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A BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE TO THE BELIEF IN GENERATIONAL
CURSES IN THE CONTEXT OF PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES IN DAR-ES-SALAAM,
TANZANIA

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BY
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY


Dissertation Approval

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled

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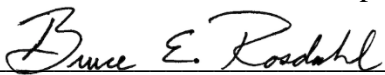
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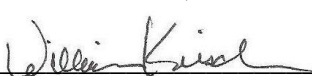
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ABSTRACT

The belief in generational curses has become one of the major issues with which the Pentecostal community in Dar-es-Salaam must wrestle. This belief, for most of its proponents, comes with its twin belief, the belief in deliverance from curses, as an important, separate experience for born-again Christians after salvation. As a result, the Pentecostal community in Dar-es-Salaam is divided, and its leaders offer different responses to the belief. Consequently, a serious variation exists in the understanding of the doctrine of salvation among the members of the Pentecostal community. The misunderstanding has affected not only the maturity of these Pentecostals, since some have continued living in bondage and fear of evil and ancestral spirits even after salvation, but also the face and respect of Pentecostalism among non-Pentecostals and non-believers, especially in its mandate to make disciples. Therefore, it was imperative that a response to the generational-curse belief be formed, a response that is not only biblically and theologically sound but also one that is contextual and relevant to the Pentecostal community in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania.

The formulation of such a response in this project has been achieved through a mixed-methodology approach in order to answer research question (RQs). The project is primarily exegetical. Exegetical analysis of the biblical texts to which proponents of generational curses refer in support of their belief was done in response to RQ1a through RQ1e which inquired on the biblical perspective on generational curses. Exegesis was also performed on the texts that appeared in content analysis and interviews with generational-curse proponents in response to RQ4a and RQ4b, which inquired on the understanding of the generational curses by its proponents and the way they interpret the texts they use in support of the belief.

The results of the exegetical analysis revealed that the Bible, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, does not teach a doctrine of generational curses as it is espoused by its proponents in the current generation. This is seen in the meaning of the word *curse* as it was used in the Bible, the meaning of the texts that were analyzed, and the core tenets of the current teaching as compared with what the Bible teaches.

Qualitative methods used in this project were semi-structured interviews and content analysis. In response to RQ3, the interviews assessed the positions of the Pentecostal denominations that are believed to have sound doctrine from among CPCT members. Interviews were also used in assessing the understanding and views of the proponents of the belief in generational curses. Content analysis, another qualitative method, assessed the documents written by the proponents to discover issues that were not revealed in interviews and also to learn how the proponents interpret the Scriptures.

Results from interviews revealed that the CPCT lack a uniform written statement that responds to the issue of generational curses. As a result, each responds based on individual understanding of Scripture. The interview results also indicate that the understanding and views of the proponents concerning the belief are informed mainly by traditional beliefs, and not by the Scriptures. This is based on the way the proponents interpret the Scriptures that they use to support the belief. However, both from the interviews with proponents and those who believe they are or have been victims, as well as from content analysis and social cultural literature review, it is clear that the belief in generational curses is also informed and fueled by genuine spiritual, social, and physical needs to which Christianity has not sufficiently responded. It is this truth that calls for Pentecostals in Dar-es-Salaam to respond relevantly to the real needs of the African Christians in Dar-es-Salaam as part of their response to the belief.

This project, therefore, proposes a response to the belief in generational curses that is not only true to the biblical teaching, but also relevant to the real issues with which the African Christian in Dar-es-Salaam is wrestling in his or her daily life. Only then will the church in Africa cease to be referred to as being a mile wide but only an inch deep. The biblically and theologically sound response calls for a sound understanding and expounding of the biblical message. It calls also for relevance in dealing with the power issues and daily cares that the African in Dar-es-Salaam is facing. This comes by relevantly presenting the truth and power of Christianity in peoples' lives.

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follow-up when I went silent. Thank you Mama PAtHs, Mrs. Joy York, for your motherly service as an administrator. My supervisor, Rev. Dr. Carl Gibbs, thank you for your guidance. You spent many hours of working on this project, you guided me gently and patiently throughout the project time. Thank you for encouraging me when it appeared impossible for me to finish this project. Thank you Dr. Bruce Rosdahl, my second reader. Your contribution to my work came at a time that I critically needed it. Dr. Jackson Nyanda, thank you for validating my research instruments, and for your close follow-up on this project.

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DEDICATION

*For He **delivered** us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His Beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

Colossians 1:13–14 (NASB77)

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED

To God, my heavenly Father

Who loved me while I was a sinner, and sent His only beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to deliver me from the power of Sin and the dominion of Satan.

He brought me to salvation as the first fruit in my family and clan and called me to be a messenger of His Kingdom in my family and clan. His Grace led my parents, my siblings, and clan members to know and experience His love and power to deliver from sin and bondage.

To my Loving Family

My husband, Jack; for his tireless support, prayers and sacrifice to see this work come to its completion, and my dear children; for the sacrifice they paid in being the most affected by my absence when they needed me the most.

To my Late Father

For his dream to see me finishing this work, but went back home only a year before the work became a reality.

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ABBREVIATIONS

TAG	Tanzania Assemblies of God
CPCT	Council for Pentecostal Churches of Tanzania

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Introduction

In the past three decades, the belief in generational curses has become a major doctrinal controversy among Pentecostals in Tanzania. This was revealed in a personal interview with Dr. Jackson Nyanda on the 12th of June 2014.¹ Dr. Nyanda has been involved in teaching and preaching ministry since the early 1980s. Also, a recent worship service in a Pentecostal church in Tanzania conducted a deliverance ministry on believers. The generational-curse controversy, therefore, centers on whether or not born-again Christians can be victims of generational curses and in need of deliverance after their salvation experience.

The primary proponents of the belief in generational curses are those in the deliverance ministries, which are primarily independent Pentecostal ministries. Most of these ministries in Tanzania are based in Dar-es-Salaam, the commercial city of Tanzania, which is cosmopolitan in nature and populated by people from all walks of life and all cultures of the country. Interestingly, though, preliminary research reveals that proponents of the belief exist even in the major Pentecostal denominations. This was revealed by an Assemblies of God pastor through a personal interview in April 2012.² Proponents in these circles profess the positions of their denominations, but practically believe in the possibility of generational curses on born-again

¹Dr. Jackson Nyanda, interview by author, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, June 12, 2014.

²Ibid., April 2012.

Christians. Divisions exist, therefore, among Pentecostal churches and believers in Dar-es-Salaam concerning this belief. This division formed the basis for this proposed study.

Background to the Study

The subjects of generational curses and deliverance ministry are currently two of the major doctrinal controversies in the African church context, Tanzania not exempted. The two subjects are so closely related that discussing one becomes difficult without discussing the other. Generational curses call for deliverance ministry, and deliverance ministry targets victims of generational curses. The primary focus of this study is the belief in generational curses. On occasions, though, the study refers to deliverance ministry, its twin doctrine, to clarify issues concerning generational curses.

A generational curse in this study refers to a curse that descends from ancestors to descendants, following a lineage. The proponents of the generational-curses belief teach that some people do inherit misfortune from their ancestors. This belief takes different forms. To some proponents, the belief takes the form of a fatalistic view that some people inherit behaviors, weaknesses, or specific types of sins from their forefathers. Hickey, for instance, defines generational cursing as an uncleansed “iniquity that increases in strength from one generation to the next, affecting the members of that family and all who come into relationship with that family.”³ Such iniquities are unaddressed and are believed to be passed on to the subsequent generations in the form of sinful dispositions, and they remain active until the believer chooses to

³Marilyn Hickey, *Breaking Generational Curses* (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 2000), 13. Hickey is an American proponent of generational curses, but she is a significant influence of the belief among its proponents in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. Her beliefs form the basis for many of the beliefs of the proponents in Dar-es-Salaam. The proponents in Dar-es-Salaam hold to most of the tenets proposed by Hickey and other non-Tanzanian proponents, as it will continue to be revealed in later discussions.

deal with them by appropriating the forgiveness of God.⁴ The belief is that the victim inherits guilt from past generations. This guilt causes a variety of calamities that are traced back from his or her ancestors. Some Bible scholars in Tanzania, though, contend that this belief is to a great extent based on and influenced by traditional beliefs rather than the Bible.⁵

To other teachers of generational curses, the curse is only in reference to the trans-generational judgment. Contributing through his article, “The Sins of Ancestors,” for instance, Chan contends that the texts that are cited in support of the generational-curse belief like Exodus 20:5–6; and 34:6–7; Numbers 14:18; and Deuteronomy 5:9–10⁶ “have nothing to do with transference of sinful tendencies or curses to later generations, but rather with the spilling over of divine judgment to later generations.”⁷ Chan’s understanding, thus, is that what is transferable is the judgment, not the sin or the guilt of the ancestors.

This belief in generational curses has at least three foundational teachings. The first and basic foundational tenet is that a person inherits guilt and problems from his or her ancestors. Proponents of the belief in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, are in agreement that the curses are inherited. One of the major proponents of this belief in Dar-es-Salaam contends, “Just as to be blessed is to be empowered to prosper, to be cursed is to be empowered to fail. A generational curse is inheriting the empowerment to fail. You inherit the curse.”⁸ He further argues, “There

⁴Ibid.

⁵Nyanda and Rev. Gregory Mallonga, interview by author, June 12, 2015. Dr. Nyanda and Rev. Mallonga were lecturers in two different Bible schools under Tanzania Assemblies of God during the research period.

⁶Bible references are taken from the NIV 1984, unless otherwise explained.

⁷Michael J. Chan, “Sins of the Ancestors: Generational Sin, Pentecostalism, and the Ecological Crisis,” in *Blood Cries Out: Pentecostals, Ecology, and the Groans of Creation*, ed. A. J. Swoboda (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 176.

⁸Generational-curse proponent (GCP-R1), interview by author, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, March 2016. See the transcript in appendix I of this dissertation.

are some things that when committed by the father, they affect the child. . . so the curses of the fathers come as punishment for sin.”⁹ Another proponent argues, “The curse comes on you because you are born in the cursed family. It comes through the blood. It is in the DNA. It does not depend on whether you sinned or not, no, you are born in a cursed family, you are under the curse.”¹⁰ The understanding is that a person is cursed on the basis of the sinful behaviors of his or her ancestors and that the victim is under these curses by virtue of being born into the cursed family.

Christian teachers of generational curses trace this ancestral inheritance in the Bible with God’s pronouncement to visit the iniquity of parents to the third and fourth generations (Exod. 20:5–6; 34:6–7). According to the teaching, the victim of such inheritance has no control of the situation and must endure and live with it. Hickey and Browling contend that God allows the iniquity of a person to be visited upon that person’s heirs.¹¹ Tanzanian proponents also concur with Hickey and Browling in the argument that Exodus 20:5 forms a biblical basis for inherited curses. This is stated by all proponents of the belief investigated in this research.¹² The curse is thus a type of bondage that passes from one generation to another as a form of God’s judgment. Their understanding is that, to the ancestor, the curse resulted from personally embracing an evil life; but to the victim, the curse is a fate the person cannot avoid. Ikedinma, a Bible scholar in

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Generational-Curse Proponent (GCP-R2), interview by author, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, March 2016. See transcript in appendix I.

¹¹Marylyn Hickey and Sarah Browling, *Blessing the Next Generation: Creating a Lasting Family Legacy with the Help of A Loving God* (New York, NY: Faith Words, 2000), electronic version.

¹²Generational-Curse Proponents (GCP-R1, GCP-R2, GCP-R3), interview by author, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, March 2016. See responses in appendix I.

West Africa, uses Exodus 20:5 as Scripture for generational curses.¹³ However, his position is qualified by his former discussions in the same book in indicating that the judgment on descendants of cursed generations came not as a result of the sins of the ancestors but as a result of the sins of these descendants, as it was with the Canaanites.¹⁴

Another tenet is that the victims of generational curses inherit a variety of curses. They could have the curse of bad behaviors such as alcoholism, anger, adultery, theft, and so on. They could also inherit conditions such as poverty, sickness, ignorance, premature deaths, and other forms of suffering. This is to say that some people behave in certain ways as a result of oppression by curses and demons from their mother's wombs.¹⁵ Mental disorders, for instance, are considered by some teachers as a form of hereditary afflictions or generational curses which calls for deliverance ministry.¹⁶ Victims could also inherit spiritual and demonic involvements, like witchcraft, sorcery, demonic possession, and others. These are issues to do with the occult, ancestral inheritance, and association of daily life with the spiritual world. Christian teachers of generational curses consider inherited guilt as the main form and source of other inherited curses based on Exodus 20:5 and 34:6–7. Usually, it is those who are poor, weak, sick, or underprivileged who are considered cursed.

The most significant tenet that this study is concerned about is the belief that born-again Christians can be victims of generational curses. This teaching assumes that any person can be a victim of the curses and even be demon-possessed, whether Christian or not. According to

¹³Nkemakolam Alfred Ikinma, *Curses and Covenants* (Privately Printed, 2009), 53.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁵David Appleby, "Deliverance as Part of the Therapeutic Process: Working with Children and Adolescents," *Liberty University* 49, (2009). <http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu> (accessed April 24, 2012).

¹⁶*Ibid.*

Nunnally, a strong opponent of the generational-curse belief, supporters of this belief claim that ‘Satan has the right to continue to hold legal claim against Christians who have not effectively dealt with their generational curses, resulting in failure, violence, impotence, profanity, obesity, poverty, shame, sickness, grief, fear, and even physical death.’¹⁷ Prince, one of the significant influencers of the teaching, contends that:

There may be forces at work in our lives that have their origins in previous generations. Consequently, we may be confronted with recurrent situations or patterns of behavior that cannot be explained solely in terms of what happened in our lifetimes or personal experiences. The root cause may go back a long way in time, even thousands of years.¹⁸

Some believe that, since Christians can get sick just like non-believers, they can also be demonized because the Holy Spirit indwells only the spirit of the believer and not the body.¹⁹ By implication, it means that born-again Christians can also be affected by generational or ancestral curses.

This position suggests that after salvation, a Christian still bears some curses that result from sins committed by his or her ancestors. As an implication, deliverance ministry is needed to break this curse out of the Christian. Such a teaching has resulted in divisions among Pentecostals. Questions concerning this popular teaching receive different responses from different Pentecostal groups who each quote the Bible in support of their various positions. This controversy, the focus of this study, centers on the teaching that generational curses and the need for deliverance ministry does not exempt born-again Christians. What is it that leads to the

¹⁷W.E. Nunnally, “The Sins of Generational Curse,” *Enrichment Journal* (Springfield, MO: The General Council of the Assemblies of God (2014). http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/200704/200704_114_gencurse.cfm (accessed September 26, 2014).

¹⁸Derek Prince, *Blessing or Curse: You Can Choose* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1990), 32–33.

¹⁹Biblical Curses, “Deliverance Manual,” www.demonbuster.com (accessed April 24, 2012).

acceptance of this belief? What is it that is lacking in the Christian teaching that leads to this controversy among Pentecostal churches? What should be the response to the controversy?

This proposed study is based on the problem of a confused Pentecostal identity in Tanzania as a result of teachings of generational curses. Non-Christians and non-Pentecostal Christians and even members of the Pentecostal community itself, have recently become confused as to what the real *face* of Pentecostalism is in Tanzania. Multiple Christian groups identifying themselves with Pentecostalism have been birthed with a variety of theological beliefs regarding generational curses. The belief in generational curses is claimed to be biblical and relevant to the lives of the Christians in Dar-es-Salaam. The curses, and the deliverance from them, seem to work; as a result, these beliefs are accepted rapidly, mainly among Pentecostal believers. Why is this so? What should be the response?

Several areas need to be studied in order for this issue to be understood and resolved. The first area to be studied is the teaching of the Bible concerning generational curses. The second area is the specific contextual reasons for the rapid spread and acceptance of the teaching on generational curses in Dar-es-Salaam. Another area is the theological positions of different Pentecostal groups, including the content of their doctrine of salvation, to establish the extent of the influence of these teachings on generational curses. Lastly, inquiry will be made into the hermeneutical methods used to interpret Scriptures.

The researcher of this problem is an instructor at Global Harvest Bible College, one of the theological institutions owned by Tanzania Assemblies of God (TAG). In this capacity, she interacts with students from various Pentecostal backgrounds and beliefs. The researcher thus considers shaping her students with biblically sound doctrine as one of her primary responsibilities.

This researcher also serves as an adjunct faculty member of Global University USA, which supervises the curriculum for BA and MA degrees offered by TAG. She is thus in a position to implement research findings and solutions by composing Bible college courses that can help resolve some of the burning theological issues in Tanzania and in Africa as a whole.

This researcher is a member of the TAG board of theologians, responsible for the church's doctrinal position. In this capacity, conducting this study will bring her contribution to the organization to speak to important doctrinal matters in the nation. This position also gives her the possibility of acquiring reasonable support from the TAG during the research period.

Above all, this researcher is a Pentecostal believer and pastor in the Tanzanian context. As a result, the researcher is in a position to effectively analyze and understand Pentecostal experiences with the Tanzanian cultural context in mind and to analyze them through sound principles of interpreting Scripture with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to develop a biblically and theologically sound response to the issue of generational curses believed to have effects on believers in Pentecostal churches in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. Since different responses come from different Pentecostals on the matter, the study aimed to provide a biblically sound response that would be the basis for understanding and responding to the issue of generational curses.

Problem Statement

The teachings concerning generational curses and deliverance ministry have gained much popularity in Tanzania during the past three decades. Scripture has been identified and interpreted by both proponents and opponents of this belief. Proponents of the teachings argue that born-again Christians are also possible victims of generational curses and that salvation by

itself is not sufficient to deliver them unless they go through a *special deliverance process*. This situation has not only created great confusion among believers, but it has also resulted in the absence of an exegetically-sound response. This unfortunate situation has created a significant dilemma in the Tanzanian Christian community concerning the doctrine of salvation. The problem this study seeks to address, therefore, is: “What constitutes a biblically and theologically sound response to the belief in generational curses in the context of Pentecostal churches in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania?”

Research Questions

To resolve this study’s problem, the following RQs were developed.

1. What is the biblical perspective on generational curses?
 - a. What do the following Bible passages reveal about the role of a parent’s or descendant’s sin regarding God’s judgment on an individual: Exodus 20:5–6; Deuteronomy 5:9–10; and 24:16; 2 Kings 14:6; Jeremiah 31:29–30; Exodus 18:14–20; Genesis 9:24; Proverbs 26:2; and Ezekiel 18:1–20?
 - b. What is the consensus of teaching in the Bible on the theory that a parent’s sin or righteousness directly affects God’s punishment on his or her child, and how can the *breakout* examples that seem to contradict the biblical consensus be explained?
 - c. How does an understanding of the Adamic curse help to explain why righteous believers might suffer even though neither they nor others related to them have sinned?
 - d. How may, or may not, a parent’s or grandparent’s sin or righteousness affect the lives of a believer?
 - e. How does the work of Christ and presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer relate to the concept of Christians inheriting curses from their parents or grandparents?

2. What are the social-cultural perspectives of the issue of generational curses?
 - a. What African worldviews and religious traditions influence the belief in generational curses?
 - b. What traditional beliefs affect the belief in generational curses in Tanzania?
3. What is the official position of Pentecostal denominations in Dar-es-Salaam concerning generational curses?
4. What are the views, opinions, and understanding of the proponents of the belief in generational curses in Dar-es-Salaam?
 - a. What are the accepted beliefs about generational curses among independent ministry leaders in Dar-es-Salaam?
 - b. How do proponents of generational curses interpret the Scriptures they use in supporting their teaching?
 - c. What are the experiences and beliefs of those who believe they are victims of generational curses?
 - d. How are the views, opinions, and understanding of the proponents of generational curses to be explained in light of what the Bible reveals about generational curses?

Significance of the Study

A biblical treatment of this teaching is an urgent need in the Pentecostal churches and institutions in Dar-es-Salaam. Preliminary review of the literature says little on the subject from the Tanzanian context. Much of what is in literature focuses either on the West or on Africa as a whole. The academy needs a Tanzanian perspective on this topic. Since Dar-es-Salaam is a major city in Tanzania, this study provides that perspective.

TAG is committed to speak to doctrinal issues in Tanzania. This study helps the researcher both as a Bible school instructor and a member of the TAG board of theologians to contribute to the development of a comprehensive response that is not only scholarly but also theologically sound and relevant to Dar-es-Salaam and to the Tanzanian context at large.

Delimitations and Limitations

Recognizing that the issue of generational curses is believed to affect both born-again Christians and those who are not born-again, this study was delimited to the issue as it relates to born-again Christians.

The issue of generational curses has spread to almost every region of Tanzania. Pentecostals exist in various denominational identities. For feasibility purposes, this study is limited to selected Pentecostal denominations and independent Pentecostal ministries in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. It focuses on three Pentecostal denominations and three Pentecostal Independent ministries for the study. All these denominations are members of the Council of Pentecostal Churches of Tanzania (CPCT).²⁰ The Pentecostal independent ministries that participated in this research are those known to be proponents of the generational-curse belief.²¹ The focus of the study was on national leaders of the denominational ministries, founders or national leaders of the independent ministries, and selected lay members.²²

²⁰These are among the Pentecostal churches that are believed to teach correct biblical Pentecostal doctrine.

²¹These Pentecostal independent ministries teach that born-again Christians can also be victims of generational curses and therefore need special deliverance to break the curse. The identity of both groups, the Pentecostal denominational churches and the Pentecostal independent ministries, were concealed as requested by some of them when they discovered the information required by the research was sensitive.

²²Members included only those who believe they are or have close relatives who have been victims of generational curses.

List of Terms

Generational Curse

This is a curse that is believed to be transmitted from ancestors to descendants. In this dissertation, a generational curse speaks of inherited bondage, evil behaviors, and problems resulting from inheriting guilt from one's past generations.

Deliverance Ministry

Deliverance ministry refers to the spiritual process conducted to break a spiritual bondage in a person. This expression, as used by generational-curse proponents, refers specifically to that spiritual process conducted to break the curse and its resultant bondage.

Born-again Christian

The expression *born-again Christian*, in this dissertation, refers to a Christian who has given his or her life to Jesus Christ by confessing sins and accepting him as his or her personal Savior. The expression will distinguish this Christian from a person who is called a *Christian* simply as a religious identity.

Independent Ministry

An independent ministry, in this dissertation, refers to a ministry or church that is not in the form of an organized denomination. This is a ministry that is either one congregation, or is centered on one man's leadership, even if it has several congregations. Independent ministries are distinguished from denominations by their lack of organizational and accountability structures.

Pentecostal Denomination

A Pentecostal denomination, in this study, refers to a Pentecostal²³ church organization with nationally-organized structures. The denomination has a system of leadership in which several levels exist where each level is accountable to another level. This is distinguished from the independent ministries or churches in which leadership is centered on one person.

Adamic Curse

The Adamic curse, in this dissertation, refers to the curse that resulted from the fall of Adam in the form of God's judgment.

²³One of the significant identities of Pentecostal churches is the belief in the baptism in the Holy Spirit with his accompanying new tongues as an initial sign. Another trait is the belief that miraculous works accompany church ministry.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENERATIONAL CURSES

Introduction

The Bible contains passages that seem to provide background to the concept of generational curses. Scripture reveals that on occasion, either God or biblical characters pronounce curses or judgments on descendants or generations. The case of Noah and his grandson, Canaan, is an illustration of such pronouncements.¹ As stated earlier in this proposal, both proponents and opponents of the generational-curse teaching cite Scripture to establish their positions. This is because, indeed, Scripture mentions instances when judgment is pronounced on generations of evildoers.

Such pronouncements of judgments give an indication that both the Bible and the proponents of the generational-curse belief relate human suffering to sin and judgment. The difference may be in how this relationship is explained. As observed in the introduction chapter, proponents of the belief in generational curses seem to propose that sins of parents and grandparents count against their children and grandchildren. This chapter on biblical-theological literature, therefore, traces the way the issue of generational curses is perceived in Scripture, seeking to assess the consensus of Scripture. It analyzes key Old Testament passages to assess how the Old Testament views the role of a parent's or descendant's sin on an individual and seeks to establish how generational curses are viewed from the Old Testament perspective. The

¹See Genesis 9:20–27. This instance will be discussed later in this review.

chapter also assesses the consensus of teaching in the Bible on the theory that a parent's sin (or righteousness) directly affects God's punishment on his or her child and how a parent's or grandparent's sin (or righteousness) may or may not affect the life of a believer. Since most of what is considered a curse in the generational-curse belief is related to sufferings or hardships, this review discusses how an understanding of the Adamic curse helps to explain why righteous believers might suffer even though they have not sinned. The review also analyzes the work of Christ in relation to a believer inheriting curses from parents. Finally, the review makes a critical summary, bringing the issue of generational curses into perspective based on the biblical teaching.

The Biblical Usage of the Word *Curse*

The word *curse* has been defined in a variety of ways. In English, the word could mean an invocation or prayer for divine punishment on someone, an oath or blasphemous imprecation, an evil, or source of misery.² Bible dictionaries relate the word *curse* to its biblical usage, first as an utterance of judgment as in Job 31:30 or in denouncing sin as in Deuteronomy 29:19ff. It is also related to things that are *devoted to* or *set apart* for God as in Leviticus 27:21.³ Ikedinma, a scholar from West Africa who wrote about generational curses, defines *curse* as “a spoken word directed in anger at something or somebody calling for the punishment, injury, or destruction of the person/thing, with or without a cause.”⁴ He, however, points to Proverbs 26:2 to raise the fact that an undeserved curse does not have to come to pass.

²*The New Webster's Dictionary of the English Language* (USA: Lexicon Publisher, 1992), 102.

³Derek Williams, ed., *The Concise Bible Dictionary* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 1989), 114.

⁴Ikedinma, 3.

The most common use of the word *curse* in the Old Testament, however, is connected to pronouncement of judgment. This usage is mainly connected to someone who breaks loyalty to a treaty. This is the sense in which the word is used in relation to Israel's covenant with God (Deut. 28; 29; 30). Bruce rightly argues that "the curse is understood as conditional, efficacious only if some legal right or arrangement has been violated."⁵ In Deuteronomy 11:26–28, the word *curse* "comes from the Hebrew, 'qalah,' which is itself a derivative of 'qalal,'"⁶ which means "to abase, to vilify, to bring into contempt, to make despicable."⁷ These various usages of the word *curse* signify bad experiences, calamities, or judgment. Yet, based on this biblical understanding of the Hebrew word for *curse*, Bruce is correct in pointing out that *curse* in the Old Testament sense "does not truly amount to the concept of 'curse' which is found within witchcraft"⁸ which is a concept often connected to the current teaching of generational curses. This biblical usage carries the conditional nature of generational judgment as expressed in the Bible and implied when the Scriptures are studied in their proper contexts.

Arguments for a Biblical Basis for Generational Curses

The Fact of Generational Curses in Scripture

Proponents of the generational-curse belief contend that the teaching on generational curses has its basis in the Bible. Most of them base their teaching on Exodus 20:5–6; and 34:6–7;

⁵Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan, *The Oxford Companion to the Bible* (Oxford, England: Oxford University, 1993), 144–145.

⁶William Gesenius, *Hebrew and Greek Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1972), 886.

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸Robin A. Brace, "What is the Truth about Generational Curses? Can a Person Be Saved Yet Still Suffer Because of 'Family Curses'?" <http://www.ukapologetics.net/08/generationalcurses.htm> (accessed June 27, 2014).

Numbers 14:18; and Deuteronomy 5:9–10, which include the phrase *visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children ... to the third and the fourth generations*. Derek Prince bases his generational-curse teaching on Exodus 20:4–5 and argues that “there may be forces at work in our lives that have their origins in previous generations....The root cause may go back a long way in time.”⁹ Others use events in the Bible that seem to suggest a person was punished for his father’s sin. Asamoah-Gyadu, for instance, suggests that even though the prophet Ezekiel repudiated the exiles for seeking to blame their trouble on their forefathers (Ezek. 18), believers should not be fast to ignore the clear biblical worldview of generational curses which is seen in some instances, such as that of the trans-generational curse over Ham in Genesis.¹⁰ The key texts they use are Exodus 20:5–6 and 34:6–7, which declare God’s judgment upon three to four generations. Some of the other biblical illustrations used to support the teaching are the blessing upon Abraham based on his faith and the curses on others based on evils committed by a member of the family.¹¹ The understanding of the proponents is that these texts and instances do not exempt the born-again believer from the curses. Others, for instance, see Ezekiel 18 as the basis for deliverance ministry.¹²

Opponents of the teaching however, take Ezekiel 18 as a reason for the impossibility of generational curses on believers. Bible scholars differ in the way they view this text. Nunnally sees both Ezekiel 18 and Jeremiah 31:29–30 as clear passages that are misunderstood as biblical

⁹Derek Prince, *Blessing or Curse: You Can Choose* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1990), 32.

¹⁰J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, “Mission to Set the Captives Free: Healing, Deliverance and Generational Curses in Ghanaian Pentecostalism,” *International Mission Review* 93 (2004): 403 <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1758-6631.2004.tb00468.x/abstract> (accessed April 25, 2012).

¹¹Asamoah-Gyadu, “Mission to Set Captives Free,” 403.

¹²*Ibid.*, 406; J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, “Of Sour Grapes and Children’s Teeth: Inherited Guilt, Human Rights and the Process of Restoration in Ghanaian Pentecostalism,” *Exchange* 33, no. 4 (2004): 334.

supports to the generational-curse belief. He says, “these passages are clear. In fact, this is the Scripture-interprets-Scripture principle: Difficult passages *should be* interpreted in light of clearer passages, such as these from Ezekiel and Jeremiah.”¹³ For Nunnally, rather than supporting the belief in generational curses, these texts disqualify the belief, since they teach individual responsibility for sin. Alexander sees the text in Ezekiel 18:1–31 teaching individual responsibility for sin. He observes that Ezekiel is repudiating a misunderstanding by the exiled Israelites of a popular proverb in their day that said, “The fathers eat sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge” (Ezek. 18:2).¹⁴ He notes that the exiles believe that they are suffering as a result of their fathers’ sins, implying that righteousness and wickedness are hereditary.¹⁵ Allen also agrees with the understanding that Ezekiel 18 is a rebuke against, rather than a support for, the fatalistic belief of the exiled Israelites about their responsibility for righteousness and wickedness.¹⁶ Based on the illustrations that God gives Ezekiel in chapter 18 to teach individual responsibility, Alexander concludes:

Righteousness is reckoned to the individual when he does the righteous acts of God revealed in Scriptures. Likewise, unrighteousness is credited to the individual who fails to practice God’s righteous ways. The decision is up to the individual, not determined by heredity.¹⁷

¹³Nunnally.

¹⁴Ralph H. Alexander, *Ezekiel, of Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, eds. Tremper Longman III and David Garland, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 734.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 735.

¹⁶Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel: 1–19*, vol. 28 of *Word Biblical Commentary*, eds. David Hubbard and Glenn Barker (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 270.

¹⁷Alexander, 740.

Concerning Exodus 20:5–6, the interpretation given by some Bible scholars dismisses the possibility of generational curses on believers.¹⁸ Thus, even though popular literature by proponents of generational curses argue for a biblical foundation for the belief, an agreement exists among reputable Bible scholars that the belief has no biblical base. This situation necessitates a study of the biblical texts used for the arguments of both camps.

Victims of Generational Curses

Divisions exist among those teaching generational curses based on whether born-again Christians can be victims of generational curses or not. The popular view of the proponents of the teaching is that both believers and non-believers can be victims. Some believe that demons can possess believers as a result of hereditary curses. The belief in the possibility of demons possessing Christians has caused a sharp debate among Pentecostals. Appleby, for instance, contends that even though believers cannot be *possessed* by demons, they can be demonized.¹⁹ He thus mentions hereditary afflictions and curses among common footholds for such demonic activities.²⁰ Anderson argues that one of the misconceptions among believers is the notion that they cannot be victims of demonic activities. He states:

The prevailing belief among evangelicals today is that Christians cannot be severely oppressed by demons. Even the suggestion that demonic influence can be part of the problem often prompts the hasty disclaimer, "Impossible! I'm a Christian!" Nothing has done greater damage to diagnosing spiritual problems than this untruth. If Satan can't touch the church, why are we instructed to put on the armor of God, to resist the devil, to stand firm, and to be alert? If we aren't susceptible to being wounded or trapped by Satan,

¹⁸Ibid. It is asserted that the Scriptures used are normally misinterpreted and taken out of context. It is also observed that the Bible here speaks of judgment upon the descendants who will follow the footsteps of their forefathers.

¹⁹Appleby, 5.

²⁰Ibid.

why does Paul describe our relationship to the powers of darkness as a wrestling match? Those who deny the enemy's potential for destruction are the most vulnerable to it.²¹

Grimsley and Miller argue against the possibility of Christians' being possessed by demons. In their article, "Can a Christian be demonized?" they argue:

By faith, all Christians are delivered from the kingdom of darkness and transferred into "the kingdom of His Beloved Son" (Col. 1:13; Acts 26:18). It is therefore no coincidence that every occurrence of the word *daimonizomai* and related terms in the New Testament, and every exorcism recorded, appear to involve non-Christians, usually in the context of evangelism.²²

It is also argued that Scripture suggests that one might have God dwelling within, or Satan, but not both. This is argued from the assurance that John gives his Christian readers: "You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is *in you* than he who is *in the world*" (1 John 4:4, NASB, emphasis added). Further, the indwelling Holy Spirit makes the believer a temple of the living God. As an implication, Paul calls the believers at Corinth not to be bound together with unbelievers on the grounds that there can be no harmony between the temple of God and idols (2 Cor. 6:14–18). Paul associates idols with demons in 1 Corinthians 10:19–20. All this is to argue that true believers of Christ cannot be possessed by demons.

The Assemblies of God, USA, show from Scripture that demonization was never associated with believers in the statement:

The word *daimonizomai*, to be possessed of a demon, or, as some put it, to be demonized, is not as common. It is used as a verb only once and that of a Canaanite girl who was "badly demonized," or cruelly tormented by a demon. Everywhere else it is found as a participle which should be translated, "the demoniac(s)" (Matthew 8:28, 33; 9:32; 12:22; Mark 5:15–18; Luke 8:35). Again, in no case is there any indication that any of these

²¹Neil T. Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1990), 10.

²²Brent Grimsley and Elliot Miller, "Can A Christian Be Demonized," *Christian Research Institute* (April 14, 2009), <http://www.equip.org/article/can-a-christian-be-demonized/> (accessed March 16, 2018).

“demoniacs” or demonized persons was right with God; and in most cases they suffered severe torment—and a dramatic change of personality.²³

All this is not to deny the possibility of demonic attacks and influences. Paul clearly states, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 6:12). Yet this does not refer to demonic possessions. It seems that those contending for demonic possessions of believers misunderstand this biblical truth and consider their demonic possession as one evidence of hereditary or generational curses on born-again Christians.

Appleby argues from Deuteronomy 28:15–46 for a biblical basis for hereditary curses in believers,²⁴ contending that the text is a general pronouncement of judgment upon the people of God. Chipatali is in agreement with Appleby, stating that believers are victims of generational curses. He contends that believers suffer because they are either negligent or ignorant of this biblical truth.²⁵ Asamoah-Gyadu²⁶ also endorses deliverance ministry for believers, arguing that Pentecostals and Charismatics should provide “a Christian ritual context in which the victims may be freed from the enslaving curses resulting from the sins of their ancestors.”²⁷ These arguments lead to a conclusion that a general agreement exists among proponents of generational

²³General Council of Assemblies of God, “Can Born-Again Believers Be Demon-Possessed?” (Springfield, MO: Assemblies of God Gospel Publishing House, 1996), https://ag.org/-/media/AGORG/Beliefs/Topics-Index/pp_4176_possessed.pdf?la=en (accessed March 16, 2018).

²⁴Appleby, 7.

²⁵Paul Chipatali, *Generational Curses: Are You Exempted?*, Plano, TX: Xulon Press, 2004. http://books.google.de/books?id=IVjfNycH0osC&pg=PA22&dq=generational+curses&hl=en&sa=X&ei=rpizT_PdL8nu8AOJStiMCQ&redir_esc=y#v=onepage=generational%20curses&f=false (accessed April 26, 2012).

²⁶Asamoah-Gyadu, “Mission to Set the Captives Free,” 398; Asamoah-Gyadu, “Of Sour Grapes and Children’s Teeth,” 334.

²⁷Ibid.

courses that a believer can also be victim of these curses. As a result, this review finds it necessary to assess what the Bible teaches about the belief.

Biblical Perspective of Generational Curses

As indicated earlier in this review, most of the Scripture texts which the proponents of generational curses use are from the Old Testament. An important question that this section sought to consider was whether the Old Testament teaches a theology of generational curses, and what it means to the ongoing study.

The Old Testament Perspective on a Parent's or Descendant's Sin in God's Judgment

Exodus 20:5–6²⁸ is one of the key texts used by proponents of generational curses to support their teaching. The text speaks of God “visiting the sins of fathers to the third and fourth generation” (v. 5). Proponents of the generational-curse teaching thus use this text to trace the ancestral inheritance of sin and judgment in the Bible. Some see this as a clear text on the validity of generational curses. Clark states:

Family curses and generational curses are reoccurring problems that steal, kill, and destroy. *Scripture is clear* God visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children up to the third and fourth generation (Exod. 20:5). Curses don't visit your family without a cause. When someone up the family tree gives spirits the right to visit because of iniquity they come looking for a reason to mess up your life.²⁹ [Emphasis added.]

The above statement means that Clark sees Exodus 20:5 as a clear biblical support of generational curses.

²⁸Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: *for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me*, and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments (KJV, emphasis added). See also Deuteronomy 5:8–10.

²⁹Jonas Clark, “Generational Curses: Seven Signs of a Family Curse,” <http://www.JonasClark.com> (accessed June 30, 2015).

Clark seems correct in the fact that the visiting God is referring to in the text is a result of iniquity or sin. The position is also accepted that the visiting is generational, since the text clearly says it is up to the third and fourth generation. However, the comment is suggesting things that are beyond what the text communicates, hence disqualifying the text as a clear reference to generational curses. First, it appears from this comment that Clark is suggesting that God visits the generations through spirits which cause a curse on the victim generation, a position also found in the African worldview, which the text does not suggest. Also, the generational nature of the visiting is not a general one as the comment above seems to suggest. Reading the text in its context shows that the judgment will be on those who *hate God*. The text is not talking about generational curses. Old Testament scholars understand this text as referring to God's judgment on sinful actions. Douglas Stuart, for instance, points to it as "God's determination to punish successive generations for committing the same sins they learned from their parents."³⁰

Exodus 20:5 is part of God's word to the children of Israel at the occasion of the giving of the Mosaic Law at Sinai (19:1–20:21). The pronouncement in Exodus 20:5 is based on the commandment God gives them to have no other gods (Exod. 20:3–4). Chapter 20:5 is, therefore, a continuation of 20:3–4 which further warns them not to make idols or bow to any other god except God the Lord, for he is a jealous God. Durham observes that the basis for Yahweh's jealousy is "the expectation of undiluted loyalty as specified in the first commandment."³¹ This commandment states; "You shall have no other gods before me" (Exod. 20:3). The sin for which

³⁰Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, of *New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Holman, 2006), 449.

³¹John I. Durham, *Exodus*, vol. 3 of *Word Biblical Commentary*, eds. David Hubbard and Glenn Barker, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987), 287.

the Israelites were to be punished involved breaking their covenant with God, to worship him alone, and instead turning to other gods.

The word *visiting* could carry the sense of friendly visiting or hostile visiting. The text in Exodus 20:5 brings with it the hostile intent of God punishing or judging. God thus declares punishment on those who will bow before other gods. Those who do so, according to Durham, “show that they hate him, that they hold him in contempt: upon them in result must come a deserved judgment across four generations.”³² Third and fourth generations here, as Cole explains, are not to be understood in an mathematical sense. Rather, it is a typical Semitic phrase denoting continuity, and in this context, it is applied only to those who refuse to live in accordance with God’s covenant with them.³³

Stuart points out that God takes idolatry seriously for “its ability to corrupt successive generations, keeping them from God’s blessings and forcing him to mete out to them wrath.”³⁴ This ability to influence successive generations is explained by the fact that idolatry was not a simple act of worship before a statue. Rather, it was “an entire, elaborate religious system that was counter God.”³⁵ Its “attractions were very powerful and tended to draw even the Israelites away from the true worship and covenant obedience to Yahweh in most generations.”³⁶

Having declared the punishment, he goes on declaring his love and mercy for those who obey him (20:6). The text is clearly conditional that he punishes the generations of those who

³²Ibid.

³³Allan R. Cole, *Exodus*, vol. 2 of *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, ed. by Donald Wiseman (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 156.

³⁴Stuart, 449.

³⁵Ibid., 450.

³⁶Ibid.

hate him and shows mercy on generations of those who love him. It is clear from the text, therefore, that God did not declare this as a general statement regardless of human behavior; otherwise he would be unjust and inconsistent in his dealings with people.

Deuteronomy 5:9–10, which repeats the same statements made in Exodus 20:5–6, is also to be understood in the same sense as Exodus 20:5–6. Deuteronomy is a renewal of the covenant to the generation that was born in the desert. As it is with Exodus 20:5–6, the instructions are part of God’s covenant with Israel. The instructions are conditional based on how Israel will behave before God. Yet, the conditions also do not mean that later generations will suffer judgment for the sins of their parents. In the same book of Deuteronomy, God makes a bold statement about the relationship between a parent’s or descendant’s sin and God’s judgment of an individual. He says, “Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sin” (24:16).

Amaziah, one of the godly kings of Judah, observed the law that God gave to Moses in Deuteronomy 24:16 when he came to throne. After his throne was established, he put to death the assassins of his father but not the sons of the assassins. The writer of 2 Kings clearly states that Amaziah did that “in accordance with what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses where the Lord commanded: fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sins” (2 Kings 14:6). Jeremiah, the prophet, repeats this clear biblical emphasis when he speaks to the Jews in Jerusalem: “In those days, people will no longer say, ‘the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.’ Instead, everyone will die for his own sin; whoever eats sour grapes — his own teeth will be set on edge” (Jer. 31:29, 30).

A very popular text in the prophetic books that speaks to the issue of generational judgment is found in Ezekiel 18:1–21.³⁷ The opening verses of chapter 18 indicate that a dispute existed between God and his people, Israel (1–4). The immediate context of Ezekiel indicates that God was responding to a wrong application of a proverb used in the land of the Israelite’s exile. The proverb stated that “the fathers eat sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge” (Ezek. 18:2). This proverb meant that the father’s sins affect his children. As a result, people believed that “righteousness and wickedness were hereditary; therefore, there was no reason to change one’s ways.”³⁸ The Israelites, who were then in exile, were blaming their suffering upon their fathers. It is possible that the complaint is the one recorded in Lamentations 5:7 which says, “Our fathers sinned and are no more and we are being punished.” The fact that Jeremiah also mentions the proverb in 31:29 suggests that this complaint was in the minds of the exiles of this time since the two were contemporary prophets. The exiles were in essence saying that God was inflicting them for sins their fathers had committed. Alexander observes that the exiles had misapplied the proverb—a misapplication that led to irresponsibility and fatalism.³⁹ Such irresponsibility and fatalism would put God in an awkward position. “If the fault could really be laid at the door of a previous generation, those on whom the judgment was falling could

³⁷The word of the LORD came to me: “What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge? As I live, declares the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die.... “Yet you say, ‘Why should not the son suffer for the iniquity of the father?’ When the son has done what is just and right, and has been careful to observe all my statutes, he shall surely live. The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the fathers suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself. “But if a wicked person turns away from all his sins that he has committed and keeps all my statutes and does what is just and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die (Ezek. 18:1–4, 19–21 ESV).

³⁸Kenneth L. Barker and John R. Kohlenberger III, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 1301.

³⁹Alexander, 734.

reasonably shrug off any sense of sin and accuse God of injustice.”⁴⁰ Such an assertion is what Ezekiel 20:25 refutes.

God’s response through the prophet is that the people should no longer quote this proverb. Habtu observes that God bases this response on two fundamental truths stated in the text.⁴¹ The first fundamental truth is that every soul belongs to God, and the second is that the soul that sins is the one that will die (v. 4). It is important to note here that the term *soul* in this text refers to person or self, which points to the whole individual rather than to any specific part of him.⁴² God therefore conveys the message that each person is individually responsible before him who owns all people. In emphasizing individual responsibility, as Cooper argues, “Ezekiel was not contradicting the corporate concept of solidarity that was an essential part of Hebrew thought.”⁴³ On the contrary, he combined corporate and individual responsibility as working together so that individual responsibility makes social and religious responsibilities possible.⁴⁴

The text then gives an example of three generations to explain this truth. The grandfather is righteous, and he lives (Ezek. 18:5–9). His son is unrighteous, and as penalty he dies (Ezek. 18:10–13). The grandson, even though he sees all the unrighteous ways of his father, does not do such things, so he lives (Ezek. 18:14–17). Responding to the people’s question as to why the son

⁴⁰John B. Taylor, *Ezekiel*, vol. 22 of *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, ed. Donald Wiseman (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 147.

⁴¹Tewoldemedhin Habtu, “Ezekiel” in *Africa Bible Commentary* ed. Tukumboh Adeyemo (Nairobi, Kenya: World Alive Publishers, 2006), 952.

⁴²Fredrick Carl Eiselen, Edwin Lewis, and David G. Downey, eds., *The Abingdon Bible Commentary* (New York, NY: Abingdon Press, 1929), 725.

⁴³Lamar E. Cooper, “Ezekiel,” of *New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Holman, 1994) 188.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*

does not die for the sins of his father, God makes a summary that restates the principle which forms the understanding of this text:

Since the son has done what is just and right and has been careful to decree all my decrees, he will surely live. The soul who sins, is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilty of his father, nor will the father share the guilty of the son. The righteousness of the righteous man will be credited to him, and the wickedness of the wicked man will be charged against him (Ezek. 18:19b–20).

This biblical declaration indicates that no individual is to be judged for the sins of his or her parents or ancestors. Cooper observes well when he contends: “Although sin had continuing effects, God never punished the righteous for the sins of the unrighteous.”⁴⁵ Even if the past generation was rebellious, future generations and individuals are free to choose a different lifestyle. Those who were once sinners could alter their destiny through repentance. This truth is well stated in God’s willingness to forgive anyone who turns away from his evil ways and willingness to punish anyone who turns away from his righteous ways (Ezek. 18:21–24). Cooper thus states: “A generation is not predetermined for judgment or for blessing by the previous one. Even within a generation, or within an individual life, the past does not necessarily determine the present or the future.... God honors repentance and genuine faith.”⁴⁶ With this in mind, it is proper to proclaim with Habtu that “we cannot hide behind any excuse, or blame our ancestors or our parents . . . for our predicament.”⁴⁷

Unfortunately, some Pentecostal preachers have taken Ezekiel 18 and Jeremiah 31:29–30 as a basis for deliverance ministry as a second work that delivers the cursed believer from his or her bondage so as to enjoy salvation. Ajatnoah-Gyandu describes this explanation when he says,

⁴⁵Ibid., 189.

⁴⁶Ibid., 191.

⁴⁷Habtu, 952.

In keeping with the prophetic declaration by the prophet Ezekiel that, “The sins of the fathers shall be no more be visited on their children,” the Pentecostal/Charismatic ministry of “healing and deliverance” provides a Christian ritual context in which the enslaving effects of generational curses resulting from the sins of one's ancestry may be dealt with. This is in order that those born-again in Christ, in keeping with the objective of Christian mission, may experience fullness of life in Christ.⁴⁸

Based on this comment therefore, healing and deliverance ministry is meant to enable the believer to fully enjoy the results of the work of the cross.

However, the biblical texts contain a clear teaching against the generational-curse teaching in its current form. This text represents the biblical perspective that generational curses do not mean that individual members of the next generation inherit the sin of their fathers or receive direct punishment for their fathers' sins. Jeremiah 31:29–30 and Ezekiel 18:1–18 teach this individual responsibility for righteousness. This biblical teaching also implies that no one will be punished even in this life for the sins of his or her fathers. The principle illustrated in Ezekiel 18 is the consistent teaching of Scripture and is stated in other parts of the Bible (Gen. 2:17; 4:7; Deut. 24:16; 2 Kings. 14:6).

In Genesis 9:24, Ham sees and exposes the nakedness of his father, Noah; and Noah then pronounces a curse upon Canaan, the youngest son of Ham. This seems to be a curse pronounced on a son for his father's sin. This text has been used to validate the teaching that God can punish someone for the sins of his or her fathers. Some people have suggested that, since the same Hebrew word is used for son and grandson, it is possible that Canaan had uncovered Noah, laughed at him, and told Ham about it (Gen. 9:24–25).⁴⁹ The text, however, does not state or suggest this position, so it may not be valid to accept it as biblical. It is possible that the curse

⁴⁸Asamoah-Gyadu, “Mission to Set Captives Free,” 386–406.

⁴⁹Paul B. Hoff, *Genesis: An Independent Study Textbook* (Springfield, MO: Global University, 1999), 105–106.

pronounced on Canaan actually had effects on Canaan's later generations. This is seen in the fact that the curse pronounced that Canaan would be the slave of Shem. Later in the Old Testament, the descendants of Canaan, the Gibeonites, become slaves of the descendants of Shem, the Israelites, during the leadership of Joshua (Josh. 9:22–24).

However, based on the whole teaching of the Bible, which indicates that God does not punish the righteous for the wicked, it could be deduced that Canaan must have participated in the sin in one way or another. Later the Canaanites were judged and destroyed, which may suggest the fulfillment of the curse. Yet, as Hoff observes, they were not judged for Ham's sin but for their own terrible moral depravity⁵⁰ (Gen. 15:16; Lev. 18:2–3, 6–30). Soungalo suggests that the Canaanites' inhabitation of the land that was promised to Abraham and the details given in Genesis 9:25 in reference to the curse prepare readers for the later destruction of the Canaanites when the Israelites come to occupy the land.⁵¹ This is not something strange in God's foreknowledge of how people will respond to him.

The writer of Proverbs observes it rightly: "Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an undeserved curse does not come to rest" (Prov. 26:2). God does not punish undeservedly, and neither does he allow one to be cursed undeservedly. This principle is consistent with the whole teaching of the Bible.

The Effects of a Parent's Sin or Righteousness on God's Judgment of a Child

It is evident from the ongoing discussion that Scripture is consistent in its teaching about individual responsibility for sin. This consistency is seen both in the Old and the New Testament.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Soro Soungalo, "Genesis" in *Africa Bible Commentary*, Tukuunboh Adeyemo, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 27; Grimsley and Miller.

The Consensus of the Teaching in the Bible

The Old Testament has explicitly declared that no one will die for his parent's sin, for each will die for his own sin. Beginning with the book of Genesis, God illustrates that he does not punish an innocent person. He separates the righteous from the sinners when passing judgment. He spares Noah from the flood in a generation of evildoers (Gen. 6–7). He is also willing to spare Sodom and Gomorrah for the sake of a few righteous if they were to be found (Gen. 18:16–33). Throughout the Old Testament, God emphasizes individual responsibility as discussed in the preceding section of this review.

The New Testament also emphasizes individual responsibility for sin. In Romans 2:6 Paul says, “God will give to *each person* according to what *he* has” (emphasis added), and in Romans 14:12 he says, “So then, *each one of us* will give an account of *himself* to God” (emphasis added); these are clear statements pointing to the New Testament's focus on individual rather than corporate responsibility.

Bible scholars reason that “these passages should be seen as reflecting the unified teaching of Scripture beginning with Moses (Deut. 24:16), continuing in the prophets (Jer. 31:29, 30; Ezek. 18:1–4, 14–16, 18–20; Dan. 9:4, 5, 7–9), and culminating in the teachings of Jesus (John 8:11; 9:1–3).”⁵² This is a reasoning that rings biblical and true. This means that even though the Old Testament had much to say about corporate responsibility in reference to Israel as a nation, the whole teaching of the Bible in both Testaments holds each person responsible for his or her own sin.

Following the *Scripture-interprets-Scripture* principle, difficult and obscure passages should be interpreted in light of clearer passages. Further, doctrine cannot be based on a single

⁵²Mike Oppenheimer, “Should a Christian be Concerned about Curses Today?” 2009 <http://letusreason.org/Wf47.htm> (accessed May 20, 2015).

text that contradicts multiple other passages that clearly teach a biblical doctrine. This should be helpful in understanding the biblical teaching of personal responsibility for sin. Kaiser, therefore, states it well when he says, “No one will ever be denied eternal life because of what his or her forefathers did or did not do. Each will live eternally or suffer eternally for his or her own actions.”⁵³ The theory that a parent’s sin or righteousness directly affects God’s punishment on his or her child, therefore, lacks scriptural basis.

Explanation of the Breakouts

How can we explain the *breakout*⁵⁴ examples that seem to contradict this conclusion? The Old Testament seems to give basis for the generational-curse teaching. At times, God or people pronounced a curse or judgment upon a generation of people. In the book of Genesis, God pronounces judgment on Adam and Eve that was to affect *all humanity* (Gen. 3:17) when they disobediently eat from the fruit that God had forbidden them. Because of their disobedience, sin and death came into the world. Paul says that, through the fall of this man, the whole earth lives under sin and death (Rom. 5:12).⁵⁵

Through the fall of Adam, the whole earth came under the curse of sin and death. Later in Romans, Paul hints that “the whole creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it” (Rom. 8:20). Isn’t this a curse on the whole human race because of one man’s sin? This can be referred to as the Adamic curse, a curse that affects all generations to this day. One writer relates this state of creation to the fall of Adam when he says,

⁵³Kaiser Jr. et al., *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 178.

⁵⁴Breakouts here refer to those instances that seem to break away from the principles that the ongoing discussion establishes.

⁵⁵Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men because all sinned.

“Before Adam sinned the earth was like a bride in her wedding dress, waiting for her bridegroom. Then Adam sinned against God. As a result, Adam left the earth, standing in her bridal dress with tears in her eyes.”⁵⁶ A later part of this review will discuss the Adamic curse.

In Leviticus 26:39–42,⁵⁷ God declares that the remnants of the Israelites shall rot away in the land as a result of “their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers” (ESV). This seems to refer to suffering in the desert as a result of sin, both theirs and their fathers’. He, however, qualifies this declaration that if they repent of their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, he will remember his covenant with Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham, their fathers of faith.

Other occasions, a curse or judgment is pronounced upon future generations are found in Joshua. In Joshua 6:26–27, Joshua pronounces a curse upon whoever raises to rebuild Jericho. It may seem that he is cursing someone in the future for the wickedness of the city then. Joshua also pronounces a curse upon a whole community, the Gibeonites, in 9:22–24.

The few references cited in this review serve to indicate that the Old Testament indeed points to the existence of generational curses or judgments. However, a study of the cited texts and others that are cited in the following section disqualifies the Old Testament as the basis for the current teaching of generational curses.

⁵⁶Van Johnson, Quentin McGhee, Edgardo Munoz, and Steve Eutsler, *Romans and Galatians: The Gospel According to Paul, Student Manual* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2012), 164.

⁵⁷And those of you who are left shall rot away in your enemies' lands because of their iniquity, and also because of the iniquities of their fathers they shall rot away like them. “But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers in their treachery that they committed against me, and also in walking contrary to me, so that I walked contrary to them and brought them into the land of their enemies—if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled and they make amends for their iniquity, then I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and I will remember my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land (ESV).

How a Parent's Sin or Righteousness Affects the Life of a Believer

The understanding that this review brings concerning the relationship between a parent's sin and the fate of the descendant does not assume that a parent's sin or righteousness has no impact on his believing child. It assumes, however, that a parent's sin or righteousness bears no *direct* effect on the believing descendant. This observation is based on the following facts that the Old Testament reveals.

Generational curses are conditional

Only those who hate the Lord, or continue to sin (Exod. 5:20; Ezek. 18) become victims of the curse. As indicated in the introduction to this proposal and this review, the biblical concept of a curse as revealed in Deuteronomy is based on God's covenant with his people. Whether they are cursed or blessed all depended on whether they keep the conditions of the covenant or not. They were to bow only to God (Deut. 5:8–10), obey his commandments (Deut. 7:9–10; 28:15–68), and obey his voice (Deut. 30:19–20)⁵⁸ if they were to live a blessed rather than a cursed life. Blessings, both for them and their descendants, would follow their obedience to the covenant, and curses would follow their disobedience.

The Hebrew noun used for curse in Deuteronomy 11:26 in reference to the result of choosing the sinful way is *qelala* (condemnation). In other words, people are to live under condemnation if they choose to live a sinful life but will live under a blessing if they choose the way of righteousness. It is important to note that in Romans 8:1 Paul says (in Greek) that there is now no *katakrima* (condemnation) on those who believe in Jesus Christ. Clearly, therefore, the

⁵⁸I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you, life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore, choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them (ESV).

Bible teaches that those who repent and live in obedience to God are free from any condemnation.

Unfortunately, the proponents of the current generational-curse teaching go beyond condemnation that results from sin and identify spirits as the main ground for generational curses. Some contend that demons cannot enter a person any time they want unless they have a legal ground to do so. They therefore describe generational curses as one among other legal grounds for demon possession. They further believe that demons can legally get into the unborn babies of people living in generational curses and that this is how curses are transmitted to other generations,⁵⁹ a notion that is never indicated in Scripture. As indicated later in this proposal, this is a result of the influence of the African worldview, not the biblical.

Exodus 20:5 for instance, cannot be taken to mean that God judges innocent people because of their ancestor's guilt. Brace notes that

the overall sense seems to be that sinful acceptances of behavior within families would tend to 'stick' - a bit like glue. In this sense, and probably in this sense only, God would 'punish the children and their children for the sins of the fathers even to the third and fourth generation.'⁶⁰

In other words, Brace sees the possibility that members of certain families would be influenced by the sinful decisions of their ancestors, accepting and living the evil ways that their ancestors lived. Only then would God punish the descendants. This punishment would not because their ancestors sinned but because the descendants also accept the sinful ways of their forefathers and live in the same manner. This is a reasonable position.

⁵⁹Michael Fackerell, "How Curses Come and Demons Enter," <http://www.christian-faith.com/forjesus/how-demons-enter> (accessed April 24, 2012).

⁶⁰Brace.

Brace's comment here reveals two things that are helpful in understanding this text. One, the text refers to punishment or judgment rather than an arbitrary curse. Two, the text declares such judgment to "those who would accept and embrace sinful behaviors of their ancestors or fathers." Kaiser notes that "for the wicked persons who by their actions tend to second their father's previous motions by continuing to sin boldly as their fathers did, with no repentance; this text warns that the chastisement of God will be felt down to the third and fourth generation."⁶¹

Prior to Exodus 34:6–7, Moses had asked God to show him his glory (Exod. 33:18). In chapter 34, God fulfills the promise by showing his glory to Moses while declaring his name (Exod. 34:5–7). In this declaration, he accompanies the name with his attributes.⁶² In context, Exodus 34:6–7 is not a general statement to all humanity. It is God revealing two aspects of his nature, his love and his justice, on the occasion of his revelation to Moses and the giving of his law. In Exodus 20:5, the divine justice of God declares God's judgment of sin, particularly idolatry, upon generations of unbelievers. But, he accompanies this declaration with a declaration of his divine love. In Exodus 34:6, he emphasizes his love upon generations of believers but also balances this with his divine justice in the punishment of sinners. In both texts, God shows a contrast between his dealings with those who love him and those who hate him. Concerning these texts Cook says, "The divine love is associated with the divine justice. ... In this place the truth appears in its essential order; the retributive justice of God is not subordinated to, rather it is made part of, His forgiving love."⁶³ The practical aspect of these two aspects of

⁶¹Kaiser Jr. et al., 179.

⁶²And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation (KJV).

⁶³F. C. Cook, ed., *Banner's Notes: The Bible Commentary, Exodus to Judges* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, n.d), 93.

God's nature is conditioned by human behavior. Kaiser puts it this way: "God's grace is balanced by the last part of Exodus 34:7 which warns that God does not leave the guilty unpunished. The reverse side of the same coin that declares God's mercy and His love speaks of His justice and righteousness."⁶⁴

This is a clear indication that God is a forgiving and loving God. It is an aspect of his divine character which he declares before Moses. He does not punish the innocent together with the guilty. Yet, he does not leave the guilty unpunished. It seems, thus, that both Exodus 20:5 and 34:5–7 present the conditions that decide how God will deal with his people in reference to sin. Those who hate God are those who live a sinful life. These will experience God's judgment. Those who love God are those who have fellowship with him and will enjoy God's forgiving grace.

In Leviticus 26:39–42,⁶⁵ it is clear that God walked contrary to the people because they followed the ways of their fathers who had rebelled and that he would keep his covenant with the patriarchs if they would turn to the conditions of the covenant, that is obey God. This is consistent with the whole of biblical teaching.

Exemptions exist in generations under curse

Those who choose to love God and live contrary to the sinful ways of their generations are exempted from the curse. This is to say that a generational curse as understood in the Old

⁶⁴Kaiser Jr. et al., 179.

⁶⁵And those of you who are left shall rot away in your enemies' lands because of their iniquity, and also because of the iniquities of their fathers they shall rot away like them. "But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers in their treachery that they committed against me, and also in walking contrary to me, so that I walked contrary to them and brought them into the land of their enemies—if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled and they make amends for their iniquity, then I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and I will remember my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land (ESV).

Testament does not mean that individual members of the community under the curse cannot believe in God and be saved. Ezekiel 18 says that a righteous father can have an unrighteous son if the son chooses a life that opposes his father's righteousness (Ezek. 18:10–13). The opposite is also true. An unrighteous father can have a righteous son if the son chooses a life that opposes the unrighteousness of his father (v. 14–18).

The truth above is illustrated in the Bible. The sinful Canaanites were under a generational curse. Yet, Rahab, a Canaanite prostitute, believed in God, was accepted, and entered into the ancestral line of Jesus (Josh. 6:22–25; Matt. 1:5). Ruth, the Moabite, also believed and was accepted into the ancestral line of King David (Ruth 1:4, 10, 13, 17). It is clear, therefore, that a person in a community under generational curses can believe. Once he or she believes, he or she breaks away from any kind of generational curses. This is expressed by opponents of the generational-curse teaching when they say:

Even though the sins of God's people would have bad consequences throughout generations, there was grace and mercy given to any individual on the basis of their personal repentance. In other words, if one repents and follows the ways of the Lord, the bondages that would have been passed on by their bad influences to the next generation are broken.⁶⁶

This comment observes rightly that sins may have bad consequences to the sinner's generations. However, even in generations under curse, a repentant person breaks away from the sinful tendencies and, hence, away from judgment. This understanding thus disqualifies the Old Testament as a basis for the modern generational-curse teaching. Contrary to the teaching of the Bible, the modern generational-curse teaching holds that individuals inherit the guilt of their fathers even if they have a personal relationship with God. It further teaches that these

⁶⁶Oppenheimer, 2009.

individuals under curse should go through a deliverance process to be delivered from the curse of their fathers, suggesting that salvation alone does not break the so-called curse.

Natural consequences are not generational curses

In Numbers 14:18–33, a bad report was brought that caused the people to complain and blame God and Moses (14:1–9). God punished the older generation by forbidding them to inherit the land (14:21–32). He made it plain also that the younger generation would have to suffer in the desert as they wait for the parents to die (14:33). This was not a curse on the younger generation but a natural consequence of the sin of its ancestors.

This discussion therefore brings the understanding that the parent’s sin or righteousness has no direct effect on the individual believer. The effect is by way of influence, either positively for the righteous parent, or negatively for the sinful parent. Consequently, a believer is not punished or rewarded because of his or her parent’s sin or righteousness.

The Adamic Curse as It Relates to the Suffering of the Righteous Believer

Introduction

Both the Old and the New Testaments reveal that generational curses are not a possibility for a believer, as indicated in the preceding review. Yet, it is undeniable that believers experience poverty, sicknesses, misfortunes, and other forms of sufferings. The question then becomes: *Why do good people experience bad things?* Generational-curse proponents use the generational-curse teaching as an explanation or reason for sufferings. They suggest that a believer cannot suffer unless a curse exists on him or her. An understanding of the Adamic curse helps significantly to explain why righteous believers might suffer even though neither they nor others related to them have sinned.

Theological Aspects of the Impact of the Fall and the Resulting Curse

The immediate impact of the fall of Adam was separation from God, also called spiritual death. Man's relationship with God was broken, and it took God's initiative to restore it in the garden by covering man's nakedness (Gen. 3:21). This death continues to be true for all non-believers today.

Physical death, separation of the body and the spirit, also followed as God had warned Adam although it was not immediate. Corruption of the body, including the decaying process, diseases, and physical sufferings, became part of the human experience which culminates in physical death. Man thus started living with a body that is unqualified to live with God in eternity. Physical death happens to both believers and non-believers.

The nature of sin entered man following the fall of Adam. The inclination toward sinning resulted from the fall. Since then, every person is born a sinner by nature, which makes it difficult for him to choose not to sin unless he accepts Christ (Rom. 5:12). A person who has a sinful nature is in bondage and cannot do what he knows is good. Instead, he does what he knows is evil (Rom. 7:14–20).

Other effects were directed at nature, since the ground was cursed. Fertility of the land was negatively affected which result in toil and pains (Gen. 3:17–19) to this day. Enmity between man and Satan also resulted (Gen. 3:15) which continues to cause spiritual battle.

The Extent of the Detrimental Impact of the Adamic Fall upon the Believer

The fall of Adam had detrimental effects for all humanity. These effects have impact even to those who believe in Jesus as their savior. A significant question that this ongoing discussion wants to focus on is on how the detrimental impact of the Fall relates to the believer.

Spiritual Death Was Dealt with Immediately.

Spiritual death was dealt with instantly by God killing an animal and covering Adam and Eve. This was the beginning of animal sacrifice, prophetically pointing to the death of Jesus Christ on the cross for the redemption of humanity. God declared the first gospel in Genesis 3:15, a prophecy of the ultimate defeat of Satan and the second death. Old Testament people who accepted the sacrificial system were prophetically accepting Christ's sacrifice. The remedy for spiritual death is therefore Christ's death. Those accepting the sacrifice do not suffer spiritual death because the sacrifice of Jesus sufficiently dealt with it. Paul indicates that the curse that resulted through one man is counteracted by the righteous act of another man who is known as the second Adam, Jesus Christ, through whom blessings come to all humanity (Rom. 5:18–19).⁶⁷ The curse resulting from sin is lifted from all believes by the death of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:17).⁶⁸ The contexts of the passages in Romans speak of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. As an implication, two groups of humans exist: the godly and the ungodly descendants of Adam.

⁶⁷“Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.”

⁶⁸For if by the trespass of one man death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

Physical Suffering and Death Continued.

The effects of the decaying body, including physical sufferings, are still felt even by believers since they have the earthly body. It should be noted that most of the so-called generational curses are the things that happen to a person in or through the body. Yet, suffering and death were brought upon mankind and all creation by the disobedience of Adam. The fall of Adam and Eve, therefore, brought God's curse into the universe. Paul says that as a result “all creation is subject to vanity, corruption and pain” (Rom. 8:20–22). Sorrow, degeneration, sin, and death came upon Adam and Eve and all their descendants as a result of this disobedience (Gen. 3:16–20; Rom. 5:17-19). Since the fall, the earth is cursed and is exposed to suffering and pain. Job realizes this when he says: "Man born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble" (Job 14:1).

Suffering is, therefore, universal because of the fall. Righteous people do suffer because they have decaying bodies. Paul says in this body “we groan, and are burdened” (2 Cor. 5:4). We still bear the corrupted body until death or transformation. So, there is aging, getting sick, lacking, and dying. Therefore, the generational-curse teaching is wrongly used to explain why good people suffer.

The Nature of Sin is Crucified by the Law of Life.

Scripture is clear that the sinful nature is crucified by the law of life. As such, it has no power over believers. It has authority over a non-believer. Paul describes his state when he was a sinner by saying that he was a failure (Rom. 7). The sinful nature is the root of all curses because it controls a person and entices him to sin. There is no curse on the believer since the believer's sinful nature is crucified by the law of life. He is spiritually alive and lives by the law of God, which separates him from curses.

Cosmic Struggles Exist in the Spiritual Realm.

Ephesians 6 describes struggles between the evil forces and God's people. The struggles are as ancient as the fall of the devil and the fall of man. The struggles may result in accidents, diseases, demonic attacks, or torments. This also explains why godly people suffer. However, God promises to be with believers in times of troubles. An understanding of the Adamic curse should thus help us learn that sufferings of a believer are not related to any sin that they or their parents committed.

The Work of Christ as Relates to a Believer's Inheritance of Curses

This research focuses on the issue of generational curses as it relates to believers. Two key questions come into focus in this discussion. How does the work of Christ and presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer relate to the concept of Christians inheriting curses from their parents or grandparents? Can a person be a believer and still inherit curses from his or her parents? The belief in generational curses holds that a person inherits the guilt of his or her ancestors leading to related problems and sufferings. It is important, therefore, to observe how the New Testament deals with the problem of sin.

The Sin/Judgment and Cause/Effect View in the New Testament

In the Gospels, one finds an event that suggests that the Jews, including Jesus' disciples, believed the notion that Ezekiel confronted (Ezekiel 18). Jesus confronts the same issues. "As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned,' said Jesus, 'but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life'" (John 9:1-3). It appears that the disciples were still affected by the old paganistic worldview that sin-guilt could be inherited. Jesus emphasizes the fact that there is no connection between the blind man's

condition and his personal sin or the sin of his parents. Rather, he emphasizes the glory and grace of God. It seems also that the disciples believe that a person cannot suffer unless sin is involved, a notion to which Jesus objects.

At times, Jesus seems to suggest that a certain problem was caused by sin. One time, he healed a paralytic and told him: “See you are well again, stop sinning or something worse may happen to you” (John 5:14). While the text suggests a connection between the person’s condition and sin, it is clear that it is not his parents’ sin that is in view. Also, when Jesus forgave sin, he did not attach any other condition after the forgiveness except the command to not sin again. In one incident Jesus stated, “Go now and leave your life of sin” (John 8:11). The words of this verse hint to the fact that his forgiveness is sufficient in bringing transformation that would result in a changed life. For Jesus, the woman he had forgiven could freely choose either to dwell in her sin or depart from it. He did not prescribe any additional work for this woman to complement or supplement the forgiveness that God had graciously offered. This is what he did with many others whom he forgave.

The Extent and Sufficiency of Christ’s Atonement

Many Christians feel that the belief in generational curses demeans the sufficiency of the finished work of Jesus Christ. From the ongoing discussion, it is clear that Pentecostals are divided on the issue of generational curses. It is because of such a division that Coulter calls for a consensus in Pentecostal theology.⁶⁹ Coulter points out an agreement in Pentecostal theology concerning the centrality of the doctrine of salvation, but admits disagreements in other areas of

⁶⁹Dale Coulter, “Deliverance by the Power of God: Toward a Pentecostal Understanding of Salvation,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 10, no. 4 (2004): 447.

belief.⁷⁰ However, it is necessary to explore what the Pentecostals in this study include in their doctrine of salvation.

Scholars have observed that some charismatic and Pentecostal preachers in Africa and beyond have evolved their preaching emphasis from focusing on their basic beliefs to focusing on fitting a biblical teaching into modern life by twisting its meaning and ignoring its context. This evolution has resulted in misinterpretation and inappropriate use of Scripture to fit personal needs.⁷¹ This issue arises as a result of disagreements that exist between what Pentecostals understand as the content and meaning of salvation in general and the extent of this salvation in relation to deliverance. Chipatali, for instance, believes that a non-believer has to be delivered by Jesus from sin before he can be delivered from curses.⁷² For Chipatali, salvation is the basis for deliverance from generational curses. This sounds biblical from the surface, but in reality, it advocates for deliverance as a second work after salvation, an error observed in most generational-curse proponents.

The Pauline Epistles are an illustration of how the New Testament deals with the problem of sin, thus forming the basis for the doctrine of salvation. Paul speaks of the sufficiency of Christ's atoning death for sin. In his letter to the Colossians he says that Jesus "forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross" (2:13–14). As far as sin is concerned, Paul's words clearly point to the fact that whatever sin-debt people had acquired was sufficiently dealt with as a result of the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ. No more debt remains that needs

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, "Learning to Prosper by Wrestling and Negotiation: Jacob and Esau in Contemporary African Hermeneutics," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 21 (2012).

⁷²Chipatali.

to be dealt with through another work after salvation. All was dealt with effectively. In other words, Christ's work on the cross was sufficient in dealing with the problem of sin.

In context, Paul in this text in Colossians is helping believers out of the danger to be moved from their faith. It appears there had been some deception that aimed at removing their confidence in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to some other regulation as the basis for their salvation. This is indicated by several phrases. Paul declares that Christians are reconciled "if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel" (1:23). He says, "I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments" (2:4). He also advises, "See that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophies . . . rather than on Christ (2:8). It appears that some deceivers were attempting to direct the believers to other things as basis for their cleansing, specifically to human traditions and regulations, rather than the atoning death of Jesus Christ. Central to Paul's argument is his call for these believers to put their confidence in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as the sole basis for their cleansing and deliverance from sin and powers of darkness (2:13–14).

In Colossians 2:14, Paul describes the nature of the forgiveness that was obtained through the cross in terms of a legal obligation or debt being annulled. Paul states that Jesus cancelled (*exaleippas*) the written code (*cheirographon*), which was similar to a bond or a certificate of indebtedness⁷³ with its regulation. The Greek root *exaleipho* (cancelled) means to wipe away or to blot out.⁷⁴ Scholars differ as to what this written code refers.⁷⁵ One strong analysis comes from

⁷³Arthur G. Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, of New International Biblical Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1990), 58.

⁷⁴Edward W. Goodrick and John R. Kohlenberger III, *The Strongest NIV Exhaustive Concordance* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 1549.

⁷⁵Ibid. Suggested references are the Law of Moses, the covenant between Adam and the devil, a certificate of debt (such as an IOU) from mankind to God, a heavenly book on which God records human sins, or Christ himself.

Patzia who says that the context of the text closely supports the reference either to the Mosaic Law or to manmade traditions.⁷⁶ Human beings could not keep the precepts of the Mosaic law. Neither could they keep the precepts of their own traditions. As a result, the precepts stood as codes that accused the sinners. Adeyemo contends that the written code with its regulations indicates that humans were hopelessly in the wrong with no possibility of setting things right and that the document stood as the accuser.⁷⁷ He observes, though, that, through the death of Jesus Christ, God nailed the document to the cross with Christ, cancelling our obligation or debt so that we could go free.⁷⁸ Paul's argument, therefore, is that to stipulate any other requirement for admission into the church is to demote the work of Christ and its resulting effect, forgiveness of all our sins. This way, Paul indicates how the work of the cross sufficiently dealt with the problem of sin by providing complete cleansing and forgiveness. As such, believers should seek for nothing more for their cleansing.

It is on the basis of the sufficiency of the death of Jesus Christ that Paul confronted the Judaic influence on believers in his letters to the Romans and the Galatians, instructing them to trust in the grace of God and base their salvation on faith in Jesus rather than on works of the Mosaic Law. This he also emphasizes in his letter to the Ephesians in chapter 1. In other words, Paul saw nothing else that could supplement the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ, hence emphasizing the sufficiency and efficiency of the cross in salvation.

From the study of Scriptures and observations made in this review, it seems that Freligh is correct that the justification of man is grounded in the infinitely righteous atonement of

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Adeyemo, 1453.

⁷⁸Ibid.

Christ.⁷⁹ While generational-curse proponents do not seem to hold that the curse would prevent one from being admitted into the body of Christ, by implication they suggest the work of Christ on the cross did not sufficiently deal with the effects of sin. Looking for another work for dealing with the effects of sin apart from Christ's death and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit is to consider the death of Christ as insufficient.

Further, it is in Paul's theology that the work of the cross has also set believers free from the dominion of the powers of darkness and principalities. Paul reveals that Jesus, by his death on the cross, did not only disarm and defeat the powers and principalities that held believers in bondage to sin, but also completely humiliated them in the process (Col. 2:15). Paul uses an expression that was common in his time. When a city was conquered, the conquerors would stage a victory parade to display their defeated enemies and the goods they had plundered.⁸⁰ According to Paul, the authorities and powers were defeated and were dragged in display by Jesus the conqueror. This means that "the death of Jesus accomplished both forgiveness of sin and deliverance from demonic oppression"⁸¹ and possession for those who accept the sacrifice. Demonic oppression in this dissertation refers to the influence that demons exert on people and the harassment and torture that they bring over people. This is different from possession, which refers to indwelling and complete control where the victim loses the will to choose and is driven by the possessing power. This implies that even the powers of darkness have no power over the born-again Christian. However, it does not mean that demonic powers will not try to exert influence or harass believers. Ephesians 6:10–18 calls believers to put on the full armor as they

⁷⁹Harold Freligh M. *New Born, A Basic Handbook on Salvation for Personal or Group Study* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, 1975), 69.

⁸⁰Adeyemo, 1453.

⁸¹Nunnaly.

wage war against the devil. Verse 12 specifically says: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” Thus, believers have the power through Christ to defeat demonic powers as Scriptures teach (Eph. 6:10–18, Col. 2:15). Also, the New Testament teaching does not give basis or support for generational possession. With this in mind, it is clear that even the witchcraft and spirit-orientation of the modern generational-curse teaching lacks support from the New Testament as far as born-again Christians are concerned.

It is important to note also that the New Testament never calls for deliverance. It calls believers to crucify the flesh (Gal. 5:24), to “keep in step with the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25), and to “put off your old self” (Eph. 4:22)—all of which speak of personal responsibility for actions. Never once do we see Paul or other New Testament authors call for *breaking* the curse, or such language.

Based on this understanding, Annang condemns generational curses as one example of systemized animism that merely adds Jesus to the list of powers in the African context.⁸² Banda observes that the scandal for African Christianity is the vulnerability of Christians to satanic powers as a result of a failure to put total confidence in Jesus against satanic forces.⁸³ He believes that present suffering is not necessarily satanic harassment and views believers who accept the possibility of generational curses as victims of ignorance of what the cross has accomplished.⁸⁴

⁸²Asumang Annang, “Powers of Darkness: An Evaluation of Three Approaches to the Evil Powers in Ephesus,” *Conspectus: The Journal of the South African Theological Seminary* (2000): 15. <http://www.satsonline.org/userfiles/Conspectus%205.pdf#page=7> (accessed April 25, 2015).

⁸³Collium Banda, “The Sufficiency of Christ in Africa: A Christological Challenge From African Traditional Religions” (PhD diss., UNISA, 2009), <http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/1434/dissertation.pdf?sequence=1> (accessed April 25, 2015).

⁸⁴Banda.

Critical Summary

This review makes the observation that it was possible for people in the Old Testament to be victims of generational judgment. A careful study of Scripture, though, qualifies this position. Firstly, a generational curse as revealed in the Old Testament does not carry the same sense as the one propagated by the modern proponents of the belief. If *generational curse* is to be accepted as a concept declared in the Old Testament, it must carry the sense of judgment by God (proclaimed by God or his servants) and only efficacious on those who follow the sinful trend of their ancestors. This differs from the sense the modern teaching carries where an innocent person inherits the guilt, and thereby the judgment, of the sin of his ancestors. It also differs with the modern sense which involves evil spirits, demons, witchcraft, and others of the sort since nowhere in the Old Testament does God judge through sorcery, demons, and spirits.

Secondly, when the Scriptures used by generational-curse teachers and deliverance ministry leaders are studied in their context, the teaching is brought to a biblical balance. The understanding of this review therefore is that, while the Old Testament indicates that generational curses exist, it does not teach the doctrine of generational curses in the sense that it is taught by the proponents of the doctrine today. Here are several critical observations concerning the Old Testament and generational curses.

Throughout the Bible, God is presented as just and righteous, so he cannot contradict himself in one or a few texts. Ezekiel 18 is one of these clear texts that teach on God's justice in dealing with sin. He does not punish the righteous children for the sins of their parents or vice versa.

Historically, Jewish communities were closely interwoven in family settings. Walton indicates that "in the ancient East a person found his identity within a group such as a clan or

family in which integration and interdependence were important values.”⁸⁵ As a result, individual behavior was viewed as corporate. So, when there was sin, the family shared responsibility. Yet, the texts where judgment to the third and fourth generations is declared are clear that the punishment is for those who hate God, those who by way of their lives follow the sinful ways their fathers practiced. As such, they are not punished because of their fathers’ sins but because they are also sinning as their fathers did. Chan observes that, even though third and fourth generations refer to a whole household, the text does not say God punishes every member whether guilty or not.⁸⁶ Some people question the issue of the seven grandchildren of Saul in 2 Sam. 21:1–9. Concerning this, Kaiser says, “Only God knows why the seven grandchildren shared in the guilt: it is not spelled out in the text. Apparently they had had some degree of complicity in the matter.”⁸⁷

Also, God’s warning to punish third and fourth generations is specifically part of the Old Testament Law. It concerned Israel as a specific nation and as a specific consequence for the sin of idolatry. The contexts of Exodus 34:7 and Numbers 14:18, for instance, show that God is dealing with the Israelite nation as his covenant people. It was a conditional covenant where blessings or curses depended on whether they obeyed or broke the commandments in the law. The book of Judges and the other Old Testament historical books provide a record of how God implemented the warning.

Further, repentance has always been Israel’s remedy from generational punishment or *curse*. Every time the nation turned from idols to God, God saved them (Judges 3:9, 15; 1 Sam.

⁸⁵John H. Walton, Victor H. Mathew, and Mark W. Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 95.

⁸⁶Simon Chan, *Man and Sin: An Independent-Study Textbook* (Springfield, MO: Global University, 1994), 131.

⁸⁷Kaiser Jr. et al, 179.

12:10–11). Even though God warns that he would visit Israel’s sin up to the third and fourth generations, in the very next verse he promises to show love to a thousand generations *of those who love him and keep his commandments* (Exod. 20:6, emphasis added).

The New Testament emphasizes faith in Jesus Christ as the basis for the believer’s covenant with God rather than works of the law as the Old Testament does. It is clear from Paul’s argument that Abraham was counted righteous not by works but by believing in God. Only those who follow Abraham’s footsteps as men of faith receive the blessing of Abraham as accepted sons of God (Gal. 3:6–9). This reveals the consistency in the two Testaments as far as the basis for salvation is concerned which has always been through personal faith in God. Neither one of the Testaments teach a doctrine of generational curses. Also, in the New Testament, the covenant is between God and an individual rather than a nation or a community. The terms of the covenant are the individual’s faith in Christ as the sufficient sacrifice for sin. This removes the possibility of a believer suffering the *guilt* of another person in the community. It also removes the possibility of the believer receiving judgment for the sins of others. The Old Testament, too, emphasizes personal responsibility. Even though corporate responsibility was an important aspect of the Israelites’ community, personal responsibility made corporate responsibility possible.

The Bible therefore does not allow believers to blame their ancestors or consider them responsible for sufferings or behaviors they experience today. Israelites were told to bring up their children in the way of the Lord; “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6). The sinning adults were told to turn away from their sinfulness and repent (Ezek. 18). This was and is still God’s means to keep blessing his people through all generations. In the New Testament, the remedy for a *generational curse* is salvation

through Jesus Christ. Christ's forgiveness makes the individual a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17) and keeps them away from God's condemnation (Rom. 8:1).

This review has revealed also that the Bible does not exempt believers from sufferings. In other words, the reality of suffering for believers is not a strange thing. It is a normal part of the Christian walk. Christians, therefore, suffer for various reasons. One, they suffer as a general consequence of the fall, the Adamic curse. Two, they suffer because the devil is at present the ruler of this worldly order, and these believers live in this world. As a result, God exerts opposition against them, which explains the admonitions for believers to stand their ground against the forces of the devil. Three, believers suffer as a godly permitted order to purify and mature them. In all circumstances, believers are given the assurance of victory. This victory, however, is not always in the form of rescue and healing. At times, it is in form of choosing to give up life and die for the Lord's sake as some did as recorded in Hebrews 11:36–38.

When analyzed in light of biblical understanding, the belief in generational curses in its current form as expressed by its proponents, seems to be based upon a misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the Scriptures. It is also based on ignorance of what Christ has accomplished. Brace's conclusion concerning generational curses is therefore a valid understanding of the Bible on the matter: "Any concept of God purposely, and by His own express intent, *cursing* later generations of a family because of the behavior of an ancestor, or ancestors, seems to be ruled out by Scriptures."⁸⁸

⁸⁸Brace. "Fathers shall not be put to death for their sons, nor shall sons be put to death for their fathers; everyone shall be put to death for his own sin" (Deut. 24:16, NASB). "The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself (Ezek. 18:20, NASB).

CHAPTER 3

SOCIAL-CULTURAL ASPECTS OF GENERATIONAL CURSES

Introduction

The preceding chapter has revealed that the generational-curse teaching in its current form has no biblical foundation. Yet, the teaching continues to spread and gain popularity, especially in the African community, with Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania being part of this community. As indicated in the introduction chapter, preliminary discussions with some Pentecostal pastors and a review of literature suggests connections between the generational-curse belief and the African worldview. This suggests that what is propagated in the current generational-curse belief and African traditional beliefs, rather than sound biblical teaching.

This chapter on social-cultural literature therefore seeks to assess the social and cultural influence of the African worldview on the generational-curse belief. The chapter will first focus on social-cultural factors in Africa as a whole. The review will then look at specific traditions and practices in Tanzania and how the issues in Africa and Tanzania influence the community in Dar-es-Salaam.

Social-Cultural Aspects of Generational Curses in Africa

It is evident from the ongoing discussions that Scripture does not consider as curses the things that generational-curse proponents consider so. A study of the social-cultural literature reveals that proponents of the generational-curse belief in Dar-es-Salaam, and Africa at large, take much of what is in the African traditional beliefs as curses and seek to make Scripture

support their teaching as being biblical. The following discussion reveals that what the generational-curse teaching hold has no basis in Scripture.

What Entails Generational Curses in Africa

Even though some variations exist in the content of the teaching on generational curses, most sources are in consensus regarding what generational curses are. Anderson contends that in anthropology, the definition of curses varies widely, including magical phenomena like witchcraft, voodoo, sorcery, the occult, black magic, evil eye, and divinations.¹ The definitions base their explanations on how such practices relate to broader social organizations. He observes, for instance, that curses had specific functions in ancient Israel. As has been noted in the theological literature, in Israel, curses carried a sense of judgment for breaking the covenant with God.

It is important to understand, though, that in the African view and in rest of the world today, generational curses are not understood the way they are understood in the Old Testament. While an understanding of the Old Testament relates curses to judgment for breaking covenant with God, the traditional African understanding relates curses to ancestral inheritance. The African understanding also extends this inheritance to the spirit world and connects generational curses with evil spirits and the demonic activities. According to this belief, the demonic activities make their way into the victim as a result of the evil life that the ancestors conducted. It is on this ground that some Pentecostals who believe in generational curses conduct deliverance ministry, to cast out the demons and spirits that give room to the curses.

¹Jeff S. Anderson, "The Social Functions of Curses in the Hebrew Bible," *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 110, no 2 (2009) 223–237, <http://www.degruyter.com> (accessed April 25, 2014).

Generational curses in Africa are also said to be manifested in various chronic conditions of the victims. According to Asamoah-Gyadu, for instance, the effects of generational curses are to be seen in the “prevalence of chronic and hereditary diseases, emotional excesses and allergies, frequent miscarriages and deaths, suicidal tendencies and persistent poverty”² in one’s family. The general understanding is that such manifestations are transmitted from one generation to another as a curse resulting from the wrongs or sins of the victims’ ancestors.³ Most generational-curse teachers agree with this trans-generational view. The difference between the proponents of generational curses is thus more on what is transmitted and who can be victims of this transmission, rather than whether or not the transmission occurs.

They contend that demons cannot enter a person any time they want, unless they have a legal ground to do so. One of such legal grounds are what Ikedinma calls evil altars. He gives an example of a pastor whose late father had called a witch to bury a live goat in the family’s compound for protection of the family. Many years later, the family members got saved, and this pastor who responded to God’s call failed in many ministerial efforts. Ikedinma claims that it was not until God revealed to this pastor that the source of his failures was the evil altar built by his father that he was able to gain deliverance.⁴ Ikedinma does not call this a covenant rather than a generational curse. Yet, the solution that the pastor was given by God, as Ikedinma narrates, involved deliverance of the family and the house in the same way that generational-curse proponents would behave. This included conducting deliverance prayer for the family and anointing the four corners of the house. It also involved asking God to break every yoke with the

²Asamoah-Gyadu, “Mission to Set Captives Free,” 398–399.

³Ibid.

⁴Ikedinma, 126.

Devil.⁵ Generational-curse proponents, thus, claim that generational curses are among the legal grounds for demons possession. They further believe that the unborn babies of people under the curses are legally victims of generational demonic possession, which explains how curses are transmitted to other generations.⁶ Ikedinma, for instance, says, “Those whose parents belong/belonged to one cultic/occultist groups invariably have faulty/evil foundation bequeathed to them.”⁷

Ajatnoa-Gyandu observes that “in both traditional and Pentecostal thinking, generational or ancestral curses are cited as some of the main reasons people suffer.”⁸ Sufferings are thus believed to originate from a certain cause, generational curses being one possible cause. The biblical-theological literature review has indicated though, that this is a wrong understanding of the biblical perspective on suffering.

The African Worldview and Generational Curses

A review of the literature on generational curses suggests a close relationship between generational curses and the African worldview, which is based on African traditional religion (ATR). Paynter observes that “people who get converted among the black community that have practiced ancestral worship are accused of bringing in their ancestral worship and mingling it with Christianity.”⁹ Even though Christian teachers of generational curses in Africa do not

⁵Ibid., 127.

⁶Michael Fackerell, “How Curses come and Demons Enter,” <http://www.christian-faith.com/forjesus/how-demons-enter> (accessed April 24, 2014).

⁷Ikedinma, 130.

⁸Ibid., 390.

⁹Ken Paynter, “Generational and Bloodline Curses,” in *Ministry Archives* (July 21, 2013) www.agfbrakpan.co.za/ministry-archives.aspx?mid=1216 (accessed July 23, 2014).

verbally connect their teaching to the African worldview, most of what is known regarding generational curses among Africans seems to be rooted in ATR. Various ATR elements influence the African thinking in reference to the generational-curse belief.

The Place of Ancestors in Africa

The traditional person in Africa is communally oriented and intimately related to his family, clan, tribe, and ancestors.¹⁰ People who die are believed to continue living in the spirit realm as ancestral spirits and continue to relate with the living, bringing both good and bad.¹¹ Kinship ties, thus, extend beyond the living. Ancestors are thought to encircle the living like a cloud, caring for them, but they will punish them when they bring disgrace to their lineage.¹² The ancestors are also believed to negotiate with gods and spirits on behalf of the living. As a result, the living must revere and feed them. In the mind of most Africans, therefore, ancestors are believed to have direct influence on the affairs of their living children and grandchildren. While not all Africans revere ancestors to the same extent, Gehman observes,

For most Africans, the ancestral spirits are a constant frame of reference for all activities. They seek their favor and blessing that they might become more powerful in the community with wealth, prestige, status and authority. They fear their displeasure and thus always try to follow the traditions of the ancestors.¹³

It seems from this observation that a person with this kind of thinking has a close interaction with the ancestral world. Such a connection makes it easier for a traditional African to be convinced that generational or ancestral curses do exist.

¹⁰Paul G. Hiebert and Eloise Hiebert Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant, and Urban Societies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 96.

¹¹Richard J. Gehman, *African Traditional Religion in Biblical Perspective* (Kijabe, Kenya: Kesho Publications, 1989), 54.

¹²Hiebert and Meneses, 96.

¹³Gehman, 55.

The Cause/Effect View of Life

Van Rheezen observes that in ATR, “personal spiritual beings and impersonal spiritual forces are believed to have power over human affairs.”¹⁴ Consequently, “humans must discover what beings and forces are impacting them in order to determine future action and, frequently, to manipulate their power.”¹⁵ This description represents an aspect in the African worldview which states that nothing happens without a cause. One of the causes or agents of fate or problems is believed to be the ancestor whose demands have not been met. Based on this, Paynter contends that “one of the reasons people are attracted to the belief in generational curses is men’s tendency to lay blame on something or someone.”¹⁶ He thus suggests that people in Africa are influenced by their traditional view that leads them to lay blame on their parents’ decisions or on their environment for the things that happen to them.¹⁷

Apart from the belief in the ancestral agency in man’s fate, the African worldview believes also that other forces like magic or sorcery cause problems to humans.¹⁸ Such problems, which include diseases, curses, and misfortunes, need a religious approach since they are spiritual or mystical in nature. As a result, many Africans consult medicine men when other forms of treatment have not achieved desired results.¹⁹

¹⁴Gailyn Van Rheezen, *Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1991), 20.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Paynter.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Peter M. Mumo, “Holistic Healing: An Analytical Review of Medicine Men in African Societies,” *A Journal of the Philosophical Association in Kenya (PAK)* New Series 4 no. 1 (June 2015) 119.

¹⁹Ibid.

Belief in the Unseen World

The tendency to consult spirit mediums and intermediaries is founded on the African belief in the unseen world. In this belief, the unseen world is as real as the physical, with high intermingling between the spirit beings and humankind.²⁰ The traditional African thus completely depends on the supernatural powers of the world to aid him in his quest for posterity, prosperity, and position. As a result, it is easy and tempting even for preachers and believers to judge things in light of this belief. At times, they force the Scripture to say something that is woven into this spirit worldview. Even though the spirit orientation of the African helps the African believer to positively respond to Christian spiritual things, it also to a significant extent has serious detrimental results.

Detrimental Influence of the African Worldview on Christian Beliefs

Annang analyzes the biblical hermeneutical approach concerning evil spiritual powers and indicates significant variations between the African view and that of other world contexts. He observes that, while others tend to demythologize or mythologize, the African view tends to hyper-mythologize the issue of evil powers.²¹ In a hyper-mythologizing worldview, events are regarded as purely a result of spiritual battle between the spirits, limiting the believer's responsibility to prayer and deliverance. Based on this, Annang contends that within many African Bible-study circles it is not difficult to accept that evil spirits do exist and have influence

²⁰Gehman, 55.

²¹Annang, 15. The author evaluates three hermeneutical approaches to the evil powers in Ephesus. Depending on context, some interpreters demythologize the evil power, completely dismissing their existence. Others mythologize them, accepting their existence but denying their personal nature or diminishing their malevolent influence. Still others hyper-mythologize them, giving a deterministic view of the function of spirits and removing responsibility from human beings in spiritual warfare. Africans are said to be hyper-mythologizers.

on humans.²² It is therefore common for churches to be involved in prayers for exorcism and deliverance for the oppressed.

Unfortunately, at times preachers and believers in Africa tend to emphasize the spirit world and exorcism, taking it to extremes. The emphasis on the ancestral or generational curse and deliverance ministry is one of these extremes. This weakens believers, because they end up taking the position that the work of the cross alone does not deliver them from satanic forces. As a result, they do not see the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, but depend on a second work to access the benefits of the work of the cross.²³ They ask for deliverance ministry even after salvation, blaming their problems or weaknesses on the sins their fathers committed. This places Christianity on shaky ground.

Again, since the belief in the generational curse in Africa is connected to the belief in evil spirits, it leads Christians to live an insecure life. This insecurity results from fearing the evil spirits and failing to put total confidence in Jesus against evil spirits, witchcraft, and other satanic forces. As a result, the Christian continues to live under fear even after accepting Jesus Christ. This is especially true with believers who were formally adherents of ATR. It is because of this condition that Banda believes that the greatest enemy of African Christianity is the vulnerability of African Christians to satanic powers.²⁴ And so, the sufficiency of Christ in African Christianity is challenged. This is a scandal for Christianity.

The relationship between ATR and generational curses has therefore been viewed as both a blessing and a curse by various scholars. For Banda, this relationship is a curse that scandalizes

²²Ibid., 14.

²³Banda, 2.

²⁴Ibid.

African Christianity.²⁵ For Onyinah, this relationship is a blessing and should be taken as an opportunity for the African to be understood and assisted to live as a Christian. Based on how he views witchcraft and sorcery in Africa today, Onyinah proposes that deliverance ministry should not be suppressed but should be properly safeguarded through healthy contextualization.²⁶ A brief look at Banda, Annang, Chalk, and Onyinah suggests a consensus on the need for contextualization, though they differ on the approach to contextualization.²⁷

A careful examination of these influential writers indicates a clear contrast in the way they view the influence of African traditional beliefs on Christianity. Banda condemns it as a product of Christianity's insufficiency to address the daily fears of its followers. He considers the vulnerability of African Christians to satanic powers as the greatest enemy of African Christianity.²⁸ Annang goes further, to warn the believer regarding an excessive and unhealthy interest in evil powers.²⁹ For him, "failure to emphasize complete victory of Christ over such generational spirits only fosters a mentality that paralyses believers."³⁰ This argument seems logical. Onyinah, on the contrary, views it as an element that non-Africans fail to see and as a

²⁵Ibid. Banda observes that African Christians live under a spiritual insecurity that results from failure to put total confidence in Jesus against evil spirits, witchcraft, and other satanic forces. This spiritual insecurity leads Christians to continue living under fear even after accepting Jesus, and as a result they continue to hold on to ATR.

²⁶Onyinah Opuku, "Contemporary Witch Demonology in Africa," *International Review of Missions* 93 (2009): 370–371, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1758-6631.2004.tb00463.x/pdf> (accessed May 17, 2012). Opuku argues that what underlies deliverance ministry in Africa is "divinatory consultation or inquiry into the sacred and search for meaning." He sees the need to contextualize the gospel in Africa rather than being preoccupied with demonization and exorcism which brings the gospel in conflict with family ties. His argument is that the "concepts of witchcraft and sorcery have changed in Africa and that deliverance has replaced the anti-witchcraft shrines" formerly owned by African inland churches.

²⁷The emphasis for Chalk is on identification and handling of conflicting issues between the African worldview and the Christian worldview. Onyinah calls for understanding of the African Christian and providing a safeguarded form of deliverance ministry. Banda insists on a transformed African Christian worldview.

²⁸Banda, 3. He looks at this relationship as a reason Christians are easily called back to ATR.

²⁹Annang, 9.

³⁰Ibid.

result, fail to understand.³¹ This contrast is an indication of a serious concern regarding the extent to which cultures and beliefs affect Christian theology and practice in the African context.

It is because of such influences that Banda³² calls for a transformed worldview for the African Christian to avoid practices that lead to syncretism. For the same reason, Chalk recommends efforts to bring the African Christian worldview into conformity to the Christian worldview.³³ Coulter also calls for a consensus in Pentecostal theology.³⁴ He proposes the establishment of a doctrinal framework that faithfully reflects Pentecostalism, contending that such a framework will describe Pentecostal global features and identify theological models that define the integrity of Pentecostal theology.

The Influence of the African Worldview on the Generational-Curse Belief

The relationship that exists between generational curses and ATR seems to explain why Africans are so easily victimized by teachings on generational curses.³⁵ Every African cultural group has its set of beliefs that become an integral aspect of life. As indicated in previous parts of this review, these beliefs and religious practices influence the African worldview. From this understanding, one can detect the basis for such a rapid expansion of the belief in generational curses in Africa. Either the generational-curse proponents are influenced by the traditional view

³¹Onyinah, 371.

³²Banda, 4. He calls for a transformed worldview in line with the victory that Jesus has accomplished on the cross over Satan.

³³Jack Pryor Chalk, "Genesis 1–11 and the African Worldview: Conflict or Conformity," (PhD diss., UNISA, 2009), <http://uir.unisa.ac.za/handle/10500/2167> (accessed April 26, 2015).

³⁴Coulter.

³⁵Onyinah, "God's Grace, Healing, and Suffering," *International Review of Mission* 95 (2006): 122. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1758-6631.2006.tb00546.x/abstract>. Onyinah proposes that "since the biblical approach to healing intersects with that of the African worldview, it makes it easy for Pentecostal Christians to pray for healing."

to the extent that it influences their Christian belief, or they use the ignorance and the compromised worldview of their adherents to victimize them. In either case, African beliefs play a major role in fueling the growth of the teaching on generational curses. Neither the minister nor the victim see anything strange in the belief in curses.

The blame for syncretism in African Christianity is directed to Christianity's insufficiency in handling the daily concerns of the African Christian convert to.³⁶ To some extent, the blame is valid. Yet, there seems to be a greater problem that leads to this syncretism. Ignorance regarding what salvation has accomplished may be a reason for the perceived irrelevance of Christianity to the African believer. African Christianity has often been considered miles wide but only an inch deep. This must be related to the superficiality of the practice of Christianity among traditional Africans, based on misconceptions concerning what the cross has accomplished.

Some scholars are now calling for a transformed African Christian worldview that conforms to the implication of the victory of the cross over evil powers.³⁷ This call indicates that some weaknesses exist in the current African Christian worldview, though not with all believers. Yet, there seems to be another greater issue: the issue of hermeneutics. How a person interprets Scripture plays a major role in determining his theology and in turn, shaping his Christian worldview. The belief in generational curses, thus, is significantly fueled by influence of the African worldview on interpretation of Scriptures.

³⁶Asamoah-Gyadu, "Mission to Set Captives Free, 404. Asamoah-Gyadu suggests that Pentecostal deliverance ministry succeeds because of the seriousness it puts on "the African worldview of mystical causation" and generational curses.

³⁷Banda; Chalk.

The question of conformity or transformation becomes relevant when discussing generational curses. Both camps in this discussion use their positions to call for contextualization. The question is whether Christianity must conform to those beliefs as a way of contextualizing the gospel, or confront the beliefs as a way of keeping the gospel pure. This expresses the need to define contextualization. Both camps recognize the reality of evil spirits, differing in the recommended response to this reality.³⁸ This diversity of opinion helps to see the complexity in the matter and points to the need to redefine Pentecostalism and its beliefs.

It seems fair, from this review, to conclude that the basis for the belief in generational curse in Africa is cultural and traditional rather than biblical or theological. The African worldview with its cause-and-effect orientation forms the basis for curiosity of the believer over the cause of their problems and sufferings. Its high regard of the ancestors and the spirit world connects the people's problems to the ancestors and spirits, hence the belief in generational curses. The desire by genuine preachers to contextualize Christianity, the tendency to overemphasize the spirit world, and the scheming by some heretical preachers to win a following influences the belief that even born-again Christians are victims of generational curses.

³⁸See Asamoah-Gyadu, Annang, Banda, and Chalk on this matter.

Social-Cultural Aspects of Generational Curses in Tanzania

Tanzania shares with the rest of Africa in much of the social-cultural aspects of the generational-curse belief. However, a survey of specific issues pertaining to Tanzania in particular helps in investigating the belief as it relates to Tanzania in particular.

Multiple African Traditional Belief Systems

The evidence discovered in this research demonstrates that, as it is with the other parts of Africa, the belief in generational curses in Tanzania is to a great extent linked to the African worldview. The literature reveals a remarkable combination of African traditions within Tanzania, which provides a hint for understanding the cultural and tribal influences that mold the Tanzanian's beliefs. It is noted that

within the borders of Tanzania co-exists approximately 120 ethnic groups speaking languages representing all four major African language groups. These include Khoisan, or "click" speaking hunter-gatherers, Nilotic-speaking pastoralists (such as the Maasai), Cushitic speakers, and Bantu speakers; the latter predominate in terms of population size.³⁹

The composition might have significantly changed in terms of size since the record was completed several years ago. However, it portrays the reality that Tanzania is made up of people of various African traditions. "The 120 ethnic groups that inhabit Tanzania have adapted to a wide range of geophysical and climatic conditions. The specific habits, customs, and life-views of each group have been influenced by tribal traditions and alliances."⁴⁰

Tanzania is also populated by people of various religious affiliations, another influence on the Tanzanian's belief system. Statistics indicate that "one-third of Tanzanians are Christians,

³⁹Robert G. Carlson and Marrison Pratt Countries and Their Cultures, "The Culture of Tanzania," <http://www.everyculture.com/Sa-Th/Tanzania.html> (accessed June 26, 2014).

⁴⁰Ibid.

another third are Muslim. The remaining third pursue one of the numerous indigenous religions. In rural places some people express their faith in an animistic religion. Hinduism and Buddhism are also found among the members of the Asian minorities.”⁴¹

Again, the sizes of the groups may be different at present. Yet, the statistics portray a significant combination. Such a combination of beliefs system also indicates a combination of various traditional beliefs and practices.

Belief in Spirit Intermediaries

Most traditional beliefs in Tanzania believe in the presence of a high god, as it is with Christianity and Islam.⁴² The Maasai, for instance, believe in one god, called *Engai*, though it has two natures: kind and vengeful.⁴³ The Sukuma, though, believing that the universe exists in levels,⁴⁴ believe also in the existence of one supreme being, called *Liwelelo*, who is not immanent but transcendent.⁴⁵

However, most of the traditional religions in Tanzania, as distinguished from Christianity and Islam, believe also in the existence and significance of intermediate spirits and humans that function between a supreme being and the people. Concerning the Sukuma worldview, for instance, Maganda states: “Men do not experience the influence of the Supreme Being with

⁴¹Chris Walker Bush, “Tribes and Religion of Tanzania,” 2016, *Shadows of Africa* (June 1), <https://www.shadowsof africa.com/blog/tribes-religion-of-tanzania/> (accessed June 20, 2016).

⁴²East Africa Living Encyclopedia, African Studies Centre: University of Pennsylvania; Tanzania – Religion, <http://www.africa.upenn.edu/NEH/neh.html> (accessed 26 June, 2014).

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ray Hatfield, “The *Nfumu* in Traditional Changes: A Study of the Position of the Religious Practitioners among the Sukuma of Tanzania, East Africa,” (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 1968), 47–48. The Sukuma believe that the universe exists in levels: “the Supreme Being, the spirits of the ancestors, man himself, and in the last level animals, plants and minerals.”

⁴⁵Fabian F. Maganda, “Contextualizing Jesus ‘the only Mediator’ for the Sukuma People of Tanzania,” *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* 21 no. 2 (2002), 149.

immediate effect as they do the power of the ancestors.”⁴⁶ The view is based on the belief that their supreme being is not active in the existing conditions of the people.⁴⁷ This indicates that the ancestors have a prominent role among the Sukuma and other traditional religions in Tanzania. Other things that suggest a close link with the ancestors among the Sukuma include naming of children after ancestors during critical illness, consulting traditional doctors in times of sickness, sacrificing to ancestors, and renaming children after a dead relative as a prescription by traditional doctors.⁴⁸ These practices signify a belief in the prevailing relationship of deceased ancestors with living families.”⁴⁹

The Ha, a tribe in Western Tanzania, also believes in the mystical and continue to sacrifice to family ancestors through shrines that are built outside their homes.⁵⁰ This belief in ancestral spirits is thus shared among many Tanzanian tribes.

The ongoing discussion suggests that, even though generational curses are not pronounced by ancestors, it is easy for traditional Tanzanians to believe that the things their ancestors did in their lifetime have direct results or impact upon the living. This is because, as stated earlier, in most African communities, ancestors are still part of the clan with the living.

Belief in Human Intermediaries

Apart from these spirit intermediates, most Tanzanian traditional religions have human intermediates. This belief varies from one ethnic group to another but have one common

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Mark H.C. Bessire, “*Sukuma Culture and Tanzania*,” <http://philip.greenspun.com/sukuma/intro> (accessed June 30, 2014).

⁵⁰Ibid.

understanding that there are people in the society who hold special religious functions like healing, fortune telling, and so forth. For example, among the Haya, the *omufumu*⁵¹ uses herbs and spiritual power to diagnose and cure illnesses. Spirits, the *wazee*⁵² come into the omufumu's head and speak through him.⁵³ The Maasai of Northern Tanzania have a *laibon* who functions as a spiritual leader.

The traditional healer, *mganga* in Kiswahili, plays a significant role in healing and treating chronic diseases and social and psychological problems. A healer is also believed to help “in problems not commonly viewed as ‘illnesses’ by people outside Africa, such as difficulty finding a lover, difficulty conceiving a child, or lack of success in business affairs.”⁵⁴

The fact that most traditional Tanzanians accept the role of human intermediates makes it easier for believers with this traditional influence to accept the role of a human *spiritual* intermediate in detecting the source of their sufferings. This makes it easier for the belief in generational curses and deliverance ministry to take roots and spread.

Syncretism of Tanzanian Traditional Beliefs with Christian Beliefs

The Reality of Syncretism

“Long before the influence of Islam or Christianity, indigenous belief systems shaped the cosmology of each ethnic group.”⁵⁵ Yet, these beliefs seem to still have strong influences on how Christianity and Islam are practiced. Maganda, for instance, observes that “it is common in

⁵¹This means *healer* in the Haya language.

⁵²This means *ancestors* or *old ones* in Swahili.

⁵³Carson.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Carson.

Tanzania and in other African countries to find Christians mixing their traditional beliefs with the biblical truth.”⁵⁶ Lundblad confirms this when she states, “Most African Christians still resort to the practices and beliefs of the traditional religions in times of crisis.”⁵⁷

The traditional practices may range from simply naming children to actual involvement in rituals and consultation of ancestors or diviners. “Many Tanzanians will give their children an additional name to a Christian or Islamic name. This is mostly a name from a grandparent and it symbolizes a relationship with the spiritual world of the forefathers.”⁵⁸ Furthermore, when tragedy or serious sickness hit the family, many traditional Tanzanians opt for traditional healers. This is because according to the African worldview misfortunes and sicknesses “do not occur by accident, but are caused by certain forces, including human agents through magic and witchcraft.”⁵⁹ Many Tanzanian Christians are victims of this practice. However, it seems that the Christian victims are mainly nominal Christians, even though syncretism is also seen among Pentecostal believers.

All this is to say that Tanzanians, like many other Africans, have a high regard of the spirit world. Their worldview is influenced by their cultural and African traditional background which embraces ancestors as part of the family who can have influence in the daily affairs of the living. Such a view makes it easier for a traditional Tanzanian to accept any suggestion of connection between their daily affairs and the ancestral or spirit world. This is also an indication that syncretism is a common thing among many Tanzanian believers.

⁵⁶Maganda, 147.

⁵⁷Janet Lundblad, “Toward an Authentic African Theology,” *Covenant Quarterly* 36 (1978) 37.

⁵⁸Bush.

⁵⁹Mumo, 119.

Reasons for Syncretism

The literature suggests several reasons as to why Tanzanian Christians continue to practice elements of ATR, the belief in generational curses included. Some Christians could be followers of preachers who do not see the ATR practices as evil. As stated earlier in this review, certain scholars view healing by diviners as a symbol of hope for good health, protection from evil forces, and prosperity.⁶⁰ Based on such influences, Christians may not see any problem in seeking for a spiritual force behind every problem they encounter and finding a spiritual solution to it, including breaking generational curses.

In his paper “Why Rangi⁶¹ Christians Continue to Practice African Traditional Religion,” Richard Cox states several reasons which cause Rangi Christians to continue practicing ATR.⁶² These reasons are not restricted to the Rangi Christians but are common to many other Tanzanian Christians. Cox states, “One of the biggest reasons for Rangi believers to still engage in ATR is because Christianity was not adopted for theological reasons but for material gain.”⁶³ The implication is that people may not be committed to the real power of the work of Christ on the cross. They may not see any inconsistency in mixing Christian practices with their traditional beliefs which have to a great extent become part of their daily lives.

⁶⁰Ibid., 117.

⁶¹“Rangi” is the name of one of the tribes found in Central Tanzania.

⁶²Richard Cox, “Why Rangi Christians Continue to Practice African Traditional Religion” *GIALens* (2008): 3, <http://www.gial.edu/GIALens/issues.htm> (accessed June 26, 2014).

⁶³Ibid., 2.

Another reason Cox gives is that “the founders of Christianity in Irangi⁶⁴ discounted the supernatural.”⁶⁵ He notes that “one of the tasks of the priests was to instruct the new believers in the Catholic faith and to encourage them to abandon their ‘superstitions.’”⁶⁶ Most of the traditional beliefs were explained away as made-up explanations to issues that Africans could not explain logically. The priests held that Africans like the Rangis of Tanzania believed that certain situations were caused by evil spirits because the Africans did not have a scientific understanding or explanation. As a result, the supernatural causes that the Rangis ascribed to their circumstances were simply dismissed.

The Africans, thus, perceived Christianity as a Western religious system devoid of the supernatural.⁶⁷ Cox notes that “such a religion void of the supernatural in the everyday life of the people is inadequate since the Africans knew there was a supernatural world that profoundly affected their lives and impacted every significant daily activity.”⁶⁸ He further notes that as a result, “Christianity was seen as what happened in the church building. ATR was left to explain and give answers to the reality of the world in which the African lived every day.”⁶⁹ Christianity failed to offer the Africans the answers they needed in their daily living.

While this reasoning may not apply exactly to the Pentecostal churches in Tanzania, there could be some truth to the fact that those who practice aspects of ATR after their salvation

⁶⁴Irangi is the region where the Rangi people originate.

⁶⁵Cox, 4.

⁶⁶Ibid. These *superstitions* were the beliefs and practices of the Rangi which had always been in line with the basic principles of ATR.

⁶⁷This is an issue that Mumo also raises in his article on page 119.

⁶⁸Cox, 5.

⁶⁹Ibid.

experience may be failing to see the relevance of Christianity in their daily lives. Also, some members of Pentecostal churches today had been nominal Christians who had a wrong understanding of Christianity and might have retained that understanding after salvation.

As previously noted in the social-cultural aspects of generational curses in Africa, the fear of evil spirits, witchcraft, and other satanic forces⁷⁰ continues to remain a threat to African Christians if the issues are not adequately addressed. Since Tanzanians are part of this African Christian community, issues to do with the spirit world affect them and could be a reason for the growth in the generational curse and in other erroneous beliefs in Tanzania.

Contextualization of Christianity is another thing that has been viewed as a reason for African Christians, including Tanzanians, to continue practicing ATR. While contextualization is a beneficial idea, literature reveals that some Christians have taken it to an extreme that pollutes Christianity. Isichei says, “Christianity came to sub-Saharan Africa in European packaging and contextualization ... has been a major concern of Africa’s theologians. However, clearly there is a point where contextualization becomes syncretism, and Christian content is eroded.”⁷¹

What Isichei is stating is valid and important; there is a need to contextualize the gospel. Like other churches in Africa, Pentecostal churches in Tanzania have adapted the idea of indigenous churches which calls for contextualization. It is possible that some of those propagating generational curses on believers are genuinely trying to make Christianity relevant to their members by providing them with a Christian way to understand and overcome their sufferings.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present* (Grand Rapids, MI: Africa World Press), 4.

Summary

Based on this review, it appears that what the proponents of the generational-curse teaching hold to is based on a traditional rather than a biblical foundation. Syncretism has played a major role in accelerating the belief. In Christian circles in Africa, Christians differ on how they approach the issue of generational curses.

Brace condemns two approaches that have been utilized in dealing with it. The first approach is where specific schemes among charismatic groups have focused on identifying and lifting curses from victims,⁷² an approach that some Pentecostal churches in Dar-es-Salaam have taken. Brace asserts that this approach is theologically and scripturally unjustified. The approach, according to him, sees demons “in every 'nook and cranny' of life and seems to be one of unreasonable fearfulness.”⁷³ Brace further asserts that most charismatic deliverance leaders and ministries “are heavily legalistic and overly Old Testament focused, and when one visits their websites one usually finds great theological inconsistency and naivety.” He sees an extreme where demonic activities are exaggerated.

The second approach Brace condemns is where evangelical theologians discount or explain away the whole issue of family curses on born-again Christians. What Brace fights here is the reasoning that victimized families are completely set free when their members accept Christ. For Brace, there is a problem with the fact that most evangelical Christians do not believe in family curses on born-again Christians. He feels that this is the evangelical’s way to dismiss

⁷²Brace. This is with the belief that family curses are only lifted when a person confesses specific sins like idolatry, participation in the occult, involvement in witchcraft and satanism, sexual sins, drugs and addictions, deceit and dishonesty, pride, etc. This must happen before the process for lifting the curse would follow.

⁷³Ibid.

things that they do not understand. In other words, Brace sees an extreme in completely dismissing the possibility of family curses.

Brace suggests that those who say born-again Christians cannot have generational curses may be sincere, but he believes that they miss an important point. The point is that “curses or failings within families perpetuated, perhaps, over several generations do not seem to be a purely spiritual matter,” and that “Christians can still continue to suffer various things because of the sinful society which surrounds them even after coming to Christ.”⁷⁴ He views sanctification as a vital teaching, but believes that becoming increasingly Christ-like is a lengthy process and that full spiritual perfection lies beyond the grave for everyone. It seems acceptable to concur with this view of sanctification while also understanding that the process of sanctification deals with the perfecting of the believer into the image of Christ and has nothing to do with inherited curses or guilt.

Genuine concerns are raised in Brace’s arguments against these two approaches. However, difficulties and contradictions can be found in some of Brace’s arguments concerning the second approach. His observation correctly cautions against explaining away the issue of family or generational curses. Still, he seems to be confusing present sufferings with some form of *family curse* which is objectionable. It is true that certain issues in the African setting are challenging to the understanding of the non-African since the African is more conversant with the spirit world. None of the issues, though, that Brace cites can validly be considered generational curses from the biblical point of view.

Also, in the biblical-theological review, it was observed that some of what seems to be identified as generational curses are consequences of sin. The things that a Christian suffers

⁷⁴Brace.

because of the society surrounding him, as Brace contends, could be consequences of sin rather than a family or generational curse. Societies can also affect individuals by way of influence which a born-again Christian should be able to resist once he/she comes to Christ. If he/she lives by the influence of society, the resulting judgment is not an inheritance from the family but one deserved for his/her own sinfulness. Above all, Brace seems to propagate that salvation does not handle the problem of generational curses. He seems to suggest that the work of the cross does not deal sufficiently with the life of the born-again believer. This, as stated earlier, is contrary to the biblical teaching on the sufficiency of the work of the cross.

Positively, though, Brace proposes a better approach to the issue of generational curses. This is an approach which, in the first place, does not view the term *curse* as necessarily related to witchcraft. This is also an approach that understands that Christians can still be affected by some kind of sufferings because of their past generations which should be understood as consequences of sin rather than as curses. This approach, as Brace views it, will not accommodate the extremes of binding the devil to break generational curses on believers' lives.

Brace's better approach suggests that it is possible for a true Christian to come from a family that is affected by long-term inherited issues. He recommends prayer as the best solution when such problems are detected in a person's life. It seems appropriate to concur with Brace's suggestion but also seems appropriate to find no sufficient reason to call long-term, inherited, family-related problems *generational curses* as the present-era teaching would call them. The fact still remains, though, that a better and more biblically sound approach is needed to respond to the issue of generational curses.

Scholars in this review have tackled the issue of generational curses in Africa from almost every angle. The treatment of the matter has focused on the general African context, with

specific references to sub-Saharan countries. The countries referenced in this review are Ghana, Nigeria, Benin, and South Africa.

The beliefs and practices noted in this review of African Christianity are gaining remarkable popularity in Tanzania. This review has therefore assessed the traditional factors that may be influencing the Tanzanians to be easily victimized by the generational curse teaching.

This researcher understands that Dar-es-Salaam, being one of the cities in Tanzania, could be sharing the same influences as the rest of Tanzania as far as the issue of generational curses is concerned. However, since literature is silent about this matter in reference to Dar-es-Salaam, an investigation was warranted. This investigation aimed at providing data that will help develop a sound biblical and theological understanding of and response to the belief. The response will not benefit Dar-es-Salaam only, but will also benefit other parts of Tanzania and Africa that share the same circumstances.

Dar-es-Salaam, being the major commercial city in Tanzania, has the greatest impact on the nation in all matters, including spiritual issues. It is easy for information and practices from the city to spread over the whole nation because of its cosmopolitan nature. If the belief in generational curse takes root and is established in Pentecostal churches in Dar-es-Salaam, its impact will significantly be felt in the rest of the nation. Conversely, if it is sufficiently dealt with in the Pentecostal churches in Dar-es-Salaam, the positive impact will also be felt in the rest of the nation. It is on this understanding and for this reason that this research focuses its efforts on the Pentecostal churches in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania.

A vacuum exists in the understanding of Pentecostals in Dar-es-Salaam in relation to the issue of generational curses. This vacuum concerns not only the things observed in Africa and Tanzania in general, but also concerns specific issues in the context of Dar-es-Salaam. These

issues include the perspectives of Dar-es-Salaam Pentecostal believers, the implications of the generational-curse teaching on the doctrine and practice of Christianity there, and the most relevant response to the teaching. It is this vacuum that became the focus of this study.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Shuttleworth defines research as “any gathering of data, information, and facts for the advancement of knowledge.”¹ He further indicates, though, that in its strict scientific sense, “research is performing a methodical study in order to prove a hypothesis or answer a specific question.”² Elliston says, “Research methods address two fundamental issues: the collection and analysis of data.”³ Because of this, a researcher should decide which methods he/she intends to use in any proposed study before engaging in the research.

As Punch indicates, the connection between questions and methods should be as close as possible.⁴ This is because “different questions require different methods to answer them. Qualitative questions require qualitative methods and quantitative questions require quantitative methods.”⁵ He thus proposes that content should precede method.⁶ This means establishing what the research is trying to find out and then considering how the researcher is going to do it.

¹Martyn Shuttleworth, “Definition of Research,” *Explorable*, October 3, 2008, <http://explorable.com/definition-of-research> (accessed April 14, 2015).

²Ibid.

³Edgar J. Elliston, *Introduction to Missiological Research Design* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2011), 55.

⁴Keith F. Punch, *Introduction to Research Methods in Education* (London, England: Sage Publications, 2009), 25.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., 27.

This particular research effort endeavors to address the problem: “What constitutes a biblically and theologically sound response to the belief in generational curses in the context of Pentecostal churches in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania? This problem demanded that the understanding, positions, and opinions of various people concerning the issue of generational curses be researched. Mainly, however, the study endeavors to investigate the biblical perspective of generational curses since it is primarily a theological study. To probe effectively into all these different aspects of the question, therefore, a mixed-methods approach was used as detailed in the following section.

Methodological Framework

As indicated above, this study was primarily theological. As an implication, the research was primarily an exegetical-hermeneutical inquiry that led to theological reflection. However, the study, to some extent, used a mixed-methods framework of other qualitative field research methods to collect the data needed to respond to the problem.

Punch points out that the combination of methods in research is now increasingly common.⁷ Jennifer Perone and Lisa Tucker also observe that “over the past decade, there has been an increasing trend of blending quantitative and qualitative data within a study to provide a broader, deeper perspective.”⁸ Punch notes, though, that none of these methods is superior to the other and that the use of either should result from and be appropriate to the RQs being handled.⁹ This research did not use any quantitative method since none of its RQs required it. However, since the research problem

⁷Ibid., 4.

⁸Jennifer Perone and Lisa Tucker, “An Exploration of Triangulation of Methodologies: Quantitative and Qualitative Methodology Fusion in an Investigation of Perceptions of Transit Safety,” www.dot.state.fl.us/research-center/...Proj/.../FDOT_BC137_22.pdf (accessed August 8, 2015).

⁹Punch, 25.

required surveying Scriptures and investigating peoples' perspectives in the field, the study necessitated a mixed-method approach.

The use of a mixed-method process also increased the trustworthiness of this study. Sensing states that "any single approach will have limitations."¹⁰ A mixed-method approach minimizes the limitations. This is because it provides room for using a variety of data sources which is important for cross-checking data. As a result, it increases the reliability of research.

One method used in collecting data for this study is the semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interviews are qualitative instruments. These were used to investigate the opinions, beliefs, and positions of senior leaders¹¹ of Pentecostal churches, prominent teachers of generational curses,¹² and members who perceive themselves as being victims of generational curses.

Content analysis, also a qualitative method, was utilized in studying the content of written teachings of proponents of the generational-curse belief. This aimed at two things. One, it functioned as a complementary method to the interviews with proponents of generational curses in discovering themes, opinions, and views of the proponents of this teaching which may not have been revealed in a face-to-face interaction like an interview and comparing the teachings with the interview responses. Two, content analysis also aimed at studying the hermeneutical principles that the generational-curse proponents use in their key texts.

¹⁰Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2011), 72.

¹¹This would include national denominational leaders who live in Dar-es-Salaam or any other senior leader of the denomination if the national leaders are not in Dar-es-Salaam.

¹²Description of this and other methods will follow later in this chapter.

Semi-Structured Interviews

An interview uses verbal questioning for collecting data. According to Gilbert, researchers use interviews to discover people's knowledge, beliefs, or feelings regarding topics of interest.¹³ The interviews help researchers gain insights through people's expressions of personal feelings, opinions, and experiences that are not available to the researcher through direct observations or group settings.¹⁴

In a semi-structured interview, a researcher utilizes a prepared list of questions but remains flexible in terms of the order of questions during the interview and utilizes probing questions to encourage the interviewee to elaborate on responses.¹⁵ Questions are open-ended, and there is flexibility to add probing questions depending on responses. Even though the researcher utilizes an interview guide, he/she is still the one controlling the interview.

In this study, semi-structured interviews were utilized to collect data from three groups of respondents. The first group was that of national leaders of the Pentecostal denominations selected in this study; they were asked to respond to RQ3. Since the question probes into the official positions of these denominations, it seemed proper to interview the leaders who represent and speak for these denominations. One leader was interviewed from each of the three Pentecostal denominations in this study.

Another group that was interviewed includes founders or national leaders of independent ministries that believe in generational curses. The basis for using semi-structured interviews for these leaders is that personal interaction with them allowed the researcher to learn personal views and

¹³Marvin Gilbert, *Research Methods and Proposal Development: Doctoral Study Guide*, Prototype (Lomé, Togo: Pan-Africa Theological Seminary, 2005), 31.

¹⁴Sensing, 103.

¹⁵Martyn Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide for Small-Scale Social Research Projects* (Berkshire, England: Open University Press, 2010), 175.

attitudes which may not have been clear in other methods like surveys. In an interview, the respondent has freedom of expression. The researcher also has room to probe more into issues that may appear important during the conversation. In this study, interviewing the proponents of generational curses focused on analyzing the opinions, views, and understanding of the proponents responding to RQ4a.

The third group that was interviewed is the *victims* group. This group comprised ordinary church members who believe they are, or have been, victims of generational curses. The interviews were used in studying the feelings and experiences of these *victims* in providing data for RQ4c. Information was collected from these members using an interview guide. The interviews were recorded by a digital recorder and later transcribed and coded before they were analyzed.

Content Analysis

Content analysis has a long history in research methods, dating from the 1940s. It was initially used to examine how frequent identified terms (word counts) occurred in texts.¹⁶ By the 1950s, it was already being utilized to examine semantic relationships rather than just presence.¹⁷ Since it can be used in examining various forms of written work or recorded communication, content analysis is used in a variety of fields for investigation. In addition to its use to reveal international differences in communication content, other researchers use it to detect the existence of propaganda. It is also used by many others to identify the “intentions, focus, or communication trends of an individual, group or institution.”¹⁸ Because of its ability to reveal

¹⁶Carol Busch et al., *Content Analysis* (Fort Collins, CO: Colorado State University, 2012). <http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/guide.cfm?guideid=61> (accessed August 24, 2015).

¹⁷Denscombe, 125.

¹⁸Ibid.

such things in communication, it seems useful to use it as a complementary method to the interviews that were used in studying the the key proponents of generational curses as addressed in RQ4a.

Content analysis in this research was therefore used to study written sermons or teachings of the proponents of generational curses.¹⁹ The purpose for studying the sermons was mainly to discover what the proponents emphasize in their preaching or teaching, so as to learn their views, opinions, and understanding of the teaching. The rationale for using this method apart from the interviews was to help the researcher discover hidden aspects of what is being communicated, which may not have been stated or disclosed in interviews.

Content analysis was also useful in establishing how the proponents of generational curses arrive at the themes they emphasize through Scripture, hence discovering the *methods* they use in interpreting Scriptures. This discovery responded to RQ4b. The discovery of the areas of emphasis in the generational-course teaching will become helpful in doing theological reflection through comparison of what the proponents teach about generational curses and what the Bible teaches.

Exegetical-Hermeneutical Analysis

Bernard places the hermeneutical method of studying text in the category of interpretive analysis, a method of investigating all kinds of texts.²⁰ The rationale for using the exegetical-hermeneutical analysis method is based on the understanding that sound biblical theology is founded on sound principles of biblical interpretation. To develop a contextual theology, therefore, requires

¹⁹Written teachings from two of the proponents involved in this study were identified. The initial intention was to analyze documents from all three proponents but no written teachings by one of these proponents could be found.

²⁰ Russell H. Bernard, *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (Lanham, MD: Altamira Press, 2011), 415.

not only probing into the RQ from the context of the people but also establishing what the Bible says about the question. This is only possible through the exegetical-hermeneutical analysis method.

In this research, the hermeneutical method was used to study biblical texts that are key to the understanding of the teaching of the Bible on generational curses. The texts include the ones that proponents of the generational-curse belief use to support the teaching and also the ones that provide basis for a sound biblical teaching on the same.²¹ This analysis yielded primary biblical-theological data that was later used with secondary data from related literature to form the basis for a theological reflection. This process was necessary for the development of a sound biblical theology on the issue of generational curses in response to RQ1a through RQ1e concerning the biblical perspective of generational curses.

Instrumentation

This study utilized three research instruments to examine various research participants. These instruments are described below.

Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Pentecostal Denominational Leaders

As stated earlier, semi-structured interviews were used to study three groups of participants, one of them being the leaders of Pentecostal denominations. The instrument that was used to study these leaders is an interview guide (IG-PDL)²² which guided in probing into the official positions of Pentecostal denominations in Dar-es-Salaam. The attached guide contains thirteen items and is written in English but was translated into Swahili since the respondents are Swahili speakers.

²¹The texts that were discovered were analyzed while examining biblical-theological literature as part of the literature review. Later, after conducting field research, texts were analyzed that had been repeatedly mentioned by the proponents in the interview responses and in the content analysis documents.

²²See it attached in appendix B.

Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Proponents of Generational Curses

Another instrument that was used in this research is an interview guide for generational-course proponents (IG-GCP).²³ This was used in studying the views, opinions, and understanding of prominent proponents or leaders of ministries that teach generational curses, and how these proponents interpret the Scriptures they use in supporting the belief. The guide has twenty-five items. Item 20 and 21 specifically seek to study the way Scriptures are interpreted.

Interview Guide for Victims of Generational Curses

A final instrument that this research utilized is a semi-structured interview guide for victims of generational curses (IG-GCV).²⁴ This was used in studying the feelings and experiences people who are said to be, or to have been, victims of generational curses. The interview guide for victims comprises thirteen items and was developed after conducting individual interviews with denominational leaders and generational-course proponents and content analysis. Themes and preliminary conclusions arising from these three studies and from the literature were used to study the people who believe that they are cursed. This way, a better position was gained in order to minimize biases by focusing on issues arising from the people rather than on the views and thinking of the researcher.

Instrument Validation

All the instruments for this research went through a validation process as proposed by the PThS instrument development and validation policy. Having developed the semi-structured

²³See it attached in appendix C.

²⁴See it attached in appendix D.

interview guides for the Pentecostal denominational leaders, for the proponents of generational curses, and for the victims, the dissertation supervisor refined them in relation to their content appropriateness as an expert in the Bible and theology. The refined guides were further refined by a local scholar, Rev. Dr. Jackson Nyanda, whose main focus was the contextual-cultural appropriateness of the instruments. Dr. Nyanda is an instructor of Bible and theology at Central Bible College in Dodoma, Tanzania. He also serves as the registrar of graduate studies there. He is a holder of a PhD from Pan-Africa Theological Seminary. He has served with the Tanzania Assemblies of God as a pastor and Bible instructor since the 1980s.

The following considerations were observed in developing the research instruments. The content of the instruments was based on the information that the RQs required. The instruments were developed in Swahili, which is the national and official language of people in Dar-es-Salaam. It is also the common language of communication. Items in the interview guides were open-ended questions and considered issues arising from content analysis and literature. The validation process helped in ensuring that bias is minimized.

Pilot Testing

Pilot testing of the research instruments was conducted with the purpose of finding out whether the interview guides would work in the field research. Things that the pilot test examined included the wording of the items, the appropriateness of the terms in the Swahili language, and whether the procedures of collecting data were clear enough. This was done by trying out the instruments on a few people.

The the interviews were administered to a few people under similar conditions. In this case, the pilot test for the semi-structured interview guides was given to two denominational leaders and two leaders who believe in generational curses. Since the recruitment in this research

is purposive, the researcher identified the people who qualified for the pilot testing. Concerning the interview guide for victims, three people who perceive themselves as former victims of curses were given the pilot test. These were selected by the researcher on a friendly basis. The people involved in the pilot testing are not those who participated in the research.

Validity and Reliability

Validity speaks of “the extent to which an instrument measures what it is claimed to measure. An instrument is valid to the extent that it empirically represents the concept it purports to measure.”²⁵ It speaks of the extent to which the instrument asks the right questions and secures the right information.²⁶ Validity speaks to the trustworthiness and accuracy of the instruments, data, and findings in research. This study investigated the position, views, opinions, and understanding of Pentecostal pastors, generational-curse teachers, and those claiming to be victims for the purpose of developing a sound exegetical and theological basis for understanding the concept of generational curses in Dar-es-Salaam. To ensure validity in this research, the questions in the research instruments needed to cover the full range of the content and domains being measured.

Punch warns that there is no fixed or permanent procedure of establishing validity, so the process of validation should be situational, based on particular details being investigated.²⁷ As a result, a risk for bias and instrument invalidity exists. A preventive measure that was taken was the development and selection of instruments under the guidance of the dissertation coordinator

²⁵Punch, 246.

²⁶Elliston, 56.

²⁷Punch, 247.

dissertation supervisor, and the contextual-culture expert as described above in accordance with the PATHs instrument development policy.

Reliability refers to the degree of consistency of the research instrument.²⁸ It speaks of consistency or stability over time. It refers to the extent to which an instrument produces the same results when administered by the same or another researcher to the same people under the same circumstances.²⁹

All new research instruments are at a risk of lacking validity and reliability. To minimize this risk, a strategy was implemented a strategy that allowed the precedent literature to inform the development of instruments. The validation process described above served to ensure the reliability of the instruments.

Research Participants and Selection

Purposive selection was used in identifying the informants for this study. The aim was to find informants who had the necessary information needed.

Participants

Three categories of informants were interviewed. The first category included national leaders or their representatives from the Pentecostal denominations under this study. The study of these leaders aimed at discovering the official positions of the denominations concerning generational curses. The study of these leaders utilized semi-structured interviews.

The second category of informants included the proponents or teachers of generational curses within selected independent Pentecostal ministries in Dar-es-Salaam. This aimed at

²⁸Elliston, 62.

²⁹Punch, 244.

studying their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and understanding of the teaching in Dar-es-Salaam. Semi-structured interviews were used to analyze this group. The study of this group utilized content analysis and exegetical-hermeneutical analysis in analyzing their written teachings, so as to learn their major teachings and the way they interpret the Scriptures they use.

The third category included ordinary church members who believe they are victims of generational curses. Initially, it was proposed that these members be recruited from the proponents' ministries that are involved in this study. However, recruitment of these victims from the intended churches failed because the leaders did not give permission to have their members studied. As a result, respondents for this group were recruited from churches that are not known as proponents. Semi-structured interviews were used to study these members with the aim of learning their beliefs, feelings, and experiences.

Participant Selection

In selecting the leaders of Pentecostal denominations, one national leader from each of the denominations was interviewed.³⁰ This leader was one of the three members of the executive staff: the arch bishop, his deputy, or the general secretary.³¹ National Pentecostal denominational leaders were personally asked to participate in the study. Also, they were given the opportunity to discuss the informed consent protocol, since they did not prefer signing an informed consent form.³²

³⁰This is a purposive sample which is intended to add depth to the study since the leaders were expected to reveal views, attitudes, and opinions, both personal and denominational. The interview focused on their position as representatives of their denominations or ministries.

³¹All denominations who are members of CPCT have an executive committee that has these three members.

³²The form is attached as appendix A. Flexibility was exercised in this process, and an alternative method of informed consent was developed in case any of the informants felt uncomfortable in signing a form. All of the three denominational leaders preferred not to sign a document, so the researcher accepted their oral consent.

On the proponents' part, three leaders of major independent ministries were interviewed. This was also a purposive selection, since the research focused on independent ministries that are key proponents of the belief in generational curses. The leaders that were interviewed, therefore, came from ministries that teach about generational curses and conduct deliverances from generational curses. The purpose for interviewing such leaders was to ensure that information was received from appropriate informants. The principal investigator in these interviews had planned to hire a professional Christian researcher to conduct the study of the generational-curse teachers and victims of the same for the purpose of hiding the investigator's identity as a TAG minister. However, part of the feedback from pilot testing of the interview guide for proponents proposed that the interviews be conducted personally by the principal investigator for effectiveness in collecting relevant data. The informed consent protocol was discussed with these respondents, who opted for an oral consent instead of signing a document.

Purposeful selection was utilized in identifying the people who believe they are victims of generational curses. As stated above, participants from the independent ministries that are involved in this study could not be attained. Each of the three leaders being interviewed were expected to identify six members that are considered victims of generational curses. All three leaders declined and cited the reason that it was not ethical to expose their members in fear of losing trust.

An optional strategy to identify respondents for this particular group of respondents was developed. A short questionnaire³³ was developed in coordination with the Dissertation Supervisor and the contextual-culture expert which helped in identifying *victims* from churches that officially do not teach generational curses. With permission from the pastors of these

³³The questionnaire is attached as appendix E.

churches, the questionnaires were distributed and six members were identified from these churches who claimed to have been victims of generational curses. Semi-structured interviews were used with these six participants instead of a focus group since the plan to use focus groups included the intention to compare responses between groups.

The purposeful selection of participants followed Sensing's advice to "select people who have awareness of the situation and meet the criteria and attribute that are essential to the research."³⁴ While this applies to the selection of the Pentecostal leaders to be interviewed, it applies more significantly to the selection of teachers of generational curses and victims of the same.

Informed Consent Protocol

Mostert and Gilbert observe that "prior to initiating data-gathering methodology involving people, a researcher must solicit freely offered informed consent from potential participants."³⁵ Informed consent increase the validity of research by ensuring that the research is conducted ethically. Also, informed consent ensures that participants are informed of what their participation in the research means. In obtaining their consent, the researcher assures that the participants' information will be secure and that the research process includes the fact that the identity of respondents will be protected. Therefore, the consent of the participants was gained by discussing with them whether they would like to fill out the informed consent form.³⁶ As noted above, all leaders opted for an oral consent. As for the *victims*, the screening questionnaire

³⁴Sensing, 83.

³⁵Johan Mostert and Marvin Gilbert "Obtaining Informed Consent in Missiologically Sensitive Contexts" in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*: January 2013: Vol. 37, no. 1, 3–8 <http://www.internationalbulletin.org/issues/2013-01/2013-01-ibmr.pdf> (accessed May 20, 2015).

³⁶See the informed consent form in appendix A.

that was used in identifying them served as the initial consent. Before the interviews with each of the participants started, informed consent was again explained to them.

Data Collection Procedure

Sensing indicates that quantitative studies are designed to investigate an issue with great breadth while qualitative studies are designed to investigate an issue with great depth. He further states that the tension between depth and breadth is resolved by determining the purpose of the study.³⁷ The purpose of this study was to develop a biblically and theologically sound response to the belief in generational curses that has an effect on believers in Pentecostal churches in Dar-es-Salaam. This was primarily a theological study which required a deep and wide investigation of relevant Scriptures. However, the use of a mixed-methods approach in this study helped in adding to its depth and width.

The problem is: “What constitutes a biblically and theologically sound response to the belief in generational curses in the context of Pentecostal churches in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania?” To respond to this issue, three RQs, two of them with subquestions, were answered.

RQ1 asks: “What is the biblical perspective of generational curses?”

- a. What do the following Old Testament passages reveal about the role of a parent’s or descendant’s sin in God’s judgment on an individual (Exod. 20:5, 6; Deut. 5:9, 10; 24:16; 2 Kings 14:6; Jer. 31:29, 30; Exod. 18:14–20; Gen. 9:24; Prov. 26:2; and Ezek. 18)?
- b. What is the consensus of teaching in the Bible on the theory that a parent’s sin or righteousness directly affects God’s punishment on children, and how can the *breakout* examples that seem to contradict the biblical consensus be explained?

³⁷Sensing, 82.

- c. How does an understanding of the Adamic curse help to explain why righteous believers might suffer even though neither they nor others related to them have sinned?
- d. How may, or may not, a parent's or grandparent's sin or righteousness affect the lives of a believer?
- e. How does the work of Christ and presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer relate to the concept of Christians inheriting curses from their parents or grandparents?

This being primarily a theological study, it began with a theological reflection that is based on an exegetical and hermeneutical approach to key Scripture texts together with related biblical-theological literature. In this reflection, the focus was to analyze important theological issues in regard to the biblical perceptions as they relate to the belief in generational curses. This reflection was based on the assumption that all proponents of generational curses take Scripture as the foundation for their belief. The biblical-theological literature review which includes an exegesis of key scriptural passages, therefore, addresses this assumption in responding to RQ1a through RQ1e. Key Scriptures that deal with the belief in generational curses, both from the Old and the New Testaments, were analyzed. The purpose was to establish the biblical perspective concerning generational curses. These perspectives later became foundational in drawing conclusions after the field research was completed.

RQ2 asks: "What are the social-cultural perspectives of the issue of generational curses?"

- a. What African worldviews and religious traditions influence the belief in generational curses?
- b. What traditional beliefs affect the belief in generational curses in Tanzania?

It is important to understand that each community has a worldview that governs how people in that community view life. As such, it was assumed that a reflection on the African

worldview would reveal significant information about the role of the African worldview in the belief system of its community members. The social-cultural literature review, therefore, addresses this in response to RQ2a and RQ2b. The purpose was to establish the worldviews and traditional beliefs that inform the understanding of the teaching on generational curses in Africa broadly and more narrowly in Tanzania. Apart from contributing to the conclusions that formed the response to the research problem, the themes that emerged from the social cultural literature³⁸ contributed in the development of the research instruments for this study.

RQ3 asks: “What is the official position of Pentecostal denominations in Dar-es-Salaam?” To probe into this question, an interview guide was used to conduct semi-structured interviews with national leaders of the Pentecostal denominations involved in this study.³⁹ The interviews focused on identifying what it is that the denominations hold as their official statement on the belief in generational curses. Three leaders of the denominations in this study were interviewed. A digital recorder was used to record the conversation after receiving permission from the interviewee. The interview responses were then transcribed verbatim, coded, and analyzed.

To be more confident with the information regarding the official position, written statements on the belief in generational curses given by the denominations were sought out in order to be analyzed as follow-up research for RQ3. It was discovered, though, that none of the Pentecostal denominations participating in this study have written an official document on the belief. The interview responses from the denominational leaders contributed significantly to the concluding theological reflection in the final chapter of this study.

³⁸A summary of these emerging themes is found in table 5.1: “A summary of issues rising from social-cultural literature in the Tanzanian setting.”

³⁹An interview guide is attached in appendix B.

RQ4 asks: “What are the views, opinions, and understandings of the proponents of the belief in generational curses in Dar-es-Salaam?”

- a. What are the accepted beliefs about generational curses among proponents of generational curses in Dar-es-Salaam?
- b. How do proponents of generational curses interpret the Scriptures they use in supporting their teaching?
- c. What are the experiences and understandings of those who believe they are victims of generational curses?
- d. How are the views, opinions, and understanding of the proponents of generational curses to be explained in light of what the Bible reveals about generational curses?

RQ4 was approached through a variety of methods depending on what each subquestion required.

In response to RQ4a, which probed into the accepted beliefs among proponents of generational curses, semi-structured interviews were used as a starting point with the key proponents.⁴⁰ The guide was different from the one used with denominational leaders and reflected themes from the information gleaned in literature. As stated earlier, most proponents belong to independent Pentecostal ministries. Therefore, one founder or key leader of each of the ministries involved in this study was interviewed. Responses were recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed.

Continuing with RQ4a, content analysis complemented the semi-structured interviews with the proponents of generational curses. Content analysis was conducted of written teachings from the generational-curse teachers. The purpose was to discover views and opinions of the

⁴⁰The guide is attached as appendix C.

proponents through the themes that dominated the content of their sermons. The plan was to analyze at least one teaching from each of the three interviewed proponents. However, written teachings by one of the proponents could not be found; documents from the other two were analyzed. In content analysis, it was hoped things would be discovered that may not have been stated earlier in the personal interviews. Key themes that emerged in content analysis are reflected in the theological reflection in chapter 6.

Content analysis was also useful in responding to RQ4b, discovering how the proponents interpret the key text for their arguments. The content of the analyzed teachings revealed both themes and methods used to arrive at those themes through Scriptures.

Based on the literature review and on the findings from the interviews and content analysis, an interview guide was then developed to study the experiences and beliefs of those who believe they are victims of generational curses. Six church members were identified that believe they have been victims of generational curses. She studied these members using the same interview guide. The interviews were recorded by a digital recorder and later transcribed, coded, and analyzed.

Concerning the data collection procedure, there is the need to conduct research ethically. Denscombe observes that researchers must abide by certain standard measures so as to minimize the risk of harm to participants in research. He proposes that in the process of data collection, the researcher should ensure that “participants will remain anonymous, data will be treated as confidential, participants understand the nature of the research and their involvement, and participants voluntarily consent.”⁴¹ In efforts to conduct ethical research, informed-consent

⁴¹Denscombe, 7.

procedures were observed. For the same purpose, in recording and analyzing data, the informants' identity was concealed.

RQ4d was specifically directed to lead to a concluding critical and theological reflection on the belief in generational curse. Based on what was discovered from biblical-theological literature, social-cultural literature, the field research on the positions of Pentecostal churches, and the views and opinions of the proponents of generational curses, a critical discussion was engaged that lead to a concluding reflection. In this reflection and discussion, issues that were discovered from the proponents and the opponents of generational curses were analyzed in light of the findings from the Bible. This reflection was then used to develop a theological response on the issue of generational curses. This reflection forms the content of the final section of chapter 6 of this study.

Data Analysis Procedures

For efficiency and effectiveness in data analysis, codes were used that are unique to every group of respondents as a way to identify the specific group in the process. Semi-structured interview responses for the three denominational leaders were identified as DL-R1, DL-R2, and DL-R3.⁴² Semi-structured interview responses for the three generational-curse proponents were identified as GCP-R1, GCP-R2, and GCP-R3. Interview respondents for *victims* were identified as GCV-R1 . . . and on.

In analyzing the semi-structured interviews with Pentecostal denominational leaders, the entire interview with each participant was first transcribed verbatim. Against every interview question, responses of each respondent were recorded for easy recognition of responses from each respondent in a given question. Follow-up questions and responses were stated as

⁴²This identification is used so that the identity of the respondents will be concealed.

parenthesis. The responses were then coded and analyzed using Microsoft tools. Finally a summary of the major issues or themes emerging from the respondents was tabulated.⁴³ The findings in RQ3 contributed in making general conclusions in the study.

For RQ4a, semi-structured interviews were conducted with proponents of the generational-curse belief. The analysis procedure followed the following steps. First, the entire interview of each of the participants was transcribed verbatim.⁴⁴ Against every interview question, the responses of each respondent were recorded for easy recognition of responses from each respondent in a given question.⁴⁵ As with the interviews with denominational leaders, follow-up questions and responses were stated in parenthesis. The responses were then coded and analyzed before being tabulating into a summary of the major issues or themes emerging from the respondents.⁴⁶

In response to RQ4a also, content analysis was used as a complementary method to the interviews for two purposes. The first purpose was to discover major themes the generational-curse proponents teach which may not have been discovered through personal interviews. As stated earlier, this method studied written teachings of these proponents. Teachings from two proponents were analyzed. The researcher coded and then analyzed them after Bernard's pattern of conducting content analysis.⁴⁷ The themes that emerged were tabulated⁴⁸ and later used in the

⁴³The summary is found in figure 5.2, "A summary of the emerging themes from interviews with Pentecostal denominational leaders."

⁴⁴See transcripts of all three respondents in appendix H.

⁴⁵See interview report in appendix F.

⁴⁶See table 5.4: "Themes emerging from interviews with proponents of generational curses."

⁴⁷Bernard, 443–447.

⁴⁸See table 5.3: "Themes emerging from content analysis."

theological reflection in chapter 6 to form conclusions and responses to the generational-curse teaching.

The second purpose for content analysis was to respond to RQ4b in discovering the methods the proponents of generational curses use in interpreting the Scriptures they use to support the belief. How the proponents interpret Scriptures was discovered by analyzing the way they use the Bible in their written documents in light of the meanings that were discovered through sound exegesis of the texts.

In response to RQ4c, semi-structured interviews were conducted with church members who believe they have been victims of generational curses. In analyzing the interviews, first, the responses of each respondent⁴⁹ were transcribed verbatim. The responses of all respondents were listed under a given question for all the respondents so that commonalities were easily identified during interpretation. Secondly, the transcripts and notes were repeatedly surveyed for emerging patterns that related to the feelings and experiences of those who believe they are victims of curses. An indicator of patterns being formed was when something was mentioned by several respondents. Patterns were coded and observed and then presented in a table.⁵⁰ The results of these interviews formed the basis of preliminary conclusions and general conclusion when theological reflection was offered and the results of the research were discussed.

The interviews with proponents of generational curses and the results of the content analysis provided the researcher with two key texts to interpret, which was accomplished through exegetical examination. The results of this examination are recorded in last part of chapter 5, the results chapter.

⁴⁹See appendix J for the transcript for victims.

⁵⁰See table 5.6: "Themes arising from interviews with generational-curse victims."

Finally, all the data that was collected and analyzed contributed to a discussion and theological reflection that is recorded in chapter 6. The theological reflection responds to RQ4d and draws conclusions that form the content of the theologically and biblically sound response to the belief in generational curses that this study purposed to develop.

Limitations to the Study

This study faced several challenges that limited the research efforts. The first limitation involved difficulties in recruiting research participants from the proponents' side which delayed the study. Initially, the participants that were approached appeared to accept the invitation to participate. Later, however, several declined indirectly by cancelling all appointments for reasons of having other commitments. One opted out of the research for fear that the results would challenge his theological position when he learned that the researcher is a TAG member.

Secondly, the unwillingness of the proponents' leadership in allowing their members to be studied resulted in a change of the kind of participants and the method of studying *victims*. Proponents who accepted to participate in the research were not willing to allow their members to be investigated. The explanation was that, they normally deal with very sensitive issues of their members and they are committed to keep the confidence of these members as part of their ministry ethics. A request was made to distribute the screening questionnaire⁵¹ to the congregation so that the members could decide personally if they wanted to participate. All the participating proponents objected. Therefore, members from churches that are known as opponents of the belief were recruited, and people who believe they were once victims were interviewed. It was believed that better information could be gained from people who were undergoing deliverance during the research period.

⁵¹See appendix E.

Thirdly, the failure to access written teachings by proponents resulted in the analyzation of two instead of three documents as stated in the dissertation proposal. As stated in the data-collection section, no written teachings of one of the three respondents from the proponents' side could be accessed. This limited the examination of this respondent to only personal interviews. As noted earlier, the purpose of content analysis is to study views of the proponents that could be hidden in personal contact and also to learn how the proponents interpret Scripture; this opportunity was missed with the third proponent.

Summary

This study employed a mixed methodological framework. This approach was considered to be the most appropriate method for collecting data to address the problem stated for this research because using a mixed-methods approach studies the problem from different angles and hence strengthens the validity and reliability of the results. Therefore, since the study is primarily a theological one, exegetical analysis was the primary method employed. However, since a mixed-methods approach was employed, other qualitative field research methods were used including interviews and content analysis. The population involved in this research was recruited through purposive selection. This was mainly due to the nature of the study which called for such a purposive selection. That way, the research was enabled to effectively inform the development of an exegetically and theologically sound biblical basis for responding to the belief in generational curses in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. However, several challenges limited the study.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

Introduction to the Study

A sound theological and biblical response to the belief in generational curses believed to have an effect on Christians among Pentecostal churches in Dar-es-Salaam must be rooted in sound biblical interpretation of relevant Scriptures. However, such a response must also be informed by sufficient understanding of the social-cultural environment and felt needs of the Pentecostals in Dar-es-Salaam. The purpose of this study is to develop a biblically sound response to the belief in generational curses believed to have effect on born-again Christians in the context of Pentecostal churches in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. The response must, therefore, be not only biblically rooted, but also practically relevant to the Pentecostals in Dar-es-Salaam. Therefore, the problem under investigation is: “What constitutes a biblically and theologically sound response to the belief in generational curses in the context of Pentecostal churches in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania?” To arrive at a response, several RQs were developed to guide the study (see appendix A).

Mixed methodologies were employed in this research. The study is primarily theological; hence, exegetical analysis has a prominent part. Other approaches used are content analysis and semi-structured interviews as qualitative methods. This chapter presents research findings from four RQs that are attached in appendix A.

Data Collection Results

Biblical-Theological Literature Report

RQ1 asks: “What is the biblical perspective of generational curses?” To probe into this RQ, it was further divided into parts.” RQ1a asks: “What do the following Bible passages reveal about the role of a parent’s or descendant’s sin to God’s judgment on an individual (Exodus 20:5, 6; Deuteronomy 5:9, 10; 24:16; 2 Kings 14:6; Jeremiah 3:29, 30; Exodus 18:14–20; Genesis 9:24; Proverbs 26:2; and Ezekiel 18:1–20)? The purpose of this question is to investigate whether the Old Testament teaches a doctrine of generational curses. This RQ was handled through investigating biblical-theological literature which involved the exegetical analysis of key texts and the study of related literature.

Biblical-theological literature revealed that it is possible for people to be victims of generational judgment. However, the literature also qualifies this understanding in the following ways.

First, from the study of the usage of the term *curse*, literature reveals that in the Old Testament the term carries the sense of judgment or condemnation. In the Old Testament, in most cases, the Hebrew word is *qelega* as in Deuteronomy 11:16 and 28, which pronounce curses on Israel. It has more to do with God’s pronouncement of judgment as a result of broken covenant terms.

Also, God’s warnings to visit iniquity on future generations in Exodus 20:5 and Deuteronomy 5:9 are conditional and based on his covenant with Israel as a nation. From the study of the Scriptures identified in RQ1a,¹ biblical-theological literature reveals that the Old Testament concept of generational curses carries the sense of generational judgment by God

¹See the Biblical-theological literature review in chapter 2 concerning the Biblical perspective of generational curses.

which is proclaimed by God but only efficacious on those who follow the sinful trend of their ancestors. The judgment is conditional in that the visitation with judgment is only on those who hate the Lord or continue to sin. Since his covenant was conditional, obedience to its terms brought blessings, and breaking the commandments brought curses.

Further, Jeremiah 31:29–30 and Ezekiel 18:1–18 teach the principle of individual responsibility for righteousness. These texts represent the biblical perspective that generational judgment does not mean individual members of the next generation inherit the sin of their fathers or get direct punishment for their fathers' sins. The principle illustrated in Ezekiel 18 is the consistent teaching of the Bible. It is a principle that is stated in other parts of the Bible, including Genesis 2:17 and 4:7, and Deuteronomy 24:16. It is also applied in other texts, as in 2 Kings, where King Amaziah put to death those who killed his father, but he did not put the sons of the assassins to death. The narrator in this event clearly says that Amaziah did not put to death the children “in accordance with what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses where the Lord commanded: *Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sins*” (2 Kings 14:6, emphasis added).

RQ1b asks: “What is the consensus of teaching in the Bible on the theory that a parent’s sin or righteousness directly affects God’s punishment on his or her child, and how can we explain the ‘breakout’ examples that seem to contradict the biblical consensus?” The study of biblical-theological literature has revealed that Scripture is consistent in its teaching about individual responsibility for sin. There is consensus both in the Old Testament and New Testament that God does not punish the righteous for the sins of the wicked. When the Scriptures are studied in their context they also reveal that God, as a just and righteous judge, does not

punish the righteous children for the sins of their parents or vice versa. This is revealed in the following discoveries.

The Old Testament has explicitly declared that each person will die for his own sin. In Genesis, God spared Noah from the flood in a generation of evil doers (Gen. 6–7) and was also willing to spare Sodom and Gomorrah for the sake of a few, if they were to be found (Gen. 18:16–33). Throughout the Old Testament, God emphasized individual responsibility, as discussed in the biblical-theological literature review.

Scripture reveals accounts where God passed judgment that involved a family or a generation. However, it was either conditional on people’s behavior or based on God’s foreknowledge of people’s future behavior, as seems to be the case of Canaan (Gen. 9, Lev. 18:1–30).

The New Testament emphasizes individual responsibility for sin. This is seen in the teachings of Jesus (John 8:11; 9:1–3). Paul’s theology agrees that “God will give to *each person* according to what *he* has” (Rom. 2:6, emphasis added). Paul further says, “So then, *each one of us* will give an account of *himself* to God” (Rom. 14:12, emphasis added). The New Testament places priority on individual responsibility rather than communal or corporate.

Nunnally rightly reasons that the above cited passages “should be seen as reflecting the unified teaching of Scripture beginning with Moses (Deut. 24:16), continuing in the prophets (Jer. 31:29, 30; Ezek. 18:1–4, 14–16, 18–20; Dan. 9:4, 5, 7–9), and culminating in the teachings of Jesus (John 8:11; 9:1–3).”² This means that, even though the Old Testament had much to do with corporate responsibility in reference to Israel as a nation, the consistent teaching of the Bible holds each person responsible for his/her sin, both in the Old and the New Testaments. The

²Nunnally.

theory that a parent's sin or righteousness directly affects God's punishment on his/her child, therefore, lacks scriptural basis.

RQ1c asks: "How does an understanding of the Adamic curse help to explain why righteous believers might suffer even though neither they, nor others related to them, have sinned?"

Generational-curse proponents use the generational-curse teaching as an explanation or reason for the sufferings of believers. They suggest that a believer cannot suffer unless a curse exists on him or her. Scripture and related literature trace suffering from the fall of man, which resulted in a curse that continues to affect humanity to the present. This is what this paper has referred to as the Adamic curse. Literature reveals the following things that help to understand how the Adamic curse relates to the sufferings of righteous believers.

The immediate impact of the fall of Adam was separation from God, also called spiritual death.³ God dealt with it immediately in the garden by initiating animal sacrifice⁴ that continues throughout the Old Testament⁵ and points to the death of Jesus. The remedy for spiritual death is therefore, Christ's death. Those accepting the sacrifice do not suffer the spiritual death because the sacrifice of Jesus sufficiently dealt with it.

Physical death, corruption of the body (including the decaying process), diseases, and physical sufferings have become part of the human experience. Meek observes that in the good creation that God made there was no sin, no suffering, and no death. But when Adam disobeyed,

³Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid (Gen. 3:8–10).

⁴The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them (Gen. 3:21).

⁵See instructions for sacrifices in the book of Leviticus.

“sin entered the world, and with it, suffering.”⁶ Paul states this to the Romans when he says, “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned” (Rom. 5:12) and shows that death is the consequence of sin. The experience is for all the human race. Wiersbe observes: “Because of Adam's sin, *all mankind* is under condemnation and death”⁷ (emphasis added). Further, suffering in this life is also a result of the fall. Wiersbe further observes that

when God finished His Creation, it was a good Creation (Gen. 1:31); but today it is a groaning Creation. There is suffering and death; there is pain, all of which is, of course, the result of Adam's sin. It is not the fault of creation. Note the words that Paul used to describe the plight of creation: suffering (Rom. 8:18), vanity (Rom. 8:20), bondage (Rom. 8:21), decay (Rom. 8:21), and pain (Rom. 8:22).⁸

This suffering is also for humans, not only for the rest of the creation. Paul says, “Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies” (Rom. 8:23). This redemption of our bodies will not happen in this life. It will happen when our bodies are transformed into glorious ones at the rapture. Scripture testifies to this redemption of the bodies:

Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15:51–54).

In this life, therefore, physical suffering and death continues to happen to both believers and non-believers.

⁶Russell L. Meek, “Truly God is Good: Suffering in Old Testament Perspective,” *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Social Care* 9, no. 2 (2016): 151–166.

⁷Warren W. Wiersbe, *Mathew-Galatians The Bible Exposition Commentary: New Testament* Vol. 1. (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications Ministries, 1989), 528.

⁸*Ibid.*, 540.

The nature of sin, the inclination toward sinning, resulted from the fall. Since then, every person is born a sinner by nature which makes it difficult for him to choose not to sin unless he accepts Christ (Rom. 5:12). The sinful nature is the root of all curses because it controls a person and entices him to sin. Yet, there is no curse on the believer since the believer's sinful nature is crucified by the law of life. He is spiritually alive and lives by the law of God, which separates him from curses.

Other effects were directed to nature since the ground was cursed. Fertility of the land was negatively affected which has led to toil and pains (Gen. 3:17–19) to this day. As a result, all creation is subject to vanity, corruption, and pain (Rom. 8:20–22). Since then, the earth has been cursed and is exposed to suffering and pain.

Enmity between man and Satan also resulted (Gen. 3:15) and continues to cause spiritual battle. Ephesians 6 describes struggles between the evil forces and God's people; these are as ancient as the fall of the devil and the fall of man. The struggles may result in accidents, diseases, demonic attacks, or torments.

This understanding of the Adamic curse, therefore, reveals that the Bible does not exempt believers from sufferings. Christians suffer as a general consequence of the fall, the Adamic curse, because the devil exerts opposition against them. Sometimes, they suffer as a godly-permitted order to purify and mature them (1 Pet. 4:13, 16).

RQ1d asks: "How may, or may not, a parent's or grandparent's sin or righteousness affect the lives of a believer?"

A careful study of Scripture reveals that some of the texts that generational-curse proponents use to support the belief speak of natural consequences of sinful behaviors, not curses or judgment by God. An example is the case of Numbers 14:18–33 where a bad report was

brought that caused the people to complain and blame God and Moses (14:1–9). God punished the older generation by forbidding them to inherit the land (14:21–32). He made it plain also that the younger generation would have to suffer in the desert as they waited for the parents to die (14:33). God was not punishing the younger generation. It was a natural consequence of their parent’s sin.

Also, it is possible for members of certain families to be affected by the influence of the sinful ways of their ancestors if they accept and live according to these evil ways. Only then would God punish the descendants. The punishment would not be because their ancestors sinned but because the descendants also accepted the sinful ways of their ancestors and lived in the same. Brace notes,

The overall sense seems to be that sinful acceptances of behavior within families would tend to 'stick' - a bit like glue. In this sense, and probably in this sense only, God would 'punish the children and their children for the sins of the fathers even to the third and fourth generation.'⁹

The implication from Brace’s observation, thus, is that when children suffer punishment for sins that are done in their families or societies, it is not because their fathers committed the sins but because the children are also influenced by the fathers’ sinfulness, and they sin also, hence, deserving the punishment.

It appears from these findings, therefore, that the Old Testament does not teach a doctrine of generational curses as it is presented in the modern understanding of its proponents. Rather, the Old Testament concept of generational curse carries the sense of God’s judgment of the generations that continue with the sinful ways of their past generations.

RQ1e asks: “How does the work of Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer relate to the concept of Christians inheriting curses from their parents or

⁹Brace.

grandparents?” This RQ purposed to assess the role of the sacrifice of Jesus in relation to the possibility of born-again Christians being victims of generational curses.

Biblical-theological literature reveals the following from the New Testament as it relates to the generational-curse belief.

First, in the occasions the words *curse*, *cursing*, *cursed* or *curses* are used in the New Testament, they are not used in the sense of pronouncing judgment as in the Old Testament understanding. The exception to this is when it is referring to the Old Testament Law as in Galatians 3:10. In this text, Paul exposes to the Galatian believers that those who live by the law are also under the *curse* of the law if they fail to observe it.¹⁰

Further, the same text that speaks of the curse of the law also exempts believers from living under a curse on the basis that Christ has redeemed the believers from the curse of the law by becoming a curse himself (Gal.3:13). This exempts believers from observing the law as a requirement for salvation and from the resulting curse or judgment for not observing it.

Further, Jesus confronts the view that suffering is always a result of direct sin in John 9:1–3.¹¹ Even when he seems to suggest a connection between a person’s condition and sin as in John 5:14,¹² it is not the parent’s sin that is in view. This means, he does not connect suffering with someone’s inheritance of guilt from sins of his/her parents.

¹⁰All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law” (Gal. 3:10).

¹¹As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.”

¹²One time he healed a paralytic and told him, “See you are well again, stop sinning or something worse may happen to you” (John 5:14).

Also, Jesus dealt sufficiently with the problem of sin and its effects. The Pauline Epistles especially point to the sufficiency of the death of Jesus Christ in cleansing and forgiving sin¹³ and also in defeating the powers of darkness.¹⁴ A believer is, therefore, free from condemnation which results from sin since he is forgiven. Frelich points out that “the justification of man is grounded in the infinitely righteous atonement of Christ.”¹⁵ In the New Testament, therefore, the remedy for the curse is salvation through Jesus Christ. Christ’s forgiveness makes the individual a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17) and takes away God’s condemnation (Rom. 8:1). Literature, thus, views believers who accept the possibility of generational curses as victims of ignorance of what the cross has accomplished.¹⁶

Biblical-theological literature reveals that the New Testament view of the concept of generational curses relates to that of the Old Testament in two things. First, the New Testament emphasizes individual responsibility for sin just as the Old Testament does. Also, the New Testament emphasizes faith in Jesus Christ rather than works of the law as the basis for the believer’s covenant with God. The terms of the covenant are the individual’s faith in Christ as the sufficient sacrifice for sin. It should be noted that, even though the Israelites in the Old Testament made a corporate covenant with God as a nation, they also covenanted as individuals with God and were required to believe in the method that God provided for their justification. They did this by accepting God’s choice of sacrifices which pointed to Jesus Christ as the

¹³When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross (Col. 2:13–14).

¹⁴And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross (Col. 2:15).

¹⁵Frelich, 69.

¹⁶Banda.

ultimate sacrifice for sin. Abraham, their biological ancestor, was justified by his faith in God as Genesis 15:6 and Galatians 3:6–9 reveal. The way of salvation has always been through faith. Concerning this truth, Wiersbe contends: “Whether people lived under the old covenant or the new covenant, before or since the cross, the way of salvation is the same: faith in the Lord that is evidenced by a life of obedience” (Heb. 11:6; Hab. 2:4; Rom. 4).¹⁷ This removes the possibility of a believer suffering the guilt of another person in the community. It also removes the possibility of the believer receiving judgment for the sins of others since the basis for judgment is personal disobedience.

From this analysis, therefore, the biblical-theological literature indicates that, when analyzed in light of the biblical understanding, the belief in generational curses in its current form as expressed by its proponents is probably based upon poor understanding and interpretation of the Scriptures and on ignorance of what Christ has accomplished.

Social-Cultural Literature Report

RQ2 asks: What are the social-cultural perspectives of the issue of generational curses?

RQ2a asks: What African worldviews and religious traditions influence the belief in generational curses?

Social-cultural literature reveals that the belief in generational curses has caused a division among African writers. From studying the proponents’ camp, literature reveals several issues about the African worldview and religious traditions as they relate to the belief in generational curses.

¹⁷Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary Old Testament: Isaiah—Malachi* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cooks, 2002), 196.

The traditional African understanding relates the curses to ancestral inheritance, meaning that the curses are a result of inherited guilt or come in the form of inherited problems. The African understanding also views the world of evil spirits as having significant connection with the transference of generational curses between generations. Evil spirits, demons, and ancestral spirits are therefore part of the belief. Proponents of generational curses, according to literature, also believe that the curses manifest in various chronic sufferings of the victims such as in prevalent chronic and hereditary diseases, emotional excesses, allergies, frequent miscarriages, deaths, suicidal tendencies, and persistent poverty in one's family.¹⁸ Literature reveals also that proponents of generational curses believe people can be under generational curses even before they are born. This is based on the belief that demons have the right to enter into the unborn babies of people under generational curses, which explains how curses are transmitted to other generations.¹⁹ It is also within the belief system of the proponents that born-again Christians are possible victims of the curses.

Social-cultural literature also reflected voices of those who oppose the belief in generational curses. The opponents contend that the generational-curse belief is a result of syncretism because of the influence of ATR. Paynter observes that "people who get converted among the black community that have practiced ancestral worship bring in their ancestral worship and mingle it with Christianity."²⁰ A review of the belief system of ATR revealed several basic ATR beliefs that can fuel the belief in generational curses. Such beliefs include the animistic view of how a person becomes a member of the society with his birth and death as tied

¹⁸Asamoah-Gyadu, "Mission to Set the Captives Free," 398–399.

¹⁹Fackerell.

²⁰Ken Paynter.

to the spirit world. Another belief is the communal orientation of a person which ties him to his family, clan, tribe, including the living, the deceased and the unborn.²¹ Existing in ATR also is the African sense of relationship between the living and the ancestral world and the dependency on the spirit world which leads to the tendency to consult spirit intermediaries. Finally, ATR believes in the cause-and-effect orientation where everything that happens has a cause that needs to be detected.

Opponents of the generational-curse belief also reject it for its being a result of problems of hermeneutical approaches to texts concerning evil powers. Scholars have pointed that such hermeneutical approaches are a result of the influence of the African worldview. The African view tends to hyper-mythologize the issue of evil powers.²² Events in this hype-mythologized world are regarded as purely a result of the spiritual battle between the spirits. Some preachers and believers in Africa tend to emphasize the spirit world and exorcism, taking it to extremes. This limits the believer's responsibility to prayer and deliverance.

Love analyzes three levels through which people view things in the universe. The high level is the transcendent world beyond us which has religion, faith, miracles, and the sacred. The middle level contains the supernatural forces on earth with spirits, ghosts, ancestors, gods, supernatural forces, the Holy Spirit, angels, demons, gifts of the Holy Spirit, etc. He observes that the African worldview tends to take the extended middle level, in which the spirit world is overemphasized.²³ This may effect the way the African interpret scriptures. Other preachers,

²¹Hiebert and Meneses, 96.

²²Annang, 15.

²³Rick Love, *Muslims, Magic, and the Kingdom of God* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2011), 27.

especially ones with a Western orientation have an excluded middle²⁴ position where they tend to deny the reality of the issues of evil powers or the spirit realm. As a result, the spirit issues that the African believers face remain unhandled, leaving them to turn to traditional beliefs for help. As such, literature reveals also that syncretic elements, including the belief in generational curses, are a product of Christianity's insufficiency to address the daily fears of its followers.

Opponents of the generational curse oppose it because of its detrimental results, both in weakening believers and in scandalizing the work of the cross as being insufficient in dealing with evil powers.²⁵ Annang observes that "failure to emphasize complete victory of Christ over such generational spirits only fosters a mentality that paralyses believers."²⁶ The opponents therefore, call for a transformed worldview for African Christianity to avoid practices that lead to syncretism.²⁷ They also call for a consensus in Pentecostal theology that would describe and identify global features and theological models that defile the integrity of the charismatic position.

RQ2b asks: What traditional beliefs affect the belief in generational curses in Tanzania? From Tanzania, few voices are heard, and those that do appear do not specifically address the issue of generational curses but rather address related issues. Nonetheless, these voices provide insight into some issues that may influence the belief in generational curses. Literature in the context of Tanzania revealed the following things.

²⁴Ibid., 27. The lower level is the empirical world of our senses with folk science, theories, and empirical explanations.

²⁵Banda.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid. Banda calls for a transformed worldview in line with the implications of the victory of the cross over Satan.

First, a significant influence on the cultural beliefs in Tanzania exists and is implied by the remarkable combination of African traditions within Tanzania. Also, social-cultural issues that affect Christians in Africa also affect Tanzania, since Tanzania is part of the African continent. People in Tanzania are therefore influenced by most of the social-cultural issues that influence people on the rest of the continent. Literature indicates also that even though two major religions exist in Tanzania, Christianity and Islam, most religious groups syncretize their religious beliefs with traditional beliefs.

Further, literature reveals two main reasons to account for the syncretism in Tanzania that is also found in other parts of Africa. The first reason that literature reveal for syncretism is Church leaders discounting the supernatural, against the high regard of the supernatural by the African.²⁸ When the supernatural are discounted, believers, who have a high regard for the supernatural turn to supernaturalistic traditional solutions to their problems. Another reason that literature point to is the extremes involved in contextualization. Genuine preachers and believers may syncretise in attempt to contextualize Christianity.²⁹

Lastly, literature that speaks specifically on the generational-curse teaching in Tanzania is limited. The few voices that specifically target the belief are found in Dar-es-Salaam and come only from the proponents' side. These voices indicate that the belief prevails, suggesting the forms, signs, sources, examples and support from Scripture and means to deal with curses as summarized below.

²⁸Cox, 4.

²⁹While this is done in a good motive and desire to help believers experience Christianity in their context, sometimes contextualization has been taken to extremes, leading to syncretism.

Table 5.1. A summary of issues rising from social-cultural literature in the Tanzanian setting

Forms	Signs	Sources/Reasons	Examples/ support in Scripture	Means to deal with the curses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Diseases -Poverty -Demonic possession -Barrenness -Family and marital problems -Sinful behaviors like drunkenness, prostitution, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Recurring or chronic diseases especially if they are inherited ones -Barrenness, abortions, menstrual pains and related complications -Marital problems like divorce, separation, and chronic misunderstandings. -Progressive financial problems, debts, becoming bankrupt and related economic difficulties. -Vagabond, failure to settle in one place of employment, church, or residence. -Experiencing resembling difficulties in family -History of suicide in family, early deaths -Sexual bondages, having spirits of prostitution, having sexual dreams, rape cases and related sexual issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sin (personal or sins of past generations) -Covenants made by parents or grand parents -Participation of victim or parents or grandparents in witchcraft, sorcery, ancestral worship -Diseases that prevailed in past generations or present close relatives like heart disease, diabetics, BP, sickle cell, mental disorders, asthma, ulcers -Marital problems in past generations or present close relatives like divorce, polygamy, delayed marriages, barrenness -Other problems in past generations or present close relatives like recurring accidents, unusual and early deaths, abortions, pre-marital pregnancies, poverty -Inherited names/or having a name that has negative confession -Pronounced curses by self or others with authority like parents, spouse, religious leaders -Living in a cursed house or country -Shedding innocent blood and oppressing others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Achan in Joshua 7:1–25 -The curse of barrenness in the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in Genesis 11:30; Genesis 25:21; Genesis 29:31 -The curse of Canaan in Genesis 9:18–27 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Praying a prayer of deliverance (personally using a pre-composed prayer or having others pray for you) -Repenting personal sins and sins of past generations

However, these voices only come from the proponents' side. A field research was thus conducted.

Semi-Structured Interview Responses for RQ3

RQ3 asks: What is the official position of Pentecostal denominations in Dar-es-Salaam concerning generational curses? The purpose was to discover the position and the response of the Pentecostal denominations under CPCT,³⁰ which are believed to have the right biblical doctrine.

Interviews were conducted with three national leaders of Pentecostal denomination that are under CPCT. The interviews were conducted with the aid of an interview guide³¹ that listed guiding questions to probe into the official position of these Pentecostal denominations concerning the belief in generational curses. All three were top leaders of the denominations in the study during the research period. All had been leaders between ten to twenty-five years. One of these leaders got saved from a pagan background with a father who was a witch. The other two had been born into Christian families. Thirteen items in the guide were used to interview these leaders.³² From the interview with these denominational leaders, the following themes emerged. They are summarized in the chart below (left) with their brief descriptions (right).

³⁰Churches under the CPCT are known to have the right biblical doctrine, as contrasted with some independent Pentecostal ministries.

³¹See appendix C.

³²A detailed report of the interviews is found in appendix G, and the specific responses of each of the interviewees are found in the interview transcripts in appendix H.

Table 5.2. A summary of the emerging themes from interviews with Pentecostal denominational leaders

Theme/Category	Explanation
The fact of generational curses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Present in OT times -Supported by OT Scriptures -Not possible as a system after the cross
Victims of generational curses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -OT People -NT non-believers (unsaved)
Reasons for rejecting the belief in generational curses on believers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -<i>Scriptural</i> (no trace of this belief in teachings and ministry of Jesus and Apostles, believer as a new creature, no Scripture supports this, poor biblical interpretation principles) -<i>Theological</i> (the sufficiency of the work of the cross) -<i>Logical</i> (ability of preacher over Jesus?) -<i>Experiential</i> (Personal testimony of breaking off from family line issues)
Explanations for breakouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Suffering of believers as spiritual warfare -Satanic oppressions, not curses -Suffering because of mortality of body because of the fall of man -Lack of understanding of the word of God leading to Devil's oppression
Possible aspects of a theological statement or response to the belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Impossibility of curses on saved people -Sufficiency of the sacrifice of Jesus -Importance of teaching the understanding the doctrine of salvation -Focusing on teaching the truth as remedy for the belief
Other important discoveries from the interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -No denomination has written a theological statement, as a result, each pastor teaches his own way against the belief. (No theologically declared response). -Belief that even God fearers in OT were victims of generational curses.

In summary, all the leaders in these interviews believe that born-again Christians cannot be victims of generational curses and base their arguments for this position on scriptural, theological, logical, and experiential reasons as described in the table above. Even with this position, the responses suggested that there are *breakouts* which are explained by the fact that

believers suffer as a result of spiritual warfare and satanic oppressions which are not necessarily curses. They suffer also because of the mortality of the body as a result of the fall. Further, they suffer because of a lack of understanding of the word of God which leads to the possibility of being oppressed by the devil.

The responses in these interviews also suggested possible items of a theological statement in response to the belief in generational curses. These include the impossibility of curses on saved people, the sufficiency of the sacrifice of Jesus, the importance of teaching people to understand the doctrine of salvation, and the need to focus on teaching the truth as a remedy for the belief.

From these interviews, the researcher discovered two other important things. None of these Pentecostal denominations have written a theological statement. As a result, each pastor teaches his own way against the belief. Also, all the leaders interviewed understand the generational-curse belief as a fact that is present in the Old Testament and is supported by Old Testament Scriptures, but they also understand it as a system that is disqualified after the cross. The leaders also view curses as being possible to Old Testament people (fearers and non-fearers of God) and to New Testament non-believers. These two are major theological issues that call for discussion. Questions emerge immediately from these issues. Can it be justice for people to be judged for their parents' sins in the Old Testament but not in the New Testament? Further, is it just for unbelievers to suffer for the guilt of their parents while Christians do not? These will be discussed in chapter 6 since they represent theological inconsistencies with the rest of the biblical teaching of God not judging anyone for the sins of his or her parent.

Content Analysis Responses for RQ4a and RQ4b

In content analysis, two written teachings from the proponents of generational curses were analyzed. The purpose was to investigate what the generational-curse proponents teach and how they interpret the Scriptures they cite. After coding and categorizing the content, the following were the recurrent issues that emerged from the documents.

Table 5.3. Themes emerging from content analysis

Document 1	Document 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Visible/observable signs of the curses -Pastor's special ability to break curses -Effects of family curses on individual -Bible support for family curses -Effects of parent's sin on generations -Generational faith and generational blessings as supporting belief in generational curses (Gen. 12:1-3) -Demons and ancestral spirits as agents of the curses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Generational blessings based on Genesis 12:1-3 as basis for belief in generational curses -Sins of the fathers as sources of generational curses -The need for a more spiritual person to lead in deliverance of personal prayer through pre-composed prayer guide -Chronic diseases, marital problems, economic difficulties, recurring or resembling problems in family, sinful behaviors as signs of curses -Involvement of Demonic spirits in transferring curses

This analysis resulted into a summary of the following items as tenets of the analyzed documents:

1. The generational-curse belief is a twin belief with the generational-blessings belief and is based on Genesis 12:1-3.
2. Sins or evils done by fathers or ancestors have direct effects on their descendants, both individual and generations.
3. The Bible supports and provides examples of curses on generations.
4. Generational curses are identified through visible, observable signs.
5. Demons are involved in transmitting or implementing the curses.

6. A person with special abilities or greater spirituality is needed in the process of delivering a person from generational curses.

Semi-Structured Interview Responses for RQ4a and RQ4b

These interviews were conducted with three ministers who serve with churches that are known for conducting deliverance for people who believe they are under generational curses. Two of the three interviewees are former members of the TAG who moved to independent ministries. The other one is from a ministry that is known to believe in generational curses but who happens to have a more balanced teaching on the belief in generational curses. All three have theological education from theological schools, and all were involved in pastoral work during the research period.

Twenty-three questions were asked to each of these three leaders.³³ The results of the interview with the proponents of the generational-curse teaching are summarized in the following table with major themes on the left and their sub-themes or descriptions on the right. The transcripts with responses for these interviews are found in appendix I.

Table 5.4. Themes emerging from interviews with proponents of generational curses

Scripture teaches a doctrine of generational blessings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Children inheriting blessings of parents -Basic for understanding generational curses -Supported by Genesis 12:3; Psalm 112:1–3 -Children blessed for their parents uprightness
Description of generational curse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Inherited empowerment to fail -God's judgment on sinners and their generations -Suppression of generations by traditional practices and rites

³³See the interview guide for proponents in appendix D.

Table 5.4, Continued

Reasons/sources of generational curses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sin of Adam- broken relationship as the primary reason -Descending from Adam / as a descendant of Adam -Disobeying God's word -Descending from a cursed family (cursed from birth – Curse in the DNA) -Worshiping other gods -Participating in witchcraft and divination -Ancestral worship and sacrifices
Forms of the curses/ Symptoms/signs of the curses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Depending on dominant behavior of a clan/family (inheriting a family behavior) -Recurring/Chronic/Resembling/Diseases in clan or family -Marital problems (Delayed marriages, separations and divorces, polygamy) -Birth complications (Barrenness, abortions) -Recurring accidents -Demonic possessions and oppressions -Economic difficulties (Fruitless diligence/Hindered success/Failure) -Poverty
Victims of the curses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Both the saved and the unsaved
Arguments for believers as victims of the curses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Signs found on believers as proofs of believer living under generational curse (as mentioned in symptoms) -Salvation not guarantee of freedom from curses and demonic bondages. Jesus forgave sin and conducted deliverance from the demonic, setting the example we should follow -The work of the cross having two aspects: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Legal/providential – accomplished 2000 years ago on the cross 2. Vital/experiential – appropriated now by faith through the work of the Holy Spirit in a believer – supported by Eph. 1:7; Gal. 3:3; Rom. 1:16. Actual deliverance of a person happens through this and is actuated as another stage after salvation -Salvation (<i>Soteria</i>) packaged with forgiveness of sin, deliverance from bondages, healing, safety, preservation and soundness and accomplished instantaneously and progressively -Deliverance meant for believers not non-believers since demons worsen the condition of a non-believer who receive deliverance (supported by Matthew 13:12)

Table 5.4, Continued

Reasons other people don't think believers can be victims	-Having a lopsided belief as a result of lacking teachings and practices on deliverance from curses -Low self-esteem and jealousy resulting from failure to do deliverance -Ignoring the sufferings believers are experiencing in form of diseases, demonic oppression, marital issues, and others
Biblical support for the generational curse	Exodus 20:5
Ways of discovering existence of generational curses	-Natural: Observing symptoms -Divine: Guidance of the Holy Spirit
Motivation for doing deliverance ministry	-Being a former victim -Caring for people's sufferings -Negligence of other Pentecostal churches in helping people under bondages and curses
The place of demons and evil spirits in generational curses	-Agents of the curses (causing the family problems, diseases and other forms of the curses) -Transmitters of the curses from generation to generation -Ancestral spirits as supervisors of the curses in clans/families
Deliverance procedure	-Repentance -Deliverance prayers to break bondages -Teachings and dwelling in the Word

Interview Responses from Generational-Curse Victims for RQ4c

This section reports the results of personal interviews conducted with six members who believe they have been victims of generational curses. As stated earlier in the methodology chapter, the initial plan was to conduct focus-group interviews with those who believe they are or have been victims. Unfortunately, it became difficult to get people who were willing to share their experiences. The leaders who promote the teaching were not willing to have their members interviewed. The results reported here, therefore, are from interviews conducted with people acquired from churches that are officially opponents of the teaching. The interviews were guided by items listed in an interview guide³⁴ and focused on probing into the feelings and experiences

³⁴See the guide in appendix E.

of those who believe they are or have been victims of generational curses as required by RQ4c. The transcripts with responses to these interview items are attached as appendix J.

The first three questions provided the respondents' personal information. Personal interviews with six people who believe they have been victims were conducted. Among them, four were men, and two were women. Three of the respondents were single and ranged between 26–30 years old. The other three ranged between 43–60, which included two married persons and one widower. Concerning their religious background, two had been Catholic, one Lutheran, one Anglican, and one Seventh Day Adventist before they got saved. The remaining one grew up in Pentecostal churches but did not get saved until she was an adult and away from her parents' home.

Reports concerning their religious status at the time of research indicate that all six were born-again Christians (saved). Two of them were in Pentecostal denominations that are under the CPCT. Three moved from their original churches to Pentecostal (CPCT) churches when they got saved, but later they moved into independent ministries as a result of searching for deliverance. One moved from a Catholic to a Pentecostal church at salvation. This means that, during the research period, four were in independent Pentecostal ministries and two in Pentecostal denominational that are under the CPCT.

Question 4 of the interview guide asks, "In your understanding, what is a generational curse?" The purpose of this question was to learn how the *victims* view generational curses or how they understand them. GCV-R1 describes generational curses as evil things that began from past generations, as being given by angry ancestors, and as resulting from breaking a taboo. GCV-R2 describes them as things inherited from grandparents. These things include evil behavior, life problems, and failures. GCV-R3 describes them as torments brought by ancestral

spirits in the same family and with the same problems. GCV-R4 describes the curses as covenants that follow a family line with the covenants coming in the form of misbehaviors, demonic possessions, and disease. GCV-R5 and GCV-R6 look at curses as a series of events or things repeating themselves in a family. From these descriptions, several things emerge as to how the *victims* look at generational curses.

Table 5.5. Description of generational curses by generational-curse victims

Category	Details
Nature of the curses	Inherited and recurrent in the victim family, involve evil spirits.
Origin of the curses	They have their origin in past generations; ancestors or ancestral spirits
Form of the curses	Torments, evil things, in form of evil behavior, diseases, failures, other family problems

Question 5 asks, “Have you personally experienced any problems resulting from generational curses?” Five of the six respondents said they have been victims of generational curses. One said he comes from a family that is a victim, and, even though he has not been a direct victim, his relatives are victims. All expressed forms by which the curses manifested, as summarized below.

Table 5.6. Forms of generational curses experienced by victims

Category	Details
Family Problems	Divorces, sufferings that result from divorces
Economic Problems	Poverty, unproductive economic efforts
Academic	Failing in class regardless of efforts, failure to finish studies (primary, secondary or college education)

Question 6 asks, “How did you know you are under generational curses?” Three of the respondents were introduced to the issue of generational curses by other people including clan elders (GCV-R1), a spouse and a spiritual leader through supposed divine revelation (GCV-R2), and a friend (GCV-R3).³⁵ The other three (GCV-R4, GCV-R5, and GCV-R6) concluded from what they considered signs of abnormal things in the family that they were under a curse. In summary, thus, results reveal three main ways the interviewees came to a point of deciding that they were under a generational curse.

Table 5.7. Ways through which generational-curse victims discovered they were under curses

Divine	Divine guidance from God, revelation through <i>men of God</i>
Natural	External signs and problems, advice by friends or relatives to seek deliverance ministry
Traditional	Elders inquiring from ancestors or spirits

Question 7 asks, “Based on your experience or what you know, what are the sources or reasons of generational curses, and which ones do you see having the greatest effect on you (or the person you are informed about)?” Several responses came as sources of generational curses and are summarized in the following list:

1. Covenants made in the form of taboos and are broken or made with the spirits (mentioned by five of the six respondents; GCV-R1, GCV-R2, GCV-R3, GCV-R4, and GCV-R5).
2. Sins of the fathers (mentioned by 3 respondents: GCV-R3, GCV-R5, and GCV-R6)
3. Inherited names (Mentioned by one respondent: GCV-R3)
4. Visiting witches (Mentioned by one respondent: GCV-R3)

³⁵All three experienced problems, and someone helped them connect their problems to some source in the family. For some, they chose to live with the problem (GCV-R1), since they felt that the problem was being caused by angry ancestors, and the person was not a believer. The other two were introduced to people who would lead them through deliverance.

5. Spoken words (Mentioned by one respondent: GCV-R3)
6. Worshipping and sacrificing to gods or participating in a ritual (Mentioned by one respondent: GCV-R5)

Responses 3 to 6 above were mentioned by at least one respondent each but are significant in that they are stated in other research occasions like content analysis and interviews with proponents of generational curses.

Question 8 inquired if evil spirits have a place in the generational-curse issue and if yes, how? *All* the respondents indicated that the belief in generational curses is closely connected to evil spirits. Below are ways the belief is connected to evil spirits as summarized from the responses to this question.

Table 5.8. Victims' responses on the role of spirits in generational curses

Spirits as facilitators and transmitters of curses	-Ancestral spirits are at the center of generational curses -Spirits transfer the curses between generations -Every family has ancestors so every family has ancestral spirits that can communicate to the living ³⁶ and are responsible for the curses
Spirits as source of curses	-Spirits are pioneers of curses, not God -Covenants, rituals, sacrifices that are not done to God are connected to evil spirits.
Spirits as forms of curses	-Generational curses can manifest in form of demonic possession.

Question 9 asks, "How have the generational curses affected your normal life in terms of education, economy, and family and self identity?" Only one respondent indicated he has not experienced direct effects of generational curses even though he has seen the effects on other

³⁶GCV-R1 clearly stated that he discovered he was under a generational curse after elders inquired from ancestors of the clan. Even the curse had its source in breaking a taboo that the ancestors had set while they were still living.

family members the same way other respondents have seen the effects in their personal lives. All other respondents reported that their lives have been affected in one or several of the ways mentioned in the following table.

Table 5.9. Victims' responses on how generational curses affected them

Physically	Through recurring diseases and death
Spiritually	Demonic possessions, bondages and other spiritual battles
Socially	Recurring divorces
Economically	Through poverty and unproductive efforts in work
Intellectually	Failure or difficulties in completing education programs

Question 10 asks for a brief description of the process or procedure through which a victim goes in receiving deliverance from the curses and if the process involves any financial seed? Generally, from the assessment of all respondents, one discovers no single rigid or fixed procedure. However, from the responses, one discovers a general pattern with the elements listed in the following table.

Table 5.10. Elements of the procedure for deliverance prayers as revealed by generational-curse victims

Discovering the problem through inquiry	-Observation of signs -Divine revelation or inquiry by a leader they were led to learn or know they are under a generational curse
Repentance of sin	-There was a point where they were asked to repent either for: 1) salvation after which they also received deliverance or 2) As a step toward their deliverance even though they were already saved. -Also, repentance involved repenting either from personal sin or personal sins and sins of ancestors
Prayer of deliverance	-Special prayer was done by the leader or the individual prayed for himself but through guided prayer
Teaching of or dwelling in the word of God	-For some was for preserving the deliverance for others, all they needed was to be set free.

Question 11 asks, “In your understanding, how and at what point in the life of a born-again Christian does the death of Jesus effect deliverance from generational curses?” This question divided the respondents into two groups. One group believes that deliverance from curses is a separate work from salvation, and the other group believes that deliverance is part of the salvation package. Both groups stated that the death of Jesus Christ accomplished all that was needed for deliverance and redemption from sin. However, three respondents believe that salvation does not come with deliverance from generational curses and that deliverance comes as another step after salvation. The other three believe that salvation comes with deliverance and that once a person gets saved he/she is also delivered from bondages. The arguments for the positions these two groups held are summarized below.

Table 5.11. Contrasting arguments of generational-curse victims on the effects of the death of Jesus on deliverance from generational curses

Deliverance from curses as a separate work from salvation	Deliverance as part of the salvation package
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Death of Christ included deliverance from curses but deliverance has to be sought after salvation experience just as salvation has to be accepted by personal faith - Receiving Jesus as savior is not sufficient/guarantee for deliverance from curses - Salvation provides forgiveness from personal sins, but sins of grandparents need separate treatment for deliverance to be complete - Teaching is important for awareness of the presence of curses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When a person is saved, he is also delivered - God is more powerful than generational curses - Studying word of God, living away from sin makes deliverance complete - Deliverance as a process involving <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowing the word of God 2. Time to learn since you don't know everything at the point of salvation - Teaching of the new believers is important to help them know what Christ has accomplished - Content of what to be taught to a born-again for deliverance to be effective <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. His faith 2. What has happened to him as a result of salvation 3. How to pray for himself - Possibility of generational curses because of lack of faithfulness or commitment in salvation - Possibility of living in fear after salvation because of awareness of curses

Question 12 seeks to discover the kind of help that the respondents received and how they view their conditions after receiving that help. All respondents said they received spiritual help that led them through deliverance. The kind of help differed. Two stated that, when they got saved, they also received deliverance. Four said that they had to go through a deliverance program. Both groups had *teaching* as a common element in the deliverance process. The themes arising from interviews with the victims are summarized below.

Table 5.12: Themes arising from interviews with generational-curse victims

Main Category	Details
Description of generational curses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -They are things that repeat themselves in the family -They have their origin in past generations; ancestors or ancestral spirits -They are torments, evil things -They can be in form of evil behavior, diseases, failures, other family problems -They involve evil spirits or demons
Forms of generational curses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Unproductive efforts -Poverty -Inherited failures -Recurring divorce and sufferings resulting from divorce -Failure to finish studies
Ways of detecting curses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -By elders inquiring from ancestors. -Victims being directed by friends or relatives to deliverance centers for problems they were facing. -By receiving divine guidance or revelation through “men of God”.
Sources/reasons of generational curses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Covenants: made in form of taboos and are broken or made with the spirits -Sins of the Fathers -Inherited names -Visiting witches -Spoken words -Worshipping and sacrificing to gods
Place of evil spirits/demons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ancestral spirits at the center of generational curses -Ancestral spirits present in every family and are responsible for the curses -Ancestral spirits are the source of generational curses, not God. -Evil or demonic spirits transfer the curses between generations -Covenants, rituals, sacrifices not done to God are obviously connected to evil spirits. -Generational curses can manifest in form of demonic possession

Table 5.12 Continued

Effects of curses in normal life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Physically: Through recurring diseases and death -Spiritually: Demonic possessions, bondages and other spiritual battles -Socially: Recurring divorces -Economically: Through poverty and unproductive efforts in work -Intellectually: Failure or difficulties in completing education programs
Deliverance process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Discovering the problem through inquiry: -Repentance of sin: repentance involved repenting either from personal sin or personal and sins of ancestors. -Prayer of deliverance: done by the leader or the individual prayed for himself but through guided prayer. -Teaching of or dwelling in the word of God: for preserving the deliverance, or for freedom from curses.
Time for the death of Jesus to affect deliverance from generational curses	Deliverance from curses as a separate work from salvation v/s deliverance as part of the salvation package ³⁷
Kind of help received for deliverance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -For some: salvation was sufficient -For others: had to go through deliverance after salvation

Exegetical Analysis Responses for RQ1Aa to RQ1e and RQ4b and RQ4d

In the process of conducting interviews and content analysis of documents from some proponents of the generational-curse belief, several biblical references that are used to support the belief were discovered. This section reports the results of exegetical analysis of two of these texts that were cited the most, one in support of the arguments for generational curses and the other in support of generational blessings.

³⁷Review table 5.5 and note the contrasting views

Exegetical Analysis of Joshua 7:1–26

Two issues are normally cited in this text by the proponents as supports to the generational-curse belief. The first one is in Joshua 7:1,³⁸ which indicates that God was angry with the whole of the nation of Israel because of the sin of Achan. This would be an example of a whole community being punished for one man's sin.

The text in Joshua 7:1 says, “But Israel acted unfaithfully in regard to the devoted things.” The words *acted unfaithfully* (NIV) or *committed a trespass* (KJV) come from the Hebrew *ma'al* and *wayyim 'ălûto* (to act treacherously, to act unfaithfully, to commit an infraction).³⁹

This event of Israel acting unfaithfully in regard to the devoted things is based on a prohibition that Israel was given through Joshua in Joshua 6:17–19⁴⁰ when Israel was about to conquer the city of Jericho. The Hebrew word here is *chêrem* (the devoted thing) and indicates something that is completely devoted to God, something that is completely in God's possession, or the act of completely devoting something to God. It can also indicate something that is dedicated to destruction..⁴¹ Concerning these devoted things, some scholars state:

Just as there were some types of sacrifices that belonged entirely to the Lord while others were shared by priest and offerer, so some plunder was set aside as belonging solely to the Lord. Just as the whole burnt offering was entirely consumed on the altar, so the ban mandated total destruction. Since the warfare was commanded by Yahweh and represented his judgment on the Canaanites, the Israelites were on a divine mission with

³⁸But the Israelites were unfaithful in regard to the devoted things; Achan, son of Karmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So the Lord's anger burned against Israel (NIV 2011).

³⁹James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1890), 69.

⁴⁰And the city will be under the ban, it and all that is in it belongs to Jehovah; only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in the house will live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. But, as for you, keep yourselves from the things under the ban, so that you do not desire them and take some of the things under the ban, so you do not make the camp of Israel accursed and bring trouble on it. And all the silver and gold and artifacts of Bronze and iron are set apart to Jehovah; they will go into the treasury of Jehovah” (NASB 1977).

⁴¹Strong, 43.

Yahweh as their commander. Since it was his war, not theirs, and he was the victor, the spoil belonged to him.⁴²

Achan, a man belonging to the tribe of Judah disobeys this command which results in Israel's defeat at Ai, the frontier that followed in their war of conquest (Joshua 7:2–13). The question becomes, why would God punish Israel for the sin of Achan? Several explanations come, some from the context and the text being studied and others from the historical context and explanations by other scholars concerning the text.

Joshua 6:17–19, which records the command that Israel breaks in chapter 7, expressly states, “But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about *your own destruction* by taking any of them. Otherwise *you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it* (6:18, emphasis added). Clearly then, any violation of the command was to bring destruction to both the sinner as an individual and the camp of Israel. This means that by punishing Israel, God was implementing what he had stated in his command. It was based on his expressed command.

Scholars have explained the possible reason as to why God would give a command with such a communal implication. Walton, Mathews, and Chavalas speak of corporate responsibility in two terms when they state:

In the ancient Near East a person found his or her identity within the group. Integration and interdependence were important values, and the group was bound together as a unit. As a result, individual behavior would not be viewed in isolation from the group. When one Israelite sinned, the group shared the responsibility.⁴³

⁴²Walton, Mathews, and Chavalas, 95.

⁴³Ibid.

The following view seems logical: In a community that is so knit together, the possibility of many participating in a sinful behavior or some behavior influencing many in the community is very high.

There is, however, another aspect of the nature of corporate responsibility that Israel shared. It is the responsibility that they shared as *a people* with a covenant with God. It is stated that “in addition to reflecting the perspective of society, this corporate responsibility was also a result of the covenant relationship that Israel had with the Lord. The law included many guidelines for individual behavior and when individual violations occurred the benefits of the covenant were in jeopardy for all Israel.”⁴⁴

Israel was, therefore, a community of God’s people. Because Israel was *one people* in the Lord and not just an assorted collection of tribes, clans, families, and individuals, God dwelt in their midst, and this made the Jews the Lord's special people (Exod. 19:5–6).⁴⁵ It is probably because of this covenant relationship between Israel and God that made God to pronounce destruction of the camp of Israel if the people broke the command to treat the spoils of war in Jericho as devoted for the Lord. Since Achan heard the command and was a member of this community of the people of God, his sin became the sin of the camp. God was not arbitrarily punishing Israel for Achan’s sin. He was acting upon his spoken word that is based on his covenant relationship with Israel as a nation.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵“Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.”

The second issue that comes into view in this text that has been cited by the proponents of the generational-curse belief is God's punishment on Achan's family along with him. Why is the family being punished for the father's sin? Again, several explanations have been given. One explanation is that Achan's children were not killed with him but were brought to the scene for them to learn from the event. In favor of this, several arguments are given.

First, it is noted that nowhere does the text say anyone beside Achan committed the crime. God speaks of the guilty as "he who is taken with the accursed thing" (v. 15). Also, Achan confesses alone: "I have sinned" (v. 20) and "I coveted" (v. 21). Second, the text declares that "Israel stoned him" (v. 25). The reference to "burning them" (v. 25) alludes to the silver, gold, and garment he had taken (see vv. 21 and 24). Third, stoning Achan's family for his crime would be a clear violation of the OT law which says emphatically that "the son shall not bear the guilt of the father" (Ezek. 18:20).⁴⁶

The arguments may appear appealing, but they pose a serious problem in explaining verse 25 which says, "They burned *them* with fire after they had stoned *them* with stones" (emphasis added). It sounds awkward to believe that inanimate objects needed to be stoned. The verse, based on the literary context of the text, seems to refer to Achan and his family.

While the text does not say why the family was punished with Achan, it is possible to derive the reason from the context of the text and the biblical teaching. In several Bible references, punishing children for the father's sin is forbidden. Genesis 18:23 says that he does not destroy the righteous with the wicked. The law also had forbidden children to be punished for the sins of their parents (Deut. 24:16). Ezekiel 18:20 expressly indicates that God does not punish the children for the sins of their parent.

Wiersbe rightly observes that, since God had forbidden punishing children for a parent's or relative's sin (Deut. 24:16), the family members must have been aware of his crime. So, they

⁴⁶Norman L. Geisler and Thomas A. Howe, *The Big Book of Bible Difficulties: Clear and Concise Answers from Genesis to Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1992), 138.

were being punished for their own sins, not his.⁴⁷ He further argues that it “is unlikely that Achan could have accomplished this deed and hidden the stolen material in the family tent without their knowing something about it.”⁴⁸ The hiding of the *accursed* devoted thing was by digging into the ground in the middle of the tent. Everyone in the tent must have been aware of, and therefore partaker of, the sin of Achan. The family was not without guilt. Achan’s family must have sinned with him or else they would not have been punished.⁴⁹ It is therefore valid to conclude that, since God does not punish children for parents’ sin, the family members must have been guilty also. It is also valid to conclude that, out of his sovereign knowledge, God knew how the family would be influenced by Achan’s behavior or what would have happened if the family was left to live.

It is suggested that God’s judgment over Achan’s family was not strange to Israel.⁵⁰ Achan’s household was judged the same way Israel would deal with a Jewish city that had turned to idols (Josh. 13:12–18) since they had turned their hearts away from God to things that God had pronounced accursed.⁵¹

At this point in Israel’s history, God is taking them to the beginning of a new period.

Wiersbe declares,

At the beginning of a new period in Bible history, God sometimes revealed His wrath against sin in some dramatic way. He did this after the tabernacle had been set up. Nadab and Abihu invaded its holy precincts contrary to God’s law; and God killed them. This was a warning to the priests not to treat God’s sanctuary carelessly (Lev. 10). When David sought to restore the Ark to its place of honor, and Uzzah touched the Ark to steady it, God killed Uzzah (2 Sam. 6:1–11); another warning from God not to treat

⁴⁷Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary Old Testament: Joshua–Esther V.5* (David and Cook, 2003), 53.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Geisler and Howe, 138.

⁵⁰Wiersbe, 53.

⁵¹Ibid.

sacred things carelessly. At the beginning of the Church Age, when Ananias and Sapphira lied to God and God's people, the Lord killed them (Acts 5:1–11).⁵²

It seems, then, that God is showing these people who are moving into the land he had promised them how seriously he hates sin or the breaking of his covenant conditions. He also wants to teach the nation not to take his commands lightly.

Exegesis of Genesis 12:3, Generational Blessings

Several of the proponents of the generational-curse belief stated that their belief in curses is also based on the fact that the Bible teaches generational blessings. One of the key verses they use to support generational blessings is Genesis 12:3 where God tells Abraham, “I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” Proponents of the generational-curse belief use this verse is used to say that all humans have the generational blessing through Abraham. This exegesis, hence, aims at discovering what the text meant and if and how it can be used to support the generational-blessing teaching.

The statement in Genesis 12:3 is part of what is known as the call of Abraham and the Abrahamic covenant. The occasion is that of God calling Abraham to leave his people in Ur of the Chaldeans and go to a place that God would show him (Gen. 12:1). His call comes after years of God focusing on all humanity as seen in Genesis 1–11 which traces the growth of humanity from one couple to nations that scatter over the earth. Genesis 1–11 shows a downward movement of people from their relationship with God. At the time of the calling of Abraham, God’s redemptive plan takes a new phase of God focusing on one nation which will eventually be born through Abraham. As God calls Abraham, he calls him to separate with his people who

⁵²Ibid.

were polytheists.⁵³ God calls him so that he may become a father of a great nation which will in turn become a source of blessings to all nations.⁵⁴

It is in this setting that God pronounces the blessings to Abraham as seen in verse 2 and 3 of the same chapter. God promises Abraham that he would be a father of many descendants (Gen. 12:2a), that he would personally become a direct object of God's blessings (12:2b), and that he would be a source of blessings to the whole universe (12:2c-3). Abraham was expected to obey the call of God to leave his people, a condition that he fulfilled as stated in Genesis 12:4. This way, God enters into a covenant with him. This is a divine covenant in which the two parties involved are God and Abraham. Even though God's choice of Abraham is based on his grace, since Abraham as a worshiper of many Gods was not deserving, the covenant, just like any other covenant, places obligations on both sides. Abraham is to be obedient and faithful to God. This is seen in God's call for Abraham to leave his people (12:1). It is also clearly expressed later when God tells Abraham, "I am God almighty; walk before me faithfully and be blameless, then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers" (17:1-2). The rest of chapter 17 of Genesis speaks of the covenant and its terms which call for the obedience of Abraham and his descendants.

It appears from this discussion, therefore, that the blessings that were promised to Abraham demanded that Abraham respond to God in faith. Notice that "he was told nothing about the land to which he must go. His departure required an unparalleled act of faith."⁵⁵ The promises were to be realized through his belief in God as he acts in obedience.

⁵³William C. Williams, *They Spoke from God: A Survey of the Old Testament* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2003), 179.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 188.

⁵⁵John Walvoord and Roy Zuck, eds., *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books 2003), 47.

The covenant promises in Genesis 12:2–3 are repeated not only to Abraham⁵⁶ but also to Isaac and Jacob⁵⁷ and even to the nation of Israel.⁵⁸ The Israelites, as a nation and as descendants of Abraham, are beneficiaries of the covenant blessings, but only as they remain faithful and obedient to God as seen in Deuteronomy 28. “God demanded a response by faith if this generation were to share in those promised blessings.”⁵⁹ In the course of history, some respond well to God and enjoy his blessings, but others do not. At certain times, God allows them to live as captives in other nations because they had broken the terms of the covenant and worshiped other gods. Still though, those who remain faithful are kept as a remnant for God to keep his covenant with Abraham, since he promises to work through such a remnant in 1 Kings 19:18 and Isaiah 1:9 and 6:13. Ultimately, God would extend these blessings outside the borders of Israel to Gentiles (Isaiah 2:2–4) through a chosen servant who would be the Messiah (Isaiah 42:1–4). This would fulfill his promise to Abraham to bless all nations in Genesis 12:2c–3.

The New Testament places its focus on Jesus Christ as the perfect remnant through whom redemption comes. Williams points to him as “the embodiment of the remnant and the only one who has perfect faith and obedience.”⁶⁰ It is through him that all the nations of the earth receive the blessing of Abraham. This is only possible through faith (Acts 15:9; Rom. 3:22; Eph. 2:8). Paul says that, those who believe are the true descendants of Abraham. He states,

Consider Abraham: “He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to

⁵⁶See Genesis 13:14–17, 15:1–7 and 18, 17; 18:9–19, and 22:17–18.

⁵⁷See Genesis 26:2–4, 28:13–14, and 35:9–12.

⁵⁸See Deuteronomy 7:12–15, and 30:15–20.

⁵⁹Walvoord and Zuck, 47.

⁶⁰Gensenius, 190.

Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. (Gal. 3:6–9).

This means that the fulfillment of Genesis 12:1–3 is ultimately through faith in Jesus Christ.

In summary then, if there is generational blessing, in the Old Testament the blessings are based upon the peoples’ obedience and in the New Testament the blessings are also based on obedience but specifically based upon faith in Jesus Christ. As a result, it is right to conclude that, Genesis 12:2c is not some magic formula for generational blessings. Rather, it is a promise that is based upon the faith and obedience of the people.

Summary

From the study done in the literature reviews, it is concluded that God does not punish the righteous for the sins of the unrighteous. Even when communities or families were punished together as in the case of Achan, members of the punished family were in a way involved in the sin that led to the punishment. The literature indicates also that, even when God warns to visit the iniquity of fathers to their generations, the visiting is not in the sense in which it appears in the modern concept that generational-curse proponents teach. This is based on the truth that the usage of the term *curse* in the Old Testament carried the sense of God declaring judgment on people as a result of a broken covenant rather than based on the demonic and fatalistic orientation the modern belief holds. The Old Testament sense also differs in that the generational judgment was conditional in that it was efficacious only on those who followed the sinful trend of their ancestors. As such, the Old Testament understanding of generational judgment exempted from that judgment those who lived in obedience to God. This is unlike the modern belief which does not exempt the believer. The Old and the New Testaments sufficiently teach personal responsibility for sin as indicated in Jeremiah 31:29–30, Ezekiel 18:1–18, Genesis 2:17 and 4:7, Deuteronomy 24:16, and 2 Kings 14:6.

There is consensus both in the Old Testament and New Testament that God does not punish the righteous for the sins of the wicked or the righteous children for the sins of their parents or vice versa. When God passes judgment that involves a family or generation, it is either conditional on people's behavior or based on his foreknowledge of people's future behavior.

Biblical-theological literature has indicated also that some of what people call generational curses are sufferings that result from the fall of man, the Adamic curse, or from natural consequences of sins of older generations, or from valid judgment.

Biblical-theological literature reveals that, the New Testament view of the concept of generational curses is distinguished from that of the Old Testament in two ways. First, the New Testament places much emphasis on individual responsibility for sin. Two, the New Testament also emphasizes faith in Jesus Christ rather than works of the law as basis for the believer's covenant with God. This faith frees the believer from observing the law as a basis for salvation. The terms of the covenant are the individual's faith in Christ as the sufficient sacrifice for sin. This removes the possibility of a believer suffering *guilt* of another person in the community. It also removes the possibility of the believer receiving judgment for the sins of others. It appears, from the study of Scripture and related literature, that the belief in generational curses in its current form is probably based upon poor understanding and interpretation of the Scriptures and on ignorance of what Christ has accomplished.

Social-cultural literature speaks generally on the broad African perspective and reveals that the belief has caused a division among African theologians and writers. Proponents of the belief believe in inherited guilt as the source of the curses. They also believe in the involvement of evil spirits in the issue of curses. Proponents believe the curses manifest in observable forms as chronic and hereditary diseases, emotional excesses, allergies, frequent miscarriages, deaths,

suicidal tendencies, and persistent poverty in one's family. For the proponents, a person becomes a victim of curses even before birth by being born in a cursed family. Proponents also view born-again Christians as possible victims of generational curses.

Social-cultural literature reveals that opponents of the generational-curse belief view the belief as a result of syncretism that is influenced by ATR. Based on this argument, opponents of the belief contend that the African worldview of man, the influence given to the spirit world, and the cause-and-effect orientation serve as fuel to the belief. They also contend that the belief is a result of problems and variations in hermeneutical approaches to biblical texts on evil powers. Further, opponents see the belief as a product of Christianity's insufficiency to address the daily fears of its followers and a result of Christians' failure to accept the sufficiency of the work of the cross in dealing with sin and with evil powers. They, therefore, call for a transformed worldview for African Christianity and a consensus in Pentecostal theology. The argument is given that believers who accept belief in generational curses are victims of ignorance of what Jesus has accomplished through the cross.

From the Tanzanian perspective, literature is limited. The few voices that are heard speak to the problem of syncretism in general. They also state two major reasons that caused syncretism in the past: church leaders discounting the supernatural against the high regard of the supernatural in the African mind and taking contextualization to the extreme. The problem of syncretism in Tanzania, specifically in Dar-es-Salaam, is also made possible by its mixed population of about 120 people groups which originate from the four major African peoples or languages.

The few voices that talk about generational curses in specific come only from the proponents' camp. These voices have the same arguments for generational curses as the ones

given by literature from the African setting as a whole. An additional aspect from the literature by proponents in Tanzania is the need for a guided prayer or prayer by *experts* to deal with the curses. Content analysis of documents from proponents of the belief in Dar-es-Salaam reveals the same themes as those revealed by literature.

In the interviews with Pentecostal denominational leaders, several main issues emerge from the interview responses. First, all the leaders of the denominations believe that the Old Testament supports the existence of generational curses. Secondly, however, they also believe that the New Testament does not support the possibility of generational curses on a believer. The basis for this position is scriptural and theological (including the sufficiency of the death of Jesus on the cross and proper interpretation of Scripture), logical, and experiential reasons. This, according to the leaders, does not mean that born-again Christians do not suffer. Yet, as they suffer, they do so as a result of the Adamic curse on all humans, spiritual warfare, and mortality of the body. A lack of knowledge of the word of God also opens the Christian to the possibility of oppressions by the devil. Thirdly, none of the Pentecostal denominations has written an official theological statement concerning the generational-curse belief. As a result, those who respond to it do so based on their personal understanding of what Scripture teaches.

The interviews with proponents of the generational-curse belief reveal the following opinions. The first is the belief that the Bible teaches a doctrine of generational blessings which forms the basis for believing in a doctrine of generational curses. The second is the belief that Christians can be victims of generational curses. This has to do with the proponent's understanding of the doctrine of salvation and with the observation of practical problems in the believers' daily living. They, therefore, include diligence from curses in the experiential aspect of salvation. For them, this experiential aspect is something that the believer must accomplish by

additional faith today in order to gain forgiveness from sin and healing of diseases. This concept is meant to distinguish what the believer must do today to *experience* forgiveness and deliverance from what Jesus accomplished *providentially* two thousand years ago, as opposed to what was providentially accomplished on the cross two thousand years ago. They also assess life issues with which a believer struggles and identify them as signs or results of curses.

From the interviews with the victims, responses reveal that they are people with real life problems that need solutions. The victims are people in search for solutions to their practical needs. This search leads them to be open to ministers that show ability or effort to provide the solution. Further, they are susceptible to teachings in that they accept and believe what they are instructed in relation to their needs. Finally, some victims are clearly being influenced to some degree by their African worldview or beliefs.

The exegetical analysis of the key texts that were cited in the interviews and content analysis reveal the same principles that were revealed in the biblical-theological literature section. The main idea the exegesis revealed is the consistency of the teaching of the Holy Scriptures that God does not punish the righteous for the sins of the unrighteous. When he judges a family or a generation, the members of the family must have in a way been guilty of that for which they are being punished. Also, the need for studying Scriptures within their context is revealed by the fact that, when the context is considered, the Scriptures that are cited in support of generational curses or generational blessings fail to provide such support.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The development of a biblically and theologically sound response to the belief in generational curses in the context of Pentecostal churches in Dar-es-Salaam has been guided by sound biblical interpretation of Scriptures and an understanding of the social-cultural environment and beliefs of the Pentecostals in Dar-es-Salaam. Correct interpretation of Scriptures has, therefore, been observed so as to avoid a response that lacks the authority of Scripture. Social-cultural factors and environments surrounding this belief among the Pentecostals in Dar-es-Salaam have also been considered so that the response will be relevant to the Dar-es-Salaam Pentecostal community. The response being developed in this research is, therefore, based primarily on findings from exegetical analysis and interpretation of relevant Scriptures, on content analysis that was conducted on documents from proponents of the belief in generational curses, and on findings from the field research with individuals through interviews.

In this chapter, the findings from the research will first be restated in a summary. A theological reflection and discussion of the findings in relation to important issues will follow thereafter. Finally, conclusions and recommendations for action and further studies will be presented.

Summary of the Research Findings

The problem statement for this study is: “What constitutes a biblically and theologically sound response to the belief in generational curses in the context of Pentecostal churches in Dar-

es-Salaam, Tanzania?” The purpose is to develop a biblically sound response to the belief in generational curses that are thought to affect born-again Christians in the context of Pentecostal churches in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. To arrive at this response, several RQs were developed to guide the process (see appendix A). Biblical-theological literature and exegetical analysis responds to RQ1a through RQ1e, which probe into the biblical perspective on generational curses. Social-cultural literature responds to RQ2a and RQ2b. RQ3 and RQ4a through RQ4c were handled through field research. Then, RQ4d, which was partly handled through exegetical analysis, leads to a theological reflection and discussion at the end of this chapter.

The Biblical Perspective of Generational Curses

RQ1 asks: “What is the biblical perspective of generational curses?” To probe into this RQ, RQ1a studies the following Bible passages: Exodus 20:5, 6; Deuteronomy 5:9, 10; and 24:16; 2 Kings 14:6; Jeremiah 3:29, 30; Exodus 18:14–20; Genesis 9:24; Proverbs 26:2; and Ezekiel 18:1–20. An investigation of these Scripture passages reveals that it is possible for people to be victims of generational judgment only when they follow the example of their parents and grandparents in sin, and they are only punished for their own sins.

The study of Scriptures and related theological literature reveals that the term *curse* in the Old Testament carries the sense of judgment or condemnation, mostly using the Hebrew word *qelega* as used in Deuteronomy 11:16 and 28. The pronunciation in this case was of curses on Israel, having more to do with God’s judgment as a result of broken covenant terms.¹ The reference was never meant to be an arbitrary curse on anyone. The findings of the study of the

¹See chapter 5 of this document for the biblical-theological literature report.

Scriptures identified in RQ1² show that the Old Testament concept of generational *curses* carries the sense of generational *judgment* by God, proclaimed by God and *only efficacious on those who follow the sinful trend of their ancestors*. The judgment is conditional since the visitation of judgment that is mentioned in Exodus 20:5 is only on those who hate the Lord or continue to sin as their fathers did. Since his covenant was conditional, obedience to its terms brought blessings, and breaking the commandments brought curses. Besides, God's warning to visit iniquity on future generations in Exodus 20:5 and Deuteronomy 5:9 is based on his covenant with Israel as a nation and how individuals and the nation respond to the covenant conditions.

Biblical-theological literature reveals also that Scripture teaches individual responsibility for righteousness, a fact that is true even in the Old Testament as expressed in Jeremiah 31:29–30 and Ezekiel 18:1–18.³ This is the biblical perspective clearly indicating that generational judgment *does not* mean that individual members of the next generation inherit the sin of their fathers or get direct punishment for their fathers' sins. Individual responsibility for righteousness is a principal that is stated in various parts of the Bible (Gen. 2:17; 4:7; Deut. 24:16) and illustrated in Ezekiel 18 and applied in 2 Kings where King Amaziah puts to death those who killed his father but not the sons of the assassins. The narrator of this event in 2 Kings clearly says that the king did not put to death the children “in accordance with what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, where the Lord commanded: *fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sins*” (2

²See chapter 2 of this research for the Biblical-theological literature review concerning the Biblical perspective of generational curses.

³See chapter 2 for the Biblical-theological literature review and chapter 5 for the report from the Biblical-theological data.

Kings 14:6, emphasis added). Biblical-theological literature, thus, reports individual responsibility as the consistent teaching of the Bible.

In probing into the perspective of Scripture on the generational-curse belief, RQ1b seeks to discover the consensus of the teaching of the Bible on the theory that a parent's sin or righteousness directly affects God's punishment on his or her child.

As stated above, biblical-theological literature has revealed that Scripture is consistent in its teaching about individual responsibility for sin, a consensus that is observed both in the Old Testament and New Testament.⁴ The literature shows that, when the Scriptures are studied in their context, they reveal God as a just and righteous judge who *does not punish the righteous children for the sins of their parents or vice versa*. This is observed in the following three discoveries. First, the OT is explicit on the truth that no one will die for his parent's sin. Examples are found in Genesis where God spared Noah from the flood in a generation of evildoers (Gen. 6–7) and when he was also willing to spare Sodom and Gomorrah for the sake of a few if they were to be found (Gen. 18:16–33). Second, when God passes judgment that involves a family or generation, it is based either on people's behavior or on his foreknowledge of people's future behavior. This seems to be the case of Canaan (Lev. 18).⁵ At the time, the Israelites are displacing the Canaanites, but it is not because of the sins of the Canaanites' forefathers. It is because the Canaanites being judged are sinful themselves. Third, the New Testament also emphasizes individual responsibility for sin as is seen in the teachings of Jesus

⁴See chapter 5.

⁵“Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled. Even the land was defiled; so I punished it for its sin, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. But you must keep my decrees and my laws. The native-born and the aliens living among you must not do any of these detestable things, for all these things were done by the people who lived in the land before you, and the land became defiled” (Leviticus 18:24–27). See chapter 5 of this dissertation.

(John 8:11; 9:1–3). Paul’s theology agrees that “God will give to *each person* according to what *he* has” (Rom. 2:6, emphasis added). Paul says, “So then, *each one of us* will give an account of *himself* to God” (Rom. 14:12, emphasis added). The New Testament’s priority is on individual rather than communal responsibility.

Theological literature has revealed that this biblical emphasis on individual responsibility is the unified teaching of the Bible that permeates the teachings of Moses (Deut. 24:16), the prophets (Jer. 31:29, 30; Ezek. 18:1–4, 14–16, 18–20; Dan. 9:4, 5, 7–9), and Jesus (John 8:11; 9:1–3).⁶ The implication is that, even though the Old Testament has much to say about corporate responsibility in reference to Israel as a nation, the whole teaching of the Bible, both in the Old and the New Testament, holds each person responsible for his/her sin. The theory that a parent’s sin or righteousness directly affects God’s punishment on his or her child lacks scriptural authority.

In response to the question concerning the biblical perspective on generational curses, RQ1c seeks to explore how an understanding of the Adamic curse would help to explain why righteous believers might suffer even though neither they nor others related to them have sinned.

The findings of biblical-theological literature have revealed five consequences of the fall of man. First, immediately after Adam sinned he experienced a separation from God. This separation might be called spiritual death.⁷ God dealt with this death immediately by initiating animal sacrifice that continues throughout the Old Testament⁸ and points to the death of Jesus. The remedy for spiritual death is, therefore, Christ, whose sacrificial death sufficiently dealt with

⁶For further study, consult the website of Let Us Reason Ministries. See also chapter 5 of this document.

⁷See chapter 5 concerning the data collection results for an exegesis of Genesis 3:8–10.

⁸See chapter 5 for an exegesis of Genesis 3:21.

it. Second, physical death, which is the corruption of the body including the decaying process, diseases, and physical sufferings became part of the human experience. Physical death continues to happen to both believers and non-believers to the present.⁹ Third, the nature of sin, the inclination toward sinning, resulted from the fall. Since then, every person is born a sinner by nature, which makes it difficult for him/her to choose not to sin, unless he accepts Christ (Rom. 5:12). The sinful nature is the root of all curses because it controls a person and entices him to sin. Yet, there is no curse on the believer since the believer's sinful nature is crucified by the law of life. He is spiritually alive and lives by the law of God which separates him from curses. Fourth, the ground was cursed. Fertility of the land was negatively affected which results in toil and pains (Gen. 3:17–19) to this day. As a result, all creation is subject to vanity, corruption, and pain (Rom. 8:20-22). Since then, the earth is cursed and is exposed to suffering and pain. Fifth, enmity between man and Satan was born (Gen. 3:15) and continues to cause spiritual battle. Ephesians 6 describes struggles between the evil forces and God's people which are as ancient as the fall of the devil and the fall of man. The struggles may result in accidents, diseases, and demonic attacks or torments which are struggles that are sometimes wrongly identified as generational curses.

Scripture and related literature, therefore, trace general suffering from the fall of man which resulted in a curse that continues to affect humanity¹⁰ and not from direct sin. This is also true in the New Testament since it does not connect human suffering to direct punishment for sin. Jesus confronted the view that suffering is always a result of direct sin in John 9:1–3.¹¹ Even

⁹See chapter 5 on results from biblical-theological literature.

¹⁰See chapter 5 on results.

¹¹As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life."

when he seems to suggest a connection between a person's condition and sin, as in John 5:14,¹² it is not the parent's sin that is in view. This means, he does not connect suffering with someone's inheritance of guilt from the sins of his/her parents. As such, the Bible does not exempt believers from sufferings.¹³ They suffer not as a result of their personal sin or their parents' sins but as a general consequence of the fall and because the devil exerts opposition against them.

The biblical perspective on generational curses is also revealed in the response to RQ1d which sought to discover how a parent's or grandparent's sin or righteousness may, or may not, affect the lives of a believer. Biblical-theological literature has revealed several points.

First, a careful study of the texts that generational-curse proponents use to support their belief refer to consequences of sinful behaviors in a community and not to curses or direct judgment by God. An example is the case of Numbers 14:18–33 where a bad report is brought and people complain and blame God and Moses (14:1–9). God punishes the older generation by forbidding them to inherit the land (14:21–32), which as a consequence results in the younger generation suffering in the desert as they wait for the parents to die (14:33). The suffering of the younger generation is not God's punishment on them but a consequence of their parent's sin.

Second, members of certain families are affected by the sins of their parents by way of influence as they accept and live the evil ways of their ancestors. When God punishes such people, it is not because of their ancestors' sins but theirs. This means that, when children suffer punishment for sins that are done in their families or societies, it is not because their fathers committed the sins but because the children are influenced by the fathers' sinfulness, and they sin also, deserving the punishment.

¹²One time Jesus healed a paralytic and told him, "See, you are well again, stop sinning or something worse may happen to you" (John 5:14).

¹³See chapter 5.

The findings presented here lead naturally to an understanding that the Old Testament does not teach a doctrine of generational curses as it is presented in the modern understanding of its proponents. Rather, the Old Testament concept of generational curse carries the sense of God's judgment on the generations that continue with the sinful ways of their past generations.

Finally, in response to RQ1 concerning the biblical perspective of generational curses, the response to RQ1d reveals the relationship between the work of Christ and the concept of Christians inheriting curses from their parents or grandparents. The study of Scriptures has revealed that the words *curse*, *cursing*, *cursed* or *curses* as used in the New Testament are not used in the sense of pronouncing judgment as in the Old Testament understanding except when referring to the Old Testament Law as in Galatians 3:10.¹⁴ In this text, Paul exposes to the Galatian believers that those who live by the law are also under the *curse* of the law if they fail to observe it.¹⁵ Further, the study discovered also that, the same text that speaks of the curse of the law exempts believers from living under a curse. This is because Christ has redeemed believers from the curse of the law by becoming a curse himself (Gal. 3:13) and exempting believers from observing the law as a requirement for salvation and from the resulting curse or judgment for not observing it.

The studies of the New Testament Scriptures reveal that Jesus dealt sufficiently with the problem of sin and its effects.¹⁶ The Pauline Epistles, especially, point to the sufficiency of the death of Jesus Christ in cleansing and forgiving sin and in defeating the powers of darkness.¹⁷ As

¹⁴See chapter 5.

¹⁵All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law" (Gal. 3:10).

¹⁶See chapter 5 of this research.

¹⁷And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross (Col. 2:15).

a result, the believer is freed from condemnation that results from sin since he is forgiven. Frelich observes this when he says, “The justification of man is grounded in the infinitely righteous atonement of Christ.”¹⁸

Biblical-theological literature reveals two other findings from the study of the New Testament and the work of Christ. First, the New Testament puts emphasis on individual, rather than corporate responsibility for sin.¹⁹ Second, the New Testament, just like the Old Testament, emphasizes faith rather than works of the law as basis for the believer’s covenant with God.²⁰ This frees the believer from observing the law as the basis for salvation. The terms of the covenant are the individual’s faith in Christ as the sufficient sacrifice for sin. In the New Testament, therefore, the remedy for a *generational curse* is salvation through Jesus Christ. Christ’s forgiveness makes the individual a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17) and takes away God’s condemnation (Rom. 8:1). This removes the possibility of a believer suffering the *guilt* of another person in the community. It also removes the possibility of the believer receiving judgment for the sins of others.

From this analysis, therefore, the biblical-theological literature indicates that, when analyzed in light of biblical understanding, the belief in generational curses in its current form as expressed by its proponents is not based on scripture. The teaching is based upon two main a poor understanding or interpretation of the Scriptures and ignorance or insufficient understanding of what Christ has accomplished on the cross.²¹ Biblical-theological literature

¹⁸Frelich, 69.

¹⁹See chapter 5 of this research.

²⁰Frelich, 69.

²¹See chapter 5 of this research.

views that believers who accept the possibility of generational curses are victims of ignorance of what the cross has accomplished.²²

Social-Cultural Perspectives on Generational Curses

RQ2 states: “What are the social-cultural perspectives of the issue of generational curses? The question probed into the social-cultural issues of both Africa in general (RQ2a) and Tanzania in specific (RQ2b).

Social-cultural literature reveals that the belief in generational curses has caused a division among African theologians and writers. Literature that speaks for the proponents of the belief reveals several things as the core tenets of the belief. Social-cultural literature also reflects voices of those who oppose the belief in generational curses. In summary, literature reveals that opponents of the generational curse have these arguments against the belief. First, the generational-curse belief is a result of syncretism because of the influence of ATR. Also, the belief is fueled by the African worldview of man²³ and the spirit world²⁴ and the African cause-and-effect orientation.²⁵ Again, the generational- curse belief is a result of problems and variations in hermeneutical approaches to texts concerning evil powers.²⁶ Further, the belief is a

²²Banda.

²³The animist’s view of how a person becomes a member of the society is tied to the spirit world, along with his coming and his going. This explains the animist’s communal orientation and intimate relationship with the family, clan, and tribe which include the living, the deceased, and the unborn. The African sense of relationship between the living and the ancestral world is very important.

²⁴The belief and dependency on the spirit world, including the tendency to consult spirit intermediaries, is quite common.

²⁵The cause-and-effect orientation is a concept where everything that happens has a cause that needs to be detected.

²⁶See chapter 5 on results from social-cultural literature and Annang. The Annang evaluates three hermeneutical approaches to the evil powers in Ephesus. Depending on context, some interpreters demythologize the evil powers, completely dismissing their existence. Others mythologize them, accepting their existence but denying their personal nature or diminishing their malevolent influence. Still others hyper-mythologize them, giving

product of Christianity's insufficiency to address the daily fears of its followers. The belief is also a result of failure to accept the sufficiency of the work of the cross in dealing with sin and evil powers. Finally, the belief is a sign of a lacking in Pentecostal theology. This calls for a transformed worldview for African Christianity and a consensus in Pentecostal theology as a solution to the problem of syncretism.

RQ2b states: What traditional beliefs affect the belief in generational curses in Tanzania? It is noted in the findings of social cultural literature that few voices are heard from Tanzania, and those that do exist do not specifically speak to the issue of generational curses. Nonetheless, these voices do speak to certain related topics that help the researcher discover some issues that may influence the belief in generational curses.²⁷

Social-cultural literature in the context of Tanzania reveals the following:

1. A significant influence on the cultural beliefs in Tanzania exists and is implied by the remarkable combination of African traditions within Tanzania with over 120 ethnic groups that speak languages from all four major African linguistic clusters.²⁸
2. Social-cultural issues that affect Christians in Africa also affect Tanzania since Tanzania is part of the African continent.
3. Even though two major religions, Christianity and Islam, exist in Tanzania, both religious groups syncretize their beliefs with traditional beliefs.
4. Two main reasons, both of which are shared with other parts of Africa, account for syncretism in Tanzania. One, church leaders discount the supernatural against the high regard

a deterministic view of the function of spirits and removing responsibility from human beings in the spiritual warfare. Africans are said to be hyper-mythologizers.

²⁷See chapter 5 of this research.

²⁸Countries and Their Cultures.

of the supernatural by the African, forcing members to seek other answers to their spiritual and mystic questions.²⁹ Two, those who believe in the supernatural take contextualization to extremes.³⁰

The few voices in the literature that specifically target the belief in Tanzania, specifically in Dar-es-Salaam, come only from the opponents' side. These voices reveal that the belief is indeed prevalent. They also reveal that there are noticeable forms of the curses with identifiable sources, signs, and a variety of ways to deal with them. The voices also provide examples and support from Scripture.³¹

The Position of Pentecostal Denomination Leaders on the Generational-Curse Belief

RQ3 asks: "What is the official position of Pentecostal denominations in Dar-es-Salaam concerning generational curses?" The purpose was to discover the position and the response of the Pentecostal denomination under CPCT which are believed to have the right biblical doctrine.

In summary, the semi-structured interviews with the leaders revealed three main issues that were represented by 100 percent of the participants. The leaders understand the generational-curse belief as a fact that is present in the Old Testament and supported by Old Testament Scriptures but one that is not as a system after the cross. These leaders also view the curses as a possibility to people in the Old Testament (fearers and non-fearers of God) and in the New Testament (non-believers only). They declare this even though they also admit that Scripture says

²⁹See chapter 5 on results from social-cultural literature and also Cox on page 4 of his book.

³⁰Contextualization is done with good motives and a desire to help believers experience Christianity in their context, but at times it can be taken to extremes that lead to syncretism.

³¹View chapter 5 concerning the social-cultural literature report. See also figure 5.1, "A summary of issues rising from social-cultural literature in the Tanzanian setting."

sons will not be judged for their fathers' sins.³² Further, the leaders believe born-again Christians cannot be victims of generational curses, basing their arguments for this position on Scriptural, theological, logical, and experiential reasons.³³ Responses also pointed out that there are *breakouts* to this position, which are explained by the fact that believers can suffer as a result of spiritual warfare and satanic oppressions. They suffer also due to the mortality of the body as a result of the fall and a lack of understanding of the word of God which leads to the possibility of being oppressed by the devil.

These leaders proposed four things they deem important in a theological statement in response to the belief in generational curses. These include the impossibility of curses to affect saved people, the sufficiency of the sacrifice of Jesus, the importance of teaching and understanding the doctrine of salvation, and the need to focus on teaching the truth as a remedy for the belief.

One more significant finding came from these interview responses. None of these Pentecostal denominations have written a theological statement in response to the belief in generational curse. As a result, each pastor confronts the belief by basing his teaching on his personal understanding of what the Bible says and on what other national churches have been presenting to their leaders.

³²These two are major theological issues that call for discussion. Two questions emerge immediately from these issues. One, can it be justice for people to be judged for their parents' sins in the Old Testament but not in the New Testament? Two, is it just for unbelievers to suffer for the guilt of their parents but not for Christians? These will be discussed in this chapter in the section that presents a theological reflection. This is because they represent theological inconsistencies with the rest of the biblical teaching of God not judging anyone for the sins of his or her parent, as discovered in the study of Scriptures and related biblical theological literature.

³³See chapter 5 for figure 5.2, "A summary of themes emerging from interviews with Pentecostal denomination leaders."

Views of Proponents of the Generational-Curse Belief

RQ4 asks, “What are the views, opinions, and understanding of the proponents of the belief in generational curses in Dar-es-Salaam?”

Findings of content analysis revealed the following as key tenets of the belief from the two documents that were analyzed. One key tenet is that the generational-curse belief is a twin belief with the generational-blessings belief, a belief that is based on Genesis 12:1–3. Another tenet is that sins or evils done by fathers or ancestors directly affect their descendants. The belief in generational curses also teaches that the Bible supports (mainly from Exodus 20:5) and provides examples (as in the case of Achan in Joshua 7) for curses on generations. Further, the belief teaches that generational curses are identified through visible, observable signs. It also teaches that demons are involved in transmitting or implementing the curses. Another tenet is that born-again believers are not exempted from generational curses. Finally, the belief teaches that a person with special abilities or greater spirituality is needed in the process of deliverance from generational curses.³⁴

The interviews with proponents of the generational-curse belief revealed the following. The first is the belief in a biblical doctrine of generational blessings which, among several other Bible passages, is supported by Genesis 12:1–3 and forms the basis for the belief in generational curses. The second is the description of generational curse as a form of inherited judgment, evil, or behavior. The third is the presence of identifiable reasons or sources and forms or signs of generational curses. Another theme is the belief that Christians can be victims of generational

³⁴Details of these findings are summarized in chapter 5 in table 5.3: “Themes emerging from content analysis.”

courses, which is based on the proponents' understanding of the doctrine of salvation³⁵ and on observation of the victim's problems in daily life.³⁶

An exegetical analysis of the key texts that were cited in the interviews and content analysis was conducted. Genesis 12:3 was cited in literature from Dar-es-Salaam, in the content analysis, and in personal interviews with proponents of generational curses. This passage was used to support a doctrine of generational blessing. The other passage is Joshua 7:1–26 which was cited in content analysis and personal interviews with proponents as an example of God punishing children for the sins of parents.

The exegetical analysis of these passages reveals that the principles that were revealed in the biblical-theological literature section are consistent with what are taught in the analyzed passages. That is, God does not punish the righteous for the sins of the unrighteous and that when he judges a family or a generation, the members of the family must have in a way been guilty of that for which they are being punished. Also, the analysis revealed that, when the context is considered, the Scriptures that are cited in support of a generational curse or generational blessing fail to provide such support. This calls for the need to interpret Scripture within its context. This principle of *context* in studying Scripture is the one that the proponents of the generational-curse belief mostly violate which is an indicator that they do not observe correct interpretation rules.

³⁵Under this theme, the proponents give a detailed understanding of their doctrine of salvation and work of Jesus on the cross, a description that is very important in understanding why they believe that born-again Christians can also be victims of the curses. This doctrinal position includes deliverance from curses in the experiential aspect of salvation, but it is something that the believer must accept by faith today as with healing of diseases and forgiveness of sin as opposed to that which was providentially accomplished on the cross two thousand years ago. See this description in table 5.4 under chapter five.

³⁶The results of the interview with proponents of the generational-curse teaching are summarized in chapter 5, table 5.4 with major themes on the left and their sub-themes or descriptions on the right.

Interviews with the *victims* revealed that they are people with real life needs that need solutions. They also revealed that the victims are susceptible to ministers that show ability or effort to provide the solutions they need. Further, the victims are teachable and responsive to instructions that relate to their needs. Finally, some victims have been significantly influenced by their African worldview or beliefs.

Theological Reflection and Discussion of the Research Findings

Understanding the Generational-Curse View in Light of Scriptural Findings

The discussion in this section is based on RQ4d which asks, “How are the views, opinions and understanding of the proponents of generational curses to be explained in light of what the Bible reveals about generational curses This RQ necessitates that the views of the proponents and those of the victims of generational curses be compared with the findings from the biblical-theological literature and exegetical analysis From the study of Scriptures, several truths have been revealed which stand in sharp contrast with the views from the proponents that were discovered through social-cultural literature.

Contrast in the Understanding of the Generational Curse Concept

Contrary to the way the proponents of the generational-curse belief describe the term *curse*, the Old Testament use of the term carries the sense of God’s pronounced judgment or condemnation upon a sinning covenant people.³⁷ The proponents of generational curses bring into the definition of the word *curse* the sense of some fatalistic inheritance of judgment for sins of the victim’s ancestors. It carries the sense of the victim being judged for sins he/she did not commit.

³⁷This can be seen in the biblical-theological literature review in chapter 2, social cultural-literature review in chapter 3, and the research report or results in chapter 5.

Also, among several other forms, the inherited judgment of the generational-curse concept includes evil or sinful behavior like drunkenness, prostitution, theft, and others as results of generational curses. Further, the generational-curse belief is portrayed to include evil entities like demons and ancestral spirits as agents or transmitters of curses. In the tenets of the generational-curse teaching, involvement of evil spirits makes it possible for someone to become a victim of curses before birth since the demons are responsible for transmitting the curses. Theologically and logically, however, it is unlikely that God would punish or judge his children with sinful behaviors or through demonic possession or oppression. This raises another serious question as to who does the cursing. In the Old Testament understanding, it is God who declares the judgment. But, the modern concept makes it difficult for God to identify with the judgment. This means, the generational-curse concept itself is not what Scriptures mean when they declare judgment on a generation. It appears foreign to the Old Testament concept of curse.

Contrast in the Understanding of the Victims of Generational Judgment

Based on the research with proponents of the generational-curse belief, it has been revealed that the proponents use Old Testament Scriptures and especially depend on Exodus 20:5 as support for the belief. However, the study of Scripture, as revealed in the biblical theological literature, indicates that the visitation that Exodus refers to is based on people's behavior. When studied in its proper context, Exodus 20:5 reveals that the visitation is judgment proclaimed by God and *only efficacious on those who follow the sinful trend of their ancestors*. The judgment is conditional, since the visitation with judgment is only on those who hate the Lord or continue to sin. This discovery brings with it the understanding that, even when God declares judgment on a generation or family, those who fear God and separate themselves from the evil behaviors in

their generation are exempted from the judgment. Such was the case with Rahab the prostitute during Israel's conquest of Jericho (Josh. 6:25).

On the contrary, the proponents of the generational-curse belief teach that no one is exempt from generational curses as long as he/she is born in a victimized family or generation. Further, they go as far as to include unborn babies as possible victims of the curses. In other words, a person cannot choose not to be under the curse. Based on the findings of biblical-theological literature and exegetical analysis, this belief has no scriptural basis since Scripture shows that a person can choose to live a blessed life by obeying or loving God (Deut. 28). Besides, God does not even judge non-believers for the sins of their parents.

Contrasting Views in the Understanding of the Biblical Teaching on Responsibility for Righteousness

Scripture teaches individual responsibility for righteousness, a fact that biblical-theological literature and exegetical analysis reveal.³⁸ Clearly then, generational judgment as revealed in biblical history *does not* mean that individual members of the next generation inherit the sin of their fathers or directly inherit the punishment for their fathers' sins. This has been revealed as the consistent message of the Bible as presented in the writings of Moses,³⁹ the Old Testament historical books,⁴⁰ the prophets,⁴¹ and the content of the New Testament⁴² including

³⁸The biblical-theological literature review in chapter 2 and the Biblical-theological report in chapter 5 reveal this truth.

³⁹God spared the righteous when he judged the world in Genesis and instructed that "fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sin" (Deut. 24:16).

⁴⁰This is stated and exemplified in 2 Kings 14 when the king spared the sons of his father's assassins in observance of the Law of Moses for individual responsibility for righteousness.

⁴¹This is explained in Jeremiah 31:29–30 and Ezekiel 18.

⁴²See John 8:11, and 9:1–3; and Romans 2:6, and 14:12.

the teachings of Jesus and the epistles, especially the Pauline Epistles. When God passes judgment that involves a family or generation, it is based either on people's behavior or on his foreknowledge of people's future behavior.

Contrary to this biblical teaching, the proponents seem to advocate for a belief that descendants under the curses suffer as victims of the sins and guilt of their ancestors. Since this is contrary the biblical teaching, the Bible cannot be cited as the source or basis for such a belief. This research has revealed that one source of the generational-curse belief is the influence of the African worldview. This reveals a problem in the understanding of the biblical teaching on individual responsibility for righteousness.

Contrasting Views in the Understanding of the Biblical Theology of Human suffering

Scripture and related literature trace human suffering from the fall of man, which resulted in a curse that continues to affect humanity to the present. The biblical teaching, thus, does not exempt believers from sufferings.⁴³ Believers suffer as a general consequence of the Adamic curse and because the devil exerts opposition against them.⁴⁴ Sometimes, they suffer as a godly permitted order to purify and mature them as Scripture reveals.⁴⁵ This is the case with Job in the Old Testament since nowhere does the Bible suggest that Job or anyone who was experiencing difficulties was under a curse.

⁴³See chapter 5 of this research.

⁴⁴This is discussed in chapter 2 regarding the Biblical-theological literature and is summarized in chapter 5 in the Biblical-theological report.

⁴⁵Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him (James 1:12).

On the contrary, the proponents of the generational-curse belief relate sufferings to direct sin, particularly the sins of the sufferer's ancestors. From the social-cultural literature, content analysis, and interviews with both proponents and victims, this assumed relationship has been clearly and consistently revealed. This creates a problem in the understanding of the biblical theology or perspective of human suffering, a problem that has its source in the cause/effect aspect of the African view as revealed in social-cultural literature.

Contrast in the Understanding of the Biblical Doctrine of Salvation

Theologians typically describe Christ's saving work in four ways. Horne pictures it as 1) a sacrifice—the answer to the sinner's guilt, 2) propitiation—the answer to God's wrath, 3) reconciliation—the answer to God's alienation from the sinner, and 4) redemption—a penalty paid as the answer to bondage to sin and Satan.⁴⁶ Thiessen uses varied terms to refer to almost the same things Horne raises: atonement (sacrifice), propitiation, reconciliation, and ransom (redemption).⁴⁷ According to Horne, these four aspects of the atonement are directed at their respective relationships that man stands before God as a guilty sinner, an object of God's wrath, an enemy, and a slave. It is of significant importance to note that all these aspects were addressed on the cross, a once-for-all event that provides for the salvation of mankind. This means, the atoning work of Jesus Christ is sufficient for all people of all generations since it was all finished at the cross more than two thousand years ago.

⁴⁶Charles M. Horne, *The Doctrine of Salvation* (Chicago, IL: Moody Bible Institute, 1984), 27–28.

⁴⁷Henry C. Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), 237–239.

Jesus dealt sufficiently with the problem of sin and its effects. The Pauline Epistles especially point to the sufficiency of the death of Jesus Christ in cleansing and forgiving sin,⁴⁸ also in defeating the powers of darkness.⁴⁹ As noted in the biblical-theological chapter and results chapter, the effects of sin (the fall) include physical death in which the body goes through a decaying process which leads to physical suffering and ultimately death. Menzies and Horton observe that, since sickness and physical suffering results from sin, there is provision for healing in the atonement. This healing is available at present, but it will be fully realized when we receive the redemption of our bodies on Christ's coming. Until then, the gradual aging process as pictured in Ecclesiastes 12:1–7 remains the normal experience of both believers and non-believers (Rom. 8:22–23).⁵⁰ The following table summarizes the understanding of the doctrine of salvation as described by the Bible (left column) and by proponents (left column).

Table 6.1. Examination of the doctrine of salvation as espoused by generational-curse proponents in light of the biblical doctrine of salvation

THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF SALVATION	
Doctrine according to the biblical teaching ⁵¹	Doctrine according to proponents of generational Curses ⁵²
The work of the Cross (atonement) has the following aspects: 1. Sacrifice - answer for the sinner's guilt, providing for	The work of the cross has two aspects: 1. Legal/providential – accomplished 2000yrs on the cross 2. Experiential – appropriated now by faith through the work of the

⁴⁸When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross (Col. 2:13–14).

⁴⁹And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross (Col. 2:15).

⁵⁰William W. Menzies and Stanley M. Horton, *Bible Doctrines: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1993), 196–201.

⁵¹Horne 1984, 27–28; Thiessen 1979, 237–239; Menzies and Horton 1993, 196–201.

⁵²This information is taken from table 5.4 in this document in the argument for believers as victims of generational curses.

<p>forgiveness⁵³, hence, justification.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Redemption⁵⁴ - (Penalty paid) 3. Reconciliation⁵⁵ - taking care of alienation/separation 4. Propitiation – satisfying God’s justice hence covering sinner from His divine wrath <p>Atonement is thus:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A finished work (once for all)⁵⁶ 2. Sufficient for all the sins of the whole world⁵⁷ 3. Efficacious only for those who believe⁵⁸ 4. Packaged with provision for forgiveness of sin,⁵⁹ Victory 	<p>Holy Spirit in a believer – supported by Eph.1:7; Gal.3:3; Rom. 1:16. <i>Actual deliverance of a person happens through this and is actuated as another stage after salvation</i></p> <p>Deliverance meant for believers not non-believers since demons worsen the condition of a non-believer who receive deliverance (supported by Matthew 13:12)</p> <p>Salvation (<i>Soteria</i>) packaged with forgiveness of sin, deliverance from bondages, healing, safety, preservation and soundness and accomplished instantaneously and progressively</p> <p>Salvation not guarantee of freedom from curses and demonic bondages. Why? Jesus forgave sin and conducted deliverance from the demonic, setting the example we should follow</p>
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⁵³In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness....²⁸ so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him (Heb. 9:22, 28).

⁵⁴He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption (Heb. 9:12).

⁵⁵All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18—19).

⁵⁶When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “*It is finished.*” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit (John 19:30, emphasis added). “For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. *Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all* at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself (Heb. 9:24–26, emphasis added).

⁵⁷This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:3–4).

⁵⁸For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, *that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life* (John 3:16, emphasis added).

⁵⁹When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross (Col. 2:13–14).

<p style="text-align: center;">over powers of darkness,⁶⁰ healing,⁶¹</p> <p>Salvation the basis of freedom from:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sin 2. Effects of sin (including sickness and demonic oppressions and bondages) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Provided for in the atonement B. Experienced at present C. Perfected/made complete at Christ's second coming 	
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Several contrasts exist between the biblical doctrine of salvation as described above and the doctrine as espoused by the proponents of generational curses.⁶² For instance, the legal and experiential aspects of the proponents' doctrine of salvation rightly describe the biblical doctrine as that which sufficiently cares for all people and all sins as distinguished from that which is efficacious only for those who believe. However, the proponents' experiential aspect misunderstands the concept of deliverance. The notion that deliverance is actuated as another stage after salvation unnecessarily points to the need of another process or work for deliverance to happen since deliverance in the proponents' view is meant for believers, not non-believers. This is one of the main problematic tenets of the generational-curse belief. Proponents of the belief seem to suggest that after a person gets saved, there must another process of delivering the

⁶⁰And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross (Col. 2:15).

⁶¹When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases" (Matt. 8:16–17).

⁶²See figure 5.5 in chapter 5 of this research for a summary of the effects of the death of Jesus on deliverance from generational curses as understood by the generational-curse victims.

person from curses or demonic bondages. Scripture however, does not teach such a belief. Scripture does not record Jesus or His disciples rebuking demons out of people who already believed in Jesus. This is a ministry that came as needed, and all instances in the bible to non-believers. Also, the notion that Matthew 8:16, 17 teaches deliverance for believers is unjustified since the context does not support that those who were demon-possessed were already Christians. The biblical understanding of the believer's body as a temple of the Holy Spirit disqualifies the possibility of demons possessing a genuine believer.

The other contrast has to do with forgiveness. Proponents of generational curses include forgiveness in the salvation package. However, the proponents' requirement for the victims to repent for the sins of their ancestors raises questions on the whole issue of forgiveness. This is because it holds descendants accountable for sins of their ancestors. To the contrary, the biblical doctrine provides for the forgiveness of an individual's sins and never requires a forgiven person to repent for his fathers for him to be freed from bondages.

The third issue that arises from the discussion of the doctrine of salvation is the way the effects of sin in the physical body are explained. The biblical doctrine of salvation includes physical healing as something for which the atonement provides but is not guaranteed. This means that, physical healing is experienced in the present life of the believer. However, since physical suffering is a result of the fall, restoration of physical wellness will be perfected or made complete in the future with the coming of Jesus.⁶³ This explains the problem of physical

⁶³I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. (Romans 8:18–23).

suffering for the believer and takes care of the proponents' notion that all suffering is a result of direct sin of the individual or his/her ancestors.

From this discussion about the doctrine of salvation it can be concluded that one of the problems that led to the belief in generational curses is the problem of an inadequate or erroneous understanding of the doctrine of salvation. This has been raised in the biblical-theological literature and interviews with Pentecostal denominational leaders. It is also reflected in interviews with the generational-curse proponents and with the victims.

Understanding the Victims' Real-Life Struggles

Both the interviews with proponents and interviews with the victims revealed that the daily life issues of the victims play a key role in the generational-curse belief. The victims face real issues that cannot be ignored or explained away. Content analysis and interviews with proponents have revealed that problems of the victims are considered as either signs or sources of generational curses. Victims also indicated that it is in looking for solutions to their life situations that they are led to people who pray for deliverance. This leads into a discovery that the victims are people with real-life struggles that need practical solutions.

Social-cultural literature has revealed that one of the things that has led to continued syncretism in Tanzania is when the church ignores or discounts the supernatural, which is a real concern in the African worldview. When this happens, people tend to turn to other options that promise to offer solutions. Yet, Jesus dealt with the needs of the people of his day. He rebuked and cast away demons and prayed for the sick and those who were oppressed by the devil in various ways.⁶⁴ This shows that, the so-called victims of generational curses have real-life

⁶⁴Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness (Matthew 9:35).

struggles that need to be understood and taken care of. They are open to any thing or any teaching that promises them or offers them a solution. People today also face oppressions and attacks by the devil, which should not necessarily be termed as generational curses, and are thus in need of experiencing deliverance from such.

Consequently, the victims are people who genuinely have a need to understand and experience Christianity in their context. They are in need of a Christianity that is relevant to their needs, one that interacts relevantly with their African worldview and daily real experiences. This is where the biblical doctrine of salvation needs to be interpreted in a way that is biblically sound and practically able to handle issues of the spirit world interacting with the empirical world and issues relating to ancestors and so forth.

Reflection on the Findings from Pentecostal Denominational Leaders

Most of what was discovered through interviews with the Pentecostal denominational leaders indicates that generational curses are not a possibility for born-again Christians. To a great extent, this position has been based on the finished work of Jesus Christ in saving mankind. However, two issues that are doctrinally problematic rose from the responses and need reflection. One, the leaders stated that generational curses were possible in the Old Testament times but are not after the cross. Two, the leaders also stated that generational curses are a possibility on non-believers. As stated in chapter five, these two beliefs provoke two serious questions. First, can it be justice for people to be judged for their parents' sins in the Old Testament but not in the New Testament? Second, is it just for unbelievers to suffer for the guilt of their parents but not for Christians?

In responding to the first question, the truth about the consistency of Scripture immediately comes to view. The Bible is consistent in all it teaches, therefore, it cannot

contradict itself. Even though divine revelation is progressive in nature, the progression is not from error to truth. Biblical theological literature concludes that Scripture is consistent in its teaching on personal responsibility for righteousness, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament. It cannot be possible, therefore, for it to support generational curses in the Old Testament and oppose it in the New Testament.

The same is true with the second question. The truth of personal responsibility for righteousness does not depend on the death of Jesus on the cross. It depends on God's nature as a just judge who does not punish sons for their fathers' sins or vice-versa. This was true in the Old Testament, and it is true in the New Testament. It is also true to believers and unbelievers alike.

How can the two beliefs be understood then? These two beliefs are to be understood as signs of a need to develop an understanding of a sound Old Testament theology. Many people find the interpretation of the Old Testament more challenging than the interpretation of the New Testament. Pentecostals are not excluded. This is why people have taken various approaches of interpreting the Old Testament in trying to understand things that seem difficult. The challenge is not strange. Since the Pentecostal leaders admitted that some passages in the Old Testament point to the personal responsibility for sin, they probably faced difficulties in understanding the breakout examples which seem to support God's judgment of children for parents' sins.

The two beliefs should also be viewed positively through the emphasis that these Pentecostal leaders placed on the sufficiency of the death of Jesus on the cross. They rightly considered the finished work on the cross as the basis for the exemption of born-again Christians from generational curses. However, this position is acceptable only as it is qualified with the understanding that accepting the work of Christ on the cross enables an individual to choose not to follow the sinful ways of his/her parents which in turn would exempt him/her from the

judgment that the sinning parents experienced. As for the unbelieving children, when they are judged, it is for their own sins, not their parents'. This remains the consistent teaching of the Bible.

Conclusions

The primary research problem that this study was responding to is “what constitutes a biblically and theologically sound response to the belief in generational curses in the context of Pentecostal churches in Dar-es-Salaam?”. As the findings of this research and the on going discussions reveal, such a theologically and biblically sound response must be based on an understanding of the biblical teaching and its application to social-cultural issues of the Pentecostal believers in Dar-es-Salaam. This section, therefore, focuses summarizing from this research important elements that constitute the response. The elements include the following.

One, a clear understanding and description of the biblical usage of the term *curse* is necessary. In the Old Testament, the terms for *curse* do not refer to arbitrary cursing of individuals or generations, but to God’s pronounced judgment on sinners who violate the terms of his covenant with Israel, his people. This differs from the sense which the modern teaching carries where an innocent person supposedly inherits the guilt and thereby inherits also the judgment of the sin of his ancestors. It also differs with the modern sense which involves evil spirits, demons, witchcraft, and others of the sort since nowhere in the Old Testament does God judge through sorcery, demons, and spirits. This biblical understanding of the term *curse* brings the sense of judgment pronounced by God upon sinners or violators of God’s covenant. By implication, this means that, since God does not judge his children by inherited evil behaviors or demonic attacks and since God does not use evil spirits to pronounce or carry out judgment, the

modern usage of the term *curse* lacks biblical support. The Old Testament usage of the term *curse* does not support a doctrine of generational curses.

The response also requires a clear understanding and description of the conditional nature of God's warning to visit the iniquity of fathers to third and fourth generations as is described in Exodus 20:5 and other passages that seem to suggest a generational judgment. This component of the response is based on two conclusions drawn from the study of Scriptures and related biblical-theological literature. First, Exodus 20:5 clearly states that the generational visiting is on those who hate him. Second, Scripture illustrates that, even when there is such a generational visiting, not all members of the generations under the curse are judged. Those who choose to fear or love God are exempted. Rehab, the Canaanite,⁶⁵ and Ruth, the Moabitess,⁶⁶ are examples of such exemptions. These exemptions indicate that those who put their faith in God and choose not to follow the ways of their generations do not suffer the judgment.

A biblically-sound response to the belief in generational curses also needs an understanding of the consistency of Scripture on its emphasis on individual responsibility for righteousness. The Old Testament is explicit on the truth that no one will die for his parent's sin because each person will die for his own sin. Examples are found in Genesis where God spares Noah from the flood in a generation of evildoers (Gen. 6–7) and when he is also willing to spare Sodom and Gomorrah for the sake of a few if they were to be found (Gen. 18:16–33). The study of Scripture shows that when God passes judgment that involves a family or generation it is

⁶⁵Canaanites were under a curse that was pronounced in Genesis 9:25, and they suffered as a nation not because of Ham's sin but because of their personal sin as reflected in the study of Scriptures in the biblical-theological literature review. Yet, because Rehab feared the God of the Israelites, she was exempted and spared from judgment.

⁶⁶Moabites were under God's judgment as pronounced in Deuteronomy 23:3–6 for not showing kindness to Israel and for hiring Balaam to curse Israel. The judgment included Moabites and Ammonites up to the tenth generation. Ruth was married to Boaz and became an ancestress of Jesus.

either conditional on people's behavior or based on his foreknowledge of people's future behavior, as it seems to be the case of Canaan (Lev. 18). People are being judged for their sins, not their parents'. Ezekiel 18 and Jeremiah 31:29 and 30 explicitly state this principle. The New Testament also emphasizes individual responsibility for sin as is seen in the teachings of Jesus (John 8:11; 9:1–3). Paul's theology agrees that "God will give to *each person* according to what *he* has" (Rom. 2:6, emphasis added). Paul says further, "So then, *each one of us* will give an account of *himself* to God" (Rom. 14:12, emphasis added). The New Testament's priority is on individual rather than communal or corporate responsibility. This means that, neither the Old Testament nor the New Testament teaches or supports a doctrine of generational curses.

A biblically-rooted theology of human suffering is needed to constitute a biblically and theologically sound response. This is a theology that understands that human suffering is a result of the Adamic curse and a consequence of the fall of man that continues to affect believers and non-believers alike. Human suffering is not necessarily a result of personal sin. Jesus confronts the view that suffering is always a result of direct sin in John 9:1–3. Even when he seems to suggest a connection between a person's condition and sin as in John 5:14, it is not the parent's sin that is in view. This means, he does not connect human suffering with someone's personal sin or inheritance of guilt from sins of his/her parents.

A biblically and theologically sound response also needs a biblically and theologically sound doctrine of salvation. This is a doctrine that understands the work of Jesus on the cross as being sufficient for all people and all sins and efficacious for all who believe. This means that people must choose to accept through repentance the sacrifice of Jesus that he accomplished about two thousand years ago. They must accept it if the sacrifice is going to be efficacious to them today. However, the repentance referred to does not include repenting for sins of parents,

since Scripture teaches personal responsibility for sin. This understanding is what has been clearly displayed in the biblical-theological literature by opponents of the generational-curse belief and in responses from Pentecostal denominational leaders.

The biblical doctrine of salvation does recognize that the possibility of physical healing is provided for in the atonement can be experienced in the present but is perfected or made complete in the future with the coming of Jesus. This explains the problem of physical suffering for the believer. It responds to the notion that all suffering is a result of direct sin of the individual or his/her ancestors, since it shows that suffering is not completely removed from present existence. It also helps to understand that deliverance from demonic oppression, oppression which is not necessarily a result of a curse, is part of what was provided for on the cross.

A biblically and theologically sound response genuinely recognizes the needs of the people in Dar-es-Salaam. It recognizes that people have real needs and struggles that need solutions and that ignoring them leads to presenting an irrelevant Christianity to the people. Content analysis reports, interviews with proponents, and interview reports from victims revealed the existence of these needs. For the proponents, the needs are recognized as signs or sources of curses. For victims, the needs have become the issues that connect them to the proponents of curses. A relevant response to the belief in generational curses will take people's needs seriously and provide solutions. This means, in order for Pentecostal church leaders to respond relevantly to the belief, they must be engaged in helping people out of their problems through prayer. Proponents sometime mention that those who deny generational curses are jealous because believers come to them with their needs and find resolution for their problems and spiritual answers to their questions.

This might appear abusive, but the truth remains that unless people receive solutions to their problems, they will look for them where they can be found, even where the solution is not based on sound doctrine.

A sound response to the generational-curse belief in Dar-es-Salaam will also seek to be relevant to the supernaturalistic element in the African worldview. It is noted in the social-cultural literature that the African worldview tends to take the extended middle⁶⁷ position. This means that issues concerning the spirit world are part of the African daily thinking. It is also noted that Africans hyper-mythologize the issue of evil powers.⁶⁸ This is why a traditional African easily connects problems to fate, mainly having its source in the spirit world. Interview responses with victims also indicate a high sensitivity and a connection of life problems to the spirit world.

One of the issues that social-cultural literature raises as a reason for syncretism in Tanzania is that, in certain places pioneering church leaders who are not African discount the supernatural. As a result, people go to church but when faced with difficulties turned to ATR. It is proposed that a sound response to the problem of the generational-curse belief will not discount the supernatural in the African worldview which causes many to live in fear of the spirit world. On the contrary, it will provide the power of the cross as the solution to the fear of the spirit world and to any other fears the people are facing.

It is important to note that spirit things are real and cannot be ignored if the African Christian is to be helped. The belief that the sins of the ancestors are responsible for the problems

⁶⁷Love, 27. The middle level contains the supernatural forces on earth with spirits, ghosts, ancestors, gods, supernatural forces, the Holy Spirit, angels, demons, and gifts of the Holy Spirit. An extended middle level would thus overemphasize the supernatural realm.

⁶⁸Annang, 15. Still other hyper-mythologize spiritual things, giving a deterministic view of the function of spirits and removing responsibility from human beings in spiritual warfare. Africans are said to be hyper-mythologizers.

of the living is not to be condoned. However, the spirit world where the demonic, ancestral, and all other spirits operate is real and is responsible for tormenting and binding people. In this case, people might be facing problems from attacks of evil powers but wrongly ascribing them to generational curses. Christianity should relevantly and sufficiently respond to such issues if a viable response to the belief in generational curses is to be provided.

A biblically and theologically sound response also demands a working program of discipleship of believers after salvation. This program does not only focus on new converts, but also on mature and ministering believers. This component of the response is based on the discoveries made in all areas of this research. The biblical-theological literature revealed a lack of or poor understanding of Scripture as the reason for the belief in generational curses. Social-cultural literature revealed syncretism and the influence of ATR as reasons fueling the belief. Interviews with all groups in this study called for the need of teaching as a remedy, even though, each group proposed different reasons and different components of the teaching content. The proponents and some of the victims called for teaching that will create awareness of the reality of the curse. Others in the victims group and Pentecostal denominational leaders called for the need to teach the awareness of what Christ has accomplished on the cross as a remedy for the belief.

A Summary of Components of a Biblically and Theologically Sound Response

In Summary, a biblically and theologically sound response to the belief in generational curses in the context of Pentecostal churches in Dar-es-Salaam should be constituted by the following components.

1. It recognizes that the Bible, both in the Old Testament and New Testament does not teach a doctrine of generational curses, and it necessitates a doctrine that is based on a correct

definition of the biblical usage of the terms for curse and an understanding of the biblically consistent teaching of personal responsibility for righteousness.

2. It demands a theologically sound understanding and explanation of the biblical perspective of human suffering which is a perspective that is based on an understanding of the implications of the Adamic curse as consequences of the fall of man.
3. It requires an understanding and description of a biblically and theologically sound doctrine of salvation.
4. It must contain a genuine recognition of the needs of the people in Dar-es-Salaam and the need for Christianity to be relevant in the daily problems of the people.
5. It needs a correct understanding of the supernaturalistic view of life of Africans and the need for Christianity to be relevant to this African worldview.
6. It must present a working program of discipleship of believers after salvation. Such a program should include but not be limited to two components. The first component is the content/information component where the believer is given awareness of important doctrinal content. The second component is the practical component where the believer is helped to develop practical abilities that will make him a victorious Christian. The program needs to consider believers at all levels: new converts, maturing Christians, and leaders or ministers. The program should take them as deep as deemed relevant at each level. The components are summarized below.

Table 6.2. Components of discipleship program after salvation

Content/information aspect of discipleship	Practical/capacity building aspect of discipleship
1. The Word of God 2. Tenets of faith (Doctrine) 3. Implications of salvation to daily living	1. Studying word of God 2. Personal prayers 3. Spiritual warfare 4. Holy living 5. Ministering to self and others 6. Baptism in the Holy Spirit and Maintaining a Spirit-filled life

A biblically and theologically sound response to the belief in generational curses in the context of Pentecostal churches in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania will therefore include several components. It will include a strong biblical and theological foundation that is attained through discipleship of members at all levels. It will also include an understanding and response to the social-cultural issues surrounding believers in Dar-es-Salaam. The response will also include a Christian ministry that provides answers to the real life struggles and needs of the believers in Pentecostal churches in Dar-es-Salaam.

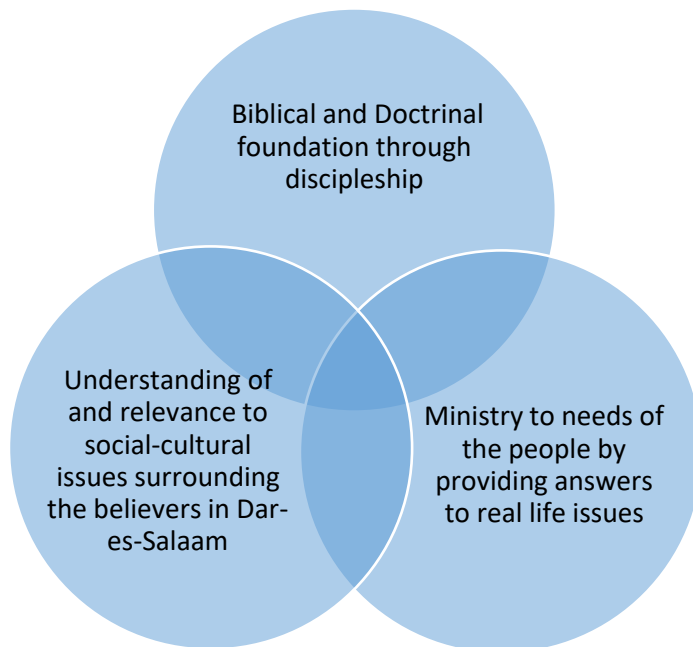


Figure 1. Proposed components of a biblically and theologically sound response to the generational-curse belief in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania

Recommendations for Other Studies

This study focused on assessing the nature of the belief in generational curses among Pentecostals in Dar-es-Salaam, which included analyzing the possible reasons for the spread of the belief, the core tenets, how its proponents understand the Scriptures they use to support it, and how Pentecostals leaders have responded to the belief. The primary understanding of most people is that the belief is a problem that is unique to independent Pentecostal churches and ministries that are believed to lack sound biblical doctrine. In the process of the study, however, signs were discovered that the belief is penetrating even among the members and pastors of Pentecostal denominations that are believed to have sound doctrine. What the leaders of these denominations may not know is the extent to which the belief has spread in their churches. Therefore, a study is proposed that would create for denominational leaders an awareness of the

extent (how widespread) of the belief in their own organizations for the purpose of helping them develop a strategy to deal with the problem within their specific churches.

All respondents proposed teaching as a practical element in effectively responding to the belief in generational curses, even though the focus and purpose of teaching differed. While discipleship is proposed as a key element in the response to the problem, this study did not specifically research that aspect. And so, questions concerning what could be the most effective discipleship methods in the context of Dar-es-Salaam Pentecostal churches remain unanswered. These methods should at least consider the dynamics of Dar-es-Salaam as an urban and cosmopolitan setting. This is an area that is proposed for further studies.

APPENDIX A
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the biblical perspective of generational curses?
 - a. What do the following Bible passages reveal about the role of a parent's or descendant's sin to God's judgment on an individual: Exodus 20:5–6; Deuteronomy 5:9–10; and 24:16; 2 Kings 14:6; Jeremiah 3:29–30; Exodus 18:14–20; Gen 9:24; Proverbs 26:2; and Ezekiel 18:1–20.
 - b. What is the consensus of teaching in the Bible on the theory that a parent's sin or righteousness directly affects God's punishment on his or her child, and how can we explain the *breakout* examples that seem to contradict this conclusion?
 - c. How does an understanding of the Adamic curse help to explain why righteous believers might suffer even though neither they nor others related to them have sinned?
 - d. How may, or may not, a parent's or grandparent's sin or righteousness affect the lives of a believer?
 - e. How does the work of Christ and presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer relate to the concept of Christians inheriting curses from their parents or grandparents?
2. What are the social-cultural perspectives of the issue of generational curses?
 - a. What African worldviews and religious traditions influence the belief in generational curses?
 - b. What traditional beliefs affect the belief in generational curses in Tanzania?
3. What is the official position of Pentecostal denominations in Dar-es-Salaam concerning generational curses?

4. What are the views, opinions and understanding of the proponents of the belief in generational curses in Dar-es-Salaam?
 - a. What are the accepted beliefs about generational curses among independent ministry leaders that teach generational curses in Dar-es-Salaam?
 - b. How do proponents of generational curses interpret the Scriptures they use in supporting their teaching?
 - c. What are the experiences and beliefs of those who believe they are victims of generational curses?
 - d. How are the views, opinions and understanding of the proponents of generational curses to be explained in light of what the Bible reveals about generational curses?

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN THEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

You are being asked to participate as a volunteer in a research study conducted by Immaculate Nhigula, a student in the Theological Doctoral Studies program at Pan-Africa Theological Seminary (PATHS). This study is designed to gather information about a theological response to the issue of generational curses in Pentecostal churches of Dar-es-Salaam, under the supervision of Dr. Carl Gibbs. You will be one of approximately ____ people participating in this study by completing a questionnaire entitled ____.

1. Your participation in this project is voluntary; you will not be paid for your participation. You may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or harm of any type. If you decline to participate in or withdraw from the study by not completing the questionnaire, no one will be informed of this decision by the researcher, and no foreseeable negative consequences will result.
2. Completing the questionnaire will require approximately ____ minutes. There are no known risks associated with completing the questionnaire. If, however, you feel uncomfortable in any way during this process, you may decline to answer any question, or not complete the questionnaire.
3. The researcher will not identify you by name in any reports using information obtained from your questionnaire; your confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of data generated by this questionnaire will protect the anonymity of all individuals.
4. I understand that this research effort has been reviewed and approved by the IDS Institutional Review Board (IRB) at PATHS.

By completing and returning the questionnaire, you are indicating that you understand the five statements above, and consent to participate in this study.

____ [Name of Researcher] ____ [Contact Information for Researcher]

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE: PENTECOSTAL DENOMINATIONAL LEADERS

RQ3. What is the official position of Pentecostal denominations in Dar-es-Salaam concerning generational curses?

My name is Immaculate Nhigula. I am a doctoral student at Pan-African Theological Seminary.

As part of my doctoral studies I am involved in a research about the belief that born-again Christians can be victims of generational curses. The purpose of this study is to develop a biblical response to the belief so that the Pentecostal community in Dar-es-Salaam will not be confused about this belief. I am interested in learning how your organization views this belief. I am therefore requesting you to help me with information that will give me the position of the organization concerning the belief in generational curse.

First of all, I would like to know something about you. (Your position in this organization _____, how long you have served in this capacity _____, how long you have been a minister in this organization _____)

1. May I then know if your organization is aware of the presence of the belief in generational curses in the Pentecostal community of Dar-es-Salaam?
2. How does your organization view the belief that born-again Christians can be under generational curses?
3. Does your organization conduct deliverance ministry on believers? (If yes), how do you explain a believer's need for such a ministry?
4. If yes, what does such a ministry seek to deliver the believer from?
5. Has your organization written any theological statement declaring its position concerning the belief in generational curses? (If yes), what are its key points? (or, ask to have access to it).

6. What is the basis for such a position? Ask question 6 only if the response to no 5 indicates the organization is an opponent of the teaching)
7. In your view, based on what your organization believes, what are those propagating the belief lacking? (Training from Bible College, knowledge of the Bible, skills of Bible interpretation?)
8. How does your organization interpret passages that show a child being punished for his father's sin, like in the case of Canaan in Genesis?
9. How does your organization explain situations in a believer's life that suggest the believer has inherited behavior, sickness, demonic attacks and others from parents or grandparents?
10. How has your organization responded to the public concerning the belief in generational curses?
11. If you were to propose to your organization themes or subjects to be included in a theological response to the belief what would you include?
12. What are your general views and opinions about the belief in generational curses?

Thank you very much for your time and contribution to this study. Your contribution will add much value to this study.

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDE:PROPONENTS OF GENERATIONAL CURSES

RQ4. “What are the views, opinions and understanding of the proponents of the belief in generational curses in Dar-es-salaam?”

- a. What are the accepted beliefs about generational curses among independent ministry leaders that teach generational curses in Dar-es-Salaam?
- b. How do proponents of generational curses interpret the Scriptures they use in supporting their teaching?

My name is Immaculate Nhigula. I am a doctoral student at Pan-African Theological Seminary. As part of my doctoral studies I am involved in a research about generational curses. The purpose of this study is to develop a biblical understanding. I am trying to understand this concept better and I am interested in learning about it from people who have long-term experience in helping people with such problems. You are one of them. Please be assured that your identity will be kept confidential.

To begin with, I would be grateful if I knew something about you (your birth place, how many you were in your family, your religious background.

Sex (F___, M___); marital status (married_, widowed___, separated/divorced_, single, never married___).

1. Can you describe your past religious background (religion, denomination) before you became a member of this church?
2. What does your typical Sunday look like? (Regular Sunday activities)
3. What is the average number of people attending services at your church each week?

4. Now I would like to learn about generational curses. What are they? How would you define or describe a generational curse?
5. In your understanding, how does a person come under a generational curse? (What causes/leads someone to be a victim of a generational curse? At what point of his/her life?).
6. Are demons or evil spirits (demons, ancestral spirits) related to generational curses? (If “yes” ask the person to explain).
7. How do you tell a person is under a generational curse? (What signs help you identify a generational curse in a person?)
8. What is the power behind your ability to detect a generational curse? (Experience? Supernatural or divine enablement?)
9. Can the person himself or herself know that he or she is under a generational curse?
10. How does a generational curse relate to (affect) the normal life of the victim (education, economy, family, spiritual life)?
11. Do you have a special schedule for conducting deliverance services for those who are struggling with generational curses? If yes, please describe it.
12. I would like to hear a brief description of the process/procedure you use in praying for people.
13. Do you involve others in your church in praying for the people?
14. If “yes” to Q14, what kind of people (elders, deacons, trained workers)?
15. If “yes” to Q15, how do you train them? (formal/informal training?)
16. How did you get your ministerial training?
17. What motivated you to pray for people with generational curses?

18. In your view based on your experience, can born-again believer (one who is saved) be a victim of a generational curse?
19. (If “yes” to Q18), what makes it possible?
20. If you were to explain to someone who needs a biblical foundation of this teaching and practice, what key things and Bible passages would you include?
21. In your understanding, how and at what point in the life of a born-again Christian does the death of Jesus affect deliverance from generational curses?
22. Some people do not believe that a born-again Christian can be a victim of generational curses. In your view, what do they lack? (Education, the Spirit of God, knowledge of Bible Interpretation principles?)
23. So, in summary, are you saying that the Bible provides foundation and support for generational curses (on non-believers, born-again believers?)
24. Do you receive feedback from the people you have prayed for?
25. Is there anything else you feel I need to hear for a clearer understanding of generational curses?

Thank you very much for your time and significant contribution to my study. I pray that God will bless you.

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW GUIDE: “VICTIMS” OF GENERATIONAL CURSES

RQ4c. What are the experiences and beliefs of those who believe they are victims of generational curses?

I am Immaculate Nhigula, a PhD candidate at Pan-Africa Theological Seminary, Lomé, Togo. I am doing my field research on the above stated topic for Academic purposes only. I am asking for your assistance in this research by responding to few questions that I will ask you. Please be assured that your identity in this research will be kept confidential. I request for your cooperation in answering the following questions sincerely.

1. May I know something about you: Your name, age, occupation and marital status?
2. Can you describe your past religious background (religion, denomination) before you became a member of this church?
3. Explain your current religious experience, as it relates to how you became a member of this church, if you are filled with the Holy Spirit, and how long you have been saved.
4. In your understanding, what is a generational curse?
5. Have you personally experienced any problems resulting from generational curses?
6. **(If yes)**, how did you know you are under generational curses? **(If no)**, can a born-again Christian be under the influence of generational curses? Please explain the reasons for your answer.
7. **(If yes to Q5)** Based on your experience or what you know, what are the sources or reasons of generational curses and which ones do you see having the greatest effect on you?
8. In your opinion, are demons or evil spirits or ancestral spirits related to generational curses? If yes, explain how this relates to your personal experience.

9. **(If yes to Q5)** how have the generational curses affected your normal life in terms of education, economy, family and self-identity?
10. Briefly describe the process/procedure a victim goes through in receiving deliverance from the curses. Does the process involve any financial seed?
11. In your understanding, how and at what point in the life of a born-again Christian does the death of Jesus affect deliverance from generational curses?
12. **(If yes to Q5)**, did you receive/are you receiving any spiritual help for your deliverance? If yes, (i) what kind of help? and (ii) how do you view your condition since you started receiving this help?
13. What is your general view and opinion on generational curses? (Anything else that you would want me to know about generational curses)

Thank you very much for your time and significant contribution to my study. I pray that God will bless you.

APPENDIX F

SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE: VICTIMS OF GENERATIONAL CURSES

I am a Christian Researcher, working on my doctorate with Pan-Africa Theological Seminary. I am currently doing a research on generational curses. I am requesting you to assist me in this research by filling this short questionnaire. Please be assured that your personal identity will be protected and only general results will be reported. You are not asked to write your name. Your participation in completing this questionnaire is strictly voluntary. Thank you very much for participating in this research. Please answer the following questions.

Q1: Have you or someone in your immediate family experienced the negative effects of a generational curse? _____ YES _____ NO

Q2: If your answer to Q1 was YES, are you willing to personally share your experience with a sympathetic Christian researcher? _____ YES _____ NO

If YES to Q2, Kindly write your phone number: _____ and/email: _____

Thank you for your assistance.

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW REPORT: DENOMINATIONAL LEADERS

This is a report of interviews conducted in response to RQ3 which asked, “What is the official position of Pentecostal denominations in Dar-es-Salaam concerning generational curses?”

Interviews were conducted with three national leaders of Pentecostal denomination that are under CPCT.⁶⁹ The interviews were conducted with the aid of an interview guide⁷⁰ that listed guiding questions to probe into the official position of these Pentecostal denominations concerning the belief in generational curses. All three leaders, as stated here, were top leaders of the denominations in the study during the research period. All had been leaders between 10–25 years. One of these leaders got saved from a pagan background with a father who was a witch. The other two were born into Christian families. Thirteen questions were used to interview these leaders.

Question 1 asked, “Is your organization aware of the presence of the belief in generational curses in the Pentecostal community of Dar-es-Salaam?” The purpose of this question was to know whether the leadership of these churches is informed about the teaching. All three church leaders stated that their churches are aware of the prevailing teaching. One observed that the teaching takes various forms from time to time because some church leaders have in various times rebuked or refuted it.

The second question asked, “How does your organization view the belief that born-again Christians can be under generational curses?” It was for the purpose of knowing their position and the reasons for such position. All the three denominational leaders indicated that their churches do not believe that a born-again can be a victim of the curses. All three denominations thus declared as their positions rejection of the possibility of generational curses on born-again Christians. Among several reasons for rejecting the possibility of generational curses on believers, all three leaders mentioned the sufficiency of the work of Jesus Christ on the cross as the main reason. All stated that they believe that the death of Jesus Christ on the cross did not leave anything unhandled. Other reasons given were the status of the believer as a new creature and the lack of scriptural support for the possibility of generational curses on born-again Christians.

The third question, asked for the purpose of learning what these denominations believe concerning the need for deliverance prayers on believers, stated, “Does your organization conduct deliverance ministry on believers? If yes, how do you explain a believer’s need for such a ministry?” Again, all the three leaders indicated that they do conduct deliverance prayers. However, all three stated that they do these prayers as response to specific needs that arise during worship services or general prayer time, rather than setting special deliverance sessions as some independent ministries do. All three denominations indicated they believe a born-again person can be attacked or oppressed by demonic or satanic influences. They also believe that salvation does not mean a person will not experience sufferings or sicknesses or other life difficulties. Yet, they do not consider these oppressions or attacks, or sufferings curses. These responses for

⁶⁹CPCT is Council of Pentecostal Churches in Tanzania. Churches under this council are known to have the right biblical doctrine, as contrasted with some independent Pentecostal ministries.

⁷⁰See appendix C.

question 3 also provided answers question 4 which asked, “(If yes), what does such a ministry seek to deliver the believer from?”

Question number 5 asked, “Has your organization written any theological statement declaring its position concerning the belief in generational curses?” The purpose of this question was to know if any theological document concerning the generational-curse belief exists in these Pentecostal denominations, and access the documents to learn the main issues or content of the statements. All three leaders stated that their churches have never written an official statement that handles the issue in the belief in generational curses. Two of these denominations though indicated that they orally teach and educate their members in individual churches and pastors in conferences from what Scripture teaches. Since no denomination had written a theological statement, question 6 which inquired the basis for the position stated in the statement was not asked.

Question 7 asked “In your view, based on what your organization believes, what are those propagating the belief lacking?” The purpose of this question was to discover how the opponents of this belief view the proponents and if they understand contextual issues about the opponents that may be helpful for the researcher in developing the biblical response to the belief. Each of the respondents gave a different but uniquely important response.

The first respondent PDL-R1 majored on the lack of understanding of the difference between the Old Testament times and the New Testament times. For him, generational curses were possible in the Old Testament while they are not possible in the New Testament. This is indicated in the statement:

In the OT, it is true, they are very right. That is why they have Scriptures that support them. There were curses from families and from grandparents. . . There were curses like that in the OT. But in the NT when Jesus Christ died on the cross, he broke all these curses.⁷¹

The response from this respondent also indicates that God dealt with his people differently than He does in the New Testament. This is seen in the statement:

Sometimes, when I listen to these people I discovered that they have failed to distinguish the way God dealt with his people in the OT and how He deals with them in the NT. . . . I just want to deal with how God dealt with his people in the OT and NT. There were curses like that in the OT. But in the NT when Jesus Christ died on the cross, he broke all these curses. This way, a person is counted righteous on his righteousness and a sinner counted so for his own sinfulness.⁷²

For this respondent therefore, the opponents fail to see that one, the Old Testament and the New Testament times operated differently, generational curses being possible in the OT and not possible in the NT. Two, God dealt in the Old Testament differently than he does in the NT by breaking the curses on the cross and holding individuals responsible. These two are cited here because they form an important point in the theological literature review chapter as to whether

⁷¹See appendix C, responses to interview question number 7.

⁷²Ibid.

the Old Testament teaches a theology of generational curses. They will be discussed later in chapter six.

PDL-R2 focused on the motive of the proponents of the generational-curse belief as the problem behind the propagation of this belief. For him, desire to show they have new revelations and need to pull crowds are the things that make people promote the belief.

PDL-R3 response focuses on the problem of biblical interpretation principles and lack of true Pentecostal experience. For him, proponents miss sound, biblical interpretation principles. This is indicated by his reference to the proponents basing their teaching on occasional instances or experiences while ignoring other parts of the Bible that oppose such a belief. Also, he believes that proponents want to cover up their lack of anointing by formulating manipulative strategies.

These responses indicate that the issues behind the propagation of the generational-curse belief are a complex of various things.

The eighth question asked “How does your organization interpret passages that show a child being punished for his father’s sin, like in the case of Canaan in Genesis? All three respondents indicated that generational curses were possible in the Old Testament and the Old Testament Scriptures support the belief. One respondent stated that the curses were a possibility even to the believers; the God fearers. All respondents were also in agreement that with the death of Jesus Christ, the curses are not a possibility for a born-again but possible for a person who is not born-again. Also, all three stated that even when a person is under a chain of the so called family curses, when he repents and comes to Christ, he breaks away from the chain of curses because of the work of Jesus on the cross and the forgiveness of sin he receives.

Question nine asked, “How does your organization explain situations in a believer’s life that suggest the believer has inherited behavior, sickness, demonic attacks and others from parents or grandparents?” All three leaders agreed there is a possibility of someone inheriting diseases from family, but all refused to identify these with generational curses and gave other reasons instead.

The PDL-R1 believes that a person continues to be under family related diseases or any other attack because of lack of knowledge of the word of God. He gives a personal testimony as a person born in a family of witch craft and inherited diseases who broke away from such when he got saved.

PDL-R2 even though family issues exist; when a person gets saved these things do not follow him. A person feels he is under these family issues because he is made to believe so because of history in the family. He also noted that people fall sick not because they are under a curse but because of the mortality of the body which has its source in sin.

PDL-R3 stated that inheriting diseases is possible but he gives other reasons for this, noting that it is not because a person is under a curse. One, inheriting diseases is scientifically or genetically possible. Two, a person may be still living in sin or not seriously committed to God, which opens a door for Satanic oppressions. Three, it is possible for a believer to suffer in various ways in form of spiritual warfare, not curse.

Question ten asked, “How has your organization responded to the public concerning the belief in generational curses? No denomination has an organized way of responding to the public. In one denomination, individual pastors teach their members against the belief, basing the teachings on Scriptures. In another denomination, the national leadership teaches in pastoral conferences, but not as an organized response. In the other denomination, teaching against the belief is avoided for fear to spread the belief and the denomination feels it is better to focus on teaching the truth rather than teaching against the false belief.

Question eleven asked, “If you were to propose to your organization themes or subjects to be included in a theological response to the belief what would you include?” Different responses were given by the three leaders but they stand out because they are mentioned elsewhere in the interviews by all these leaders. The things proposed for a theological statement are: spelling out that there is no possibility for generational curses on born-again Christians, basing the response on the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross and its sufficiency and basing the response on the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Apostles and to put emphasis on the word of God.

Question twelve asked for any additional information concerning the belief in generational curses. Two of these leaders emphasized the need to oppose the teaching based on Scriptures and the need to focus on studying and teaching the truth of the sufficiency of the work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

APPENDIX H

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS: PENTECOSTAL DENOMINATION LEADERS

Denominational Leader Respondent 1 (DL-R1)

I: What is your position in this organization?

R: Deputy arch bishop

I: How long you have served in this capacity?

R: Since 2008. It is about eight years now

I: How long you have been a minister in this organization?

R: I started ministry in 4th November 1979. This is when I started my first service as a pastor. I continued to be a pastor until 1987, in that year, I was elected as an assistant sectional presbyter. At that time, Dar-es-Salaam was just one section. After that I was elected as sectional leader of Ilala/Temeke section in 1988 because this is when Dar-es-Salaam was divided into two sections until, a position that I held until 1992 and I served for 16 years in that capacity. After that, I was elected to be the district bishop of Dar-es-Salaam, which had 8 regions. Then in 2008 I was elected as the deputy arch Bishop of this church. I position that I hold up to now.

Q1. I: May I then know if your organization is aware of the presence of the belief in generational curses in the Pentecostal community of Dar-es-Salaam.

R: Yes. It is true that there is a teaching that claims that Christians can have curses from their fathers or grandfathers, and that a person needs to break those curses even after salvation, that if your grandfather or father was a witch, there is a curse that follows you after salvation. As a church we are aware of the teaching because those who teach it do it in public. So, we know, because the teaching is widely spread.

Q2. I: How does your organization view the belief that born-again Christians can be under generational curses?

R: No!. We don't believe that a person needs to deal with curses after he has given his life to the Lord. We do not even believe there are curses on a believer after he has come to Christ. You know, we believe that by Christ giving himself as a sacrifice, because by him giving himself for us, he accomplished two things. One, he became the priest, also he became the sacrifice. By becoming these two things, he finished everything. That's why in the NT 1 Corinthians 5:17 the bible says when a person is in Christ, he has become a new creation, all has passed and behold he is new, even though I am quoting it exactly, but I believe you are getting me. So the work of cavalry accomplished everything. So the work at cavalry completed everything, even if I was born in a family of witches, ancestral spirits or cursed people, when I get saved, and believing this sacrifice, Christ's work has finished everything. You know, for us to accept that generational

curses follow believers, then we must delete from the bible the verse that says all has become new, say that some things remain that Christ's death did not take care of. But the bible does not say so. So we do not believe that there are curses that follow a born-again Christian, whether coming from his fathers, or relatives, that they did something bad so that this Christian is punished. And the reason is that Christ's sacrifice on the cross did not leave anything unaccomplished. It is sufficient. And the principle for breaking a curse, it is true that, even when Adam sinned, and ate the fruit of the tree in the garden, they were cursed. So the first curse in the world, leave alone ancestors curses, the first person to curse anyone was God. They were cursed. And to break the curse, blood was needed, because a curse is not removed without blood. Blood was needed. That is why, God started dealing with humanity in a way of removing the curse. Not really to remove it, but in a way dealing with it. That is why, immediately Adam and Eve sinned, an animal had to be slaughtered, then the skin of the animal was used to cover them. But later, you see God continuing to deal with them slowly, having them give animal sacrifices. Blood was needed. With those animal sacrifices, blood was poured. But the blood of the animals could not remove the curse, it just covered it. The blood of one who is innocent was needed. And this blood, is the blood of Jesus Christ. And this blood of Jesus, did not leave anything unhandled. This is on one side. But on the other side, we believe that when you are saved. And you live against your covenant with God, when you do things that do not please God, there are evil or bad things that will come to your life. Things that you commit yourself. For example, when you stop tithing, or you have sinned, or in any way you have done things you are not supposed to do, bad things may happen to you. But this then is a curse that you have sought yourself. You have broken a covenant. Because the cause of a curse is breaking a covenant. The covenant that you made with God that you God, I will live for you" When you break it, we believe that there are strikes that will follow you. So we believe that this way you can be stricken.

I: Do these strikes include curses from your ancestors?

R: Yes, it is true that when you break your covenant with God, to live for him, you may open doors for even things that harm other people to harm you also. Yes, even if there are ancestral spirit, they will strike you. If there is witchcraft, you will be bewitched. Because you have broken your covenant with God. But if you repent and come to Jesus again, the powers have no access to you.

I: May I get you right bishop. Are you saying that if a person isn't saved, it is possible for him to be followed by these generational curses?

R: Yes, exactly.

I: Thank you.

Q3. I: Does your organization conduct deliverance on believers?

R: Yes. We can pray for the deliverance of our members.

I: How do you explain a believer's need for such a ministry?

I: How do you explain a believer's need for such prayers?

R: A believer needs such prayers in the sense that, even if you are saved, it does not mean that you cannot go through challenges and difficulties. So we pray for you.

Q4. I: What does such a ministry seek to deliver the believer from?

R: The deliverance that we do is to remove you from the oppression of the devil. These are direct attack of the devil. Because when you get saved, we do not say the devil will not attack you at all. The devil will attack you. In fact, he can even oppress you in some specific areas. This is not a formula, that the devil necessarily binds you in some areas when you get saved. Sometimes he oppresses you because of your lack of the knowledge of the word of God. And many times, I have learnt in this ministry, a person can be set free mainly by knowing the word of God, even more than depending on such prayers.

Q5. I: Has your organization written any theological statement declaring its position concerning the belief in generational curses? (If yes), what are its key points? (or, ask to have access to it).

R: From what I can remember, we have not done such a thing? But every pastor teaches in his church against this belief.

Q6. I: What is the basis for such a position? Ask question 6 only if there is a document written.

R: Scriptures. There are many Scriptures. If I had sat and prepared, I would have given you Scriptures that show that curses have no room in a person who faithfully stands with God. There is no such thing as a curse upon a born-again Christian.

I: I would appreciate if later, as you get time you prepare at least few Scriptures that you use in opposing the belief.

R: Why not. If you allow me to sit and prepare well I can write clearly why I do not agree that a born-again can be under a curse. Just remind me.

Q7. I: In your view, based on what your organization believes, what are those propagating the belief lacking? (Training from Bible College, knowledge of the Bible, skills of Bible interpretation?)

R: I believe that what they miss is that they fail to differentiate times. What I mean by times is that it is true that in the past, a curse would follow a clan. A curse in the clan would go from generation to generation and another generation. And because you have allowed me to write, later I will also list for you Scriptures that show what God did in the OT and what he does now. Sometimes, when I listen to these people I discovered that they have failed to distinguish the way God dealt with his people in the OT and how He deals with them in the NT. In the OT, it is true, they are very right. That is why they have Scriptures that support them. There were curses from families and from grandparents. There were other curses also. And these curses, did not end there. I just want to deal with how God dealt with his people in the OT and NT. There were

curses like that in the OT. But in the NT when Jesus Christ died on the cross, he broke all these curses. This way, a person is counted righteous own his righteousness and a sinner counted so for his own sinfulness. So there in no condemnation because of a parent's sin. No condemnation because of a clan's sin. So I have learnt that this is the problem of these people. In fact, if you listen to them without the knowledge of the word of God, you may believe them. So the issue of lacking the knowledge of the word of God is also a problem they have.

Q8. I: How does your organization interpret passages that show a child being punished for his father's sin, like in the case of Canaan in Genesis?

R: As I said earlier, in the OT, such generational curses were there. So for OT instances it is possible for a son to be punished for a parent's evil. Even now, these curses are there. What we are refusing is the belief that a born-again can be under such a curse. But as for the non-believers, that is a way of life. The system of life in the OT is working to this day. But the system of life of the people of God in the OT and the system of life in the people of God in the NT differ. The difference is that, for the OT people of God in the OT, curses followed them. Even those who feared God, curses followed them. But the people of God in the NT, those who are in Jesus Christ, there is no more condemnation. This is what even Paul says in Romans 8. He says, there is therefore no condemnation in those who are in Christ.

Q9. I: How does your organization explain situations in a believer's life that suggest the believer has inherited behavior, sickness, demonic attacks and others from parents or grandparents?

R: That is possible. You know there are things that you struggle with because you lack knowledge. There are diseases that follow families, but it depends on how much a person knows the word of God. You know the devil sometimes torments you because you believe the things that followed your family will also follow you. That is why I say there is need for doing deliverance by the word of God.

You know, I have confidence because I experienced it myself. I was raised in a family of witches. My father was a witch doctor. I was taught to work with my father do the medicines. The demons chose me to inherit his work. I am the one who used to go with him in the forest to dig up trees for medicine when he was possessed and directed by demons to certain trees. Also, our family had a disease of nose bleeding. All in the family had this problem, including me. But when I got saved, and my brother also got saved, we do not even know when the problem disappeared. I did not even rebuke it, I had even forgotten about it. Also, even though my father was a witch and demons had chosen me to inherit him, when I got saved, nothing else followed me. This is why I am saying I have confidence that when a person is in Christ, all has become new.

Q10. I: How has your organization responded to the public concerning the belief in generational curses?

Q11. I: If you were to propose to your organization themes or subjects to be included in a theological response to the belief what would you include?

R: Hahaha! That is a very difficult question. I would have proposed what is in by personal position and belief. I would have proposed that there is no curse. When a person is in Christ, there is no more curse. I would have given more explanations as I have done, but the main point would be no more curse when a person is saved.

I would also have proposed that sometimes people interpret things as curses while they are things that they cause themselves by not living according to the word of God. Because you may live contrary to the word of God and you get problems or the things that were supposed to happen to you before you got saved happen to you and you count them as curses. But the truth is that this curse found you when you do not have Christ. You are not in Christ Jesus.

Q12. I: What are your general views and opinions about the belief in generational curses?

R: I am just glad that you have allowed me to work on this and speak theologically. You know, you should not just oppose something without saying why you are opposing it. I will write and give you supporting Scriptures. Do not fear to remind me.

Denominational Leader Respondent 2 (DL-R2)

I: What is your position in this organization?

R: I am the arch bishop of this church.

I: How long you have served in this capacity?

R: Since 2008. It is about *eight years* now

I: How long you have been a minister in this organization?

R: I was saved in 1971. I was born in this church but I did not make a personal commitment until that year. A year later I started sensing the call of God to ministry but I was still employed in the government. In 1977 I started pastoring and I left my employment in 1979 and became a full time pastor. I started with a small congregation, but we continued growing. After seven years I moved to Dar-es-Salaam, in 1993 I was elected to be the national leader of this church. In those days we were not called bishops, but chairmen since our church was autonomy of local churches. Local churches were very strong. But we continued to change the system slowly. Our term of leadership was one year, later we moved into 3 years and then to 5 years. Since 1993 I have been reelected into this office to this day. So I have been in this office for more than 20 years. 23 years now.

Q1. I: May I then know if your organization is aware of the presence of the belief in generational curses in the Pentecostal community of Dar-es-Salaam.

R: Yes. We have heard many preachers preaching so.

Q2. I: How does your organization view the belief that born-again Christians can be under generational curses?

R: We do not believe in such a teaching. We believe that once a person is in Christ Jesus he is a new creature. The old is gone and everything is new. We also believe that Jesus was made curse for us so that we may be blessed. We also believe that when Jesus saves, He leaves nothing unhandled, His work is perfect and sufficient. What we believe and teach is that when a person gets saved, what remains is the progressive cleansing of his life, in the sense of progressive sanctification. The work of Jesus is complete, but the person continues to be cleansed and changed to grow progressively into the likeness of Jesus Christ, growing into perfection. This is a day to day work and it is normal. As a person walks closer to Jesus he becomes more and more perfected. But we do not believe that there are some curses that Jesus has not finished. Thinking that when Jesus saves he leaves some curses in the person is despising the work of Jesus on the cross. The work that Jesus did was so great, to set people from sin and from every kind of curse. The Bible teaches about redemption, that when Jesus died, He was doing the work of redemption. He redeems us from the curse of the law, He redeems us from sin, and from rebellion. So, saying that there is still a curse that remains when a person is in Christ Jesus, a curse that the preacher will help this person out; If Jesus failed, will a preached be able to help this person out of this problem? We see this as despising the work that Jesus did on the cross. This is a false teaching. When Jesus saves, He does it perfectly.

For us, we see salvation as something uniform. No one is more saved than another because the work of saving is the work of Jesus. It is not someone's own effort that he jumped into it more than another person did. No, because this is the work of Jesus. What remains as I have said is the cleansing of a person's way of life, a day by day cleansing until he is brought into perfection. And this is a process that depends now on how much the person yields to the working of the Holy Spirit in the process as he gives himself the study of the word of God and in living according to the word. The more he yields to God the more he grows to become more like Jesus in his life and behavior. But we do not believe in Jesus leaving some curses that the preacher comes to help Him take care of.

I: Could it be that during this time of progressive cleansing, because the believer is still struggling with sin curses get a doorway into him?

R: No, I don't think so. You know, curses are something that a person is set free from. The cleansing only has to do with his behavior, his transformation into the likeness of Jesus Christ, not redemption from curses. Someone may still have anger, and other things like that. He continues to be cleansed daily as he yields to God. The fruit of the Spirit continues to get a place in this person and it continues to grow. His behavior gets better and he becomes more like Jesus daily. Just as Paul teaches in Ephesians that Jesus gave the five-fold ministry so that the church will be perfected. Perfection is a progressive thing. But this progressive perfection does not include removing curses that are still present. I do not believe in such a teaching.

Q3. I: Does your organization conduct deliverance on believers?

R: No. We don't do deliverance.

I: Casting out demons, or any form of attacks by evil spirits?

R: Casting out demons yes. We pray for people that are tormented by evil spirits, delivering people from various bondages, we do that. But seeking for curses and making special programs for delivering people or making them vomit curses, we do not have such kinds of prayers. We do not look for demons.

I: How do you explain a believer's need for such prayers?

R: Someone comes asking for prayer for some sickness or any other problem. The Bible is very clear that we shall lay hands on the sick and they will be healed. As we pray, evil spirits manifest. We cast them out, to set the person free. But we do not go about looking for demons so that we may rebuke them. That is not our work. Our duty is to teach people the word of God, to teach the truth of God. And when we have people who need prayers for various needs, we pray and in the process if evil spirits manifest, we deal with that. We don't try to look for demons everywhere, or build a belief that demons are everywhere and in every sickness. There are diseases that are just bacterial or viral infections. Not everything is demonic.

Q4. What does such a ministry seek to deliver the believer from? (**Was not asked because it was handled in response to Q3**)

Q5. I: Has your organization written any theological statement declaring its position concerning the belief in generational curses?

R: No, our church has never done such a thing.

Q6. I: What is the basis for such a position (**Not asked because no statement has been written by the Church**)

Q7. I: In your view, based on what your organization believes, what are those propagating the belief lacking? (Training from Bible College, knowledge of the Bible, skills of Bible interpretation?)

R: I think; people just want to feel good by making people think they always have a new revelation. I think this is their thinking. They think this way they will be able to attract many people because they have new revelations or new things, so they start emphasizing such things. I really think this is what makes them teach such things.

Q8. I: How does your organization interpret passages that show a child being punished for his father's sin, like in the case of Canaan in Genesis?

R: We believe that such things might have happened during the Old Testament. Not just in the Old Testament, even now, when someone is not in Christ Jesus. But now that Jesus has come, and someone has believed in Him, I don't believe that the curse continues to be effective. The Bible says in Ezekiel 18. You may even think that the Bible contradicts itself, but this is to tell us that we cannot just focus on one instance and ignore what other passages say. When a person is

in Jesus Christ even if there were such things, that chain is broken and the person begins a new life because Jesus has been made a curse for him. No more curses follow him. So for a person who is not saved, it is possible for such curses to follow him, but not a saved person.

Q9. I: How does your organization explain situations in a believer's life that suggest the believer has inherited behavior, sickness, demonic attacks and others from parents or grandparents?

R: I still emphasize that when a person is saved, such things will not follow him. What happens is that someone just makes him believe that there are generational curses. It is true that there are things that belong to your clan, but when a person is taught well and his faith is built well that these things are not part of us who are in Christ it really helps him. I really don't believe, you know this is just some interpretation, someone beginning to think you know my father was like this, my mother and grandmother died with this. I really wonder, if a curse still follows him, what did the work of Jesus on the cross accomplish? It seems then, the work of the cross is powerless. Jesus did not deliver us from sin only. And, the sin is the source of every curse. The bible teaches that when Adam sinned, land was cursed, because of the sin he committed. Even now, as sin continues in the world, the world continues to be marred because of the presence of sin. In general, the world continues to suffer because of sin. Sin causes curse. But now if someone was cursed because of his sinful life in the past and now his sins have been forgiven, how would curses continue to follow him? Some people say we get cursed just as we get sick. When Jesus saved us, he did not say we are now immune to sicknesses. We get sick because we are still in this dying body. Not because we are cursed.

Q10. I: How has your organization responded to the public concerning the belief in generational curses?

R: You know this is how we have looked into it, when you start teaching something against something; it is like you start attracting people toward what you are teaching against. We feel it is better to concentrate more on teaching the positive rather than trying to argue against the negative. You may teach once in a while as you teach other truths that may in a way bring you to that point as an example, then you concentrate on teaching about the power of Jesus, His work on the cross, the deliverance he has done and how he did his work perfectly. So you may mention the negative teaching briefly in the process. But you should not build a whole teaching that you focus on every day as your main teaching, otherwise you may negatively affect the growth of the church by focusing only on fighting negative teachings. It is better to teach the truths of Jesus so that you build people's faith and understanding on their knowledge of Jesus. When a person is well built up on the truth, the faulty side withers and dies of by itself. So we focus mainly on teaching the truth in our congregations. I once heard from a pastor friend from Scandinavia, these are the people who brought us the faith. He told me that when the prosperity gospel became popular in USA, those churches that focused on teaching against it became spiritually dry and lost members to the teaching. Churches that just focused on teaching other important truths made their members health and the teaching failed to make any roost among them. It is always good to focus on teaching the truth.

Q11. I: If you were to propose to your organization themes or subjects to be included in a theological response to the belief what would you include?

R: I would propose that we build our response on the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. If we build on the work of Golgotha and the results or implications of that work, and on what Jesus has accomplished in the life of a believer, this will be the best response to the teaching. It will help the believers and for those who keep on teaching that believers still have curses.

Q12. I: What are your general views and opinions about the belief in generational curses?

R: What I can say is that, we need to continue teaching, and doing more research and digging more into this thing so that we may be able to show the power of the cross and what the cross has accomplished for the lives of the people. If we build more on teaching the truth, I believe other things will just wither and die away. Anything that you focus much on, people may start thinking there is some truth. But if we focus on teaching the truth of what Jesus did in saving us and delivering us from all those curses, I believe that this will be more helpful. Let us focus more on teaching the truth, rather than arguing against the false teaching. This is my advice. Christ's work on the cross was sufficient. There is nothing that his work did not handle sufficiently.

Denominational Leader Respondent 3 (DL-R3)

I: First of all, I would like to know something about you. (Your position in this organization _____, how long you have served in this capacity _____, how long you have been a minister in this organization _____?)

R3: For more than ten years now I have served as general secretary. I have served as a pastor in this church since 1989.

Q1. I: May I then know if your organization is aware of the presence of the belief in generational curses in the Pentecostal community of Dar-es-Salaam.

R3: Yes. I think we have heard this teaching, people teaching that people have ancestral curses, especially in the past, the teaching was very much prominent.

I: Does it mean that these days it is not as strong as it was in the past?

R: Yeah! Because I think, because some other people have rebuked such teachings or taught publicly against the teaching. But the devil is very cunning. The teaching, kind of . . . goes away then it comes back in a slightly varied form. But the teaching is there, and we are aware.

Q2. I: How does your organization view the belief that born-again Christians can be under generational curses?

R3: We as Pentecostals believe that our salvation includes complete healing of everything. We believe that when Jesus died on the cross, all was dealt with. He carried all our curses for it is written cursed is everyone who is hang on the cross. So even these curses, whether family of any other kind; we believe that all was finished on the cross. Completely finished. The reason we are saying this is because we did not here Jesus himself dealing with family curses. He cast out

demons, prayed for the sick but never tried deliver people from family curses. So we ask ourselves, what power do these curses have over the power of the blood of Jesus? We do not here the Apostles also dealing with family curses. Not in their teachings, not even in their practices. If there was a demon, they just rebuked the demon, and we see this happening in their ministry. And with the anointing that they had, evil spirits departed when they prayed for people. So we believe that on the cross, everything was finished. But in practice, without salvation, these things exist. We cannot deny this. Because in the Old Testament teachings God says he visits iniquity up to the fourth generation. This means some things exist in a clan or family. Some are in certain family covenants. But when someone gets saved, the thing has no power over him anymore. What I can say . . . or what I see is that some people do not mean it when they get saved; some are not really serious with salvation. There are things they do not stop. People say “a rope breaks at its weakest point.” Some things might be in the clan, they leave, but if this person retains some sinful behaviors or don’t get serious with God these things may follow him and he surely becomes a victim.

I: Are you saying that curses might be in a family but when a person gets saved he breaks from them?

R: That is how it should be; according to the mission of Jesus on earth. Otherwise, if we have to do something else to break them, Christ’s coming and dying would be useless. Scripture does not support such a teaching. The Devil might be coming through some other doors and people just call them family curses.

Q3. I: Does your organization conduct deliverance ministry on believers? (If yes), how do you explain a believer’s need for such a ministry?

R3: Yes, our church observes the foundation laid in Mark 16 where Jesus instructs his disciples that “go and preach the Gospel to every creature”, and he says “and these signs will follow those who believe, they will pray for the sick and the sick will be healed, they will cast out demons, and so forth. Our foundation or basis for our church’s deliverance of people is on this Scripture and this command to the church. But these issues of curses, we do not deliver people from such.

I: Do you cast out demons from believers also, or you just focus on unbelievers?

R: This ministry of praying for people’s needs is part of our worship service. When a person comes for the service he has two things: he comes to worship God and he might be having his own needs. So we have general prayers for people with needs, but as the Spirit of God reveals to his servants, or as need may rise we rebuke. These things happen in our church, but not deliberately forcing things.

I: Can a born-again then, be possessed by demons?

R: If he is truly saved and living for God, no. In theory, no. But in practice, it really depends on how a person is living. Because some people have demons before they get saved. Others are delivered from demons the very day they believe. Others take more time. As they continue growing in their walk with Christ they continue also receiving freedom from other areas. It really

has to do with how a person stays in the word of God, as Jesus says, “you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. For someone who stays in Jesus, and in His word, possession cannot happen. So, even when we have a person in church who goes through demonic attacks, or sicknesses, we simply pray for him. God knows why this person is going through that. We do not start seeking for sources from his family line. Timothy had a stomach problem and we don’t see Paul searching through Timothy’s family line to trace the source of the problem. He simply prescribes the solution.

Q4. I: (If yes), what does such a ministry seek to deliver the believer from?

R3: A variety of needs exist. Not necessarily demons but also some other oppressions. As I said, believers may come to church with various needs.

Q5. I: Has your organization written any theological statement declaring its position concerning the belief in generational curses? (If yes), what are its key points? (Or, ask to have access to it).

R3: No! We have not done it officially. We just try to teach and educate people. In our church, we believe in divine healing. But we also have nothing against going to hospital. We accept medical treatment. Even the Bible recognizes doctors like Luke. So we observe what apostles did. We teach people. But the church has not come to a point of writing any theological statement about the belief in family curses

Q6. I: What is the basis for such a position? Ask question 6 only if the response to no 5 indicates the organization has written a theological statement. (Not asked for R1 and R2 because they have no theological statement written. (Question was not asked because the denomination has not written any theological statement).

Q7. I: In your view, based on what your organization believes, what are those propagating the belief lacking? (Training from Bible College, knowledge of the Bible, skills of Bible interpretation?)

R3: I think those people, ah! We can at times have our own view of things against what the Bible teaches. I believe, even if things are happening in a family, because as I have said, God visits the iniquity of people to the third and fourth generation. These things may be present in some families, yes, but if we search Scriptures careful we discover that the Bible is not teaching what we are saying. We really need to observe Scriptures rather than just forming our own things based on what we believe. We need to be faithful to the word of God. You know, if we just build our teaching on our experiences or on what we see, apart from what the Bible teaches, we will put ourselves in problems. You know, when you are developing doctrine, you don’t base only on what you see or experience. The Word should be observed and be rightly interpreted. In developing doctrine, we do not base on people’s experiences, but on doctrinal instructions. Experiences have power, but building on people’s experiences. Base on doctrinal instruction. Paul might have used handkerchiefs in one incident; this does not mean it is the norm. It was just an experience, but the instruction was, you will lay hands on the sick and they will be healed. So I believe, even if people say this or that we will reduce the power of the Word. Not every problem is a demon or a curse. Sometimes people are just made to believe that they have demons

or they are cursed. But if someone is taught the Word properly, he is set free. No need for vomiting curses. We should build doctrine on doctrinal instruction. We do not pick just a few events and call them doctrine. I think also that another thing that is missing in our generation is the anointing of God. There is no powerful anointing as it was in the NT times. So people device means to manipulate. Some go for oil. Others go for water. These are signs of lacking the anointing. As a result, people device a lot of manipulative means to compensate. Someone wants to pray for a sick person, he starts to ask so many questions and the background or history of the person. As the church, we should pray for the anointing of God to fill us. We will not try to manipulate people.

Q8. I: How does your organization interpret passages that show a child being punished for his father's sin, like in the case of Canaan in Genesis?

R3: I think, some of these other things like the ones in the Old Testament we cannot say much about them. But in the New Testament, is very clear. It even teaches us not to curse. We see these things in the Old Testament, a person sins, God declares to judge him. If he repents, he may be forgiven but his generations are punished. So in a way, these things existed. But once a person repents, they go away.

Q9. I: How does your organization explain situations in a believer's life that suggest the believer has inherited behavior, sickness, demonic attacks and others from parents or grandparents?

R3: Yeah, I have also seen such things, but others, like diseases are more scientific. Even behaviors are inherited though I don't know why. Yet, the truth remains that Jesus finished everything on the cross. These things do not have a place in the believer. You know, sometimes even the people we have in our churches are not serious with God, or they have sinful behaviors. And we do not know how committed some people are to God. A person lacking commitment or living with some sinful habits. That way the devil gets room. Sometimes even for genuine believers, fierce warfare come. A family might be having some demonic issues. When a person gets saved, the demonic possessions lack room. However, sometimes a believer is attacked over oppressed. This person must be set free, it is his right.

Q10. I: How has your organization responded to the public concerning the belief in generational curses?

R3: We have not done anything that is official. But we talk in our pastoral conferences that pastors should defend the faith. We are grateful that our pastors are attentive. They protect the truth, including the truth against this belief.

Q12. I: If you were to propose to your organization themes or subjects to be included in a theological response to the belief what would you include?

R3: The first one I would say is that we people of God should stand in the teaching of Jesus Christ. We should keep the faith. The Bible states this when it says we should keep the faith that offered only once. Jude says this and we should observe it. These things did not start just yesterday. Even Paul warned against such teachings, and even before he died, some false teachings had stepped in the church. Paul and other Apostles rebuked such. Jude says we should

fight for the faith. In my understanding, this faith is the one taught by Jesus that we preach the word and teach them to observe what I have commanded them. So the faith includes what Jesus did and taught, but also, the things taught by the Apostles. So what I would have said is that we keep the faith but also that we should not stray from the word. Or else we will lose the church of god and we will become like witch doctors, because we depart from what Jesus has laid as foundation. When we stop doing what we have been commanded and we do our own things, we become our own bosses. That is a very serious mistake and we will be judged. We take the glory of God, which he cannot share. We should not depart from the Word. A person may receive an insight of revelation but this does not qualify as a normative doctrine or practice.

Q13. I: What are your general views and opinions about the belief in generational curses?

R3: No I don't have. I am grateful if this will be helpful. Others may say what I have not said.

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS FOR GENERATIONAL-CURSE PROPONENTS

Generational-Curse Proponent 1 Transcript (GCP-R1)

I am a Christian researcher, also involved in Doctoral studies at Pan-Africa Theological Seminary. I live in this town. I have been following TV programs and learning from various Christians about believers suffering as a result of generational curses. As part of my studies, I am trying to understand this concept better and I am interested in learning about it from people who have long-term experience in helping people with such problems. You are one of them. Please be assured that your identity will remain confidential, and that your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study.

To begin with, I would be grateful if I knew something about you
Sex: M; Marital Status: Married

Q1. I: Can you describe your past religious background (religion, denomination) before you became a member of this church?

R1: I am a son of TAG. Even though when I got saved I started worshiping in FPTC, and worshipped in some other Pentecostal churches, I later moved to TAG.

Q2. I: What does your typical Sunday look like? (Regular Sunday activities)

R1: We normally begin with prayers early in the morning. We have two worship services, one from 7:00 to 10 AM and another one from 10 AM to 1 PM. At 3:00 PM we start a prayer service where we pray for those who have come with needs.

Q3. I: What is the average number of people attending services at your church each week?

R1: About 500 people or so. It is difficult sometimes to keep track since some who come are not members of this church. They just come for prayer on particular days and some stay while others go back to their churches.

Q4. I: Now I would like to learn about generational curses. What are they? How would you define or describe a generational curse?

R1: I have done a research on curses and I have taught much about the subject. I normally think it is good to start with the issue of generational blessings. It is not just a matter of generational curses. There are also generational blessings. Some people don't believe that generational curses do exist. They should also deny that there are generational blessings. There are some generational blessings that a person inherits from his ancestors, for example if you read Genesis 12:3, it says: "I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." Also proverbs 20:7 says: a righteous man walks in his integrity, his children are blessed after him. So there are blessings that depend on the father.

But also in Psalms 112:1–3, it says, blessed is the one who fears the Lord..., the generation of the upright will be blessed. So there are blessings that depend on how a person fears God. In worshiping and fearing God, one's children get blessed. So depending on how a father lived, it may bring blessings, if he was upright or curses, if he was sinful. So if someone says there are no generational curses, he should also say there are no generational blessings. I am trying to widen your understanding so that you will not just look at generational curses but know that there are also generational blessings. Another proof of generational blessings is Psalm 37:25–26, "I have been young and now I am now old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken, or his children begging bread." Then he says they are always generous and lend freely, their children will be blessed." So children are blessed because of their fathers' righteousness.

Now, concerning generational curses, how do I define them? To be cursed is to be empowered to fail, just as to be blessed is to be empowered to prosper. A generational curse therefore is inheriting this empowerment to fail. You inherit the curse.

Q5. I: In your understanding, how does a person come under a generational curse? (What causes/leads someone to be a victim of a generational curse? At what point of his/her life?).

R1: We can see an example in Exodus 20:3–5 where he talks about those laws, you should worship no other god, or make an idol, then he goes on to say, "I punish the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me." So one cause of these generational curses may be the sins of fathers, like the ones stated in these verses; making idols and worshiping other gods. So God says clearly that he punishes the children for the sins of their fathers. So there are some things that when committed by the father, they affect the child. If you also go to Exodus 34:7 he also says that he visits the iniquity of the fathers to the third and fourth generation, now this word iniquity, I have done a study on this word in Hebrew it is *avon* – which also means *punishment of sin*. So these evils, like the ones mentioned in Exodus 20 categorized as worshiping other gods. When a person worships other gods ...let me see what the Strong's concordance says. . . (opening concordance and searching, going through several meanings of *avon* then spots at punishment), this clarifies it very well, so the curses of the fathers come as punishment for sin. There are many examples in the bible where things occur repeatedly or people getting punished for sins of their parents. Even in the kings of Judah, when a king was godly even descendants . . . the trend goes like that, because there are also generational blessings. Even the Abrahamic blessings, God promised him that "I will bless you . . . , then in you all the nations of the world will be blessed. These are generational blessings. When Jesus died, we also who were gentiles got these blessings which were generational, because we are in Christ. So there are things that we got not because we deserved. He says in Galatians 3:13–14 that "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree. He redeemed us so that the blessing of Abraham may come to the Gentiles through Jesus Christ." These are also generational blessings that we have received. So if God blesses a person because of his father's righteousness, a person can also be punished for the sin of his father. Sins of past generations.

Q6. I: Are demons or evil spirits (demons, ancestral spirits) related to generational curses? (If "yes" ask the person to explain).

R1: When a person is walking under generational curses, spirits are also there that enforce the curse because a curse is a contract that wants evil for the person. So there are demons that follow up the curse. So there is that possibility. When there is a curse contract or covenant, there must be demons also that follow up the curse. (**Follow up**)

I: Is it possible then for a curse to exist without any association with demons?

R1: It is possible yes but based on my experience, curses go with demons. For example, a person may have demons of barrenness, now when there is barrenness according to Deut. 28:4 “I will bless the fruit of your womb.” So when a person gets children, he/she is blessed. But in Deut. 28:18 it says, “I will curse the fruit of your womb.” This means when there are curses, it is possible that demons are also there to enforce the curse.

Q7. I: How do you tell a person is under a generational curse? (What signs help you identify a generational curse in a person?)

R1: This is a very good question. I have compiled a list of signs that can tell you whether you are under a curse. I have included about 12 symptoms. I will give you this paper. I use them when doing counseling. For example, things like worshiping other gods, false gods, idols, participating in witchcraft or divination, not respecting parents, a person who does not obey parents gets cursed automatically. Also, not tithing, Malachi 3:8–10. So some other curses to a Christian are just automatic. When a person disobeys the word of God, he opens up to curses. For instance, when a person goes to see a witch doctor, he invites demons and curses. Also oppressing the weak, like aborting babies, that is oppressing the weak, and others. Derik Prince has listed all these symptoms. Also, words that have been spoken by close relatives or other people against you. Someone may come here to introduce her fiancé, but her sister brought a witch doctor who said I don’t see this thing succeeding. It is true that that relationship broke up. The protection of God’s people is not automatic. The bible says that we are kept by the power of God through faith. You have to exercise faith. When someone pronounces an evil thing, you must cancel it, or else it gets you. Deuteronomy 28:15–68 gives a list of many symptoms of curses. Also things like mental illness in the family, chronic or recurring diseases especially if they are inherited, miscarriages, tumors, divorces: you find that in some families, parents divorced, children also get married and divorce, polygamy, poverty or difficulties in getting money and others.

Well, I have come to ask myself, if you look into churches, there are people that are not supposed to be the way they are. Because even sicknesses are part of the curse, according to Deuteronomy 28:15–68 which lists the curses that will follow a person who does not observe his instructions. Around verse 20 or 23 he mentions diseases. When a person has diseases, it is not a blessing. Health is a blessing. But, Derik Prince can help you very much in this area. He even has lessons in YouTube. I consider him an authority in this area and my teachings and beliefs in generational curses are heavily built on His teachings, mainly his book *Blessing or Curse: You can choose*. So there are people in the church who have chronic diseases that do not go away easily on in an ordinary way.

Sometimes you see unusual accidents in a person’s life. Derik Prince gives an example of a girl who got accidents three times in one month and all these three times she broke the same leg.

What is this? When he prayed for the girl to break the curse her leg recovered and the accidents stopped.

Q8. I: What is the power behind your ability to detect a generational curse? (Experience? Supernatural or divine enablement?)

R1: Sometimes by looking at the signs. A person may come for prayers and in the process of interrogating him you discover signs of curses. At times you sense it in the Spirit that this person is under curses. This book that I have written will also help you learn more symptoms. Would you like to buy the book? It is 6000 shillings.

I: Yes, I appreciate.

Q9. I: Can the person himself or herself know that he or she is under a generational curse?

R1: Sometimes because of lack of knowledge he cannot. That is why teachings are needed. Those teachings about deliverance open up a person to discover that he has a problem

Q10. I: How does a generational curse relate to (affect) the normal life of the victim (education, economy, family, spiritual life)?

R1: There is a very close relationship. As I have said, things like difficulties in a person's economy, education or any other progress also family or marriage problems are things that happen in a person with curses.

I: Do you have a special schedule for conducting deliverance services for those who are struggling with generational curses? If yes, please describe it.

R1: Wednesdays, Fridays, Sunday afternoons are all for praying for people's issues, and many people have been delivered.

Q11. I: I would like to hear a brief description of the process/procedure you use in praying for people.

R1: We receive people who need prayers. As we talk to them we discover signs of curses and we lead them in deliverance. The process itself isn't rigid because people come with different problems. Of course, there must be some uprooting and destroying before we build the blessings. Once we discuss with them and discover the source we take them through prayers to break the curse and we teach them. Teaching helps them to maintain the deliverance.

Q12. I: Do you involve others in your church in praying for the people?

R1: Yes

Q13. I: If "yes" to Q14, what kind of people (elders, deacons, trained workers)?

R1: I mix. Not only leaders. Others are not leaders but they have been trained through experience.

Q14. I: If “yes” to Q15, how do you train them? (Formal/informal training?)

R1: I give them training. We have a two-year bible school here that offers diploma. I personally teach the practical lessons. My wife also teaches. Just last week I was teaching counseling, which is a bit related to the issue of curses. And as I told you I write a lot of books and also articles in different Christian newspapers, even the TAG newspaper if you read it.

Q15. I: How did you get your ministerial training?

R1: My library has more than 5000 books. I read a lot of books and as I told you, I have also researched this thing. But I also got formal training through a Bible school. This school is a believer in generational curses and deliverance and they taught us to do deliverance. It is in this bible school that I also discovered I have bondages and I was delivered through deliverance prayers in this school.

Q16. I: What motivated you to pray for people with generational curses?

R1: I was also a victim. As I told you I got saved long time ago. I was also a member of Pentecostal churches, TAG being one of them. Yet, I was a victim. A friend of mine also from TAG attended some teachings somewhere and came to teach me. When I was prayed for, the curses were broken and we, my wife and I started to have breakthroughs in our financial issues. We have even managed to build a storied residential house. We were under the curse of poverty. I discovered many people are under the same situation so I started praying for people.

Q17. I: In your view based on your experience, can born-again believer (one who is saved) be a victim of a generational curse?

R1: Exactly

Q18. I: What makes it possible?

R1: Just the fact that they are born into a cursed family. The curses still have room because of the family connections and they must be broken.

Q19. I: If you were to explain to someone who needs a biblical foundation of this teaching and practice, what key things and Bible passages would you include?

R1: Exodus 20:5, Deuteronomy 28, they are many. Getting saved does not exempt one from these curses, just like the way it does not exempt us from falling sick.

Q20. I: In your understanding, how and at what point in the life of a born-again Christian does the death of Jesus affect deliverance from generational curses?

R1: There is something that we must understand here. There is the legal side and the vital side or what I call the experiential side of what Jesus accomplished. This legal side is what Jesus accomplished on the cross 2000 years ago. Basically, Jesus has paid the complete price for all the sins of all the sins of people. But the ones who are saved, are those who invite or accept Jesus into their lives. So even with the issue of sickness, it is automatic that a person gets what Jesus provided on the cross. It requires a person to exercise faith in receiving it. So this legal side is what accomplished when he died on the cross 2002 years ago. But now the vital side is what the Holy Spirit does in a person now in completing the work that was completed 2000 years ago. Because one argument that is raised in issues relating to deliverance is that all was finished on the cross. If all was finished on the cross, why are people still sick? People sometimes suffer with diseases until a minister who has the gift of healing comes to pray for them, and sometimes it is always the same people coming to be prayed for the same problems. So it is true that legally we are already redeemed as stated in Ephesians 1:7 which says “in Him through his blood we have redemption.” He does not say we will have redemption, he says we have redemption. This is what Christ, in Galatians 3:3, “Christ redeemed us”, it is past tense. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. So we are already redeemed. But then he says, “that we may receive the blessing of Abraham, and the promise of the Spirit.” So there is the work of the Spirit now, the Spirit coming to complete the work that was completed on the cross. The Spirit does this through the Word, the revelation of the word that a person has. There is another example in Romans 1:16 “I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation for all who believe. Now the Greek word for salvation is *soteria* which includes “deliverance, healing, safety, preservation and soundness. So he says I am not ashamed of the Gospel which brings deliverance, healing, safety but to everyone who believes. So a person may have this package but he needs faith for what he needs, whether healing, deliverance and others.

So a person may be saved, but he needs faith for him to receive deliverance or healing and so forth. For the package to be effected, the condition is faith. Now, this faith, because faith comes by hearing, and hearing comes by the word, he needs teachings. I will give you an example. I was raised by the TAG. I got saved in 1979. The first church I went to was a Pentecostal church. In 1982-1989 I was in TAG. I have even conducted seminars in TAG. There is a TAG pastor who learnt these things of deliverance. He went to a TAG church and prayed for people, even church elders had demons. So he came and gave me these testimonies. Even my own experience, I also had bondages. I had demons of poverty. When I was prayed for, these demons manifested, saying that we are hindering this person from prospering. You know, Jesus said to the woman who needed prayers for her child that he cannot give children’s food to dogs. Basically healing and deliverance is meant for the children of God, the born-again. Even in Mathew 13:12, the Bible says that when demons leave a person, they move around and when they come and find the house is clean and empty, they go and bring other demons like them and the condition of the victim becomes worse. This means, delivering a non-believer is creating more problems on them, unless they get saved. So based on this text deliverance from the demonic is for the believers, it is their right, not the non-believers.

Q21. I: Some people do not believe that a born-again Christian can be a victim of generational curses. In your view, what do they lack? (Education, the Spirit of God, knowledge of Bible Interpretation principles?)

R1: Some people just don't have a balanced belief. You know, what you believe affects your practice and your practice or experience affect your belief. This is the problem with a lopsided belief. The teaching you get determines your belief, what you believe determines your practice, your practice also determines what you teach and the circle goes on and on.

Some others are just having inferiority complex. Someone is just jealous because you are doing something that he cannot do, and he terms it a false teaching. We conduct deliverance even in major Pentecostal denominations, even on pastors. We cannot mention their names because of their security in their desire to protect their churches and employment.

Q22. I: So, in summary, are you saying that the Bible provides foundation and support for generational curses (on non-believers born-again believers?)

R1: Yes, for both indeed.

Q23. I: Do you receive feedback from the people you have prayed for?

R1: Sometimes yes. People come back to testify, others come to stay in our church, others of course never come back.

I: Is there anything else you feel I need to hear for a clearer understanding of generational curses?

R1: Not much really! It is important to know that people are suffering. I do deliverance even for people from churches that do not believe saved people can be under these curses. They are denied the ministry so they go out to seek for it anywhere it is found. As a result, people are considered rebellious but the truth is that their problems are not taken care of. My ministry ethics do not allow me but I would have even directed you to some pastors from Pentecostal churches that come here for deliverance but they ask us to keep it confidential because they want to protect their jobs. It is sad! Take me to any of the TAG churches that you trust the most and allow me to cast out demons. I promise you, you will see how much people are tormented by these curses and someone says they are safe because they are saved.

I: Thank you very much for your time and significant contribution to my study. I pray that God will bless you.

Generational-Curse Proponent 2 Transcript (GCP-R2)

I am a Christian researcher, also involved in Doctoral studies at Pan-Africa Theological Seminary. I live in this town. I have been following TV programs and learning from various Christians about believers suffering as a result of generational curses. As part of my studies, I am trying to understand this concept better and I am interested in learning about it from people who have long-term experience in helping people with such problems. You are one of them. Please be assured that your identity will remain confidential, and that your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study.

To begin with, I would be grateful if I knew something about you

Sex: M; Marital Status: Married

Q1. I: Can you describe your past religious background (religion, denomination) before you became a member of this church?

R2: Coming from a Catholic background

Q2. I: What does your typical Sunday look like? (Regular Sunday activities)

R2: Three worship services: the first from 6:00 AM to 9:00 AM, the second from 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM and the third from 2:00 PM to 4:30 PM then prayers for specific needs in the evening. It is a busy day.

Q3. I: What is the average number of people attending services at your church each week?

R2: More than 1,500 people

Q4. I: Now I would like to learn about generational curses. What are they? How would you define or describe a generational curse?

R2: First of all, let us talk about the word Curse. What is a curse? Then we can look at what generational curses are. Curse, is the opposite of blessing. Curse is the opposite of blessing, and blessing is the opposite of curse. Man was created as a blessed being: His origin is blessing, meaning that he was created with blessings. But who blessed him? God. When God created man, He blessed Him. Everything you see on earth was supposed to be under the dominion. He blessed him with power of dominion over other creation. But it was a condition by God that man can only have that power when he maintains a relationship with God. In Genesis 1:26 God says Let us create Man and let him rule over all sorts creatures. So when man was created, he was perfect. But the devil used the serpent to in Genesis 3:1–20, because the serpent was clever to deceive them to eat the fruits the knowledge of good and evil. They ate and broke their relationship with God. This is where all problems began. So God said to the serpent, you are cursed over every other creature on earth. He also put enmity between the serpent and the woman. He also cursed the woman to bear children with increased labor pains. Then to the man he said, the ground is cursed because of you. You will eat its fruit with toil. From this point on, man lost his blessings and started living under curse. This became the beginning of diseases, death and difficult lives. This was the beginning of curses.

Afterwards, various generations came from Adam. Chaggas, Sukumas, Americans and all others came after Adam. All these generations have come from one man so they all live under the curse of Adam. Because they are under a curse, and because man was created as a dependent being, man was created to depend on God, but when this relationship was broken, he started seeking for other powers to help him. Others started going to trees, graveyards, and others as sources of power. That is why we have witches and sorcerers. Traditions developed that are based on what these generations depended on for help. Now, how does a generational curse work? Those born in these generations are suppressed by the traditions of their clans. When a person wants to succeed in anything, these traditional curses suppress the success. The generational curse

suppresses all that they do so that they remain unsuccessful in everything they do. That is why you find someone educated but he doesn't get employed. Another one is very intelligent but he fails in class. The curse depends on what these people believe in. Others believe in ancestral worship, others in covenants. So the curse is based on the behavior the generation has. The behaviors of the generations permit, or make the generational curses possible.

You may find a person in the village who works so hard, but nothing succeeds in his work. You may be tempted to believe this person is lazy, but the truth is that he is very diligent, but everything fails. This person gives birth to a son and he takes him to school. The son is very good and diligent, but when exam comes he fails. It is the power of the curse in his family that suppresses his academic progress.

Q5. I: In your understanding, how does a person come under a generational curse? (What causes/leads someone to be a victim of a generational curse? At what point of his/her life?).

R2: The curse comes in you because you are born in the cursed family. It comes through the blood. It is in the DNA. It doesn't depend on whether you sinned or not, no, you are born in a cursed family, you are under the curse. This is why a person may be diligent, but the moment he or she starts to shine in the family, something that even endangers his life happens.

Q6. I: Are demons or evil spirits (demons, ancestral spirits) related to generational curses? (If "yes" ask the person to explain).

R2: When we say curse we mean that someone has turned from worshiping God into worshiping ancestral, so the ancestors make sure that you remain under the curse. You cannot be under a generational curse apart from the ancestral spirits. The ancestral spirits are the ones that supervise or oversee the implementation of the curses. People in the family may be gathering probably yearly and thank the spirits for doing things in the family. This way, they promote the continuation of the family curses.

Q7. I: How do you tell a person is under a generational curse? (What signs help you identify a generational curse in a person?)

R2: Struggles in attaining any success. It is difficult for the person to succeed. For instance, he might be very learned and he gets employed, but every time he gets money, problems come that call for the use of that money and he remains with nothing. He may even thank God that the problems came while he has money, not knowing it is the curse that brings the problems to suppress his success.

Q8. I: What is the power behind your ability to detect a generational curse? (Experience? Supernatural or divine enablement?)

R2: There is divine enablement but it is also possible to detect the curses from seeing the sign, just like a medical doctor tells a person has a certain problem by looking at symptoms and at other times by going through laboratory tests.

Q9. I: Can the person himself or herself know that he or she is under a generational curse?

R2: No, he doesn't. That is why he is happy that problems came when he had money.

Q10. I: How does a generational curse relate to (affect) the normal life of the victim (education, economy, family, spiritual life)?

R2: I said this before, no success in any area of life, regardless of how diligent a person is in education, work, and other areas. The power of the curse hinders everything from succeeding.

I: Do you have a special schedule for conducting deliverance services for those who are struggling with generational curses? If yes, please describe it.

R2: Yeah! We have counseling sessions on Monday and Tuesdays but we also have prayer sessions on Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday evenings.

I: Are these prayers specific for curses?

R2: Not for curses only, for other needs as well

Q11. I: I would like to hear a brief description of the process/procedure you use in praying for people.

R2: The main thing is for him to get saved. Once he is saved, he goes through sessions of teachings and as he continues to be taught, he gets complete deliverance.

Q12. I: Do you involve others in your church in praying for the people?

R2: Yes, we involve others

Q13. I: If "yes" to Q14, what kind of people (elders, deacons, trained workers)?

R2: Anyone who is saved. When you are praying for these people, it is not by your power that they get delivered, it is by the power of Christ who is in you.

Q14. I: If "yes" to Q15, how do you train them? (Formal/informal training?)

R2: Training is not necessary. As long as one is aware that he is saved and Jesus is in him, God uses him. Jesus did not come for theological training. He says in John 1:12 that all who received Him were given the power to become his sons. In other places the Bible says when someone believes, Jesus comes to dwell in him. These are things of faith that you need to learn through the Word of God so that you know who you are. The Word of God is important in setting people free, knowing that you have power that is above these other powers.

Q15. I: How did you get your ministerial training?

R2: Through Bible School

Q16. I: What motivated you to pray for people with generational curses?

R2: People's problems. Many people live under these curses. They strive for breakthroughs but nothing is succeeding.

Q17. I: In your view based on your experience, can a born-again believer (one who is saved) be a victim of a generational curse?

R2: For one who is saved, that is why Jesus came, so that he may deliver us from these curses. The Bible says that he was made a curse to deliver us from curses. One who is born-again has been forgiven his/her sins. The curse that was on this person goes away. The power of curse that was following the family breaks away. That is why when a person gets saved in the family, even if the family is from a Christian background they hate him. It is not them that hate him, it is the power that saved this person that interferes with their things and the power of the curse cause them to hate him.

Q18. I: If "yes" to Q18, what makes it possible?

R2: N/A

Q19. I: If you were to explain to someone who needs a biblical foundation of this teaching and practice, what key things and Bible passages would you include?

R2: John 1:12 says whoever believes in him he was given the power to become son of God. He is new and he is in another family. No more curses because sin has been forgiven. Since there is no sin that cannot be forgiven, there is no curse that cannot be removed.

Q20. I: In your understanding, how and at what point in the life of a born-again Christian does the death of Jesus affect deliverance from generational curses?

R2: When a person gets saved, the death of Jesus effects all that there is to be effected. Jesus did not die only for our sins. He also dies for the deliverance from curses and all other problems. After salvation, all one needs, is to dwell on teachings.

Q21. I: Some people do not believe that a born-again Christian can be a victim of generational curses. In your view, what do they lack? (Education, the Spirit of God, knowledge of Bible interpretation principles?)

R2: I really don't know how a person believes he is under a curse while he is saved. Where does the curse come from? What I know is that, some people declare that they are saved but they continue to live in sin. That way you are not saved. You are not saved because you go to church; you are saved because Christ is in you. Christianity is not a religion; Christianity is belonging to Christ. Knowing that you belong to Christ means that you live according to what he wants, what he wills. If we do not please him, even if we say we are his, if we do not live for him, he does not take responsibility with what happens to us, so when curses come, they get you.

Q22. I: So, in summary, are you saying that the Bible provides foundation and support for generational curses (on non-believers born-again believers?)

R2: For non-believers, yes.

Q23. I: Do you receive feedback from the people you have prayed for?

R2: We see the results.

Q24. I: Is there anything else you feel I need to hear for a clearer understanding of generational curses?

R2: What I can say is that, just look at what is happening in your family. Are things succeeding? You may find that people are working but when they come to retirement time they are like they never worked. There is a curse. The main thing needed for one to be delivered from curses is to be saved. Also, some of these teachings are the Devils techniques to hinder you from being diligent. If you know that even when you are saved you will still be under curse, why then seek God? You see! It is the enemy's trick to hinder people from growing.

I: Thank you very much for your time and significant contribution to my study. I pray that God will bless you.

Generational-Curse Proponent 3 Transcript (GCP-R3)

I am a Christian Researcher, also involved in Doctoral studies at Pan-Africa Theological Seminary. I live in this town. I have been following TV programs and learning from various Christians about believers suffering as a result of generational curses. As part of my studies, I am trying to understand this concept better and I am interested in learning about it from people who have long-term experience in helping people with such problems. You are one of them. Please be assured that your identity will remain confidential, and that your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study.

To begin with, I would be grateful if I knew something about you

Sex: M; marital status: Married

Q1. I: Can you describe your past religious background (religion, denomination) before you became a member of this church?

R3: Currently, I am a TAG pastor. Before this I was in one of the popular ministries in Dar. I was more actively involved with these problems of generational curses than I am today. This is because my church is still new.

Q2. I: What does your typical Sunday look like? (Regular Sunday activities)

R3: I am having only one service on Sunday morning. But I use the afternoon hours to pray with people who have personal needs. My church is still new so I spend most of the time in the church to keep it active.

Q3. I: What is the average number of people attending services at your church each week?

R3: About 100 people

Q4. I: Now I would like to learn about generational curses. What are they? How would you define or describe a generational curse?

R3: It is God's judgment on a person who or people who continue to do physical and spiritual evil before God, that is, doing against God's word. This judgment results in closing the door of God's protection and opening of a door to Satan to destroy the people under the curse physically and spiritually and he does this generation after generation

Q5. I: In your understanding, how does a person come under a generational curse? (What causes/leads someone to be a victim of a generational curse? At what point of his/her life?).

R3: The curse is caused by many things. (1) Repeating your fathers' traditions in serving other gods as in celebrating special days like birthdays, Christmas, Easter, and New Year. (2) Participating in or financially supporting traditional rites and ceremonies. Making or having images of Jesus, Mary and others, or showing films that are supposed to be the life of Jesus. Such things open doors for Satan to use the images in appearing to people in dreams. This is idolatry according to Deuteronomy 4:15–19.

Q6. I: Are demons or evil spirits (demons, ancestral spirits) related to generational curses? (If "yes" ask the person to explain).

R3: Certainly yes! Evil spirits cause misunderstandings in marriage that lead to separation and divorce. These spirits also cause the children of the divorced to inherit the same thing and it becomes a chain. Spirits of adultery cause girls and boys to engage in pre-marital sex. Evil spirits also enter in these girls and boys and cause barrenness, tumors in the uterus, abortions, menstrual complications, early deaths etc. Spirits are the agents of generational curses in transmitting them from generation to generation.

Q7. I: How do you tell a person is under a generational curse? (What signs help you identify a generational curse in a person?)

R3: Again, there are many signs and forms. Marriage problems like recurring divorces in the family, barrenness, chronic diseases, pre-marital sex, abortions, delaying in getting married

Q8. I: What is the power behind your ability to detect a generational curse? (Experience? Supernatural or divine enablement?)

R3: The signs are visible, so you can discover that this person is struggling with something unusual. But the Spirit of God is also at work in helping his servant discover such things

Q9. I: Can the person himself or herself know that he or she is under a generational curse?

R3: Not always. He might know he has a problem but he may not be able to connect it to the cause unless someone with that knowledge helps him connect the problem to the cause.

Q10. I: How does a generational curse relate to (affect) the normal life of the victim (education, economy, family, spiritual life)?

R3: As I said before, family life is messed up when there is a curse and when a family is broken, other areas of life are shaken: economy, education for children, even spiritual life. When a person is under generational curses he is under the curse of God. Satan gets a way and authority to interfere with the life of this person (John 10:10). Satan also controls the heart and mind of the person, becoming the main controller of the person's life. The cursed person becomes spiritually dry. Physically, he is controlled by diseases. The doors for his blessings are closed.

I: Do you have a special schedule for conducting deliverance services for those who are struggling with generational curses? If yes, please describe it.

R3: Not for curses only, for other needs as well

Q11. I: I would like to hear a brief description of the process/procedure you use in praying for people.

R3: We cannot say we will be healed by faith because faith without works is dead (James 2:26). Fasting and praying will not remove the curses. Genesis 3:15 declares deliverance battle between the woman and her seed and Satan and his seed. The problem we have is that Pentecostals ignore the need for deliverance. This is the devil's strategy to use the ignorance of believers to keep them in bondage. Even though Jesus has rescued us from the dominion of darkness as it is said in Colossians 1:13, He still commands us to show works in James 4:7–8. Deliverance prayer is, therefore, the solution to the curses. Deliverance has many meanings but I have taken two. One, Jesus bringing deliverance to the world through the cross. Two, physical deliverance from bondages through servants of God who have the gifts of healing, and deliverance from powers of Satan. In his life time, Jesus did both.

Q12. I: Do you involve others in your church in praying for the people?

R3: Yes.

Q13. I: If "yes" to Q14, what kind of people (elders, deacons, trained workers)?

R3: Any. As long as they are believers and have faith

Q14. I: If "yes" to Q15, how do you train them (Formal/informal training)?

R3: Through experience. I started ministering to people with generational curses even before I went to Bible school.

Q15. I: How did you get your ministerial training?

R3: I am currently doing diploma in one of the TAG bible colleges. But also I do personal research.

Q16. I: What motivated you to pray for people with generational curses?

R3: People are in serious problems my sister. Yet, they are just given good words to encourage them that they are healed while they continue suffering. I was a victim of such encouraging words until someone took time to pray with me. That is how I feel compelled to help others too.

Q17. I: In your view based on your experience, can born-again believer (one who is saved) be a victim of a generational curse?

R3: Why not? I know some people don't believe this. Most Pentecostal churches, including mine don't believe this. But, let's be real. How do we explain the things people go through in life? Born-again believers are humans and they are also targets of the generational curses.

Q18. I: If "yes" to Q18, what makes it possible?

R3: As I said earlier, Jesus delivers us from sin, but he also delivers us from bondages. The deliverance from bondages is the one most ignored by Pentecostals. Yet, Jesus conducted deliverance from bondages even with the people he forgave. Salvation does not exempt us from the need to be delivered from oppressions of the devil. Are we not belonging to any generations? Don't we belong to a certain ancestry? This is especially true with Africans since we are so much connected to our family lines. Sometimes we even fail to disconnect ourselves from the traditions of our fathers. How can we say we cannot be victims of generational curses?

Q19. I: If you were to explain to someone who needs a biblical foundation of this teaching and practice, what key things and Bible passages would you include?

R3: Exodus 20:5b

Q20. I: In your understanding, how and at what point in the life of a born-again Christian does the death of Jesus affect deliverance from generational curses?

R3: The moment a person believes he receives forgiveness. But there is a process to bring to completion his deliverance from other oppressions and bondages.

Q21. I: Some people do not believe that a born-again Christian can be a victim of generational curses. In your view, what do they lack? (Education, the Spirit of God, knowledge of Bible interpretation principles?)

R3: I think they don't just take time to follow up the life of the believer. If a person is not under the curses, why does he get sick? How many believers die at the age of 120? Why do they die prematurely? Why do they face the same problems as the non-believers like delayed marriages, barrenness, and restrictions in eating some foods with excuses that they are diabetic or have hypertension? What about the resembling diseases and problems we see in their families? I think people just tend to ignore these or pretend they are normal things, but they are not.

Q22. I: So, in summary, are you saying that the Bible provides foundation and support for generational curses (on non-believers, born-again believers)?

R3: Yes, for both

Q23. I: Do you receive feedback from the people you have prayed for?

R3: Yes. They give testimonies.

Q24. I: Is there anything else you feel I need to hear for a clearer understanding of generational curses?

R3: What I can say is that we Pentecostals should not ignore people's problems in the name of salvation or faith. People have real problems and these result from curses. Jesus came to save and deliver us from bondages. We need to help people experience this freedom from generational curses so that they enjoy their fellowship with Christ.

I: Thank you very much for your time and significant contribution to my study. I pray that God will bless you.

APPENDIX J

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS FOR GENERATIONAL-CURSE VICTIMS

Generational-Curse Victim R1 (GCV-R1)

RQ4c. What are the feelings and experiences of those who consider themselves victims of generational curses?

1. May I know something about you: Your name, age, occupation and marital status?

GCV-R1: Sex: Male; I am 60 years old; a Chagga by tribe. I have a small business in town which gives me my daily bread. I am a widower, my wife died 9 years ago, living me with 4 children, 3 of them are now in universities.

2. Can you describe your past religious background (religion, denomination) before you became a member of this church?

GCV-R1: I was a Roman Catholic for 58 years before I became a member of this church.

3. Explain your current religious experience, as it relates to how you became a member of this church, if you are filled with the Holy Spirit and how long you have been saved.

GCV-R1: My life was in chaos. Since my wife died, I decided to not marry so that I take care of my children. I will probably get married when all four get to universities. I lived a stressed life all my life. All I wanted to do was to make sure that my children succeed in life. I have toiled for that all my life and it has not been easy with my small stationary. I got saved two years ago, and that is how I became a member of TAG. I have been saved and filled by the Holy Spirit for two years now.

4. In your understanding, what is a generational curse?

GCV-R1: A generational curse as I understand it is when things of the ancestors continue following later generations. For example, in the clan, a certain taboo was stated in the past and later generations fail to observe it, what the elders in that family said will affect these later generations. In some families in our tribes, people are not allowed to marry in a certain family or clan, but sometimes they ignore the warning and they marry from these families. Ancestors get angry and so problems follow them through many generations after them because of the broken taboo. This is a curse in this clan.

5. Have you personally experienced any problems resulting from generational curses?

GCV-R1: Yeah! This is how I lost my wife. Our clan was not allowed to marry in a certain clan. I avoided all the women in this particular clan but I did not know that this one I was marrying also belonged to the clan in a distant relationship. I married her and we really

suffered a lot. She struggled all her life with diseases that were not accepting any treatment until she died.

6. **(If yes)**, how did you know you are under generational curses? **(If no)**, can a born-again Christian be under the influence of generational curses? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

GCV-R1: I grew up in the village. I used to hear from the elders in my clan that we are not allowed to marry in that clan and this other clan. I was told that our great grandparents had quarreled and so there was enmity between our clan and theirs. Every kind of interaction was forbidden, including marriage. When married my wife and she started experiencing these problems, elders inquired from the ancestors and it was made known that she also belonged to the clan we were not allowed to marry from. I had to remain with that pain for the rest of my life because I loved her and we already had four children. **(Follow-up Q:** Can a person who is born-again still be under generational curses? **R:** I hear people saying it is possible. But I have problems believing so because I believe when I am saved I belong to a different power and kingdom. I really don't know how Satan through ancestors or any other spirit can hold me connected to his things)

7. Based on your experience or what you know, what are the sources or reasons of generational curses and which ones do you see having the greatest effect on you (or the person you are informed about)?

GCV-R1: There are many sources. Breaking covenants that were made by ancestors, failing to observe taboos like the one I have just stated, many others but which are more related to communication with ancestors. For me, the only that really affected me is this one of failing to observe the taboo set by the elders of our clan.

8. In your opinion, are demons, evil spirits or ancestral spirits related to generational curses? If yes, explain how this relates to your personal experience.

GCV-R1: Demons are at the center of every family curse. As I have said, the main causes of these curses are connected to ancestors. Ancestors are spirits of the dead people in a clan. I view these as demonic spirits because how does a dead person communicate with the living? It is very serious among us the Chaggas. I thank God who separated me from such practices. Chaggas offer alcohol, milk, food and other staffs to the dead people by pouring them on graves. They consult them as if they were living. And because these are spiritual issues relating to faith, things happen. The spirit world is real and very powerful among those attached to it. In my experience as I told you, ancestors had to be consulted about my case and we believed what they instructed. It is terrifying. **(Follow-up question:** Who is the source of the curse in this case:

R: The ancestors. The demons and Satan. God does not curse people. Well, I don't know if I am right but I think I am. He does not allow us to curse people either.

9. (If yes to Q5) how have the generational curses affected your normal in terms of education, economy, family, and self-identity?

GCV-R1: Probably my family, but nothing else. I lost my wife. As a result, I had to raise my three daughters and one son alone. It was a painful experience. My children had no mother to guide them. As a result, my daughter got pregnant and this added a burden on me, psychologically and economically.

10. Briefly describe the process/procedure a victim goes through in receiving deliverance from the curses. Does the process involve any financial seed?

GCV-R1: For me, things changed when I got saved. I was prayed for, I repented and received Jesus. I have sat under teachings ever since and none of these things is terrifying me now. The main process was the teaching of the word of God. I started learning that I am now in a new kingdom. I am no longer vulnerable to the ancestors and their claims on me. I was taught that I have power in Jesus to live free from the oppression of the devil and evil spirits. I am only afraid that my children are still vulnerable because they are not saved yet.

11. In your understanding, how and at what point in the life of a born-again Christian does the death of Jesus affect deliverance from generational curses?

GCV-R1: I believe that when I got saved Jesus delivered me from these curses.

Follow-up question: Are you saying that the curses broke immediately you got saved?

R: Yes, even though it was not easy to believe so in the beginning. Teachings helped me. I have lived in fear for quite some time because I was so much aware of the curse in my clan. Fear followed me. But if God is powerful, and I am no longer a sinner, I don't participate in those ancestral ceremonies and events, I don't consult them. How can Satan continue following me with his things? The problem is that some people say they are saved but they secretly participate in these events or still hold to some beliefs and taboos of the ancestors. That way, the curses will never leave you. I believe that salvation is the breaking point from curses.

12. (If yes to Q5), did you receive / are you receiving any spiritual help for your deliverance? If yes, (i) what kind of help? and (ii) how do you view your condition since you started receiving this help?

GCV-R1: The spiritual help I received was salvation and the teachings I received. I am free from any fear of curses. I know Jesus is with me. The fear I have is for my children. I pray daily for them because they are not cut off from the ancestral line. Maybe because I am saved God will also help them.

13. What is your general view and opinion on generational curses? (Anything else that you would want me to know about generational curses)

GCV-R1: Nothing much. I am only concerned that there is a lot of people suffering out there with these problems. Some people have been so much oppressed that they have become desperately involved in going to witches, even among the saved. I pray that somehow they will also be helped. I believe God will set them free as he did with me. In our African traditions, these things are so real, but they should come to an end when someone gets saved.

I: Thank you very much for your time and significant contribution to my study. I pray that God will bless you.

Generational-Curse Victim R2 (GCV-R2)

RQ4c. What are the feelings and experiences of those who consider themselves victims of generational curses?

1. May I know something about you: Your name, age, occupation, and marital status?

GCV-R2: Sex: Male; I am 49 years old. I belong to the Nyakyusa tribe. I am involved with full-time teaching ministry in my church. I am married.

2. Can you describe your past religious background (religion, denomination) before you became a member of this church?

GCV-R2: Before I got saved I was an Anglican.

3. Explain your current religious experience, as it relates to how you became a member of this church, if you are filled with the Holy Spirit and how long you have been saved.

GCV-R2: I received Jesus as my savior when I was 28 years old. I have therefore been in salvation for 21 years. It was in an open air meeting that was prepared by a certain TAG church when I met Jesus. I became a member of the TAG church. However, I did not stay for long. When I got married, my wife introduced me to a friend who took us to the full gospel church for prayers. We became members of that church. We lived a life of serious struggle economically until we met another TAG friend who had attended teachings about generational curses. We decided to move into this current church because through those prayers, the curse of poverty that was on us was broken and we started to succeed in life.

4. In your understanding, what is a generational curse?

GCV-R2: Generational curse is when someone inherits evil behaviors, life problems and other things that make him/her a failure in life from his/her grandfather son clan. There are

families that fail in almost everything. You find that a grandfather was not educated, the father, and sometimes brother and sisters of this person fail to get education. In general, it is when bad things keep on happening in the clan or family.

5. Have you personally experienced any problems resulting from generational curses?

GCV-R2: Yes. As I told you, poverty was my main problem. It is not that we were not working. We worked very diligently, especially my wife, but poverty did not leave us. We were not succeeding even with all our efforts.

6. **(If yes)**, how did you know you are under generational curses? **(If no)**, can a born-again Christian be under the influence of generational curses? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

GCV-R2: As I said before, my wife introduced me to her friend who had also faced these problems. She took us to her church and we were helped. The man of God divinely discovered that the spirit of poverty which was also on some of my older relatives was on me and that is what hindered our success. That is how I discovered I am under a curse.

7. Based on your experience or what you know, what are the sources or reasons of generational curses and which ones do you see having the greatest effect on you (or the person you are informed about)?

GCV-R2: When you are born in a cursed family, those curses have a legal ground to follow you. They follow the blood line. Your fathers might have made covenants with the witch doctors, or the spirit world. You may not be aware of this but later in life the things follow you. As for me, I am not really aware of what caused the curses to be on me. But I know that there must be a reason beyond my understanding and beyond my power to control. My father was poor. I am told that even my grandfather was poor. Since the curse followed me also, there must be a reason but those responsible are not alive to tell me how the curse came to our family.

8. In your opinion, are demons, evil spirits or ancestral spirits related to generational curses? If yes, explain how this relates to your personal experience.

GCV-R2: I believe so. This is because; the curse starts with people who are not alive at present. This means that something extra human is involved in making the curse move from generation to generation. When I was prayed for also, demons manifested and they were rebuked. This means they were involved in making me poor.

9. **(If yes to Q5)** how have the generational curses affected your normal in terms of education, economy, family, and self-identity?

GCV-R2: I was poor. I did not succeed in anything. Also, spiritually, I was still bound by demons, even though I was saved.

10. Briefly describe the process/procedure a victim goes through in receiving deliverance from the curses. Does the process involve any financial seed?

GCV-R2: There is no specific procedure, even though, repentance is the first step. Curses follow you because there is sin in you or your ancestors. So repentance of your sins, and the sins of your fathers which are probably the causes of the curse on you is of primary importance. After repentance, you renounce any curse that is following you, you renounce words that might have been pronounced against you by people or witches, you claim the blessings of God on you. Normally it is the man of God who leads you through the process. You may pray for yourself as well but since you may not be aware of what is happening in your life or how to pray, they guide you. Money is not a requirement in the process, unless you choose to bless the man of God. He did not ask for money from me.

11. In your understanding, how and at what point in the life of a born-again Christian does the death of Jesus affect deliverance from generational curses?

GCV-R2: It is until the person knows he is under a curse and takes step to break away. When Jesus died, he died for everything. But even as it is necessary for someone to accept Jesus, it is also necessary for someone to seek for deliverance. Deliverance is not automatic.

Follow-up Q: How did you learn this?

R: The man of God always teaches this. Many people do not know this great revelation. They think that just by being saved they are delivered from curses.

12. (If yes to Q5), did you receive/are you receiving any spiritual help for your deliverance? If yes, (i) what kind of help? and (ii) how do you view your condition since you started receiving this help?

GCV-R2: The spirits of poverty were rebuked away and they left. I was taken through the deliverance sessions. I sat under teachings that are helping me to continue staying free and to help others. I am completely free. I am getting richer and now we have even built a storied building as our residence. I am also involved in teaching others and praying for them to be free from curses.

13. What is your general view and opinion on generational curses? (Anything else that you would want me to know about generational curses)

GCV-R2: My sister, many churches are deceiving their members that they are delivered from generational curses just because they are saved. No. I was saved and I was under curses. I think life becomes interesting when one is set free and this freedom is not automatic. There

must be a process after a person gets saved to discover things that are in his/her family and work toward complete deliverance.

I: Thank you very much for your time and significant contribution to my study. I pray that God will bless you.

Generational-Curse Victim R3 (GCV-R3)

RQ4c. What are the feelings and experiences of those who consider themselves victims of generational curses?

1. May I know something about you: Your name, age, occupation, and marital status?

GCV-R3: Sex: Female; I am a Zigua by tribe, 43 years old and married for more than 10 years now. I am having my own business in town as a way of earning a living.

2. Can you describe your past religious background (religion, denomination) before you became a member of this church?

GCV-R3: I am a daughter of PAG pastor. I grew up in the church so basically, this was my religion. I don't remember making any serious commitment to Jesus all my life in my father's church. I was just my religion because that is where I was born.

3. Explain your current religious experience, as it relates to how you became a member of this church, if you are filled with the Holy Spirit and how long you have been saved.

GCV-R3: As I told you, I was a PAG member. I don't know exactly when I got saved but at least I remember making serious commitments to Jesus after I was away from my home church. I joined a TAG church when I was in secondary school, still a teenager. I think this is when I seriously got saved. I was 17 years old, so I have been saved for 26 years now. Ten years later, I joined my current church. I discovered that in the TAG I was missing a lot of important teachings and blessings because they did not have any ministry to help those who are living under family curses. I had been suffering in poverty and deceases for long until a friend introduced me to this church.

4. In your understanding, what is a generational curse?

GCV-R3: When ancestral spirits keep on tormenting people in the same family, this family is under a generational curse. Someone may be prayed for but the spirits keep on coming or a person has diseases that do not go away in an ordinary medical treatment, what is this if it is not a generational curse. If you trace the past you will discover that someone or some people in his clan had the same problems.

5. Have you personally experienced any problems resulting from generational curses?

GCV-R3: Yes. I suffered a lot. My father was a Pentecostal pastor. But somehow, I think he did not know these issues of family curses. As I told you, I was not that committed to Jesus when I was in my father's church. But even the ones who seemed to be committed were at times found to be with demons. This caused me to investigate from other Pentecostals. That is when I discovered that I was not safe either. Our family was not making any progress in life. Very few people were rich or educated in the family. We my father was working hard but there was little success. I also inherited failures even though I was working hard in school.

6. **(If yes)**, how did you know you are under generational curses? **(If no)**, can a born-again Christian be under the influence of generational curses? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

GCV-R3: I met a friend secondary school who knew about these things. When she discovered I was struggling with my studies and live a difficult life, and learned that I was a pastor's daughter, she started teaching me of the necessity to seek for deliverance. She is the one who helped me know that I was under a curse.

7. Based on your experience or what you know, what are the sources or reasons of generational curses and which ones do you see having the greatest effect on you (or the person you are informed about)?

GCV-R3: My friend and later the pastor who led me through deliverance talked of many causes. Inherited names, visiting witches, sins of grandparents, being given to spirits through covenants, spoken words. My grandparents were Muslims and they were involved so much visiting witch doctors. I am also told that one of the elders in our clan had pronounced a curse on my grandfather because he was not taking care of him when he was old, so when he was about to die he said my grandfather would also not get someone to care for him. I think this is why we are not succeeding in life.

8. In your opinion, are demons, evil spirits, or ancestral spirits related to generational curses? If yes, explain how this relates to your personal experience.

GCV-R3: Exactly. How else would the curses be transferred? Even when someone is not demon-possessed, the demons are there to make sure that the curse is transferred. These curses start from the past. Spirits are involved in making the curses transferable because they are spirits and they exist in all families. No family has no ancestors.

9. How have the generational curses affected your normal life in terms of education, economy, family and self-identity?

GCV-R3: My main problem fruitless efforts. I was not succeeding in anything. My school life was difficult; I was not getting enough financial support from my father because he was also struggling financially. In general, there was failure in my life.

10. Briefly describe the process/procedure a victim goes through in receiving deliverance from the curses. Does the process involve any financial seed?

GCV-R3: I went for prayers for my problems. Pastor asked me my history and through that he discovered the curses I was struggling with and the possible causes, he had me repent of my personal sins and the sins of my grandparents then he started praying for me. Several times I was asked to confess the victory of Jesus on my life and his blessings. I also started attending teaching sessions where I was taught to live as a victor.

11. In your understanding, how and at what point in the life of a born-again Christian does the death of Jesus affect deliverance from generational curses?

GCV-R3: Jesus died for our curses also. But we have to seek for the deliverance he provided on the cross. I think, when the person discovers he has curses and asks for deliverance that is when he benefits from the death of Jesus. When we are saved, we are forgiven. But the effects of the sins of our grandparents have to be dealt with for us to be completely free.

12. (If yes to Q5), did you receive/are you receiving any spiritual help for your deliverance? If yes, (i) what kind of help? and (ii) how do you view your condition since you started receiving this help?

GCV-R3: I am well as you can see. I am even teaching others and helping them through the process.

13. What is your general view and opinion on generational curses? (Anything else that you would want me to know about generational curses)

GCV-R3: Everyone who is an African comes from some kind of African ancestral worship. Most of our ancestors were worshippers of the ancestral spirits. That way, they connected us to the ancestral world in a way that we cannot avoid the effects. I think everyone is under a curse from his past relatives and should not relax just because he is saved.

I: Thank you very much for your time and significant contribution to my study. I pray that God will bless you.

Generational-Curse Victim R4 (GCV-R4)

RQ4c. What are the feelings and experiences of those who consider themselves victims of generational curses?

1. May I know something about you: Your name, age, occupation, and marital status?

GCV-R4: Sex: Female; I am 27 years old, working with Tanzania Fellowship of Students. I am single.

2. Can you describe your past religious background (religion, denomination) before you became a member of this church?

GCV-R4: I was a Lutheran until I was 20.

3. Explain your current religious experience, as it relates to how you became a member of this church, if you are filled with the Holy Spirit and how long you have been saved.

GCV-R4: I got saved when I was in secondary school in a Christian union meeting. I got baptized in water and was filled by the Holy Spirit the same year. I have been in this current church for all the seven years I have been in salvation.

4. In your understanding, what is a generational curse?

GCV-R4: Generational curses are results of covenants that a family makes with Satan for the purpose of worshipping gods. The covenants follow the descendants of the generation that made them through diseases, demonic possessions, misbehaviors and others.

5. Have you personally experienced any problems resulting from generational curses?

GCV-R4: I have experienced things in my family that are related to these curses. My mother was the first wife to my father, but later they divorced. From that time, I experienced many difficult things. I actually discovered that divorce is a recurrent and persistent problem in my mother's clan. Many of my aunties are not with their husbands. They either separated or divorced. I don't know what covenant they have made in the past but there must be a problem.

6. **(If yes)**, how did you know you are under generational curses? **(If no)**, can a born-again Christian be under the influence of generational curses? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

GCV-R4: When my parents divorced I started experiencing very difficult life. It affected me such that I always was in deep thoughts. I could not even concentrate on my studies. As a result, I started failing in class. I got discouraged. Generally, my success in school deteriorated.

7. Based on your experience or what you know, what are the sources or reasons of generational curses and which ones do you see having the greatest affect on you (or the person you are informed about)?

GCV-R4: There are many that people mention, but for me as I said, covenants have affect on me. I have no evidence but what I have faced in my life is not normal. I am convinced that somewhere in life my parents made a covenant that is following them, especially my mother's side.

8. In your opinion, are demons, evil spirits, or ancestral spirits related to generational curses? If yes, explain how this relates to your personal experience.

GCV-R4: I believe so, even though I have not personally experienced any demonic influences. But I believe since these things are spiritual, some spirits must be involved.

9. (If yes to Q5) how have the generational curses affected your normal in terms of education, economy, family, and self-identity?

GCV-R4: My school life has been so much affected. I have come this far at college level by God's grace. But it was not easy. Also, when there are generational bondages in your family, it burdens you who are saved in this family, even though others may not know what is happening. You start fighting a lot of spiritual battles.

10. Briefly describe the process/procedure a victim goes through in receiving deliverance from the curses. Does the process involve any financial seed?

GCV-R4: Simply, prayers. It is God who delivers, so they pray for God to deliver you from the curses. Then, teachings of the word of God about the faith one has received. Remaining in constant prayers also as an individual is important; otherwise the things will keep coming back. I did not give any money for me to be prayed for. But I know that some pastors were asking for money. There is a place where the man of God started praying for those giving ten thousand, then five thousand and finally two thousand. Those who gave less than that sometimes he did not pray for them. But I think this is not right because it is God who delivers. I think even those who accept to give the money they are asked for do not read the Bible.

11. In your understanding, how and at what point in the life of a born-again Christian does the death of Jesus affect deliverance from generational curses?

GCV-R4: I believe that when a person gets saved, he is delivered. He now needs to be diligent in studying the word of God, and to keep away from the things he used to do before he was saved, the things that led him to the situation he is being delivered from. Some people over do the issue of praying for the person. I think when a person is taught about his faith, what has happened to him, how to pray for himself, these other things are not necessary.

12. (If yes to Q5), did you receive/are you receiving any spiritual help for your deliverance? If yes, (i) what kind of help? and (ii) how do you view your condition since you started receiving this help?

GCV-R4: I received spiritual help. I was prayed for and I was taught how to be steadfast and faithful to God. I am free, now my condition has significantly improved.

Follow-up Q: How do you know that it has improved?

R: I am now in college. The curse had affected my studies, but now I am doing very fine in my studies. Also, the fears that I had concerning separation or divorce in marriage has vanished. I believe mine will be different because Jesus has delivered me.

13. What is your general view and opinion on generational curses? (Anything else that you would want me to know about generational curses)

GCV-R4: I think people should be taught immediately they get saved about the faith they have received. They should be encouraged to be diligent in prayers and in studying the word of God. When this delays, someone grows in salvation with fears and beliefs that he is still being tormented by curses. But it is true that generational curses are a big problem. They hinder development.

I: Thank you very much for your time and significant contribution to my study. I pray that God will bless you.

Generational-Curse Victim R5 (GCV-R5)

RQ4c. What are the feelings and experiences of those who consider themselves victims of generational curses?

1. May I know something about you: Your name, age, occupation, and marital status?

GCV-R5: Sex: Male; I am approaching thirty and I am a university student, taking bachelor of pharmacy.

2. Can you describe your past religious background (religion, denomination) before you became a member of this church?

GCV-R5: My whole family is Sabbath (SDA), so I grew up as an SDA until I got saved back in the year 2007 and became a Pentecostal.

3. Explain your current religious experience, as it relates to how you became a member of this church, if you are filled with the Holy Spirit and how long you have been saved.

GCV-R5: I am now in Living Faith Church, Winner's Chapel. I am filled with the Holy Spirit, and I feel good where I am. I see God moving with me more than before.

4. In your understanding, what is a generational curse?

GCV-R5: I can say that they are things that happen in series following generations. They happened to fore fathers, fathers, and they follow children in that family or clan.

5. Have you personally experienced any problems resulting from generational curses?

GCV-R5: I would say yes, in some way, because I have seen it running in my family: my parents, then my siblings, and my clan in general. Thank God I have not experienced it directly because I had to deal with it early, the moment I realized there is such a thing in my family. *(There should have been a follow-up question here as to how he dealt with the curses. This is one area I missed very important information because someone else was doing the interview when I realized that my TAG identity is limiting my research).*

6. **(If yes)**, how did you know you are under generational curses? **(If no)**, can a born-again Christian be under the influence of generational curses? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

GCV-R5: I knew that my family was under a generational curse because I saw the trend of things happening. Same things happening to us over generations. Especially the issue of failing to be educated, failing to go to school on time, failing to move on with education.

7. Based on your experience or what you know, what are the sources or reasons of generational curses and which ones do you see having the greatest effect on you (or the person you are informed about)?

GCV-R5: What I know is that there are rituals or worship of gods that have been done by our fore fathers or even our parents, some sort of covenants, blood covenants. Those ones can be sources of generational curses. The ones that I see affecting my family are having children out of wedlock, divorces; my brothers have been experiencing such.

8. In your opinion, are demons, evil spirits, or ancestral spirits related to generational curses? If yes, explain how this relates to your personal experience.

GCV-R5: Yes, they are related. **(Follow-up Q: How?)**

R: So long as there are such things as rituals, blood covenants, sacrifices out of God's dimension, those things are there.

9. **(If yes to Q5)** how have the generational curses affected your normal in terms of education, economy, family, and self-identity?

GCV-R5: As I have said, these things did not affect me personally. As far as I am concerned I am free because I have received Jesus Christ. I know my identity in him. But I see the curses affecting my brothers. Some of them did not go to primary school straight. They had

to struggle. Others failed to go straight to secondary school or high learning. They had to reseat their exams and that has been the trend.

10. Briefly describe the process/procedure a victim goes through in receiving deliverance from the curses. Does the process involve any financial seed?

GCV-R5: The struggle normally comes because of lack of knowledge. Most people are ignorant; they don't even know that they are in generational curses. So they keep on struggling until they are set to light. They come to understanding and recognition that they are under those curses; that is when they start to fight and find their way out. What I can say is that total surrender to Jesus is important. Total deliverance and total freedom is by the grace of God. But total surrender to Jesus has a great role. When you surrender, you know the truth. When people know the truth they are set free. If you don't know the truth, there is no way you can be set free. The more you know the truth the more you become free. Concerning the issue of sowing a seed so that you can be delivered, what I believe is that when you give out of faith, God does out of your faith.

11. In your understanding, how and at what point in the life of a born-again Christian does the death of Jesus affect deliverance from generational curses?

GCV-R5: It's a process. Deliverance is a process. The more you know Jesus the more you get delivered. The more you know the word of God, the more you are set free. The moment you are just saved, there is no way you will be knowing everything. So it is a process.

12. (If yes to Q5), did you receive/are you receiving any spiritual help for your deliverance? If yes, (i) what kind of help? and (ii) how do you view your condition since you started receiving this help?

GCV-R5: Question not asked because the person does not consider himself a direct victim of the curses.

13. What is your general view and opinion on generational curses? (Anything else that you would want me to know about generational curses)

GCV-R5: What I can say is that, the more you get to know God the more you are delivered. This thing is there, I have experienced it in my family, I have seen it in others, but I believe that the more you get deep in God, the more you are set free.

I: Thank you very much for your time and significant contribution to my study. I pray that God will bless you.

Generational-Curse Victim R6 (GCV-R6)

RQ4c. What are the feelings and experiences of those who consider themselves victims of generational curses?

1. May I know something about you: Your name, age, occupation, and marital status?

GCV-R6: Sex: male; I am 26 years old. I am single. I am currently working with student ministry.

2. Can you describe your past religious background (religion, denomination) before you became a member of this church?

GCV-R6: I come from Roman Catholic background. I was born there and I grew up there until 2012. In 2009 I started worshipping with a Pentecostal ministry called Jesus Deliverance Center but this ministry went through a split; that is why I am no longer there. Later, in 2012 when I was in form six, reseating for my exam I moved to TAG and that is where am until today.

3. Explain your current religious experience, as it relates to how you became a member of this church, if you are filled with the Holy Spirit and how long you have been saved.

GCV-R6: I have been saved for almost 4 years now. Since I gave my life to Jesus my life has been having some changes. I have been changing day after day. I was once filled by the Holy Spirit but the experience has never come again.

4. In your understanding, what is a generational curse?

GCV-R6: Generational curses are a series of events that occur in a certain generation then it occurs in the other generation, and the other. That is what I understand.

5. Have you personally experienced any problems resulting from generational curses?

GCV-R6: Sure! I have experienced one thing. My father did not finish well his school. When he reached standard seven he had to repeat the class. My brother also experienced the same thing. When he reached form five, he had to repeat the class. It also happened to my sister and it is happening to me. So it has happened to almost everyone in our family. The other thing that I have experienced is that my mother's grandparents did not have a good marriage and that has been a problem in their clan. Most of them do not have good marriages. It has also happened with my parents. They have divorced. It seems this thing will go up to great grandchildren if we are not careful.

6. **(If yes)**, how did you know you are under generational curses? **(If no)**, can a born-again Christian be under the influence of generational curses? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

GCV-R6: This repetition of things is not normal. It is a curse. Why are things that happened to great grandparents happening to children and great grandchildren?

7. Based on your experience or what you know, what are the sources or reasons of generational curses and which ones do you see having the greatest effect on you (or the person you are informed about)?

GCV-R6: Sources of generational curses could be sins that have been done within a generation. The most important thing that I know is that sin is the cause of all these. Sins that were not repented in that particular clan.

8. In your opinion, are demons, evil spirits, or ancestral spirits related to generational curses? If yes, explain how this relates to your personal experience.

GCV-R6: When I was converted we had to go to my village to make prayers of separation, separating ourselves from family spirits because we discovered that those spirits are there. I got saved in 2012, and we went to the village for this purpose in 2013 when I was going to form five. We went home to make prayers because things were not working well in the family, there were quarrels and other things that were not good. That is when we discovered there are some evil spirits that were causing such things in our family.

9. **(If yes to Q5)** how have the generational curses affected your normal in terms of education, economy, family, and self-identity?

GCV-R6: Mainly, my education and my family life. The fact that my parents separated

10. Briefly describe the process/procedure a victim goes through in receiving deliverance from the curses. Does the process involve any financial seed?

GCV-R6: I believe I received deliverance from those curses. On my side, it involved traveling to my village, and when we were there we were having overnight prayers every Wednesday and Friday just to pray for our deliverance from the curses. In my former church, before I moved to TAG, we had series of those prayers of breaking curses. **(Follow-up Q:** Did you plant anything? **R:** I didn't).

11. In your understanding, how and at what point in the life of a born-again Christian does the death of Jesus affect deliverance from generational curses?

GCV-R6: From my experience and from the knowledge that I have learnt, many pastors tell us that receiving Jesus as your savior is not sufficient to deliver you from the curses. You might be having those curses even if you are saved; therefore, you have to go to a further step of being delivered. Therefore, I believe that up to now . . . at first I believed that once you are saved, you are delivered. But from the knowledge that I received from my church, my former church Jesus Deliverance Center, is that after you get saved you must get to another step of being delivered.

12. **(If yes to Q5)**, did you receive/are you receiving any spiritual help for your deliverance? If yes, (i) what kind of help? and (ii) how do you view your condition since you started receiving this help?

GCV-R6: I received spiritual help but just for a short time, like four weeks, and it was not consistent. **(Follow-up Q:** What kind of spiritual help were you receiving? R: Prayers). My condition changed, but from that time, I had to continue working more on my own to get that help because it was done for a very short time and I needed more of it but it was not there. So I had to continual working on my own, up to this time.

13. What is your general view and opinion on generational curses? (Anything else that you would want me to know about generational curses)

GCV-R6: Generational curses are in most of our families, especially the African families. Most of them have generational curses. And if you do not get the right education about this issue of generational curses, you might continue to be in these curses for a very long time. Most people do not know that they are living under generational curses until they see things happening. On my side, what I would suggest is to have many people explaining to people what is generational curse; because it is something that should be dealt with. Until I talked to you, I did not term them as generational curses, but I knew something evil is following my family. People may not know the name to call it but it is in their families.

I: Thank you very much for your time and significant contribution to my study. I pray that God will bless you.

APPENDIX K

CONTENT ANALYSIS RESULTS FOR RQ 4A AND 4B

Document 1: Teaching Session by GCP-R1: Dar-es-Salaam: November 8, 2015 (4 pages)

Document 2: Sermon by GCP-R2: Dar es Salaam: July 22, 2013 (2 pages)

The following themes emerge from these documents as revealed by the example quotes that follow each theme. The table that follows with the list of themes reveal the frequency the theme is suggested in the document.

Generational blessings as basis for generational curses (Code number 1)

Document 1: Just as you can be blessed you, can be curses as a result actions and covenants made by your parents

Document 2: We see that the blessings of Abraham descended also to his descendants. This means that blessings can be transferred from grandparents. In the same way, curses can be transferred from one generation to another

Visible/Observable signs/Forms of curses (Code 2)

Document 1: Do you have the following signs of curses in your life? (1) Chronic diseases especially inherited ones like arthritis, hypertension, diabetics, and cancer? (2) Mental disorders, barrenness, abortions? (3) Repeated separations and divorces?

Document 2: You may find a person that is a liar, thief, adulterer, selfish or argumentative because these are behaviors that result from family curses.

Effects of parents' sin on generations (Code 3)

Document 1: What kind of parents and grandparents did you have? Sorcerers, witch doctors, ancestral worshipers?

Document 2: What parents and clan did in the past have great effects on a person today

Effect of generational curses on an individual (Code 4)

Document 1: You may be cursed through the actions your parents committed

Document 2: A person might be behaving in certain ways even though he does not like, but it is because of his family

Demons and spirits as agents of curses (Code 5)

Document 1: Curses and bondages are brought by demons

Document 2: You must fight against all spirits that bring curses in your family and in your life

Leader's ability/Authority to break curses (Code 6)

Document 1: If you need prayers to be delivered from bondages and curses you may come to this church every Saturday from 10:00 AM up to 2:00 PM for special prayers

Document 2: By the authority I have in Jesus I command misfortunes and curses in your family to be broken in the Name of Jesus

Bible support for generational curses (Code 7)

Document 1: Some curses have their roots in your parents or grandparents (Exodus 20:4–5)

Document 2: We learn that when the Jews wanted to kill Jesus, they openly asked “let His blood be upon us and upon our children’s heads (Mathew 27:24–26). The Jews knew the truth that curses can pass from one generation to another.

Summary

Code		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Frequency	Doc. 1	2	4	2	4	9	1	1
	Doc. 2	3	3	3	3	3	1	3

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