meaning participants produce and reproduce as a necessary part of their everyday activities together (Blaikie 2010:99). Within the interpretative perspective, Olive (2004:28) comments that it is not assumed that there are predetermined social facts which can be collected and analysed, but rather the social world exists in a state of fluid interaction, and that it has to be interpreted to be at least partially understood. It is argued that in interpretivism, ontology is internal to an individual and subjective while epistemology manages rather than control bias and subjectivities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

3.3.3.6. Methods

Henning (2004:36) explains that method is a way of doing something while methodology refers to the coherent group of methods that complement one another and that have the appropriate fit to deliver data and findings that will reflect the research questions and suit the purpose. Crotty (2003:3) contends that methodology in research has to do with techniques or procedures used to gather and analyse data related to some research question or hypothesis.

3.3.3.7. Research Survey

Surveys simply refer to the research we conduct in which we gather data by asking respondents questions rather than by manipulating some feature of their environment, observing their behaviour, making inferences from indirect indicators, or participating in their daily lives. The purpose of the research survey is to arrive at and convey some sense of the distribution of responses across the population (GoldenBerg, 1992:297). Surveys are usually concerned with the representativeness and with being able to generalize one's findings to a larger population of units (individuals, or cases, or settings). To ensure representativeness, random sampling procedures are necessary (Golden, 1976:261). In this qualitative research study, individual or cases were employed by asking questions in order to have a sense of a range of sentiment across the CCAP Blantyre Synod members in Malawi.

3.3.4. Qualitative Research Paradigm

Since a paradigm encompasses four terms namely ethics, epistemology, ontology and methodology that structure and organize qualitative research, these paradigms and perspectives are positivism, post positivism, constructivism and participatory action frameworks (Denzin 2011: 245). Qualitative research paradigms therefore use these terms which have been adopted in this study.

3.3.4.1. Qualitative Research

Qualitative study has to do with the use of spoken or written accounts of events in order to describe situations (Drew 2008: 19).In other words, qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world (Lincoln 211:3). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011:4) qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. They turn the world into series of representations including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. Qualitative research therefore emphasises the qualities of entities and the processes and meanings that are not experimentally measured in terms of quantity, amount or intensity or frequency. This stand in contrast to quantitative research which focuses on numbers; qualitative research emphasizes words and aims at finding causes of phenomenon and understanding people in the way they create of their settings and experiences (Bryman: 2004:20). In qualitative research the social nature of reality is stressed. Kalof (2008:78) argues that the goal of qualitative research is to perceive processes, experiences and meanings people give to things.

In this research study, the qualitative method was used because it is a theological topic that cannot easily be measured. Again, this research study used the qualitative approach because the topic under study needed characteristics as alluded by Denzin and Lincoln (2011:7) focusing on; natural setting or contexts of the problem and the people living with the problem, the researcher as an instrument of data collection who interacts with the data

sources, the principles of openness, reflexivity of the researcher and flexibility in designs rather than rigid approaches. Qualitative research is therefore claimed to describe life-worlds from the inside out from the point of view of the people who participate (Flick et al., 2004:3). Qualitative research is described to be more useful for exploring phenomena in specific context, articulating participants understanding and generating tentative concepts and theories that directly pertain to the particular environment (Shulze 2010:67).

3.3.4.2. Triangulation

The term triangulation means that researchers take different perspectives on an issue study in answering research questions. These perspectives can be substantiated by using several methods and/or in several theoretical approaches (Flick 2009:445). In social research triangulation is used to refer to the observation of the research issue format from at least two different points (Flick, Kardorff & Steinke 2004: 178). What is crucial in triangulation is that the methods or theories should be linked. According to Sheldon (1992:52) triangulation refers to combining different sorts of data on the background of theoretical perspectives, which are applied to data. As far as possible, these perspectives should be treated and applied on an equal footing and in an equal consequent way. But in this study, triangulation has been used because it has used two theories as a strategy of promoting the quality of qualitative research (Flick 2009:444).

3.3.4.3. Triangulation in Qualitative Research

Triangulation in qualitative research can be used as a validation strategy in four different forms namely; triangulation of data that combines data drawn from different sources and at different times, places and different people. Another one is the investigator triangulation which is characterised by the use of different observers or interviewers to balance out the subjective influences of individuals. The third one is triangulation of theories which means approaching data with multiple perspectives and hypotheses in mind and with various theoretical points of view (Flick, Kardorff & Steinke 2004: 178). The fourth being methodological triangulation which according to Denzin (1978:304) aims at summarizing methodological triangulation that involves a complex process of playing each method off

against the other so as to maximize the validity of field effort. This study has only employed methodological triangulation.

3.4. Sampling

Taking into account my discursive position that 'knowledge's' from personal lived experiences are all that we can truly know and since the researcher wants to discover, understand and gain insights into interviewees experiences of witchcraft (Merriam 1998:61), sampling in research means the procedure employed to extract samples for study. This enables the researcher to study a relatively small part of the target population and yet obtain data that is representative of the whole. This involves the persons, groups, and systems chosen to be studied (Sarantakos 2005:152). According to GoldenBerg (1992:154) the idea of sampling is to generalize to a population without having to gather data from and concerning each element of that population. The advantage of this is that it is simple, saves time and cost less.

3.4.1. Categories of Sampling

There are two categories of sampling strategies namely probability and non-probability, though they are sometimes mixed. Contrasting the two, GoldenBerg (1992:156) argues that in probability sampling, each unit in the population must have a known probability of being selected while in nonprobability sampling each unit in the population does not have a known probability of being selected and estimates of error are difficult to make on any statistical basis. Sarantakos (2005:154) states that sampling may be constructed through self-selection (respondents decide to take part in the study) or as is common through the researcher. He agrees that there are random or probability samples and non-probability samples.

3.4.2. Probability Sampling

Probability sampling also known as random sampling is the procedure in which the choice of respondents is guided by the probability principle, according to which every unit of the

target population has an equal, calculable and non-zero probability of being included in the sample. Among several forms of probability sampling the most common are simple and systematic random sampling (Sarantakos 2005:154).

According to GoldenBerg (1992:156) in simple random sampling, each element of population and each combination of elements has a known and an equal chance of being selected into the sample. Random sampling produces a representative sample of the population listed and no systematic biases are present. It is therefore claimed that simple random sampling is the strongest basis for generalization to population as compared to systematic samples.

In this research study probability sampling was partially used alongside to nonprobability sampling which was more utilised since this study is a qualitative study.

3.4.3. Nonprobability Sampling

According to Sarantakos (2005:163) nonprobability sampling procedures do not employ the rules of probability theory; they do not ensure representativeness, and are mostly used in exploratory research and qualitative analysis. Some of these techniques can, with some adjustment, be converted into probability methods. There are four forms or examples of nonprobability sampling; namely: accidental sampling, purposive sampling, quota sampling and snowball sampling. In this research study nonprobability was appropriate for some of these reasons; because the research is qualitative, treated respondents as people, representativeness was limited, involved relatively low costs, did not control researcher bias and that planning was not time consuming (Sarantakos 2005:155). Therefore, this is qualitative research which is appropriate for nonprobability sampling.

3.4.4. Quota Sampling

Quota sampling is a procedure in which the researcher sets a 'quota' of respondents to be chosen from the specific population groups, defining the basis of choice (gender, marital status, ethnicity, education etc) and determining its size (Sarantakos 2005:164-165). In this research study profiling of church ministers, church elders, female ordinary church

members, women guilds members, youths, male ordinary church members and session clerks will be done below when dealing with sample size.

According to GoldenBerg (1992:162) quota samples are another common form of nonprobability sampling. The results of this sample look like those of simple random sample. The only slight difference is that in quota sampling, samples are structured in advance to produce results. In this study, quota sampling was employed as the profiling shows below in the sample size.

3.4.5. Purposive Sampling

The researcher has adopted what Merriam (1998:61) calls purposeful sampling as a strategy or gathering data. This strategy required the researcher to identify the selection criteria for choosing the participants to be interviewed. It also helped with two questions that one should ask; who to sample and how many to sample? This is known as the sampling frame.

Purposive sampling or theoretical sampling is a process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find it, in order to develop his theory as it emerges (GoldenBerg 1992:163). In purposive sampling also known as judgemental sampling according to Sarantakos (2005:164), the technique is that the researcher purposely chooses the subject who in his/her opinion is relevant to the project. The choice of the respondents is guided by the judgement of the investigator and there are no procedures involved in the actual choice of the subject. The important criterion of choice is the knowledge and expertise of the respondents, and hence their suitability for the study.

In this study, the researcher in his own judgement chose the topic and the respondent groups with the aim of gaining qualitative data, hence he chose to use purposive sampling (Babbie 2007:184).

3.4.6. Sampling Size

Sampling size is to do with population from which the sampling was taken. Hendriks (2004:229) defines population to refer to the group being studied. According to Sellitz et al.,

(1951:50) explains that a single number of a population is referred to as a population element and when we select some of the elements with the intention of finding out something about the population from which they are taken, we refer to that group as a sample. Sarantakos (2005:170) emphasises that a wise rule in the sample size is that the sample must be as large as necessary, and as small as possible. In this research the sample considered was comprised of 4 church ministers, 6 church elders, 10 female church members, 10 women guilds members, 10 youths, 6 male ordinary church members and 4 session clerks (officials) from two presbyteries of Mulanje which is located in rural area and Blantyre city which is an urban area of CCAP Blantyre Synod in Malawi. The table below shows gender, age and statistics. Further, an emphasis must be made that a total of 50 people interviewed was through face to face interviews based on purposive sampling because of the sensitivity of the topic understudy.

TABLE-B. Shows the profiling sample size of church members.

RESPONDENTS	STATISTICS	AGE	GENDER	REASONS

Session Clerks	4	Between 40-60 years	Males-2, Females-3	Session Clerks: These are church administrators.
Church elders	6	Between 30-70 years	Males-3, Females-3	Church Elders: These are ruling elders in Presbyterian system.
Women guilds	10	Between 25-70 years	All Females	Women guilds: They are the most organised group in the church.
Ordinary male members	6	Between 35-75 years	All Males	Ordinary male members: Not well organised group in the CCAP Church.
Ordinary female members	10	Between 30-75 years	All Females	Ordinary female members: Mostly accused of witchcraft.
Youths	10	Between 18-21 years	Males-5, Females-5	Youths: They are the most active group in the church.
Church ministers	4	Between 30-70 years	Males-2, Feamles-2	Church ministers: They are teaching elders and policy makers in the church.

3.5. Data gathering Instruments and methods

The tools that the researcher employed for the purpose of gathering information were questionnaire and individual interviews. These will be explained and discussed in this section.

In qualitative research the emphasis is that data collection should be collected at the site where the researcher finds the participants in their own setting. This is where experiences and the issue being studied arises. In this case, information is gathered through talking directly to the people and seeing their behaviour and actions within their context (Cresswell 2009:175).

There are many ways of collecting data in a qualitative research such as those mentioned by Flick (2009:296-299) e.g. field notes, documentation sheets and naturalistic recordings. The process of documenting the data comprises mainly three steps; recording the data, editing the data (transcription), and constructing a new reality in and by the produced text.

In this research study, field notes and recordings were used as instruments of collecting data through face to face interviews. As alluded to before that witchcraft is a very sensitive issue and not many people were comfortable to discuss it in a group hence focus group was not used.

3.5.1. Questionnaires

Questionnaires are a set of questions formulated to be used as guidelines during interviews or discussion (Sarantakos 2005:239). Questionnaires vary according to the way they are administered as well as according to their nature. These research questionnaires were developed based on research objectives and research questions. Unstructured questionnaire or unstandardized questionnaire format was adopted in this research in order to gain unstructured responses which provided flexibility. The questionnaires are as follows:

1. To what extent is there witchcraft beliefs and fear in Malawi?
2. How is witchcraft affecting the church?
3. What is the understanding of witchcraft by the CCAP Blantyre Synod members?
4. How is the prevalence of fear of witchcraft by the congregants of CCAP Blantyre Synod?
5. What has the church done and continues doing to combat the problem of witchcraft beliefs and fears?
6. What are some of the major challenges that the church encounter in solving witchcraft beliefs and fears amongst its members?

7. What are some of the major challenges that the church face in helping the government to eradicate violence against those accused of witchcraft?
8. What do you think needs to be done if the church has to be more effective in witchcraft related issues?
9. What does the CCAP Blantyre Synod do to help its own members who are accused of witchcraft and those who are victims or those who fear?
10. What is the most effective approach in helping solve witchcraft beliefs and fears within the church and Malawi as a whole?
11. Has the government of Malawi assisted effectively in addressing the question of witchcraft beliefs and fears?
12. Why have the secular approaches continued to fail in reducing witchcraft beliefs and fears in Malawi?
13. What are some of the big challenges the church faces in the fight against witchcraft beliefs and fears?
14. Why has witchcraft continued to be a major problem after many years of Christianity in Malawi?

3.5.2. Individual Interviews

Interviews are employed as methods of data collection in most research designs, regardless of the underlying methodology (Sarantakos 2005:268). Since this study is a qualitative, it has adopted unstandardized form of face to face and semi-structured interviews. Sellitz (1951:241) asserts that interviews have the advantage that they can be used with all segments of life. This method can be used with people of varied educational backgrounds and ages. This study fitted well with utilising the interview form of data capturing because it involved people of different status within the CCAP Blantyre Synod. As Hofstee (2006:132) contends that semi-structured interviews allow for digression from the format either in question or the answers, depending on the circumstances. Sellitz (1951:241) argues that semi-structured interviews are generally flexible to use and hence the interviewer has the opportunity to rephrase the question.

In this research fifty full members of CCAP Blantyre Synod were interviewed using the face to face method. This figure comprised of church ministers, church elders, session clerks,

women guilds. It also featured ordinary female and male church members and the youths of 18 years and above who were also full communicants from the presbyteries of Mulanje and Blantyre city. After obtaining a letter of permission from the General Secretary of CCAP Blantyre Synod, Presbytery officials were informed and congregations that were targeted were informed as well. Some interviews were done in special church rooms, others preferred their homes while others opted for their offices after working hours. All interviews were recorded and analysed through the connected themes or thematic.

3.5.3. Content Analysis

This is a recommended approach when analysing text to analyse it according to various topics or themes that may arise from the interviews or texts. According to Creswell (2013:180) the general process with data analysis comprises preparing and organizing the data, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes and finally representing the data in figures, tables or a discussion. In this study data, discussion was adopted since this was a theological qualitative research. Mwanza (2014:191) argues that interview data straight from the data collection phase is just raw data, far from answering the research questions. It needs to be prepared and organised for further analysis. The data ought to be transcribed. King and Harrocks (2010:142) defines transcription as a process of converting recorded material into text. The researcher transcribed the data by listening to the recorded information; from there translating it from the vernacular language into English through typing. Further, the field notes were used during transcription to ensure accuracy. The transcripts were also read more than once to make sure answers were translated in a correct way. Codes were developed thereafter on basis of similarities and differences and repetitions.

Content analysis is an approach to the analysis of documents and texts that seeks to quantify content in terms of predetermined categories and systematic and replicable manner. The content analysis is a transparent and objective method of qualitative data analysis (Bryman 2006:183).Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007:129) add that data analysis is a systematic search for meaning. In this study, data was analysed using a thematic approach in the individual interviews. The analysis was done manually and themes were developed

based on differences, repetitions, similarities of familiar and unfamiliar words (Bernard and Ryan (2010: 61).

Since the research used semi-structured interviews, supplementary questions were used depending on how the respondent answered so that more information was obtained.

3.5.4. Reliability and Validity in Research

Reliability in research refers to consistency or repeatability of measurement by an item or scale employed by a panel of users or judges simultaneously. If a measurement is judged reliably, then it ought to produce the same results time after time, regardless of who uses it, so long as it is used properly (GoldenBerg 1992:109). GoldengBerg (1992:113) argues that reliability is indicated by correlation between maximally similar measures while validity in research is indicated by a high correlation among maximally different measures of the same thing. However, Flick (2009:387) emphasises that in qualitative research validity receives more attention than reliability as validity can be summarised as a question of whether the researchers see what they think they see. While Rowley (2002:89) admits that there are terms such as content, construct validity, external validity, representativeness which are commonly used among different types of validity. In this research study, to ensure validity of the survey research data, the questionnaire was paramount to the validity of the project.

3.5.5. Challenges encountered during data collection

There were some challenges that were experienced during the collection of data in this research. The first one was that female church members were not comfortable to be interviewed because of the fact that in Malawi, most people accused of practicing witchcraft were women. It was therefore understandable that if they provided information regarding witchcraft other people might regard them as witches. This challenge was managed by assuring the respondent women that this was purely academic and it would be confidential. The researcher assured them of their anonymity. The researcher also asked them to choose the venue where the interviews could be held to avoid being exposed to other people.

The second challenge was to do with the session clerks (Church officials). Since most of the session clerks were working class people and they were always busy with church matters or

their employment tasks, to find time to meet them was not easy. The researcher opted to make appointments with them even after working hours either in their offices or at the church premises. This approach finally worked.

The third challenge encountered during collection of the data was that of language. Witchcraft has different names in the local language in Malawi. Some people would mention words that were difficult to understand. For instance others would say; *namandwa, m'thakati, patali*. These words meant witches (*mfiti*) but the researcher would not understand properly. The remedy to the problem was to ask supplementary questions for clarification during the course of the interviews. This was done in this way because this was also semi-structured interviews which allowed the researcher the freedom to probe more information from the respondents.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

There are many ethical considerations that social science researchers should consider when doing research. The first ethical question that arises is who will benefit from this research? (Manson 2002:42). In this research approach, the people interviewed may not necessarily benefit directly from interview, but any changes to the course will undoubtedly be as a result of the knowledge gained from their experiences. It can imply that somehow the respondents are indirectly involved in the making of possible changes regarding witchcraft related issues. This was explained to them before the interviews.

The next ethical consideration is how the attitude of the leadership of our church to the findings of this research may impact on the application of these findings (Manson 2002:42). The CCAP Blantyre Synod may not necessarily agree to possible changes that the research findings may recommend. This is an issue that involves adherence to church discipline and all the implications that hold for the researcher as a church minister within this particular church. It is however not anticipated that such a conflict situation should arise, but it is within the realm of possibility and therefore needs to be taken into consideration.

Another ethical consideration has to do with the actual data gathering from the respondents. Although it was not anticipated that the intended in depth interviews would evoke painful, debilitating memories taking into consideration the nature of the topic

(Merriam 1998:214), it nevertheless was possible that such negative emotions could stirred up by the interviews especially if the person interviewed had had a bad experience with something related to witchcraft. This raised the issue of privacy and the need for informed consent in what may be used for the purpose of this research (Merriam 1998:215). Therefore, the researcher had to be sensitive and observe these ethical issues.

Manson (2002:79) suggests some guidelines as to how to conduct qualitative interviews in an ethical way as follows:

Firstly, in asking questions consideration needs to be given as to the ethical justification for asking the question. Is it justified in terms of the aim of the research while still respecting the privacy of the interviewed people? In this research of witchcraft beliefs and fear it can be argued that questions that were formulated were ethically justifiable. The intension was not to probe the person privacy of an individual regarding witchcraft.

Secondly, how the question are asked would determine whether the interviewed person feels uncomfortable and pressurised to reveal experiences they rather would not share publicly. In all the interviews of 50 people, such situation never occurred. The respondents were free to express their opinions and experiences.

Thirdly, the interviewer should be alerted to what the interviewees may tell as a consequence of the trust that may be established during the interview. Here, the ethical justification for allowing such information to be imparted needs to be seriously considered. During the interviews, there were some issues that were very sensitive particularly issues that involved personalities were revealed, which undoubtedly was the result of the level of trust that was established during the interviews.

Fourthly, the ethical implication of guaranteeing confidentiality and anonymity means that careful consideration needs to be given as to how the data is to be used when it comes to analysis and interpretation. In all the interviews, respondents preferred to be anonymous, which the researcher strictly observed

Finally, power relations are implicit in the interview interaction whether the power is being exercised by the interviewer or the respondent, which does hold ethical implications in terms of how the interview is conducted and the information that as a consequence is

obtained. In this research the researcher restricted himself not to influence using his powers. This is why informed consent from the respondents was paramount. This suggests that this research has proven to have produced a fair sampling for the purposes of this research.

Sieber (1992:46) defines Privacy as control over others' access to oneself and associated information; preservation of boundaries against giving protected information or receiving unwanted information, confidentiality as an agreements with a person or organisation about what will be done and may not be done with their data; this may include legal constraints. Sieber (1992:42) defines anonymity as lack of identifiers, information that would indicate which individuals or organisations provided which data. In this research all these issues were very much considered as explained above.

The researcher also asked for permission from the General Secretary of CCAP Blantyre Synod in order to go into the two presbyteries. Similarly, officials of the presbyteries were informed and so too the congregations. All respondents were informed about the topic and the aim of the research and nobody was forced. Therefore informed consent was paramount for all respondents. Further, the General Secretary of CCAP Blantyre Synod was provided with the Ethical Clearance Certificate from the University of Fort Hare that mandated the researcher to conduct the research.

3.7. Conclusion

This chapter was divided into five parts. The first part discussed the context of the site where the population, social status and religious status were thoroughly discussed. The second part tackled research methodology. This was the stage where all methods used in this research were unpacked while the fourth part discussed data gathering instruments. The last part in this chapter was to do with ethical considerations such as anonymity, confidentiality, privacy and informed consent which are very important in any social science research and all these were discussed in this chapter.

The next chapter will tackle the research findings and analysis; thus considering possible available responses and will be influenced by Tödt's theory of ethical decision-making.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS, ANALYSING SITUATION AND EVALUATING APPLICABLE NORMS AND CRITERIA

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter presented the research design and methods that were employed to collect data for this research. The chapter explored all steps that were taken in this research study. This chapter will attempt to present the paradigm shift and the theoretical application of Tödt's theory of decision-making in trying to deal with the problem of witchcraft beliefs and fear in Malawi. At this point it is worth to explain briefly Tödt's theory of ethical decision-making before presenting the findings, discussing and analysing them.

4.1.1. BRIEF EXPLAINATION OF TODT'S THEORY OF ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING

This section will refer to Rashe (2008:11) where he used Tödt's theory of ethical decision-making. There are six steps of Tödt's theory which includes: seeing, accepting and describing the problem, analysing the situation, considering possible responses, evaluating the applicable norms and criteria, listening to other opinion and taking a decision. This section will try to explain three of them just to show how the theory should be understood and these are; seeing, accepting and describing the problem, analysing the situation and considering possible available responses.

4.1.2. Seeing, Accepting and describing the problem

In Tödt's theory of ethical-decision this is the first step in forming your opinion on the issue. Smit (1995:15) emphasised the aspect of seeing, accepting and describing the problem. He argues that Christian ethics should be an ethics-of-seeing. This implies that seeing is vital in ethics.

The second thing to consider is that, having identified or seeing the problem, it has to be accepted. There can never be an ownership to the ethical problem of witchcraft if there is no acceptance. Referring to Rashe(2008:11) Moulton argues that in accepting a problem which is situated far away from one, while neglecting people and situations closer to one, an element of guilt can be involved, which makes even this aspect of accepting or not a moral issue. He adds that people should agree on the nature of the problem as a moral problem.

This suggests that it is only acceptance and ownership of the problem that can help people to come up with a collective solution to the problem.

4.1.3. Analysing the situation

This second aspect, which is the issue of analysing the problem is equally very important. According to Tödt's theory, Rashe (2008:12) states that it is considered that those who analyse and are part of the context can be biased. But in order to do justice in our response and contribution to the problem it is argued that a thorough investigation, which has been done in other sciences as well as with other sources of information and statistics, must be consulted. That is why this study, has tried to consult history, legal systems and other sources.

4.1.4. Considering possible available responses

This is a third aspect in ethical analysis. The Tödt's theory suggests that when dealing with the problem, there is a need also to consider different opinions or responses available to solve the problem. This is why ownership of the problem is necessary. According to Moulton (1995:238) responses are determined by how the people involved understand themselves as human beings. This implies that they are not separated from their behaviours. Once they accept themselves they can also find the solution to their problem. In this study, people accepted that witchcraft is part of them and all responses are very important in trying to solve the witchcraft beliefs and fear.

4.1.5. Other aspects of Tödt's theory

Apart from seeing, accepting and describing the problem, analysing the situation and considering possible available responses in Tödt's theory of decision-making, there are other aspects which are equally important and these are; evaluating responses applicable norms and criteria, listening to the opinion of others and taking the decision and acting. All these aspects were used in one way or the other in this research study in order to find a solution

to the problem of witchcraft beliefs and fear which are both ethical as well as theological issues.

The problem at hand has been approached in various forms as interventions and different paradigms have been used but all seem to have failed. According to Kuhn (1970:10) a paradigm shift, a new paradigm or model replaces old ones, as evidence accumulates which makes the old ones unsustainable. This is done to make things change.

This being the reason the researcher feels a new model or paradigm is necessary to provide a solution to the problem of witchcraft and fear in Malawi. Most of those interventions were secular, but this one being theological and Christian Ethics can attempt to deal with the problem. The next part will mainly present findings and analysis influenced by Tödt's decision-making theory as explained above.

Using Tödt's theory of decision-making in this research study, it is about accepting the problem of witchcraft beliefs and fears. Having accepted the problem and analysed it, possible and appropriate action must be taken by all the people concerned. Mouton (1995:150) asserts that such a response or reaction (i.e. what is to be considered as good and action or behaviour, which would lead to a good and moral decision) will essentially be determined by how the people involved understand themselves as human beings. What this means is that people should be able to come up with solutions to solve their problems. Forcing them to do things will not yield anything in a society because they will not own the solution. In this case, people must accept that witchcraft has posed a challenge to their life or refute it. Thereafter a prompt action must be taken to change the situation for the better once they accept that witchcraft has affected them negatively.

4.2. Research findings and data analysis

Research findings is the data that is produced during the research as Onwuegbuzie (2007:129) states, data analysis is a systematic search for meaning. This section presents research findings and their analysis. There were five major themes that emanated from the findings as causes of witchcraft beliefs and fear from the interviews and these were: Cultural factors, Social factors, Economic factors, religious factors and legal factors. These will be discussed in details in this chapter and in this section.

4.2.1. Cultural Factors

Cultural factors refers to customs and beliefs of the people on witchcraft. Banishing witches and concoction of muabvi emerged and will be discussed under cultural factors below.

There was a mention of culture as a contributing factor to the problem. The cultural belief that old people especially women were witches was seen to be contributing factor to the fear of witchcraft in Malawi. This was also influenced by the fact that there were more females than men in Malawian society as could be evidenced by the National statistics (National Statistics, 2012). The culture that old people practiced witchcraft came about because it was believed that the life span of many Malawians was reducing due to witchcraft and therefore anybody who was very old was regarded to be a witch. But this point needed support which was not available. It was a matter of speculation.

Another cultural factor that emerged was to do with concept of misfortunes (*matsoka*) which was believed among the Chewa tribe and Lomwe tribe interviewed in the districts of Blantyre and Mulanje. There is a cultural belief that all misfortunes or *matsoka* such as illness, deaths, accidents, bareness, unemployment, low harvests are due to witchcraft. It was believed that there was no natural death or bad luck without witchcraft being involved. Mbiti (1971:9) agrees that the people are saturated with beliefs, fears, and superstitions connected with these practices and witchcraft permeates the life of an African. He adds that even Christians know that witchcraft exists and need not to ask what it is or what it does. However, these can be argued. For instance, in the case where the misfortune of low harvest occurs, one can argue that the low harvest is due to the effects of low climate change. If it is accidents on the roads one can argue that there are some people who drive while drunk and they end up causing accidents killing innocent people. But the belief that all misfortunes were due to witchcraft had been passed on from one generation to another. Cultural factors therefore emerged as causes of witchcraft belief and fear during the interviews.

4.2.1.1. Banishing witches

There was cultural belief among the communities of Blantyre and Mulanje that witchcraft could not be eradicated by any other means other than banishment. The respondents

mentioned the belief that was used by their fore-fathers when someone was suspected of being a witch, they were killed or sent away from the village. Currently the practice of banishing has been done secretly in fear of law enforcers. This cultural initiative was done because it was believed that exorcism prayers could not remove witchcraft. As a result of this thinking the only solution was to kill those suspected witches by burning them alive or chasing them away from the community. But it was reported that this could not completely wipe out all witches. In other ways this method proved to have failed to provide a solution to witchcraft.

4.2.1.2. Concoction of muabvi

The respondents mentioned that due to the belief that there was no solution for witchcraft eradication apart from the concoction called *muabvi* which is poisonous, all suspected witches were forced to drink *muabv*i in order to get rid of witchcraft from a person. But it was reported that many suspected witches who drank the *muabvi* concoction died instantly among Chewa and Lomwe tribes in Blantyre and Mulanje districts. It was believed that those who were not witches would just vomit which had no scientific evidence. This was done because many people believed that witchcraft had no solution and hence, was a threat to humanity. It was reported that certain traditional chiefs of these two districts of Malawi even allowed witchdoctors in their villages to do witchcraft cleansing by using *muabvi* concoction which ended up killing innocent people. But some of those chiefs happened to be members of the church but the church never disciplined such chiefs or condemned their approach. It was only the police that arrested people who were victimising others once the matters were reported. In a sense the whole community was seen to be in agreement with the method of getting rid of witchcraft by the poisonous concoction called *muabvi* except the police. Respondents felt this method still posed a danger to many lives as there was no scientific proof or testing for this concoction. Again, this was seen not to be the effective way in dealing with the witchcraft problem in Blantyre and Mulanje Presbyteries or districts.

4.2.2 Social factors

Social factors can refer to the way the society is organised to meet for some activities. In this section, media, families, schools, churches, working places and funerals will be discussed under social factors.

Respondent spoke of socialisation that starts in the family where every person originates. Thereafter it continues through the schools when the children start their education. Further, adults socialise at their various working places. As believers, the socialisation takes place in church gatherings. It was also reported that we should also be mindful that we are living in a technological era where radios, televisions and internets are easily found around society. Louw (1991:9) defines socialisation as the process whereby the individual becomes a member of a social group by learning to conform to the behaviour of the group. He adds that more specifically, through socialisation the individual acquires knowledge of the rule, attitudes, beliefs, habits, values, role requirements and norms prevailing in the social environment and learns to accept the social norms as his or her own or at least to take them into consideration in his/her behaviour. Rashe (2008:53) comments that this process is very similar to learning in the sense that changes in the individual's overt and covert behaviour occur because of external influences. Let us see in the following sections how respondents regarded these social factors as contributors of witchcraft beliefs and fear in Malawi particularly in the two presbyteries of Mulanje and Blantyre.

4.2.2.1. Media

The media had been regarded to have played a role in socialisation in Malawi. Respondents mentioned that issues to do with witchcraft have been exposed by media using radios, televisions, newspapers and internet in most parts in Malawi. During the interviews, people admitted that media in Malawi played a role in disseminating information about witchcraft. Stories about women teaching children witchcraft have been dominating in the media. The media have been writing stories of people who were arrested by the police because they were found with human body parts. The recent story mentioned two men who were arrested by the police when they were selling human bones in Mulanje district (Nyasa Times, 15 March, 2015).

Another story that was exposed by the media was about a young man in Mchinji district of Malawi who killed his sister and removed her private parts so that he could use them to get rich (Zodiak radio, 6, Jan,2015). Such reports were seen to be influencing the minds of many people in Malawi to fear witchcraft. Although media is a potent socialisation agent as well as a source of information, but it has been seen as a harmful weapon as well in the issue of witchcraft beliefs and fear in Malawi. Due to the way the stories were reported, the reaction that was inspired in the community was fear and it made people angry and bitter against witches. This presentation by the media has instigated people to take revenge through violent means. Therefore, the media has not provided solution to the problem of witchcraft in Malawi.

4.2.2.2. Families

The Biblical Scriptures describe family as ones' own bone and flesh (Gen 29:14). Williams (2013:27) makes a comparison of the family with the trinity; the persons in a family are essential to each other. There is openness so much that the relationship is interactive. Family is another social place where behaviour and minds are influenced straight from childhood. Williams (2013:31) adds that the family is the major human influence on any person. Respondents in the two presbyteries of Mulanje and Blantyre City confessed that issues of witchcraft start to be told in families between parents and children. There have been stories that some parents warned their children not to throw hairs anywhere apart from the toilets because witches would take them and be used to bewitch them. Similarly there were stories shared within the family members that they should not call each other names loudly in the night because witches would hear them and use the same names to bewitch them when they were sleeping. Further, it was in the family where incisions or cuts (*mphini)* were made on everybody in the family and charms in powdered form were rubbed into the wounds made by the cuts to protect themselves from being bewitched. Such stories that were collected during the interviews were said to have contributed to the fear and belief in witchcraft by people right from tender ages.

In the family is where a person is gloomed into good citizen following the norms of the society, but with the negative portray of witchcraft the family can be seen as a perpetrator of hatred and violence on issues of witchcraft.

4.2.2.3. Schools

It is in schools where learners interact with each other. Apart from gaining academic knowledge, it is reported that these were places where learners share experiences. In schools students learn different subjects through reading and through the instruction of teachers. They also have time for group sharing or discussions. Issues of witchcraft have been shared in formal or informal groupings in a negative way. This influenced the minds of learners and they eventually began to believe in and fear witchcraft. This was why according to respondents even those regarded as very educated people they still have that mind set of believing in witchcraft and fear it because of these social gatherings in schools, colleges and universities. One story that was marvellous was that there is another school in Mulanje that teachers have been refusing to work because of witchcraft practices that were rampant around that school. Again two church minsters, a male and a female (names withheld) were reported to have asked for transfers from their parishes because of being troubled with witchcraft. These were church ministers who were highly educated both academically and theologically but they were afraid of witchcraft. Kalilombe (1998:15) agrees that an African will remain with his belief despite his or her educational status in a society. Here education has not been seen as a solution to witchcraft belief and fear in Malawi.

Respondents mentioned what can be seen as contradiction to the social aspect in schools that was regarded as a contributing factor to the belief in witchcraft. They felt that the high illiteracy rate in Malawi was the social factor of causing the witchcraft belief and fear. According to United Nation Development Programme (2013) the illiterate rate of Malawi was 37%. The Malawi National Statistics Office (2013) also reported the same figure. This suggests that there are many Malawians who are not able to write and read. Respondents observed that this trend means that people do not know what other cultures around the globe do with the issue of witchcraft since they cannot read. As a result they just believe what is being said or discussed within their society only. In other words, they are limited in their ability to access information or knowledge from elsewhere. So the more people are illiterate, the more they lack the correct information regarding the issue of witchcraft. Until there are interventions to reduce the illiteracy level, the problem of witchcraft will persist in Malawi.

4.2.2.4. Churches

The church is where people meet to worship God. This is where the preaching of the word of God takes place. According to Grudem (1994:853) defines the church as the community of all true believers for all time. Every person on earth expect the church to preach about love, comfort, forgiveness and it is a symbol of hope to all mankind because it includes all people disregarding gender, political affiliation, race and, status in the society. Grudem (1994:863) adds, it is in the church where there is ministry to God through worship and ministry to believers through nurturing. It is indeed a good forum for socialisation. But respondents observed that some pastors or church ministers have preached at people accusing them of practising witchcraft without proof or evidence. Some scriptures have been misinterpreted and have been made to emphasize witchcraft only. This influenced some groups within the church like choir groups, women guilds, cottages (*milaga*) to start accusing others of practising witchcraft and fear them. As a result gossip, hatred and division were even experienced in churches. Instead of sowing love, peace, joy, forgiveness and fellowship as a social gathering, the church was seen to have lost its role and mandate from Jesus Christ; that the church is the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13).

The church therefore has not been seen as good agent tool for social change as it ought to be. However, this does not mean that the church is not holy. According to Milne (1992:217) the church stands before God in Christ, it is spotless and without moral blemish. The people of God are holy people (1Peter 2:9). One would therefore ask why issues of witchcraft are experienced in the church. It is not the entire church but the individuals who are not righteous. The church will always be holy. The church should be the best tool to deal with witchcraft but the approach should be revisited. The theological aspect is believed to be the best way to deal with witchcraft within and outside the church.

4.2.2.5. Working places

This is where different people from different backgrounds and areas socialise as they work. It ought to be a good place to share good ideas but instead not all working places are helpful to the society. It was in the working places that people socialise as well. Respondents mentioned that in these working places people have been influenced with lies and stories

that were merely malicious; stories without evidence or proof. Here, reports were that if one had to be promoted the only thing to do was to be involved in witchcraft. The solution to obtain promotion at work was said to bewitch someone above so that he or she can get sick or die so that there was a vacancy to be filled. Others even shared stories of someone being bewitched by getting involved in a car accident and die. Stories of killings each other mysteriously using lightings were mentioned to be taking place in working places. These stories, whether they are real or not, have played a part in poisoning the minds of people hence the belief in witchcraft and the fear of it. If one was under the impression that witchcraft was a village phenomenon, and those who were professionals in the urban centres were untouched by the phenomena of witchcraft the respondents completely refuted it. This social gathering was seen to have proved a failure in providing a solution to witchcraft in Malawi.

4.2.2.6. Funerals

Many respondents mentioned that the gathering at the funeral which was supposed to be a place of comforting the bereaved families, sometimes were turned to be places to inflict more pain to the bereaved. This is done when some people talk about the death of that person as unnatural, meaning that the dead person was killed by witches. Instead of mourning and encouraging one another this social gathering proved to be breeding ground for belief in witchcraft and the stirring up of the fear of it. This has been the tradition perpetuated by speakers at the funeral which include chiefs, relatives, politicians, some religious leaders, friends and others. This has proved to be dangerous because it influences the minds of people to meditate on witchcraft, and no wonder people fear those suspected of practicing witchcraft and hate them. It was reported that sometimes fighting has erupted in funerals influenced by speeches at the funeral. This too is seen to be a place of perpetuating hate, violence and enmity.

4.2.3. Economic or poverty factors

Economic factors are connected with the money that the society or an individual has. The state of not having money can be described as poverty. The reality is that economic

prosperity can be achieved through doing business, employment and farming. Economic or poverty factors emerged as one of the major themes in this research.

Many respondents said that there was a belief that for one to succeed in business, farming, or education, one was supposed to be involved in witchcraft. Anybody rich in the society was believed to be a witch/wizard. The respondents mentioned this because it was believed that it was impossible to get rich without using magic. Further, they mentioned that nobody can be rich and remain alive because other evil people can bewitch him/her out of jealousy. Therefore anyone who was seen to be poor was believed to be innocent or free from witchcraft. This influenced some people to be lazy in farming, in business or doing other things that could improve their lives as a result they look at those people who were prospering to be witches/wizards. However, this kind of thinking lacks evidence. It was reported that this could probably be the reason why Malawi was regarded as one of the poorest countries in the world with many of its citizens living below the poverty line of US$1.25 per day (UNDP 2013).The United Nation Development (2013) further reported that Malawi was ranking at 170 out of 186 countries on the human development index. This can suggest that in Malawi the poverty was wide-spread. Therefore, the issue of economy or prosperity was seen to be bringing more accusations of witchcraft than solving the problem.

The situation in Malawi agrees with what Akamba people in Kenya believe when magic potion is used in seeking wealth and employment. Protective amulets are used for almost every problem associated with witchcraft (Gehman 1989:95). In other words a person cannot be rich without using magic. Similarly, it is not possible for a wealthy person to remain alive without using protective charms. Respondents were of the view that only witches can survive economically and live longer.

4.2.4. Religious factors

In Christian churches, the Bible is the centre of belief because it is believed that it contains the word of God. In addition to the reading and hearing of the word from the Bible, there is preaching that is done during the worship, along with hymn or choir singing. These have been regarded as factors in religion that have contributed to the belief of witchcraft and fear in one way or the other especially when they are used in a way that is seen to

perpetuate hatred, violence and un-forgiveness. The following section discusses these separately.

4.2.4.1. Biblical passages

The respondents mentioned that during worship services in the church there are several biblical passages that are read concerning witchcraft. Such passages talk about witchcraft and that it exists. References were mentioned such as Deuteronomy 18:10 where God commands that, "let no one found among you practicing witchcraft". Further, Revelations 2:20 where Jezebel used food against unsuspecting church members in Thyatira for the initiation into witchcraft Revelation 21:8 where it says that all who practice witchcraft will be punished in hell. Such texts if they are not carefully interpreted have ended up making people to believe in witchcraft and causing them to fear it. Since Christianity is about beliefs, some people have tended to believe everything that is contained in the bible literally, and therefore all suspected witches should be hated and feared. Williams (2013:106) argues that our experience then naturally stimulates our response. We are not just passive sensors, but respond to experience. Thus the experiences that we have directly affect our spirit, by motivating action. In particular of course, what we hear modify our behaviour. Apostle Paul also says that faith comes from hearing (Rom10:17). This includes what is read. People are therefore affected and influenced with what we hear and read from the Bible no matter what. Respondents therefore, felt that biblical passages were seen to be perpetuating witchcraft beliefs and fear if not carefully interpreted.

4.2.4.2. Lack of biblical understanding

Witchcraft beliefs and fear according to respondents was also influenced by lack of biblical understanding. The bible which was originally written in Hebrew in Old Testament and Greek in New Testament needs deep interpretation by biblical scholars. But some preachers have taken the texts literally without proper interpretation and understanding. Passages that mention witchcraft needed to be interpreted well so that it does not twist the original meaning. Such lack of original meaning has led many readers or preachers to take the scriptures literally. This has influenced the minds of some believers to fear witchcraft and think that witchcraft is something that is above God's power. This is contrary to the word of

God. Many respondents were of the view that God is so powerful and all those people who received Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour were given power to be children of God (John1:12). They were able to say that Christians have more powers to overcome powers of witchcraft. Texts like Romans 8:37 that say that Christians are more than conquerors were recited and Matthew 28: 20 that say Jesus will always be with believers. This means Christians are protected by the blood of Jesus hence they ought not to fear witches.

4.2.4.3. Emphasis on punishment rather than forgiveness

Respondents often observe that most preachers have emphasised on the condemnation of witchcraft and that all those practicing it will be punished by God. While this is true, there is a need to be balanced. Some people who were suspected of being witches have ended up leaving the church because of the kind of messages they hear from the church. Instead of getting messages of hope some preachers have always preached about punishment to all witches. This type of preaching has influenced many church members to hate and make judgements on those suspected of witchcraft as going to hell.

Those that were interviewed preferred some kind of balance in the preaching. There are many passages as well that mention the love and forgiveness of God to all sinners. This is where preachers in CCAP Blantyre Synod churches needed to include as well with the aim of avoiding influencing people with the notion that witches cannot be forgiven which perpetuates violence and discrimination against those suspected of practicing witchcraft. According to Grudem (1994:868) advices that a church that emphasises only one thing will end up with inadequate Bible teaching of believers and its members will remain shallow in their understanding of the Scripture and immature in their Christian lives. This is where balancing the purposes of the church ought to follow. Therefore, this approach has failed many people including Christians in the church.

4.2.4.4. Composition of music by choir groups

The respondents mentioned the type of music that were composed and sang in churches as promoting the belief of witchcraft and fear as well. Some of the songs that are sang by choir members are full of hate messages against witches more than glorifying God. These songs

are mostly composed with the aim of castigating those accused to be practicing witchcraft. In CCAP Blantyre Synod congregations there are different choir groups like women's choir, youth choir, men choir, and Sunday school choir. These choirs compose music that can be were perceived to be lacking theological meaning. Since choir singing forms part of the worship service, it means every Sunday service there is choir singing. Now with music full of witchcraft messages that some choir groups usually sing influences the minds of church members on witchcraft and eventually end up in hatred of those suspected of practising witchcraft.

It was felt that with such social gathering people seem to be influenced by choir music that are full of witchcraft messages instead of singing music that can bring glory to God. As much as rebuking the devil is part of the messages that is to be contained in spiritual music, but balancing would be necessary for the edification of the members of the church. Composition of music by choir members should be done very carefully to avoid spoiling this noble task of serving God through singing. The question still remains the same; has gospel music helped to get rid of witchcraft beliefs and fear in Malawi? The answer is thus far: not yet.

4.2.5. Legal factors

Legal factors are mainly connected with the law. In this case what does the law of Malawi says about witchcraft. In this section we shall discuss and see whether the Malawi witchcraft law has contributed to witchcraft beliefs and fear or not.

Respondents felt that Legal aspect in Malawi has been seen as a contributing factor to witchcraft belief and fear because it does not recognise the existence of witchcraft. The Witchcraft Act in Malawi was last amended in 1963 forbids as follows:

"The profession or calling of witchdoctor or professional maker or mixer of poison is hereby declared to be an 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". This section is banning the profession of witchdoctor. Here what is being banned is the practice of finding witches and wizards hence if there is somebody suspected of being a witch and then a witchdoctor comes to determine whether that person is a witch or not that

is clearly breaching the law and can be sent to prison as witchdoctor is a banned profession. Here it is seen that the punishment for a witchdoctor is more severe than that of a witch. This is because the law wanted to erase the belief in witchcraft in order to free people from the belief in witchcraft and also because of difficulties of proving witchcraft the law wanted to protect innocent people from mob justice.

Again Section 2 of Malawi witchcraft Act states that, Trial by the ordeal of muabvi or other poison, fire, boiling water, or by any ordeal which is likely directly or indirectly to result in the death of or bodily injury to any person shall be and is hereby prohibited.

Further, section 3 (1) of witchcraft Act also states as follows: Any person who directs or controls or presides at any trial by ordeal which is prohibited by this Act shall be liable to imprisonment for seven years. It can be seen from these sections that trying a witch by an ordeal specified in the sections is prohibited under this Witchcraft Act. For instance if a community suspects someone of being a witch and then they call a witchdoctor, that community or those people are committing an offence by trying that witch with ordeal or charms.

Section 3(3) of the same Malawi Witchcraft Act stipulates that, any person who is present at or takes part in any trial by ordeal which is prohibited by this Act shall be liable to a fine of 5 British pounds and to imprisonment for one year. Looking at this, the section is even more draconian in that it criminalises even mere presence at a trial by ordeal.

Finally the Malawi Witchcraft Act section 4 states that, any person who, in laying information before a court, a police officer, a chief, or other proper authority, accuses any person with being a witch or with practicing witchcraft or names or indicates any person as being a witch or wizard shall be liable to a fine of 25 British pounds and to imprisonment for five years. This Act criminalizes even merely accusing another of witchcraft. If someone suspects another of being a witch or wizard then he accuses that person of being a witch or a wizard the person who accuses another of being a witch commits a crime in this Section 4 of witchcraft Act.

The complication here is that since the courts act on the basis that witchcraft does not exist it follows that there cannot be any evidence strong to prove witchcraft. However, for the church the scriptures clearly accept the existence of witchcraft and condemn it and that

anybody involved in witchcraft breaches Christians principles and should be disciplined by the church. Due to this contradiction between the bible and the Malawian Law on witchcraft, legal system has been seen to contribute to witchcraft belief and fear in Malawi as people believe more what the bible says. Legal factors has therefore been regarded as a contributor to witchcraft belief and fear in Malawi which if it was framed in a way that agrees with the reality on the ground it would be a different story. It is this approach that the Malawi Witchcraft Act is seen contributed witchcraft beliefs and fear in Malawi.

People especially old people have said that they did not take part in the decision- making of this old Malawi Witchcraft Act that was last amended by in 1963 even before the country became independent. It is reported that even the current government is doing things at a slow pace in order to amend the Witchcraft Act to meet the reality on the ground. The research also revealed that since this witchcraft Law which was made without the consultation of the Malawian people by the British colonial masters is seen as oppressive hence people often have resorted to take the law in their own hands. This law was supposed to involve traditional chiefs, ordinary people in the villages, religious leaders and other stake holders before it was enacted. The witchcraft law was just imposed on the people by then the colonial government and this lacked sense of ownership by Malawian people then Nyasaland.

4.3. Consequences or impact of these factors

The factors that were mentioned to have contributed to witchcraft belief and fear in Malawi have impacted negatively to the society of Malawi. This section attempts to present those consequences as mentioned by the respondents.

4.3.1. Shame

This is the feeling of sadness, embarrassment and guilt that one has when he has done something wrong or stupid. The question that may arise is can someone feel shame after he or she has been accused of practicing witchcraft? This section tries to discuss this.

Pattison (2000:70) defines shame as a feeling we have after evaluating our behaviour or actions. He adds that it leaves those who experience it feeling exposed, passive and impotent. Whether one practices witchcraft or not but the fact that people have labelled you to be a witch there is as experience of pain psychologically. Lewis (1992:2) contends that shame is an acute, painful, in-articulable experience.

When one has been accused of witchcraft in a society, the shame that engulfs him or her can make that person to feel rejected and may therefore end up him/her withdrawing himself from socialisation. This can have a negative impact to the development of the country. In a church setting one may decide not to be active in the activities of the church such as participating in women guild work like cheering the sick, comforting the believed families because shame affects one's feelings and how he/she can deal with others. Lewis (1992:2) comments that shame results in anger, depression or withdrawal. In this situation a person who is accused of witchcraft feels that the community has rejected him or her and live a solitary life. But a person is a social being and staying in this kind of life cannot be a health situation.

4.3.2. Backsliding of members

When members of the church have accused each other of witchcraft the accused person due to shame, anger, bitterness, loss of trust may sometimes decide just to stop going to church. If a person stays without hearing the word of God it may end up his/her spiritual life going down which can be termed as backsliding. Faith in Christ comes by hearing the word of God and if one stops attending church services the faith of that person goes down. Grudem (1994:497) states that outside of Christ, a person is totally unable to do well in a spiritual sense. If a person is not doing well it means his behaviour is bad and therefore lives in sins. If a church member is accused of witchcraft and decides to stop attending church services it is obvious that his spiritual life will go down (backslide) which eventually will lead him or her to do bad things in a society. Milne (1992:33) comments that multitudes of Christians in every generation have testified that, as they read the bible and hear it expounded, they are moved to recognize its inherent authority and this keeps their spiritual lives.

In this research study, it was mentioned that some members of the society who were accused of witchcraft have ended up leaving the church if they were Christians or in a case that they were not believers their behaviour changed to worse. This is bad for the spirit of nurturing one another especially in a church.

4.3.3. Relationship disrupted

It was mentioned that due to accusations of witchcraft it has ended up in disrupting relationships among people of the same village, family, church and tribes in a country. Upon knowing that someone is being accused of practicing witchcraft or being bewitched, that person becomes angry and upset. Further, members of his family also become angry and bitter because one of their family members is being accused of witchcraft or is being bewitched. The accused usually is seen with evil eyes by people around hence he or she receives mockery from other people. The suspected witches are blamed of breaking the norms of the society. This situation mostly result into breaking good relationships within the family, village, working place or the church. All this comes because of witchcraft belief and fear. When the society is filled with anger, bitterness and unsafe about their lives, the result is committing sins such as murder, self-killing and other violent acts. Gruchy (2006:173) says that sin damages the classical trilogy of truth, goodness and beauty. This implies that witchcraft accusations can result into disrupted relationships in a society.

Williams (2013:121) asserts that sin can well refer to the deliberate intention to go against God. Hoekema (1986:172) adds that an act of sin follows from a deliberate intention; the root of the problem is perversity of mind. Sin is in the very centre of a person, the heart. He further comments that without God it is more susceptible to community pressures because sin is not easily restrained by reason. Robinson (1926:314) asserts that there are two problems of sin, the disposition and the acts, so the solution is twofold, needing obedience on the part of the individual and forgiveness on social. Christianity has commonly seen the actions forgiven through Christ's sacrifice, and righteousness imputed, while the change in disposition comes as the will is conformed to Christ, righteousness being imparted (Williams 2013:123). In a restrained relationship that has emerged because of witchcraft there is need

for forgiveness on the part of the person who feels angry and obedience to the word of God. This can applies to both persons; the one who is being accused of witchcraft and the person who is believed to be bewitched. This is where theology plays a crucial part in situations like these.

4.3.4. Church disciplines

There was a general feeling from the respondents that church disciplines should be imposed on those church members who were indulging themselves in the act of witchcraft. The punishments that were mentioned included ex-communication from the church or suspension to those that have confessed and admitted to stop it. Most of them were quoting the bible texts where God condemns witchcraft.

Thurneysen (1963:32) says that the fathers of the Reformed church are the ones who reinterpreted church discipline. He adds that John Calvin saw the need for discipline as a way of making a community of believers alive and pure and emphasised that in the absence of an individual admonition, the church would disintegrate. But the question that can be put forward is how should the church exercise discipline? Louw (2000:277) argues that the transgressor should be reproved with love as an expression of grace and love, and not as an act of condemnation and rejection. He adds that admonition should focus on encouraging believers to remain faithful to God.

The difficult part that needs careful considerations when dealing with witchcraft related cases within the church is the contradiction between the Witchcraft Act and what the Bible says on witchcraft. Since the civil courts act on the basis that witchcraft does not exist it follows that there cannot be any evidence however strong it may be to prove witchcraft. However for the church since the scriptures clearly accepts the existence of witchcraft and condemns it as unchristian, anybody practicing witchcraft breaches Christian principles and should be disciplined by the church (BT Synod Minutes, 2010:31). But the sticky issue that was mentioned when dealing with witchcraft cases within the church is that the evidence brought before the church court should be visibly proven since the church cannot just accept evidence that is merely speculation. Now evidence such as a naked person being found on the roof of somebody's house or inside house with charms in the basket cannot be

allowed in church. In most cases however, the suspected witches and wizards have not had such type of evidence proved against them. It is only when the accused has admitted to be practicing witchcraft then this will be enough evidence for the church courts.

Another difficult area mentioned was that of evidence of children. Several children have claimed that someone who is old within the community was teaching them witchcraft. In some cases suspected witches have been brought to be confronted by the children in church courts and in some cases the suspected witches upon hearing stories from those children have remained silent and people had taken that as a proof of admission of witchcraft. However, in law Kainja (2010:33) silence does not mean admission of a crime. Therefore we should be careful when a suspected witch remains silent. According to Kainja (2010:33) the second problem with the evidence of the children below 13 years of age is that evidence if not corroborated is not admissible in court because the Law in Malawi states that if a child gives evidence in court, such evidence before it is admitted must be corroborated by other extrinsic evidence or other evidence of a mature person to corroborate the child story. Unfortunately in the church court system it was reported that the evidence of children is taken as conclusive evidence without looking for corroborative evidence. This is where witchcraft case is so tricky and difficult to handle in church and pass judgement. Kainja (2010:33) advices that with such cases in the church there is need to adhere to what the law says on these matters so that the church can be able to defend itself in civil courts if it has been sued. The church minister should therefore be encouraged to help both the accuser and the accused spiritually like counselling or special deliverance prayers to avoid embarrassing the church.

In the event where there is admission of the accused it is imperative to discipline a member of the church. Louw (2000:277) emphasises discipline with love for the renewal of life and readjustment of the believer's life style. If the church discipline is not handled well members lose trust and hope for the church. But the church should be seen as a model of giving hope to the hopeless and justice to the oppressed.

4.3.5. Loss of church members

Loss of church members was mentioned as one effect that was experienced by the church due to witchcraft belief and fear. This happens to both the accused persons and sometimes those who fear witchcraft. The respondents said that they have seen other people leaving the church because they were traumatised with accusations of witchcraft so much that they felt rejected, stigmatized and discriminated. Sometimes the allegation might be untrue but the pain they suffered forced them just to quit the church. For the church this was a loss because if members were leaving the church then who would make the church. Grudem (1994:853) defines the church as the community of all true believers for all time. The Apostle Paul also emphasises that Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her (Eph. 6:25). Now if the church was losing church members without good reason it was dangerous for the spiritual life of its members and also the salvation of mankind.

Similarly, a member of the church who feels has been bewitched and sees that the church has not taken any drastic measures against the accused or praying for her recovery, that victimised person sometimes just opted to leave the church in fear of his/her life. It was reported that in CCAP Blantyre Synod, cases of like these have ended up losing its members to the mushrooming Pentecostal churches that were seen to be dealing with this problem through exorcism prayers.

Jesus Christ commanded Simon Peter to tend or nurture the sheep or church (John 21:16). The issue of witchcraft should therefore be handled with maturity and sensitivity to avoid the exodus of its members from the church. Nothing can be better than solving this problem of witchcraft with love, patient and spiritual maturity which was mentioned to be lacking.

4.3.6. Loss of life and property

It was mentioned by the respondents that witchcraft beliefs and fear has caused loss of life and property because of trauma, and disbelief on the part of the person who was accused to be a witch/wizard. Some people who could not stand with the pain and humiliation due to the fact that they were labelled as witch resulted into collapsing and eventually died because of heart attack, high blood pressure or loss of appetite. Respondent mentioned few incidents that happened and resulted into loss of some people in Blantyre. Trauma is

dangerous for human life. Rashe (2008:85) mentions some of the effects that come as a result of trauma as follows:

-Shock: usually an immediate response may include numbness, chills, faintness, confusion, disorientation, trembling, nausea and vomiting.

-Sleeping problem: unable to sleep, sleeping more than usual, or other changes in sleeping patterns.

-Eating problems: no appetite and subsequent weight loss, or compulsive eating and subsequent weight gain,

-No energy or too much energy,

-Physical illness: the stress may weaken her immune system, and make her more vulnerable to sickness.

-Cardiovascular problems: heart palpitations, breathlessness, tightness or pain in the chest, high blood pressure.

Respondents testified that three old people died due to trauma they suffered because they were accused of witchcraft by either their own members of the family or their fellow church members. Such deaths could be preventable when community had decided to approach the issue of witchcraft in a different way. Where there is loss of life urgent attention should be considered as life is very precious and we should always remember that we were all created in the image of God.

Loss of property was also mentioned. Some people have resorted into violence once they were convinced that someone bewitched them or their relative. They went wild to the extent of destroying property of the one accused to be a witch. Houses were reported to be burnt, crops in the farm destroyed, shops destroyed, bicycles smashed. This act of violence though illegal under Malawi Law but some people decided to take the law into their own hands. When the situation is like this, the loss becomes so severe. A recent example happened in Ndirande Township in Blantyre when people went rampant to destroy property of some individuals who were alleged to be practicing witchcraft. Although the police were deployed to calm the situation but property was destroyed (The Nation, Jun 24 2014).

4.3.7. Loss of trust

According to the Survey that was conducted by the Daily Times (March, 2015) revealed that in Malawi many people trust chiefs and religious leaders than politicians. However, the respondents were of the view that witchcraft beliefs if remained unchecked it can make people to lose trust even to the church because of the way the church has been handling the witchcraft related issues. If pastors or church elders are the ones to castigate suspected witches and solve the cases of witchcraft in a biased manner then the people will lose trust to such leaders and the church as a whole.

The church was supposed to be where minority groups or oppressed people can freely go for help. Some respondents mentioned the biblical texts where Jesus openly said that he came for the sinners, to heal the sick, to liberate the oppressed, to cast out evil spirits (Luke 7:22-23). If ministers/ pastors or congregations are not siding with those accused to be witches and reject them, who else would take care of them? The result would be the loss of trust to the entire church by the victimised or rejected ones. It was felt that this was the situation in other congregations and no wonder such congregations are not growing numerically. The church should aim at growing even in number because more people are joining it.

4.3.8. No spiritual growth

In a church, the problem of witchcraft has been seen as a cause of retarding the spiritual growth of many members because people were always busy with gossiping. The focus on the mandate of the church was felt to be diminishing. Emphasis was on witchcraft instead of doing evangelism, worshipping and ministering to believers. Grudem (1994:869) warns that the church that makes one area a priority and neglecting another will end up with no spiritual growth. For the church to remain healthy, it must continually be able to include all areas of her mandate. If people are only busy with issues of witchcraft in the church, it is very doubtful that church will grow spiritually. Respondents were of the view that the church cannot grow in spirit with that kind of situation of leaving in fear of witchcraft. Few church cases were mentioned in Mulanje where the church took time to resolve the cases.

In the end the congregation ended up in a church split. Others decided to start their own church using another name. This lacked spiritual growth among the church members.

4.4. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM OF WITCHCRAFT BELIEFS AND FEAR

Several possible solutions to the problem of witchcraft beliefs and fear were mentioned by the respondents that could help reduce or end the problem which the people accepted. This section tries to discuss those possible solutions. The possible solutions that were mentioned would be influenced by the theory of decision-making of Tödt. Some theological doctrines will also be included in this discussion.

4.4.1. Sound Biblical teaching for good relationships

After accepting that witchcraft beliefs was a problem the respondents suggested the remedy for it. In order for relationships among people to be restored or maintained sound biblical teaching was mentioned by the respondents. It was noted that sound teaching was lacking within the church of CCAP Blantyre Synod. However, the relationship among people cannot be looked at without considering the humanity of Christ. Sherlock (1996:97) states that Jesus died in our place as a substitute or as a representative for our sins, if the sacrifice is to be effective for our sins it requires that Jesus is human. In relation to other people, Jesus experienced a normal human development (Luke 2:52). Brunner (1939:405) contends that the growth is fundamental to humanity. In other words Jesus though he was fully God became man so that he could restore the relationship that was broken between man and God. Jesus being fully human ate and drank, and experienced human emotion, getting tired, feeling hungry weeping, got angry when he saw the abuse of the Temple. All these are human feelings indicating that Jesus was fully human. But even though he was also fully deity he was associated with man to restore the relationship that was broken through sin.

Paul teaches Christians that Jesus Christ who was human should be the model to be followed: "be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1Corinthians 11:1) According to Williams (2013:158) Christians shall bear that image fully in creation, people bore the image of the man of dust, but then shall bear the image of man of heaven. We shall be like Jesus, meaning a fulfilment of all the relationships, living as originally intended in harmony with God and other people. Here the teaching about the humanity of Jesus Christ can be a good

teaching to the church to restore good relationship that were broken because of witchcraft issues.

The cross should be taught also as victory for believers. Arnold (1992:83) comments that Jesus procured the redemption of all who believe in him through his death on the cross. He now continues his redemptive mission to the world through the agency of the church. Once members of the church are taught about the cross they will not fear witchcraft because Jesus reaffirmed the disciples authority over the demonic realm as well as his ability to heal (Luke 9:1-6, Matthew 10:1-16, mark 6:7-11). What is interesting is that Jesus even gave the believers authority to trample on snakes and scorpions which are both symbols of demons. Thus he gave the power to overcome all powers of enmity (Luke 10:19). This means that since believers have appropriated Jesus authority, the power of the evil of witchcraft cannot harm them. Wink (1992:142) contends that in scripture the cross of Jesus is the demonstration of victory through weakness. At the cross Satan stands judged because he put Christ, God incarnate as a perfect man, to death. But it was on the cross that that Jesus bore the sins of the world and triumphed over all the powers of evil including witchcraft. Paul asserts that it was not through the resurrection that powers were unmasked, but precisely through the cross (Col 2:13-15). Such teachings are good to provide solution to the problem of witchcraft.

Another teaching which needs to be included is the teaching of atonement. Aulen (1931:51) asserts that the work of atonement is depicted in a dramatic terms as a conflict with the powers of evil and a triumph over them. He adds that this involves a necessary double sidedness; in that God is at once the Reconciler and the Reconciled. His enmity is taken away in the very fact in which he reconciles the world to himself by sending his son Jesus Christ that whoever believes in him, should have eternal life (John 3:16). Believers must learn to forgive and reconcile with those that have even bewitched them or accused them of practising witchcraft. The reason for this is that Jesus came not only to deal with the problem of sin in the world, but also to deal with God's prime supernatural opponent-Satan himself (Arnold 1992:79).

Respondents felt that there is need therefore to intensify bible teaching in churches, in order to impart the knowledge of the restored relationship between man and God and also man and fellow man. This according to respondents can be achieved through conducting

bible trainings. These bible training would be even for church elders who can assist ministers in preaching and teachings in places that the minister may not cover in the parishes.

4.4.2. Counselling

The respondents felt that apart from sound biblical teaching deep counselling should be included in the church programs since it will assist those who have been victimised by witchcraft issues. These include those that were accused of practising witchcraft and those that believed that they had been bewitched. This counselling can be done by the church ministers or the church elders who have been trained and are spiritually mature. Emphasis was made that special skills in counselling should be acquired by ministers who will in turn teach church elders who are always closer to the people.

The purpose of counselling was proposed by the respondents to ensure that those that were accused of practising witchcraft should not stay away from the church or stop coming to church because of feeling rejected or embarrassed. Secondly respondents felt that counselling should be done to give them hope that God does not abandon his people even those that feel discriminated against and rejected by the society. Thirdly the purpose of counselling was to encourage people to accept the situation of witchcraft and accommodate those that were accused to be practising witchcraft and that judgement should be left with God. But this counselling should be done not only one session but several meetings. According to Doehring (2006:7) counselling is very important as it can transform a person's outlook. He adds that counselling has also the potential to restore hope to a situation of hopelessness and it has the potential foster healing and wholeness as well. Respondents further expressed that the time for counselling can be a reflection moment whereby the people can revisit their understanding of witchcraft and come up with a good solution to this challenge.

The respondents were able to point out that counselling can be seen as fulfilling the task of the church (shepherd) as mandated by God, in Ezekiel 34:16. Even though this command was originally directed to the leaders of Israel, but today this applies to the church and those that work within it. According to Ezekiel, the church engages in searching, guiding,

healing, nurturing, governing, reconciling and sustaining. These virtues can be gained during counselling. The goal is to facilitate maturity in the believer (Eph. 4:15). Maturity in Christian life entails to live fully as a person released from the dominion of darkness and under the kingship of Christ (Col. 2:12-13). Respondents were engaging with the problem and were able to provide possible solutions using biblical verses and Christianity Ethics which was observed to be a healthy situation.

4.4.3. Referring the sick to Hospitals

It was felt by the respondents that another possible solution would be for the church to refer those people that claimed to be bewitched to the hospital for medical examination and treatment. This can reduce mere accusations because the hospital may find the causes of the illness for that particular person and provide treatment. If the patient after getting medical treatment gets cured then this can stop the belief that the person was bewitched. This can also act as a reconciliatory way between two parties that were in disagreement because of witchcraft. Some respondents confessed that they have tried to use this method by taking their sick relative whom they suspected to be bewitched to the hospital and after clinical testing the person was found with severe malaria. The person was put on malaria treatment and after a week that person was cured. So the hospital can be another place that can be a solution to the problem of witchcraft belief and fear.

However, this takes to persuade and convince the victim or members of his/her family to accept going to the hospital otherwise they would refuse going to the hospital since witchcraft cannot be scientifically proved and these things do not go together.

It was mentioned that the church should take a leading role in encouraging people who are sick to go to hospital other than just relying on prayers when people are sick since the church is one of the institution that is trusted by many people in Malawi. People have more faith in the church than they do in politicians or government (Nation News survey, 2014). The church can utilise civic education, teaching from the bible with stories like the one that Jesus used saliva to heal the blind man (John 9:6). Here the church should not always be thinking of using prayer as a solution to the problem but also use other means like advising patients to go to the hospital for medical treatment while prayers are continuing.

4.4.4. Lobbying parliament to amend the Witchcraft Act.

According to the respondents, there is a disparity between the Malawi Witchcraft Act which does not recognise the existence of witchcraft contrary to the reality on the ground. Believers and no-believers in the society know that witchcraft exists while the law disputes it. This contradiction has been seen to be causing a problem in trying to find a lasting solution to the problem of witchcraft in Malawi. It was suggested that it was high time that people lobby the parliamentarians and government to make a deliberate effort to amend the old and unpopular witchcraft Act that was introduced by the colonial masters (The British) before independence in 1963. Respondents suggested that different groups in the society should be engaged. Groups that were mentioned included traditional leaders, religious leaders, civil society, political leaders, faith based groups, media, health sector, education sector, and lawyers among others.

According to Kuhn (1970:12) any model or law that does not bring good result must be changed. It is surprising that many laws in Malawi have been amended since independence and have proved to be effective in addressing some challenges but witchcraft has remained static. Laws that were amended included the one party state government law which was changed in 1994 so that Malawi became a multi-party democratic nation. Another one was to do with the term of office for the president of Malawi which was for life but it was amended to meet the current democratic principles. It was also felt to be appropriate that this witchcraft law be revisited to end the problem of witchcraft beliefs and fear. Here it was noted that people admitted that the witchcraft Act in Malawi was bad and needed to be changed. But it was also expressed that the change should be made in consultation with the people. It was clear that if people are involved in the decision making of the laws they will respect those laws and there will be a sense of ownership and responsibility.

The Bible speaks of repentance if people realise that they have committed an error or sin. Jesus also emphasised this to Nicodemus that unless one repents or turns to God he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven (John 3:3). What the respondents meant by referring to the biblical verse here was that unless a businessman takes a risk to change his usual business in order to make more profits the business cannot grow. The result would be bankrupt and

closing the business completely. The Witchcraft Act in Malawi must be amended today for the good of the citizens.

4.4.5. New curriculum in schools, colleges, seminaries and universities

Respondents mentioned that there was a need that a new curriculum was developed in primary schools, secondary schools, colleges and universities to suit what was happening on the ground. It was felt that Malawian education was mostly influenced by British ideologies since they were the ones that brought education in Malawi. This meant that issues to do with witchcraft were described negatively in literature or that witchcraft does not exist. Therefore it was not surprising that in all educational institutions, witchcraft was like a taboo to be discussed while the learners were aware of its existence through oral tradition and experiences in their localities.

It was suggested that new curriculum should be developed so that children were taught the reality about witchcraft and how this problem can be solved. It can be placed in a subject that can be relevant like ethics, psychology, anthropology, sociology, bible knowledge. As it is said that knowledge is power, it was felt that only when learners were taught the truth about witchcraft, only then the solution to the problem could be found. It was expressed that this problem should not continue to haunt and scare people in many generations to come as if people have not suggested solutions. This can be done by the ministry of education, theological institutions, and universities by engaging local people to have their input on the subject matter. Lack of adequate education was seen to be the challenge and hence needed curriculum changes for the students to be taught the truth about witchcraft in order to meet the challenges that people are experiencing in Malawi at present.

Further, the government, churches and other non-governmental organisations should establish adult literacy programmes especially in rural areas so that adult can learn how to read and write for themselves. Once literate, they would be able to access information on witchcraft through reading books, on internet or reading magazines. This can help people to be empowered with more knowledge. It was felt that unless the illiteracy rate of 37% in Malawi was reduced there can never be any progress with the fight against witchcraft beliefs and fear in Malawi.

4.4.6. Empowering the people economically

The issue of lack of economic empowerment was mentioned as another challenge that Malawians were experiencing. Respondents felt that the situation was that the richer were getting richer and richer while the poorer were getting worse in their poverty. This results into envy, jealousy hatred, and finger pointing. Respondents were able to compare witchcraft in developed countries and developing countries like Malawi. It was felt that in countries like Britain, America, France and German there is low accusations of witchcraft and yet literature shows that witchcraft has been existing there from long before these problems were such an issue in Africa. The reason was that economically people from these nations are empowered or are richer. In that situation every person is busy with his/her work that can sustain him or her economically. In contrast, Africa, and Malawi in particular most people are just farmers and with climate current change being experienced harvests are always bad making them poorer every year.

Further, respondents felt that there were no deliberate efforts from the government of Malawi to ensure that more people were economically empowered. Economy of the country was going down because of corrupt politicians who were making even things worse for majority of people. In the situation like that, when people have nothing to do the only thing was to speculate or cook stories and accuse each other of witchcraft. One respondent even said idleness is sin. This is where the government with the help of non-governmental organisations, religious groups needed to join hands and empower people economically by giving them soft loans to start income generating activities. The country also needs to challenge its engineers and researchers to come up with new things or ideas like mining sector so that more people were employed. It was felt that unless more people were busy doing something to earn money, there shall be no time to look at each other and making accusations of witchcraft which sometimes is made out of jealousy. It was interesting to hear that people accepted the problem of witchcraft belief and fear because they lacked economic empowerment. But it takes a collective effort to solve this problem which was also suggested as government cannot do it alone.

4.5. OTHER IMPACT OF WITCHCRAFT WITHIN CCAP CHURCH

Under the religious factor, the research has unveiled a number of things that the church should know and seriously consider for action to be taken to safeguard its integrity as it has impacted the church negatively.

4.5.1. Too much focus on witchcraft at the expense of other areas

The findings under religious factor has revealed that one of the major impact of issues of witchcraft in the church has been lack of balanced messages. It has been noted that the focus of most preachers has been on witchcraft and Satanism messages. This is not good enough because congregations need balanced messages from preachers for their spiritual growth and maturity. The Bible warns us not to remain spiritually babies (1 Peter 2:2-3) but to grow into maturity.

This is a wakeup call for ministers who are responsible for training lay preachers in the church. However, this does not mean that passages that mention witchcraft, evil spirit, and magic should be omitted. What it means here is that preachers should not forget other issues from the bible at the expense of witchcraft. Too much focus on witchcraft on preaching has resulted in ignoring other biblical teachings that the church needed to know as well. Eventually, these repeated sermons have bored people in the pews, which drives them away from the word of God. This needs to be considered urgently.

4.5.2. Glorifying the devil more than Christ

Under the same religious factor, the research has revealed that most congregations have been busy preaching and talking about witchcraft in their gatherings instead of the head of the church who is Jesus Chris himself. The centre of all activities in the church ought to be proclaiming Christ's victory on the cross which is also the victory of all Christians. But the mentioning of witchcraft very frequently in the church which is one of Satan's activities is like honouring him or fearing him. The understanding of many people is that the church should be the place of promoting the name of Christ rather than Satan with his evil acts.

4.5.3. Creating fear instead of joy

The issue of witchcraft in CCAP Church has brought fear and insecurity in many congregations because every week the pulpit has been the place of scaring people about witchcraft and Satanism. It is true that the church must warn its members about Satan and his evil deeds, but what is paramount is to give hope to Christians that Jesus is above all evil powers of the devil. The New Testament has full of messages that mention about Jesus Christ that he liberated us from fear and oppression of these evil forces such as witchcraft when he died and rose again. The church has to find ways of tackling this problem for the good of its members.

4.5.4. Pulpit as a battle field

Still with the same religious factor, some congregations within CCAP Blantyre Synod are focusing so much on issue of witchcraft so that other important issues are being neglected. The pulpit has turned to be the place where some preachers castigate each other on witchcraft. This is especially true with some church elders (*akulu a mpingo).* This can suggest the reason why Jesus had to clean the church by overturning the tables in Mathew 21:12-13 to clean the place of worship. The pulpit is the place where God speaks to his people through the preacher. Therefore, the church should ensure that pulpit should not be used to target others through the word of God. Church ministers as teaching elders should train all preachers the appropriate way of delivering pulpit sermons. Ministers discontinue the practice of using the pulpit to attack others.

4.5.5. Poor church attendance

Under the religious factor, it has been established that in some congregations where the emphasis is on witchcraft, it has resulted in poor Church attendance during Sunday services. Due to the fact that there are always frightening messages and repeated castigations, some believers have opted to stay away from church on Sundays. Some have secretly decided to go to other congregations mostly Pentecostals. The question to be asked is: where is the mandate that was given to the church by Jesus himself, the mandate of tending the sheep (John 21: 17)? This is the area the church must be serious with in finding the solution.

4.5.6. Hatred and enmity instead of love and forgiveness

Witchcraft related issues which are on the increase in the church are creating unnecessary tension and panic among believers. It has even brought hatred, enmity and suspicion amongst Christians within the same church. There has been instances where the case of witchcraft was resolved within the walls of the church but there is a tendency to harbour un-forgiveness, and yet the bible commands believers to forgive without conditions (Mathew 6:14-15). If the church cannot forgive, then whom is the church following? If believers are harbouring grudges against one another, which bible are they using? Love and forgiveness are non- negotiable in the Christian life because that is what God commands. There can be no fellowship if there is no love and forgiveness within the church. If love and forgiveness are no longer in the church, where is the church heading to? Is it not the church that is mandated by Christ himself saying; "Let light shine before, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven"? (Mathew 5:16). Can the church shine with bitterness, hatred, selfishness and divisions? This is a big challenge to the church today and if this is not taken seriously, as a church we are heading to an ecclesiastical catastrophe.

The church has been badly affected by witchcraft issues probably due to the way witchcraft cases have been handled in the different court sessions. It is therefore important to see how the church can deal with witchcraft issues in a way that can portray Jesus Christ beginning at congregational level up to the Synod.

4.6. CONCLUSION

There were five factors that emerged from the findings as causes of witchcraft beliefs and fear in Malawi: namely; cultural factors, social factors, religious factors, economic factors and legal factors and these were discussed in this chapter. After discussing the findings and applying Tödt's theory of decision-making it is clear that people have accepted the problem and they seem to have possible solutions to the problem of witchcraft beliefs and fear in Malawi. The impact of the problem has been discussed as well especially where the church has been badly affected, but the positive area is that the people know how this problem can be approached and solved. They have suggested different possible solutions in order to deal with the problem. But until this point, the problem is not solved yet but using decision-making theory, people are able to engage the problem and come up with different

suggestions. We have discussed how secular approaches have failed to end the problem of witchcraft in Malawi.

In order to attempt to end the problem of witchcraft beliefs and fear, it is therefore important to apply Dirk Smit's theory of ecclesiological forms in the next chapter. This will help to equip the church take its rightful role in trying to end the problem of witchcraft beliefs and fear in Malawi.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN WITCHCRAFT BELIEFS AND FEAR

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter dealt with data findings of witchcraft beliefs and fears and analysed the interviews of the targeted individuals in line with the objectives of the study as follows; church ministers, church elders, session clerks, women guilds, the youths, ordinary male and female members of the church. The chapter also attempted to discuss how other approaches failed to address the issue of witchcraft beliefs and fear in Malawi. Influenced by Tödt's theory of ethical decision-making it has discussed how people came to accept the problem of witchcraft and were able to come up with possible responses in order to deal with the problem.

This chapter attempts to find out what could be the role of the church in trying to address the problem of witchcraft beliefs and fear in Malawi. The chapter discusses the role that could be played by the church at the moment and what it could do in dealing with the challenge of witchcraft. Having accepted the problem of witchcraft in chapter four and making decision, it does not mean that the people have addressed the witchcraft challenges. There is a need to act on it in order that the problems of witchcraft are corrected. This is where the church is challenged so that it can put strategies in eradicating witchcraft beliefs and fears in Malawi. This is where the last step of Tödt's theory of taking the decision and acting is applicable.

Jesus Christ demonstrated the role of the church when he read out; "the spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour" (Luke 4:18-19). This was the message that also inaugurated Jesus into a programme of action to do things that God commanded him to do while in the world. Just as God commanded Jesus to perform these functions when he was on earth, the church today is commanded to take up its role of addressing the problems experienced by God's people. This chapter therefore will try to discuss the rightful role of the church.

Koopman (2005:9) suggests that in investigating the role of the church Smit's identification of six forms of the church might be helpful. It is through this background that this chapter will follow Smit's meaning of the church with the purpose of understanding the church's role on the issue of witchcraft beliefs and fears. Therefore, the theory of Dirk Smit of six ecclesiological forms of the church as congregation, worship, believers, volunteers, denomination and ecumenical church will be central in this chapter in trying to come up with solutions to the problem.

5.2. The Congregation

The Oxford dictionary defines congregation as a group of people who are gathered together in a church to worship God. This section tries to discuss how the congregation can help to make a contribution to the problem of witchcraft beliefs and fear in Malawi because it is the

church that is regarded as one of the most trusted institutions than any other groups (Nation News, 2014).

Smit (2004:135) explains the understanding concept of the church as a place gathered for worship and celebration and for mutual fellowship and support. These practices can assist the fulfilment of the task of the church in eradicating witchcraft beliefs and fears in Malawi because this is where love and, forgiveness are taught and preached. Koopman (2005:10) contends that the congregation has various practices that people do as they gather together when they worship God. Erickson (1998:1063) says that the function of the church is the edification of believers. He adds that although Jesus laid greater emphasis on evangelism, the edification of believers is logically prior referring to Ephesians 4:12 where it indicates that God has given various gifts to the church to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. In the case of CCAP Blantyre Synod in Malawi these practices are like choir singing, bible study, Sunday school class teachings, women's guilds gatherings or in local language *mvano.* They also include outreach ministry which includes cheering the sick in hospitals, helping the needy and evangelism. All these are done when people congregate in the church. The question is how can the congregation be helpful in trying to deal with the problem of witchcraft beliefs and fear within the church? The best approach can be to categorise the practices as follows; Sound biblical teaching, pastoral care, outreach ministry, and evangelism. Each one of these practices is important and can be helpful to reduce or end to the challenge of witchcraft beliefs and fear in Malawi within the congregation if they are used.

5.2.1. Sound biblical teaching

In most congregations of the CCAP Blantyre Synod in Malawi, we receive reports that bible studies are conducted. But these bible studies are done unsystematically or without having any guidelines or manual, or any other commentaries that can help gaining a clear understanding of the scriptures. These activities are done, for the most part, just to fulfil the policy of the church. Reports indicate that during youth meetings they have bible study. Women's guilds *(mvano)* gatherings they sometimes have bible study. During mid-week prayers in cottages *(milaga)* it is very rare to hear of bible study being one of the activities included on the program. Further, Sunday school classes are mostly taught by the youths who have not gone for special training on biblical studies. That means when conducting the

teaching from the bible, they lack sound knowledge to impart to the Sunday school members who will one day be full church members. The Sunday school instructors do not possess the skills required to accurately interpret the scriptures.

It is understandable however, that the church in Malawi is big and one minister cannot conduct bible study for all members of the church who are scattered in the parish. He needs help from lay leaders. But there must be a way to deal with the challenge of providing sound biblical teaching to church members. This is where the work of a teaching elder (Minister) entails. Turnbull (1967:324) asserts that it is in teaching ministry is where pastors or church ministers have the opportunity to have contact with their members and an opportunity to serve as teachers.

One way to deal with this problem is for the congregation to ensure that all those entrusted to lead in bible studies, be it in the cottage prayers, women's guild, or Sunday school classes should be those that have been well trained on how to conduct a bible study. Secondly, the material or manual for bible study in the church should be written in such a way that even a lay person would understand. It has been observed that most materials used for bible study were developed in English and not touching issues to do with challenges that Malawians are facing. It will be helpful to revisit these bible study materials and should be developed by local theologians so that issues like witchcraft are included. This is where the local minister of the congregation and the entire CCAP Blantyre Synod should endeavour to do for the good of the congregation or the synod.

It is through bible study that members of the congregation can be exposed to teachings such as witchcraft in the bible, sanctity of life, family life, love, forgiveness, the victory of Christians, the consequences of sin, holiness and other topical issues that are not usually tackled during preaching. These topical issues are very important that should be expanded during bible teaching because they form bases of Christian principle. Finally, it is high time that the church put emphasis on bible teaching instead of preaching so that topical issues are discussed in details for the spiritual maturity of members of the congregation within the church of CCAP Blantyre synod. The bible studies will help believers to develop love for each other, forgive even those accused of witchcraft, and they would be able to engage in violence as they would have learnt that Christ is the prince of peace. Further, if the biblical teaching is emphasised believers will know that Christ is above all witchcraft powers and

when he died, and was resurrected, after he conquered death, it meant that all believers should not fear witchcraft. The bible mentions that Christians are more than conquers (Romans 8:37) and that all believers were given powers to be children of God (John 1:12), therefore we have powers from God that are more powerful than that of witchcraft. Therefore there is no need to fear witchcraft.

5.2.1.1. Workshops, seminar and conferences

For the church to have sound biblical teaching in all congregations of CCAP Blantyre Synod it is vital to conduct workshops, seminars and conferences for ordained leaders and lay leaders. Rashe (2008:116) says that education is one of the most powerful tools that can assist members of the church to understand the extent of the problem. It is in workshops, seminars and conferences that ministers can reflect their theological knowledge and share new ideas. In workshops and seminar, lay leaders who assist ministers in conducting bible study have more knowledge imparted to them, so that they can work efficiently as they serve in the church. These seminars can even be conducted at congregational level at least once or twice a year. Unfortunately, most congregations are not conducting these seminars, workshops for its church members or leaders who lead in bible studies. The Synod is also supposed to intensify ministers' conferences or seminars so that relevant issues are addressed by sharing ideas in these conferences and seminars. Most ministers went for theological training long time ago when the challenges of today were not as severe as they are at present. It is therefore important to gain new knowledge and skills in order to assist the congregations better in the present day. If one stops learning new things then that person is destined to stop progressing, be it spiritual life or economic life. These workshops, seminars and conferences should specifically dwell on issues of witchcraft which are posing challenges to the life of many believers.

It is only when the members of the church are equipped with theological teaching regarding witchcraft that there can never be accusations, gossiping, mistrust and backsliding for Christians. Some members have ended up of leaving the church because of lack of theological knowledge on issues relating to witchcraft. But by exposing the believers with such knowledge through workshops, seminars and conferences can strengthen the faith of Christians and witchcraft cannot be a threat to spiritual life.

5.2.2. Pastoral care and counselling

Pastoral care and counselling involve the utilization by persons in ministry of one-to-one or small group relationships to enable healing empowerment and growth to take place within individuals and their relationships (Howard: 2012:7). Pastoral care and counselling seek to utilize both theological and psychological insight regarding the human situation, and the healing of persons. This suggest that a congregation has the responsibility of bringing healing and growth in all areas of human wholeness. If the community is experiencing bad relationship because of witchcraft accusations, the church must find fresh ways of meeting the needs of troubled persons for the renewal of peoples' relationships. According to Howard (2012:9) counselling is an instrument of continuing renewal through reconciliation, helping to heal our estrangement from ourselves and our families, from other church members, from those outside the church and from an enlivening, growing relationship with God.

The gospel of John 10:10 which Jesus says; ....'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full' (NIV). This suggests that Jesus came to liberate people and bring them into wholeness. The church should therefore endeavour to fulfil the mission of Jesus of nurturing and empowering life in the people in fullness by restoring good relationships. The Book of Genesis also gives us a good thought on wholeness. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female" (Genesis 1:27). The question that can be asked is that are the congregations within CCAP Blantyre Synod fulfilling this mandate? Why is it that there is hatred, gossiping, accusations, enmity, and stigma due to witchcraft? This is where pastoral care and counselling should be intensified by the church. The church minister should embark on training lay leaders to assist him or her in pastoral care and counselling. The congregation is the only institution that can bring meaningful life to the people since it deals with physical and spiritual aspect. Jesus despite being criticised for spending much time with the sick and those who were burdened (Mark 2:17) and tax collectors (Mathew 18:12-14) who were regarded as sinners, he demonstrated this in his response to them. The parable of the lost sheep parable also demonstrates Jesus mission Mathew 18:12-14. This suggests that Jesus was concerned with the need of the people which the churches need to emulate today.

The Presbyterian Church in Malawi particularly CCAP Blantyre Synod should ensure that intensive is done with the victims of witchcraft in order to fulfil its task of showing the love to those oppressed and victimised as was demonstrated by Jesus Christ when he associated himself with the oppressed and victimised. The trauma that the people who were victimised by witchcraft requires deep counselling and this can best be done by the church ministers or church elders who are leaders of the church. Counselling without showing love and empathy is meaningless. But when the counselling is done by the leaders of the church with love and with that understanding of someone's feelings and experiences, it can yield positive results to the victimised people.

The church should also pay attention to counsel or teach the people who are perpetrators of violence as well for the sake of peace and harmony in the congregation within CCAP Blantyre Synod in Malawi. These are the people who victimise others because of witchcraft even within the church. But there can never be peace, harmony and unity within the church if others are busy victimising others due to witchcraft related issues. Neither can there be growth of the church both spiritually and numerically if members of the same church are treating each other badly. Again the leaders of the church are best placed to do what Jesus taught and demonstrated when he taught the Pharisees about forgiveness and tolerance through an adulterous woman in John 8:4-11 which says; "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law of Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" The response of Jesus was very interesting. Jesus answered them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her". The Bible mentions that all the people went away without giving answer to Jesus. Then finally Jesus said that he could also not condemn the woman for the adultery. This implies that there is need for tolerance and forgiveness of one another. Church ministers or pastors and church elders in CCAP church Blantyre Synod must be able to engage those that perpetrate violence because of witchcraft with the aim of teaching and counselling them.

5.2.3. Outreach ministry

This activity mainly involves going out and helping the people with the word of God also known as evangelism and assisting the needy by sharing with them such things as food,

clothing, shelter and other necessities. The congregation must do merciful work by doing ministry unto the world. This should be done to all people including those that are seen to be rejected or discriminated against due to witchcraft, including those that do not belong to any congregation or church. Jesus Christ commanded the church to do this in Mathew 28:19 by saying; "therefore go and make disciples of all nations". Grudem (1994:854) says that the church that is ministering to the world through evangelism and mercy is bound to grow even in number. This suggests that people who are believed to be practicing witchcraft and those that experience misfortunes because of witchcraft can be liberated from the bondage of practicing witchcraft and fear. The church is called to preach about the love of God that was shown by sending his son Jesus Christ to die for the world. This should be done irrespective of any situation because God loves all the people. This approach can win more souls to Christ for their salvation as well as nurturing those that belong to the church. But are the congregations in CCAP Blantyre Synod doing this ministry in the community? Any church that omits this ministry should not expect to grow numerically and spiritually (Milne1982:215). This teaches that if Jesus spent much of his time in outreach ministry, thus evangelism and helping those that were suffering, the congregations of CCAP Blantyre Synod today need to follow his example.

But this ministry cannot be done by a minister alone. This is why Paul mentioned the different spiritual gifts; "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit of the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge, to another the faith by the same Spirit, to another the gift of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongue and to another the interpretation on tongue" (1Corinthians 12:4-11). Again the Bible says that all believers are a royal priesthood (1 Peter2:9). This teaches us to join hands in doing the work of God irrespective of gender, economic status in the society, or our position in church or outside the church but should know that what binds us together is Christ.

5.3. Worship Services

Another activity of the church is worship. Worship lays its emphasis on God. According to Erickson (1998:1066) worship, praise and exaltation of God was a common Old Testament practice, as can be seen particularly in the book of Psalms and in the book of Revelation in New Testament and in other books of the bible. Worship also known in Greek as Latreia meaning ministry represents the most obvious way in which the church fulfils its purpose of bringing honour to God (Milne 1982:221). He adds that this is frequently reflected in scripture and liturgical formulae. According to Smit (2004:135) Christian worship is demonstrated through regular worship intended to have an impact on those who attend; an impact that includes faith formation and moral formation. This understanding about worship service means that the church ought to make use of this gathering to address issues related to witchcraft that affect its members so that people can change for the better. This can be done through praying for the victimised and those that accuse others of witchcraft practice. White (1983:16) contends that Christian worship is speaking and touching in God's name. This means that worship is to do with interacting physically and not only intellectually or theoretically. According to White (1983:16) the meaning of worship is that during worship service we speak to God for people and to people for God. This means that in worship services, members of the church pray together, sing together, celebrate Holy Communion together and have baptism. Further, during worship, the prayer of confession is done, the Lord's Prayer is recited where it mentions that; 'Forgive our sins as we forgive those who sinned against us' (Mathew 6:12). Such prayers and other activities during worship services can make some impact to peoples' lives.

Koopman (2005:9) agrees that worship services have the potential to transform people. This suggests that if worship services in CCAP Blantyre Synod congregations are conducted in a vibrant way, they can transform people in the way they perceive witchcraft. Those that accuse others and hate them for practicing witchcraft can be transformed. Similarly those that believe that they have been bewitched can change their lives considering that God heals and is above these evil powers of witchcraft. Therefore the church has the responsibility of using the worship services to make it lively and touching spiritually so that both the victims of witchcraft and those that accuse others of witchcraft practice, those who reject, victimise and hate those that they accuse; they should all change their mind set. The

church should endeavour to spearhead love, forgiveness, reconciliation and peace. Worship services can be used in the church to achieve that. The CCAP Blantyre Synod even empowers church ministers in its constitution to conduct the service of worship in a way that can be vibrant to bring glory to God (Blantyre Synod Constitution, 2004).

According to (Webber 1979:137) the world, though created good, has fallen; subsequent culture expresses the fallen nature of man, but the death of Jesus and his resurrection reverse the fallen condition of man and his creation. The Christian hope is for the ultimate release of man and creation from the bondage of sin into a new and perfect creation. This suggests that although man sinned, through the death and resurrection of Jesus that can be taught during worship services, people can be transformed. The church serves God for his glory through worship (Milne1982:221). This means that in worship there are elements such as praise, prayer, reading the word of God (Bible), singing, sacraments and offerings. He adds that too often Christians come to worship in a spirit of what will I get out of this? Whereas in fact the proper spirit should be, what can I give to God in this? This implies that Christians should think of how they can change the life of others in worship.

Therefore, as Webber (1979:29) points out, the church should seek to transform society and not to withdraw from it or accommodate it. Jesus Christ became human and directly involved himself in the liberation of humanity from sin. This implies that CCAP Blantyre Synod as a church must emulate Christ whereby it should be directly involved in liberating people from the bondage of witchcraft beliefs and fear which is sin through propagating the gospel.

5.4. Christian Believers

Taking the definition of Grudem (1994:394) that the church is a community of true believers, one would see the task the church which is composed of believers is supposed to do. The bible contains many passages that mention about what believers ought to do. Jesus himself commissioned disciples (believers) before his ascension in Mathews 28:19-20; saying, 'therefore, go and make disciples of all nations and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you'. This suggest that obedience to the word of God was not only restricted to the hearers but also to those that proclaimed the gospel. Christian believers in

the church are therefore tasked to preach by example or through what they do. This is where faith and action applies (James 2:26).

Smit (2004:143) defines Christian believers as the salt on the earth and the light of the world. He adds that believers are always involved in their own daily ways of following Jesus Christ and confessing the faith through their lives and actions. Milne (1982:226) contends that believers must glorify God by being the salt and light of the society as it is written in Mathew 5: 16 but not merely through evangelism but also efforts to influence society towards a form of life which is more just, pure, honest and compassionate, a closer reflection of God's own character and therefore more honouring to him. Rashe (2008:133) citing Smit's ethical questions challenges; the roles of Christian believers in public life, in politics, and in the economy. How can they make contribution to the moral fabric of society? Do believers see themselves as having a role in moral formation and faith formation of other fellow brothers and sisters? If we take what Koopman (2005:9) suggested, that worship services can transform people, then believers are able to influence others and change their way of thinking towards witchcraft.

It is the role of an individual believer to demonstrate that he/she does not live under the fear of witchcraft or accuse others of practising witchcraft. A real Christian believer will witness about the power of Jesus Christ over witchcraft forces rather than hating those that are believed to be witches. Christian believers will be busy with conducting special prayers for those that believe they have been bewitched so that deliverances are done. It is the duty of believers to pray for the children that have confessed that they are being taught witchcraft by some witches. This is where exorcism prayers are needed, for those people believed to be taught witchcraft.

Another area that that believers have to embark on is counselling to the victimised. These are people that have been discriminated against and stigmatized by society because they were accused of practising witchcraft and also the ones that believe that they were bewitched and are sick or experiencing some misfortunes. Milne (1982:94) says that true believers must be able to witness to the ministry of resurrection of Jesus Christ. This suggests that the believers are doing ministry with fellow believers for spiritual nurturing. This is also in agreement with what the bible teaches about witnessing in Luke 6:12ff; and

Acts 1:21ff. In this way the church can be stronger to Christ because it is seeking righteousness through prayer (1 Peter 2: 9).

5.4.1. Believers doing ministry to others

The duty of the believers is not confined to the church alone. Jesus Chris told his disciples and all believers to go to proclaim the gospel to all people (Mathew 28:19-20). Christian believers have the responsibility to reach out to others who are living in the bondage of sin of practicing witchcraft or fear it. All these people need help. Believers who make up the church of God should do this through evangelism so that other people can hear the gospel and receive Christ as their personal Saviour. Any church that ignores evangelism to revive its members as well as reaching unsaved souls is missing its mandate (Milne 1982: 114). This implies that people who are victimised by witchcraft need to know the truth about the gospel. These include those practicing witchcraft and those that fear it.

Believers must also ensure that they are doing merciful work such as helping the needy, and cheering the sick. There are many passages in the bible that demonstrate the role of a believer when it comes to cheering the sick and helping the needy. Jesus himself fed 5,000 people when they were hungry (John 6:1-11), he healed the blind (Mathew 9:29-30). Milne (1982:220) adds that believers which neither preaches the gospel, nor experiences a burden for the moral and spiritual welfare of those around their doors, nor express concern for the poor and needy wherever they are found, have lost the title to authenticity and are the living denial of their Lord. This emphasises that believers should reach out to others as an expression of love for them just as God has loved them. Erickson (1998:1067) says that Jesus cared about the problems of the needy and suffering. He healed the sick and even raised the dead on occasion. This suggests that the church should continue with what Jesus was doing by helping those who are believed to be suffering because of witchcraft issues. These include people who are accused of practicing witchcraft and those that believe they have been bewitched.

5.5. Volunteers

Volunteer is another form of the church by Dirk Smit's theory of ecclesiological forms. Many dictionaries define volunteer as a person who does a job without being paid for it. In the church, people are involved with helping others without any personal gains. In Malawi for instance, Christians go the assist the bereaved family with spiritual support, monetary support, and physical support in order to comfort and console the bereaved family. Volunteers are therefore free to go anywhere to work for the Lord. Women guild members are good at that in CCAP Blantyre Synod where they spend days with the bereaved family until the burial is done.

The church need to cast the net wide in the work of volunteering in the community. The volunteer services should extend to even those people that are accused of witchcraft practice; who mostly are rejected and discriminated against in society. There are old people who need financial support, emotional support, and spiritual support. According to Rashe (2008:142), emotional support means being there for the person who is in trouble or in need. This implies that much as financial support is important to needy people but physical presence is more important. In a situation where one person is being accused of witchcraft practice and is being rejected by the society, the church as volunteers should be visiting him or her regularly. Very often people who are accused of witchcraft practice do not have many people who are interested in giving them support or financial support. This is where the church should come in and help as volunteers.

Another task of church volunteers is to speak for those people that are being victimised in the society due to witchcraft. Most people who are victimised as a result of accusations of practicing witchcraft are not given the chance to be heard by the society. The church as volunteers should speak for them as others may just be innocently accused. Jesus ministry was associated with those who were oppressed or could not defend themselves (Luke 4:18-19). Therefore there is a need to raise awareness around issues of witchcraft and this can best be fulfilled by the church because they do not belong to any political party, any tribe or any group of people but are mandated by God himself according to scriptures. This should start in church and expand into the whole community. The church should always ask itself whether this noble task is being done or not. Why are old people in the community suffering

due to accusations of witchcraft and yet the church is there? Why are some people including some Christians busy accusing others of witchcraft practice instead of depending on the power of Jesus Christ who is above witchcraft powers?

The church has the responsibility to help all people spiritually, financially, emotionally and to provide civic education around the community it is serving for peace, love, and the glory of God.

5.6. Denomination

Denomination is another form of the church in Dirk Smit's theory. Smit (2004:143) defines denomination as a group of congregations clustered together with commonalities. It includes individual Christians, volunteers and congregations working together. This implies that the church should unsure that it is working together to fight against all evils such as victimising those accused to be practicing witchcraft and those that those that are believed to be suffering because of witchcraft.

In Malawi all denominations under CCAP Blantyre Synod worked together to fight for democracy prior to 1993 when the synod issued a pastoral letter, on the "Role of the church in the Transformational of Malawi in the context of justice and Peace" (Gama 2010:142). He comments that in the letter that all denominations under CCAP Blantyre Synod were emphasising that it was within the mandate of the church to speak prophetically on issues of social justice. This resulted in a referendum that led Malawi to be a multiparty democratic nation. The same thing can apply to witchcraft in Malawi. If all denominations under CCAP Blantyre Synod can work in unity, against witchcraft beliefs and fears, the problem of victimising each other will stop. It was out of togetherness by all the denominations that helped the CCAP church spearhead multiparty democracy in Malawi. Denomination as it emphasises working together by all congregations must ensure that issues of witchcraft are dealt with in unity. There are several arms of the church that can make use of this to end witchcraft beliefs and fear.

5.6.1. Church and Society

In CCAP Blantyre Synod there is an arm of the church that deals with civic education for the community about presidential and parliamentary elections in Malawi. Committees are already there in all presbyteries and congregations. It is high time that these committees also included witchcraft related issues in their civic education programmes. Since members of these committees are trained with various skills, once they include witchcraft issues the community will benefit quite a lot and stop victimising others because of witchcraft. The church should therefore use its existing structure to provide civic education to the people. Church and Society can also help to engage people on how this problem of witchcraft can be dealt with because they are at the grass roots level. This can come up with good ideas and can be presented to the government as they also try to deal with witchcraft related issues in Malawi.

5.6.2. Public Affairs Committee (PAC)

Public Affairs Committee (PAC) in Malawi is an umbrella body of all religious faiths that was established in 1992 with the purpose of fighting against the one party system of government. When this was achieved in 1993, the organisation is mainly seen when elections in Malawi are about to be held. This means that a period of five years the organisation role is not really effective in the community. The church ought to use this group which has spread all over the country and in different denominations like CCAP, Anglican, Roman Catholic, Assemblies of God, Seventh Day Adventist and others to train their members to conduct civic education and also speak with one voice to the community so that issues of witchcraft are addressed as a united front. Since this organisation gets funding from overseas organisations, they can even produce booklets that address witchcraft in a Godly way. It can even conduct seminars and workshops to equip leaders on how to deal with witchcraft in Malawi. It is only when people are empowered with sound knowledge that they can speak and teach effectively with one voice. Gama (2010:143) observes that with the formation of and involvement of PAC in matters of social justice, it was no longer necessary for a single denomination to fight against the political system alone, or to work in isolation from other churches on matters of social justice. There was really a spirit of ecumenism among churches. This implies that PAC played a good role in

ecumenism and this can be possible once more when tackling the issues related to witchcraft.

There are so many challenges affecting Malawians now including witchcraft related issues and PAC should not only be seen as only a political mouth piece of religious groups, but should also be keen to address other issues that affect the lives of human beings like the issue of witchcraft. No wonder this body is now seen as another political party.

5.6.3. Continuous training

There is need for continuous theological training for church ministers through various forums. Theology is a living subject because it deals with what God is speaking now to the people. Sadly to note that in our churches many pastors and ministers went to theological trainings a long time ago. The world keeps on changing and if church leaders rely on what they learned in class many years back, it will be difficult to help the church in addressing challenges of today. Witchcraft in Malawi for instance was not openly mentioned during one party rule from 1964 to 1992. But after the birth of multiparty as the freedom of expression was enshrined in the New Constitution of Malawi the issues of witchcraft are rampant. It takes pastors being continuously be trained on the current issues affecting the people so that their work can be seen as relevant. This can be done through regular workshops, seminars and conferences so that they can gain new theological ideas to deal with current problems.

Another way is the culture of reading current theological books and articles. Ministers are encouraged to read widely, current books that are addressing issues of today. Witchcraft related issues have negatively affected the church and if the church cannot find new ways of tackling the problem more members will be lost.

The church should also teach relevant topical issues in the sermon during the service of worship. The church is seen to emphasise on preaching and not teaching. Jesus though was engaged in preaching in evangelistic rallies, but he kept a balance. He used to teach so that believers are equipped with knowledge like in Matthew chapter 5. The church should embark on training and teaching as well so that people are grounded with knowledge and hence cannot fear witchcraft or victimise others because of witchcraft practice.

5.7. Ecumenical church

Smit (2004:135) refers the ecumenical church as the group of denominations and faith based organizations irrespective of their doctrinal beliefs working together and doing things together. In Malawi there is Malawi Council of churches (MCC) which is the umbrella body for all churches in Malawi. The churches under this organisation can be used to deal with the problem of witchcraft beliefs and fear together as one body. This body has been effective when it comes to health related issues through hospital services as well as in education. But MCC has been seen not doing enough for other issues affecting Malawians such as witchcraft beliefs and fear.

But being a well organised body, it can bring some positive change to the society once there is togetherness in approaching the problem of witchcraft which has brought hatred, gossiping and fear instead of trusting Jesus Christ whom Christians believe conquered the evil powers of witchcraft when he died and was resurrected. This can be achieved by ignoring their doctrinal teachings. Just as they have worked together through Christian Hospital Association of Malawi (CHAM), they can also work together in tackling the problem of witchcraft so that nobody can be victimised because of witchcraft practices. Several programmes can be done to address the problem of MCC as ecumenical body works together in Malawi in addressing the witchcraft beliefs and fears. The church should therefore be asking this question; are we addressing the problem of witchcraft which people are facing today as Jesus wanted it to be? Jesus was interested in the life of today being lived in wholeness and the life to come and that is why he clearly said; "I have come so that they may have life, and have life in full" (John 10:10). This implies that the church as ecumenical body should address the challenges people are facing today by breaking the silence of talking about the evils of witchcraft. But what programmes can the ecumenical church establish as ways of dealing with witchcraft in Malawi?

Firstly, the ecumenical church should do civic education to the masses about the evils of discriminating and victimising those that are accused or suspected of practising witchcraft. If the ecumenical church can unite and teach the community, there can be less or no violence against those accused of witchcraft. Secondly, the ecumenical church should condemn with one voice the behaviour of victimising others because of witchcraft. As a united church,

people will be able to listen and understand what the ecumenical church body teaches if all the churches are condemning the perpetration of violence against those suspected to be involved in witchcraft. Thirdly, the practice of witchcraft is sin and the ecumenical church should teach it members that God condemns idol worship and therefore nobody should be indulged in witchcraft. This teaching can help those that are practising witchcraft to stop and only trust in God. Jesus also discouraged the spirit of serving two masters at the same time. Fourthly, the ecumenical church can come up with Income Generating Activities that can help empower believers economically so that there can be no envy or, jealousy amongst the people. The ecumenical body can also help in coming up with tracks, booklets, magazines and manuals that can contain issues of witchcraft teachings and distribute them to all believers for their spiritual growth.

5.7.1. Establish elderly centre homes

Ecumenical church can establish elderly centre homes whereby all elderly people who are accuse of practicing witchcraft can be placed to avoid them being victimised in the communities. Here they can be provided with security, food and spiritual support. These people also need counselling for the life they have experienced. Together the ecumenical church can organise skilful people who can help with counselling. These centres can act as their homes just as government established Mpemba Boys home in Blantyre where naughty and convicted boys are sent for the purpose of helping them to rehabilitate their behaviour.

The elderly centre home can be a safe place for the accused elderly witches since their lives are always in danger when they live in the communities. Incidents that are happening in communities consisting of killing, beating, the burning down of houses and discriminating against those are accused of practicing witchcraft, all can be avoided when they are staying at one place with some security provided for them. In this way we can save lives of many elderly people who are mostly accused of practicing witchcraft.

The centres can also be a good place to assist them with food clothes and health facility. Most elderly people who are accused of witchcraft practice are left without any help since they are rejected even by their own family members. Due to their age they are unable to work and get their basic needs in life. As a result most of them get sick and die quickly. But

as a church we know that life is a gift from God and anybody who has lived longer does not necessarily mean that he/she is practicing witchcraft. The bible has many examples of people who lived many years but they were not witches or wizards. We have Abraham who lived 175 years (Genesis 25:7), Lameck lived 777 years and died (Genesis 5:31), Adam lived 930 years and died (Genesis 5:5). This implies that living longer on earth does not mean one is practicing witchcraft. The elderly centres can make the elderly people live the years that God has given them.

Elderly people need spiritual support as well. Most often old people are neglected spiritually when they live in the communities and are suspected to be practicing witchcraft. But these are the people who need more spiritual support because they are being prepared for another life to come. The ecumenical church can organise programmes for prayers with them regularly by assigning different pastors and ministers to go and conduct prayers with them without considering the denomination they come from. During these prayers the Gospel can be preached to them. Erickson (1998:1069) asserts that the preaching of the gospel is the heart of the ministry of the church. He adds at the beginning of Jesus' ministry he announced that he had been anointed to preach the gospel and later he charged the apostles to continue his ministry by spreading the gospel. This indicates that in the centres that elderly people are placed, they are supposed to be preached to renew their spiritual lives.

The elderly centre homes can also be the place where exorcism prayers can be conducted. This can help those that were given witchcraft unknowingly by their parents and they have admitted to be delivered. Ecumenical church can organise such prayers and send pastors and ministers who are gifted in this area to help these people. According to Koopman (2005:10) says that the role of the ecumenical church in terms of priestly task is by showing solidarity with the marginalised and the wronged. This suggests that the priestly task is the work of taking care and showing compassion to those that are victimised and rejected by the society due to witchcraft related issues. According to Rashe (2008:149) ecumenism gives us a clear aim of the concept of bringing unity among Christians in order to carry out the general mission of the church to unify humanity in Christ. He adds that ecumenism brings together the people of God irrespective of race, cultural background and denomination to respond as a unit to the challenges facing our societies. This implies that elderly centre

homes can best assist the victimised people if ecumenism takes a role because it does not segregate people.

5.7.2. Ecumenical church to speak for the voiceless

The ecumenical church has a role to speak with one voice for the voiceless. This is what is termed as prophetic ministry. Old people who are accused of witchcraft practice mostly cannot be able to speak for themselves. Instead they suffer in silence which is not good for their health. It is the duty of the church to speak for such oppressed and suffering people. The prophetic ministry was given biblical mandate to the church. According to Nurnberger (1979:356), the church of God cannot pass by on the other side, like the priest and the Levite of the parable, while a neighbour is wounded and bleeding to death. He adds that if we read the Book of Acts, we see that the church of Jesus Christ has had an effective influence towards change on the society. "These men have changed the world upside down". This means that things changed because the disciples of Jesus were speaking and doing the same thing in unity.

Apostle Paul also encouraged believers to speak and do things with one voice. "Now the important thing is that your way of life should be as the one common purpose and that with only one desire you are fighting together for the faith of the gospel. Don't be afraid of your enemies; always be courageous and this will prove to them that they will lose and that you will win, because it is God who gives you the victory" (Philippians 1:27-28). This encourages the ecumenism to do and speak in unity.

The issue of witchcraft is very sensitive and it is impossible to speak about it while divided. What is even worse is that the Witchcraft Act in Malawi forbids the existence of it and does not provide solution to it while the church knows that witchcraft exists. This contradiction requires one voice as a church so that the victimised are protected. Similarly, the voice should address the problem of fear of witchcraft to those that live in fear. The ecumenical church can best address this because the bible empowers the church to speak truth. The Kairos Document (1995) says that both the oppressor and the oppressed need hope, and this hope can only be preached by the churches who apply prophetic theology to their social

role in their context. This hope is from Jesus Christ, and Jesus has taught us to speak of this hope as the coming of God's kingdom.

The ecumenical church needs to speak for those that are suffering because of witchcraft issues. The church has to condemn all sorts of violence as well as condemning witchcraft practice as a sin before God. The advantage of the church is that it can provide solution to those who fear; not even witchcraft referring them to Jesus Christ who is above all evil powers. If anybody surrenders his or her life to Christ there is nothing to fear witchcraft because his death and resurrection conquered all powers of darkness (Romans 8:37-39).

Just as ecumenical church spoke against the issue of albino killings in March, 2015, and things changed for the better in Malawi, the church can do the same with the issue of witchcraft. The ecumenical church should therefore not sit back and watch while other people are being victimised and live in fear because of witchcraft related issues. The recent incident that happened in Dedza district of Malawi can testify about how the church need to speak out as a unit. According to Zodiak on line (Wednesday, 20 May, 2015) reports that angry mob set on fire twelve houses of people accused of practicing witchcraft at Mayani in Dedza district in Malawi. The reports indicates that a girl died on Monday, 18 May, 2015. A certain development had raised suspicion among villagers who organised themselves and started attacking people suspected of witchcraft in the area. The reports indicated that the victims fled their homes during the attack and have been rendered homeless while their properties were burnt to ashes. In a situation like this among many, the ecumenical church should speak against this kind of behaviour.

5.7.3. Day Care Centres for victimised children

Another group that have suffered greatly in Malawi because of witchcraft are the children. There have been reports that when a child has admitted to be taught witchcraft, some parents and relatives disown or reject the child. In the end those children end up as street children like orphans while their parents are alive. This is inhuman and irresponsible. In a situation like this the church ought to establish day care centres to accommodate such children. The church needs to solicit funds to help these children with food, clothes, education. Furthermore such centres can be a good place where these neglected children

can be connected to God through special prayers so that powers of witchcraft are disabled or removed. The church has the responsibility to teach such children through bible study and prayers how to rely on the power of Jesus Christ rather than evil powers. There are many pastors and minsters that are gifted in exorcism that the church can use to deliver these children from the bondage of witchcraft which the bible describe as sin (Revelation 21:8).

In additional to the prayers, these children can be counselled. Since they have experienced a life of rejection by their parents and relatives, they need to receive counselling from skilful people. The church can use these day care centres as the best place for counselling these children so that they turn into good citizens. But it must be emphasised that this is a sensitive issue and a big task that can best be handled by the ecumenical church. The day care centres will also assist the church to monitor the children's behaviour who were believed to be taught witchcraft. The ecumenical church has therefore a big responsibility to care for such victimised children.

5.7.4. Debates forums

The church being an institution that many people trust can organise debates on the evils of victimising others who are suspected of practicing witchcraft through the radios, televisions and other mediums. This can help people to see the effect of victimising others for the sake of witchcraft in Malawi. The forums can also came up with suggestions on how to tackle witchcraft issues in a manner that cannot be destructive, oppressive and victimisation to the suspected people.

Malawi witchcraft Act needs amendment and such forums can bring suggestions together and be presented to government to consider as it tries to change the existing witchcraft Act which does not address issues on the ground today. There is no better institution than the church in Malawi that can be respected when it has organised a meeting for a national issue. The church should therefore take up its rightful role as mandated by Christ; "you are the salt and light of the world" (Matthew 5:13-14). The church has the capacity to change the mind set of people and start respecting each other.

5.8. Conclusion

This chapter looked at the role that the church can play in dealing with the challenge of witchcraft. The theory of ecclesiological forms by Dirk Smit was discussed and tried to come up with solutions to witchcraft beliefs and fear in Malawi. The chapter has seen that the church has the capacity to deal with the problem of witchcraft. The last chapter presents the recommendations of the study. In conclusion, this chapter will summarise the entire research study and offer some suggestions for future research in this topic.

CHAPTER SIX: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY AND SUMMARY

6.1. Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the role that the church can play to deal with the problem of witchcraft in Malawi. This was tackled using the theory of Dirk Smit of ecclesiological forms

which tried to come up with possible solutions to the problem. This final chapter of this research study will present some recommendations and then offer suggestions for future research in witchcraft beliefs and fear. The last section for this chapter will summarize the entire research study.

6.2. Recommendations

This section of the study part will be dealt with from two perspectives; i.e. recommendations on how to deal with witchcraft problem for those believed to be practicing witchcraft and those that are being victimized because of witchcraft.

6.2.1. Those practicing witchcraft

This category can also be divided into two areas namely; those who confess their involvement and those who are unrepentant even when evidence seems to be leaning heavily against them.

6.2.1.1. Those who confess

The recommendation is that those who confess their involvement in witchcraft within the church need to be taken through a session of prayers of deliverance by those people who are spiritually mature enough and are gifted in deliverance. After deliverance, then counselling should follow for those people. But the counselling should be in several sessions because they experienced hard times in the field of witchcraft. This counselling should be done by trustworthy and skillful people who are spiritually mature and have been were trained. Here the church should be free to use other spiritually matured believers from other congregations.

6.2.1.2. Those who refuse to confess

Those who refuse their involvement in witchcraft despite the evidence leaning heavily against them need to be taken through the established church disciplinary processes. But this should be done after counselling sessions have been done. Disciplinary session should be the last resort for such people. There is need for the church to proceed with caution

when handling witchcraft cases. The recommendation is that there should be patience, prayers and involve the involvement of the members of the church who are gifted with discernment as this is spiritual warfare. This is where the church minister is supposed to know members of his or her congregation and their gifts and train them so that they can assist him or her. The church has different parts with different functions as Paul says in 1 Corinthians chapter 12. The church should use these gifts for the glory of God.

6.3. Those who are victimized by witchcraft

There are people who are victimized because they are accused of practicing witchcraft innocently and those that believe that they are suffering because they were because they were bewitched hence they are sick and experience misfortunes.

6.3.1. Those victimized and accused innocently

The church should counsel the victimized on a regular basis because of the trauma they have experienced. This part requires the minister to do it. The accused person must see the love of God through the highest level in church structure. This should be done with biblical teaching so that the accused person is comforted and strengthened both physically and spiritually. But this must be done after discernment to prove that the person was indeed accused innocently. Secondly the minister must publicly announce it in the church that the person was accused wrongly and should further condemn the spirit of accusing each other of witchcraft practice. Thirdly, for their security, the church should try to establish day care centers for the children who are suspected to be practicing witchcraft and elderly center homes for the accused elderly people. The church should mobilize resources to cater for such victims at one place. The church can ask the police to protect these people at one place or recruit security guards.

6.3.2. Those victimized or believed to be bewitched

The church must be taught that the real answer regarding witchcraft is not to cure the ill but to prevent it. The emphasis should be to teach Christians that they can be protected by the

blood of Jesus Christ. As the saying goes; prevention is better than cure. The church should take the following steps to protect its members from being attacked by witchcraft:

- By building a strong intercessory prayer base at the local congregation.
- By building an effective Sunday school led by capable and spirit filled teachers.
- By promoting strong, sound and biblical based teaching at congregation level.
- By having time to pray for the people who have specific needs of this nature.
- By inviting people to publicly respond to the Gospel and acknowledge Jesus openly as Lord.
- By encouraging people to testify of their relationship to Jesus Christ.
- By teaching Christians to be prayerful all the time.

Let us look at some of these points on how they can help the church overcome witchcraft related issues in the church.

6.3.2.1. Building an effective Sunday school

Sunday school lays the foundation for the future of the church, hence the need for proper training. The Bible even puts emphasis on this that; "train a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it" (Proverbs 22:6). At this level, children should be taught about witchcraft that it really exists but for them they can overcome it once they put their faith in God which comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17) hence the teachers have to teach them the word of God. Teachers need to know the word of God and impart the same to the children (1 Corinthians 15:3-5). The teachers who have volunteered to be assisting our children should be interviewed by the church minister or any spiritually matured member of the church to make sure they are real Christians who are capable and are called to teach the word of God to the children. This should be done to ensure that they don't teach wrong things like witchcraft itself to our children. Both teachers and the children must be encouraged to live a perpetual life of prayer.

6.3.2.2. Having time to pray for peoples specific needs

Many people have been affected by issues of witchcraft and expect the church to give help to them. They come to church with issues during worship services and they go back with the

same problems. Therefore, the church has to give an opportunity of listening to the problems of its members and try to provide solutions to their problems. This can be done through prayer connected to their needs. Further, such people should be directed to the minister of their congregation and ministers should help them accordingly. This is where there is a need to form deliverance and counselling teams at a local congregation. Once these teams are trained by the church minister, they can assist the minister with deliverance prayers and counselling to such people who have problems.

6.3.2.3. Inviting people to publicly respond to the Gospel and acknowledge Jesus openly as Lord and savior

After people have listened to the message an opportunity should be given to listeners to declare publicly their stand of faith. Let those who have been touched and convicted by the message come out openly and confess the Lordship of Jesus in their lives. This will help them receive discipleship in order to grow in faith (Blantyre Synod Constitution 2004; article 9.13.2).

6.3.2.4. Having people testify of their relationship to Christ

When something has happened or one has had an experience in their personal or spiritually life, that person must be encouraged to share openly with other people so that the church can get encouraged and be built up in faith. Such testimonies in their walk with God will help the church minister and the entire leadership of the church to know what to teach and whom to include on the preaching program during Sunday worship services. These new converts need prayer cover as Paul says; "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus " (Philippians 1:3-6). These entails that these new converts must be remembered in prayer by the church minister, the prayer intercessory team in the congregation and the entire church by mentioning their names during their times of prayers. In additional to prayer cover, these new converts need

discipleship as the scriptures says; "like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation" (1 Peter 2:2).

6.3.2.5. Proper explanation on witchcraft, under the supervised testimony of those that are formerly affected

It can be helpful to compile biblical passages or verses that mention the evils of witchcraft practices and be expounded by ministers so that they can be distributed to Christians and to those that are suffering with witchcraft related issues. These verses should be combined with verses that teaches people what they are expected to follow as believers in dealing with witchcraft. Members who once practiced witchcraft but are now delivered should be encouraged to testify about the evils of witchcraft and the power, goodness and love of God which they have experienced.

6.3.2.6. Women guild class and catechumen classes should include witchcraft issues in their syllabuses

- Women's guild (*mvano)* and catechumen classes should embody the current problems of witchcraft and provide solution on how Christians should live once they experience such a situation in the society. They need to be taught that God is more powerful than Satan and is able to set free those in bondage of practicing witchcraft. They need to be trained on how to impart biblical teachings on witchcraft to children. Women are care givers and should be encouraged to take up their role in the proper upbringing of children on issues of witchcraft. In addition, it must be realized that most allegations of witchcraft are against women and as such special intensive bible study on witchcraft should be a must in all church women group meetings. Wives of church ministers should be encouraged to take a leading role in imparting witchcraft biblical training in women meetings, conferences and training classes. Women should also intensify special prayers for spiritual growth and prayers of deliverance to assist those practicing witchcraft and those who fear it.

6.3.2.7. Special training of ministers in witchcraft issues and deliverance of witchcraft should be conducted vigorously

Let church ministers be conversant with the contemporary challenges of the church and be thoroughly equipped with how to address issues of witchcraft experienced by their members. Since the curriculum of theological training did not include witchcraft, church ministers should be trained by the Synod on how to conduct prayers of deliverance to free people from witchcraft. The Synod should be able to organize such in- service trainings periodically to all ministers of CCAP Blantyre Synod.

6.3.2.8. Proper counselling and follow up to those who confess to act and engage in prayers of deliverance conducted by spiritually mature Christians

It is important that those people that have been affected by witchcraft should be provided with spiritual therapy and this can be two-fold: firstly, counselling should be done thoroughly with scriptural references addressing their witchcraft problem. Secondly, there should be prayer of deliverance offered to the affected person. Once these steps are done, follow up with those that received counselling and deliverance should be done. This will help the person to grow in the Christian faith.

6.3.2.9. Syllabus of Sunday school should be revised to include witchcraft issues

Witchcraft is an issue that is posing a threat to Christian faith as such the church needs to urgently revise the syllabus for Sunday school to include witchcraft issues. But caution must be made that witchcraft issues in the syllabus for children must be tackled in a way not to confuse the children since their age ranges from 5 years to 13 years.

6.3.2.10. Lobbying Parliament to amend the old Witchcraft Act imposed by the colonial government

The church should lobby the Malawian Parliament to amend the Witchcraft Act that does not recognize the existence of witchcraft which is contradicting the biblical teaching and the reality on the ground.

6.3.2.11. Empowering the people economically

The church should not only be concerned with spiritual life but the physical life as well. Therefore it should encourage people to do Income Generating Activities (IGA). This can be done by linking the members of the church with other financial institutions that offer loans for business and Agriculture to empower them economically and in this way, the people can avoid having the spirit of envy and jealousy amongst them.

6.3.2.12. Promote unity with other churches

The CCAP Blantyre Synod should promote unity with other churches like Anglican, Roman Catholic and others so that they can speak with one voice on the issue of witchcraft in Malawi. This can be done through the already existing structures like Public Affairs Committee (PAC) and other religious bodies that are ecumenical in nature.

6.3.2.13. Preach the word and not preaching at people

The CCAP Blantyre Synod should encourage all preachers to preach the good news or the word of God and avoid castigating others on the pulpit because they are suspected of witchcraft practice. This can be avoided by conducting training sessions for all preachers. This is where the duty of a minister is seen. In the case of minister doing that, the Synod should periodically conduct seminars and workshops for minister so that they are reminded what they learned at Theological College or seminary many years before. People come to church to hear the word of God and not hear people castigating each other on the pulpit.

6.3.3.14. Compose music that are theologically sound

Choir groups are encouraged to compose songs that are theologically sound. In singing, people want to hear God being glorified and not Satan. By mentioning witchcraft in songs throughout the singing is like glorifying Satan rather than God and mostly it has no positive impact on the lives of people spiritually. Instead people are bored and scared. Again it has negative effects because people tend to start hating suspected witches within the same

congregation which is bad for the growth of the church. Ministers should help in this area as teachers of the Word of God.

6.3.3. Christians' role in overcoming witchcraft

The church must not compromise in speaking about sin. Believers in CCAP Blantyre Synod must be taught the truth about the word of God and they should be able to choose life or death, thus Jesus or Satan. Just as Joshua openly preached to the Israelites to choose God or Satan (Joshua 24:24), members of the church should be taught to repent and be delivered from the bondage of Satan who makes them to practice witchcraft or choose to die in sin while practicing witchcraft and go to hell.

To those that are suffering because of witchcraft related issues they must be taught that their suffering is from the devil hence they need to appropriate the power of Jesus Christ to be freed from the power of witchcraft. This can be done through denouncing the devil through prayers.

Secondly, Christians in CCAP Blantyre Synod should learn to read the bible on their own, in their homes in order to overcome the tricks of the devil. Grudem (1999:179) maintains that just as Satan tempted Eve to sin against God (Genesis 3:1-6), so he tried to get Jesus to sin and thus fail in his mission as the Messiah (Mathew 4:1-11). He adds that the tactics of Satan and his demons are to use lies, deception, murder and every kind of destructive activity to tempt and cause people to turn away from God and destroy themselves. Demons will try every tactic to blind people to the Gospel and keep them in bondage to the things that hinder them from coming to God. The demons will also try to use temptation, doubt, guilt, fear, confusion, sickness, envy, pride, slander, or any other means possible to hinder a believer's witness and usefulness. This is recommended for teaching to our members of the church. It is only when Christians know these things, they cannot fall into the temptation of practicing witchcraft or being deceived by the devil through fear, doubt, deception and unusual sickness.

Thirdly, Christians of CCAP Blantyre Synod should be aware that demons are limited by God's control and have limited power. The story of Job tells us that Satan could only do

what God accepted and nothing more (Job 1:12, 2:6). The Scripture also mentions that demons are kept in "eternal chains" (Jude 6) and can be successfully resisted by Christians through the authority that Christ has given them. Grudem (1999:176) agrees with the bible, that the power of demons are limited. If this teaching and knowledge is imparted to believers there is no way they can fear witchcraft.

Fourthly, Jesus has given all authority to Christians to rebuke and command the demons to leave them. Jesus demonstrated this when he was sending the twelve disciples to preach about his kingdom in Luke 9:1, he gave them power and authority over demons. Paul also used spiritual authority over demons to a spirit of divination in a soothsaying girl, "I charge you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her" (Acts 16:18). This teaches us that Christians should see the victory through the work of Christ on the cross and this should be the ultimate basis for our authority over witchcraft, demons and all magic powers. It is out of this biblical teaching that CCAP Blantyre Synod should engage in teaching its members about the authority in the name of Jesus Christ.

The simple task that is recommended here for all Christians is that when they discern the presence of an evil spirit or witches around them, they should just command the witchcraft spirits to go away or leave the place or the person in the name of Jesus Christ. Believers should not wait for the minister or church elder alone to pray for them because they have the power through Jesus Christ whom they believe. The Bible says; "you are of God, and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). Paul also says that "God did not give us the spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control" (2Timothy1:7). This emphasizes on prayer for any Christian before the demons attacks us, during the trial or attack by witchcraft or after we have noticed that we have been attacked by the powers of witchcraft.

To summarize the role of Christians, the following disciples must be observed: reading of the bible meditatively should be food for very Christian in order to prevent the attacks of witchcraft. This should be accompanied by prayer in the name of Jesus and with faith. Arnold (1992:213) comments that wearing a magical charm or even a crucifix does not impart God's power to Christians; nor should we expect God's power through some magical use of Jesus name. He adds that God's power is bestowed on his people through simple

trust or faith in him. This agrees with the scripture that without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6), and again James (1:6) emphasizes that when we ask we must believe and not doubt because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea. Therefore, emphasis must be on teaching the congregation. The approach should change the way sermon are delivered in the church. It is high time that teaching sermons must be emphasized other than evangelistic or revival messages alone. This is why balancing the sermons is very crucial.

6.3.4. Active involvement in church activities

The last recommendation worth mentioning to overcome witchcraft is that Christians should be encouraged to be involved in the ministry in their congregation. It is vital for every Christian to be very active in the church activities so that he or she receives the enabling power of God to resist the attack of evil forces as Paul stressed through his analogy of the church as the body of Christ. God has chosen believers to strengthen and build up and protect individual Christians through their relationships with other members of the church especially when the believers meet for worship services.

Therefore, attending church services is very important for a believer because it is where God's power is appropriated. This can be done in cottage (*mlaga)* prayers and during Sunday service of worship. Technological and media things like television and radios should not divert Christians from attending church services thinking that they will hear the sermon on the radio or watch television. The bible emphasizes on fellowship in order to strengthen one another's spiritually. Christians should also be encouraged to be involved at least in one or two activities of the church apart from just attending the worship service. There are several ministries at a local congregation such as participating in women's guild, youth activities, teaching Sunday school class, singing in choir groups, joining intercessory team, evangelism and other ministries in the congregation.

6.4. Summary of the entire research

In this research, an inquiry was conducted into ethical and theological approach to witchcraft beliefs and fear in the Church of Central African Presbyterian (CCAP) Blantyre Synod in Malawi. An overview summary of the introduction of the research design and findings was outlined and discussed.

6.4.1. Preliminary literature review

The literature that has been used in this research study assisted in coming up with different factors that were the causes of witchcraft beliefs and fear by the society in Malawi which included legal factors, cultural factors, social factors, economical factors and religious factors. Out of these factors, there was a strong belief that the church in Malawi together with the entire community have been affected by witchcraft beliefs and fear in one way or the other. The literature review has also revealed some positives of witchcraft as it helps to maintain law and order in the society. This has been something that most people would not know. But most importantly, through the literature review, it has been noted how witchcraft negatively affects people.

6.4.2. Research objectives

This research had objectives and these were outlined as follows:

- To inquire an understanding of witchcraft in Malawi by CCAP Blantyre Synod members.
- To assess the fears that CCAP Blantyre Synod church members might had due to witchcraft in Malawi
- To recommend the possible responses available, from a theological perspective towards minimizing witchcraft beliefs and fears in Malawi.

6.4.3. Research design and method

The research was authorized by the University of Fort Hare when Ethical Clearance was presented. Further, the General Secretary of Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP)

Blantyre Synod offered a letter of permission in Malawi to conduct the research within the jurisdiction of CCAP Blantyre Synod particularly in the two Presbyteries of Mulanje and Blantyre City.

6.4.4. Qualitative approach

From the beginning of the research study, it was clearly mentioned that this being a theological-ethical research study it will use qualitative approach in order to understand the factors and impacts of witchcraft beliefs and fear in CCAP Blantyre Synod. Therefore, the study was an explanatory with the aim of getting to the bottom of understanding about witchcraft beliefs and fears within the CCAP church. One would ask what criteria were used in order to select the sample. This was based on the following:

- Be a full member of CCAP Blantyre Synod for not less than three years.
- Be an African church member of CCAP Church and no a white person from other continent.
- Be willing to take part in the research.
- Be an official of the church; in this case it was the session clerk.
- Be a member of women guild of CCAP Blantyre Synod.
- Be a serving church minister of CCAP Blantyre Synod.
- Be an active youth member of 18 years and above at a local congregation.
- Be a serving church elder at a local congregation.

Due to the sensitivity of the topic, only individual interviews were relevant for the people or respondents to be open and free to express their mind with the researcher who happened to be a church minister as well. This was also very necessary for the purpose of gaining in-depth information on the factors that cause witchcraft beliefs and fears as well as obtaining possible solutions that the church could use to address the problem of witchcraft related issues. All interviews were conducted in vernacular language of Chichewa and answers were translated into English.

6.4.5. Data analysis

The data obtained from respondents was analyzed manually using thematic analysis. According to Liamputtong (2011:1730) thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns or themes within the data. It is perceived as a foundational method for qualitative analysis. He adds that in thematic analysis the researcher needs to read through each transcript and try to make sense of the interview data from the interviews. Coding was done based on similarities and differences, repetitions in the texts, unfamiliar words and familiar words that are used in unfamiliar ways. The research revealed the following themes: Cultural, social, economic, religious and legal themes.

6.4.6. Discussion of the findings

The research findings established that witchcraft beliefs and fears are influenced by cultural factors, legal factors, religious factors, economic factors and social factors. These factors have resulted into loss of church members, backsliding of some Christians who were very strong before. The church as well as the community at large has experienced bad relationships, shame, loss of life and property as a result of witchcraft beliefs and fear. Further, the church which has been trusted for a long time in Malawi by the people was slowly losing its integrity of being trusted because of witchcraft issues that has rocked the church as well. There has been no spiritual growth among church members because of the witchcraft related issues that has not spared the church. However, the findings and discussions was able to establish possible solutions to the problem of witchcraft beliefs and fear.

6.4.7. Possible solutions

The research revealed possible solutions in the following manner:

-Sound Biblical teaching is very important in the church.

-Counselling should be intensified in the church.

-Day care centers for the children who are accused of practicing witchcraft so that they are safeguarded while helping them spiritually and physically.

-Elderly center homes to be opened to care for the accused people. This is done to protect them from angry people who can harm them physically.

-Lobbying Malawi Parliament to amend Witchcraft Act so that it is in agreement with the bible and the reality on the ground.

-The CCAP Blantyre Synod should promote unity with other churches so that they can join hands in the fight against witchcraft beliefs and fears in Malawi.

6.5. Recommendations

Summarizing the recommendations, the research came up with recommendations that can address the issue of witchcraft beliefs and fear in Malawi as follows;

-Building effective Sunday school.

-Deliverance prayers needed in the church for those that come with the problem of witchcraft.

-Counselling to be intensified.

-Special training for Ministers in issues of witchcraft and deliverance of witchcraft.

-Syllabuses for Sunday school, Catechumen and Women guild to be revised to include witchcraft issues.

-Lobbying Malawi Parliament to amend the Witchcraft Act.

-Empowering the Christians economically by linking them with other financial institutions that provide loans for Income Generating Activities.

-Music to be composed theologically.

- Make use of those who once practiced witchcraft but are converted to be testifying the power of God publicly.

- Teaching sermons should be done frequently.

- Church discipline should be the last resort on people accused to be practicing witchcraft. In all this, love should be paramount when helping them.

6.6. Recommendations for future research

It should be noted that more research on this topic is needed so that the church should establish why some Christians still practice witchcraft and yet they claim to be born again Christians. Again future research should be done to establish why women are mainly accused of witchcraft practice.

6.7. Conclusion

The research study has established that witchcraft beliefs and fear in Malawi is caused by cultural factors, legal factors, social factors, and economic factors. This has had a negative impact on Malawian society, a society which includes the CCAP Blantyre synod Church. The consequences of witchcraft related issues have resulted in victimizing of innocent people. There has been backsliding of church members because of shame, church disciplines and relationships have been put under strain. On some occasions, there has been loss of life and property due to accusations of witchcraft. Due to this the church has been busy with witchcraft issues instead of concentrating on the core business of spreading the Word of God and therefore there has been no spiritual growth. However, there are possible solutions to this challenge of witchcraft beliefs and fear.

The church can do away with the challenge of witchcraft beliefs and fear by intensifying teaching, counselling, civic education, lobbying the government to amend the Witchcraft Act and empowering the people economically among others. But this can be achieved through working together with other churches and other organizations. Once this process is followed, there can never be such stories of victimizing each other because we are all created in the image of God and the constitution of Malawi provides freedom and security for its citizens.

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APPENDIX 1. Ethical Clearance Certificate from University of Fort Hare, URC.

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE
REC-270710-028-RA Level 01

Certificate Reference Number:	RAS021SCHI01
Project title:	**Witchcraft beliefs and fear in Malawi: An ethical-theological inquiry within the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) Blantyre Synod**
Nature of Project:	Masters
Principal Researcher:	Reverend Austin Chimenya
Supervisor:	Dr R Rashe
Co-supervisor:	

On behalf of the University of Fort Hare's Research Ethics Committee (UREC) I hereby give ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project and research instrument(s). Should any other instruments be used, these require separate authorization. The Researcher may therefore commence with the research as from the date of this certificate, using the reference number indicated above.

Please note that the UREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the document
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research

The Principal Researcher must report to the UREC in the prescribed format, where applicable, annually, and at the end of the project, in respect of ethical compliance.

Special conditions: Research that includes children as per the official regulations of the act must take the following into account:

Note: The UREC is aware of the provisions of s71 of the National Health Act 61 of 2003 and that matters pertaining to obtaining the Minister's consent are under discussion and remain unresolved. Nonetheless, as was decided at a meeting between the National Health Research Ethics Committee and stakeholders on 6 June 2013, university ethics committees may continue to grant ethical clearance for research involving children without the Minister's consent, provided that the prescripts of the previous rules have been met. This certificate is granted in terms of this agreement.

The UREC retains the right to

- Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance Certificate if
  - Any unethical principal or practices are revealed or suspected
  - Relevant information has been withheld or misrepresented
  - Regulatory changes of whatsoever nature so require
  - The conditions contained in the Certificate have not been adhered to
- Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.
- In addition to the need to comply with the highest level of ethical conduct principle investigators must report back annually as an evaluation and monitoring mechanism on the progress being made by the research. Such a report must be sent to the Dean of Research's office

The Ethics Committee wished you well in your research.

Yours sincerely

Professor Gideon de Wet
Dean of Research

12 February 2015

APPENDIX 2. Application to CCAP Blantyre Synod to access congregations and Presbyteries in Malawi.

University of Fort Hare
Private Bag X1314
King William's town Road
Alice, 5700
Republic of South Africa

9th November, 2014

The General Secretary
CCAP Blantyre Synod
P. O. Box 413
Blantyre
Malawi

Dear Sir,

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY WITHIN THE CCAP BLANTYRE SYNOD

I am writing to request to your permission to conduct a research study within the CCAP Blantyre Synod.

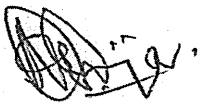
Sir, you may wish to know that this study is a fulfilment of the requirements of a degree of Master of Theology.

The purpose of this study is to examine the witchcraft beliefs and fears in Malawi focusing on ethical and theological inquiry within the CCAP Blantyre Synod.

This research study is planned to be conducted between November and December, 2014 and will involve some members of the church, church ministers in Mulanje and Blantyre city presbyteries.

Find, please a copy of the Ethical Clearance form from University of Fort Hare that will be followed to conduct the study.

Yours Faithfully,



Rev. Austin E. Chimenya

Email: revchimenya@gmail.com/ 200701735@ufh.ac.za

Cell: + 723372901/ 0787477056

APPENDIX 3. CCAP Blantyre Synod approval to access congregations and Presbyteries in

Church of Central Africa Presbyterian
Synod of Blantyre

Telephone: – Blantyre 01 836 744 Office
01 836 787 GS
E-mail: btsynod@broadbandmw.com

General Secretary
P.O. Box 413
Blantyre
Malawi

20th November, 2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This letter serves to authorize **Rev. Austin Chimenya** to conduct a research within CCAP Blantyre Synod.

The research will be of much help for the growth of the Church and prevent any forms of violence even to the entire Nation of Malawi.

Your assistance and cooperation will greatly be appreciated.

Yours in Christ Service,

Alex Benson Maulana (Rev.)
GENERAL SECRETARY

APPENDIX 4. Informed Consent Form.

NAME OF APPLICANT

Ethics Human 2011

<< >>

OFFICE USE ONLY

Ref	Date

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Ethics Research Confidentiality and Informed Consent Form

Please note:

This form is to be completed by the researcher(s) as well as by the interviewee before the commencement of the research. Copies of the signed form must be filed and kept on record

(To be adapted for individual circumstances/needs)

I, Austin Chimenya (Rev), of the University of Fort Hare / Theology and Religion Department would like to ask you to answer some questions, which I hope will benefit your community and possibly other communities in the future.

I am conducting research titled: **Witchcraft beliefs and fear in Malawi: An ethical-theological inquiry within the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) Blantyre Synod,** in fulfilment of a Masters degree in Theology. I am interested in finding out more about witchcraft beliefs and fear. I am carrying out this research to help the church in its work of propagating love, peace and forgiveness to one another.

Please understand that you are not being forced to take part in this study and the choice whether to participate or not is yours alone. However, we would really appreciate it if you do share your thoughts with us. If you choose not take part in answering these questions, you will not be affected in any way. If you agree to participate, you may stop me at any time and tell me that you don't want to go on with the interview. If you do this there will also be no penalties and you will NOT be prejudiced in ANY way. Confidentiality will be observed professionally.

I will not be recording your name anywhere on the questionnaire and no one will be able to link you to the answers you give. Only the researchers will have access to the unlinked information. The information will remain confidential and there will be no "come-backs" from the answers you give.

The interview will last around 45 minutes. I will be asking you questions and request that you are as open and honest as possible in answering these questions. Some questions may be of a personal and/or sensitive nature. I will be asking some questions that you may not have thought about before, and which also involve thinking about the past or the future. I know that

you cannot be absolutely certain about the answers to these questions but I ask that you try to think about these questions. When it comes to answering questions there are no right and wrong answers. When we ask questions about the future I am not interested in what you think the best thing would be to do, but what you think would actually happen.

If possible, I may come back to this area once we have completed our study to inform you and your community of what the results are and discuss our findings and proposals around the research and what this means for people in this area.

INFORMED CONSENT

I hereby agree to participate in research regarding witchcraft beliefs and fear. I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can stop this interview at any point should I not want to continue and that this decision will not in any way affect me negatively.

I understand that this is a research project whose purpose is not necessarily to benefit me personally.

I have received the telephone number of a person to contact should I need to speak about any issues which may arise in this interview.

I understand that this consent form will not be linked to the questionnaire, and that my answers will remain confidential.

I understand that if at all possible, feedback will be given to my community on the results of the completed research.

.....

Signature of participant **Date:**.....

I hereby agree to the tape recording of my participation in the study

.....

Signature of participant **Date:**.....