

**THE QUEST FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL LOCAL COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP FOR
RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE MALAWIAN DISTRICT OF LILONGWE:
A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

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DECLARATION

I, Chancy Gondwe, hereby declare that **The quest for transformational local community leadership for rural development of the Malawian district of Lilongwe: a theological perspective** is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety, or in part, submitted it elsewhere for obtaining any qualification. The authors of all sources used or quoted herein have been duly acknowledged.

Signature.....

Date.....

ABSTRACT

In most African communities, local community leadership is highly esteemed and plays a crucial role in community development. Local community leaders, especially in rural areas, have much power and authority over community members and in most cases act as contact persons with development agents. They are key to the development of their communities. However, most communities experience a number of leadership challenges. A number of leaders are corrupt, oppressive, self-seeking and incapable of serving their communities. This hinders transformation in communities.

Therefore, this thesis presents the need for transformational local community leadership for community transformation in rural areas, Lilongwe rural (Malawi) in particular. It contends that for community transformation to take place there has to be a leadership that is transformational to guide such change. The local church is deemed as an ideal change agent that can model transformational leadership and reach out to local community leaders because of its nature, call and strategic position in local communities despite its imperfections.

To have a deeper understanding of the theme of this research, an empirical study was conducted in “Mgwayi” community in Lilongwe rural, Malawi, using a case study research strategy. An interdisciplinary approach was employed to gather primary and secondary data, which was analysed from a practical theological perspective. The results clearly indicate that the community experiences a number of leadership and general challenges caused by internal and external factors. The local church is playing some significant role in addressing these challenges; however, it can do better. Therefore, this study suggests that there is need for the local church to reclaim both its nature and its call so that it can take its rightful position and role in the community. There is need for the local church to exercise transformational leadership as modelled by Christ Jesus. Development agents can partner and work alongside the local church to empower it towards transformational leadership and being what it ought to be.

Key words: *Transformational leadership, transformation, local church/congregation, local community.*

OPSOMMING

In die meeste Afrika-gemeenskappe is die plaaslike gemeenskapsleiers hoog aangeskrewe en speel hulle 'n belangrike rol in die ontwikkeling van die gemeenskap. Plaaslike gemeenskapsleiers, veral in landelike gebiede, het baie mag en gesag oor die lede van die gemeenskap en tree in die meeste gevalle as kontakpersone op tussen die gemeenskap en ontwikkelingsagente. Hulle is die sleutel tot die ontwikkeling van hul gemeenskappe. Die meeste gemeenskappe ervaar egter 'n aantal uitdagings t.o.v. leierskap. 'n Groot aantal is korrupt, onderdrukkend, soek hul eie belang en nie in staat om die gemeenskap te dien nie. Dit verhinder transformasie in gemeenskappe.

Daarom bespreek hierdie tesis die behoefte aan transformerende plaaslike gemeenskapsleiers in landelike gebiede, in besonder landelike Lilongwe (Malawi). Dit beweer dat daar transformerende leiers moet wees om 'n gemeenskap te begelei deur verandering vir gemeenskaps-transformasie om plaas te vind. Die plaaslike kerk is die ideale agent vir verandering om transformerende leierskap te modelleer en uit te reik na plaaslike gemeenskapsleiers as gevolg van die aard, roeping en strategiese posisie in die plaaslike gemeenskappe ten spyte van die kerk se tekortkominge.

Om 'n groter begrip te ontwikkel vir die onderwerp van navorsing is 'n empiriese studie gemaak van die "Mgwayi" gemeenskap in landelike Lilongwe, Malawi, met behulp van 'n gevallestudie navorsing strategie. 'n Interdissiplinêre benadering is gebruik om primêre en sekondêre data in te samel, wat van 'n prakties-teologiese perspektief ontleed is. Die resultate dui duidelik aan dat die gemeenskap 'n aantal leierskap_ en ook ander algemene uitdagings ervaar. Dit word veroorsaak deur interne faktore en eksterne faktore. Die plaaslike kerk speel 'n belangrike rol in die hantering van hierdie uitdagings, maar kan verbeter hierop. Hierdie studie dui aan dat dit nodig is vir die plaaslike kerk om beide sy aard en roeping weer ernstig op te neem sodat hy sy regmatige plek en rol in die gemeenskap kan vervul. Daar is 'n behoefte vir die plaaslike kerk om transformerende leierskap te modelleer, volgens die voorbeeld van Jesus Christus. Ontwikkelingsagente kan saam met die plaaslike gemeente werk om die kerk te bemagtig tot transformerende leierskap sodat dit die instrument kan wees wat dit behoort te wees.

Sleutelwoorde: *Transformerende leierskap, transformasie, plaaslike kerk/gemeente, die plaaslike gemeenskap.*

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the loving memory of my sister Mrs. Sophie Kalua and her husband Mr. Yoram Kalua together with their two children who slept in the Lord some years ago. I especially dedicate it to my late sister who mentored me in the Lord and demonstrated to many how to live an abundant life in Christ despite the pain, suffering and stigma due to HIV and AIDS. Your legacy awakens hope.

Praise, honour and glory be unto the LORD forever!

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ACRONYMS

- ADC - Area Development Committee
CBO - Community Based Organisation
CCAP - Church of Central Africa Presbyterian
COTN - Children of the Nations
DA - District Assembly
GVH - Group Village Headman
HIV & AIDS - Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
KJV - King James Version
MASAF - Malawi Social Action Fund
MP - Member of Parliament
NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation
NIV - New International Version
SC - Senior Chief
SDA - Seventh Day Adventist
TA - Traditional Authority
VDC - Village Development Committee
VH - Village Headman
WC - Ward Councillors

***When He saw the crowds,
He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless,
like sheep without a shepherd.
Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.
Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field."***

(Matthew 9:36-38)

THE QUEST FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL LOCAL COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE MALAWIAN DISTRICT OF LILONGWE: A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Africa is one of the continents where local community leadership is highly esteemed and plays a key role in all community activities. Almost each and every community has local leaders or influential people such as chiefs, village headmen, merchants, moneylenders, sangomas,¹ teachers, politicians, the clergy and others. In explaining the role of leaders, Adeyemo (2006) shows that African elders/leaders are repositories of history and they are regarded as problem solvers and peacemakers. These leaders are often appointed or assume their positions following various local reasons and criteria. Regardless of their leadership quality, they have authority, influence and exercise their supposed leadership roles. By virtue of their position and status, they are expected to take initiative and a leading role in the development of their communities in various ways and in other community activities.

Talking about traditional leadership in the African context, Rukuni (2009: 102) says:

traditional leaderships are still relevant today because they relate to the ordinary people in the village... Their systems are based on very practical approaches to leadership because they are highly decentralized, making it possible for decisions to be taken and actions to occur where they are needed most.

This shows that local community leadership is crucial in achieving a self-reliant sustainable community development.

Despite the perceived value of African leaders as stated above, outsiders often have a wrong impression of rural communal village life and its leadership. Burkey (1993: 40) observes that “because outsiders have so little experience of it, they tend to romanticize village life.” Conversely, he argues that:

Sharp contradictions among different groups with conflicts of interests exist in most Third World villages. Accordingly, there are dominance/dependence relationships even at the village level which need to be understood. These

¹Traditional healers in the South African context

relationships give power to the dominant (landlord, the trader, the moneylender, the bureaucrat) and enable them to exploit the poor (Burkey, 1993: 41).

Therefore, from the grass-root level in communities there are paternalistic relationships and oppressive leaders and leadership structures. These perpetuate poverty and the plight of the poor right from the family, school, local church, and village level. Leadership is often confused with positions. Maxwell (2007: 15) says, “it’s not the position that makes the leader; it’s the leader that makes the position.” Hence, there is a need for local community leadership that is transformational and understands its role and responsibility in the local community. Such leadership is to be in touch with the local people, represents their needs and can facilitate a desired community transformation. Barna (1997: 18) makes a bold statement that “nothing is more important than leadership.” He argues that there is need for good leaders who will do whatever it takes to facilitate qualities like righteousness and obedience to Christ in sinful mortals in this broken world (*Ibid*).

I have studied modern history to comprehend the dynamics of revolutions, people movements, societal systems and national fortunes. The result is the conviction that there have not been – and are not likely to be – any significant and successful movements, revolutions or other systems in which strong, visionary leaders were not at the forefront of those groups, leading the way for change in thought, word and deed (Barna, 1997: 19).

This vividly shows that leaders play a crucial role in bringing positive and meaningful change in communities. In addition to this, looking at current affairs in different nations in the world today, there’s no doubt that “we live in a world that’s crying out for better leadership” according to Hybels (personal communication, 2011). Therefore, good leadership is indispensable for the transformation of any community more especially rural communities that often fall prey to the politics and manipulations of the urban elites.

This researcher’s understanding of the crucial role that local community leadership plays (or can play) in bringing sustainable community transformation made it necessary to conduct this empirical study. The aim is to establish the reality of the local community leadership and its implications on development from an insider perspective and explore the local church’s stand and role in community transformation.

1.2 Research Problem

1.2.1 Problem Statement

It is undeniable that we are facing a leadership crisis in Africa. Ayittey in Dalglish (2009:42) laments:

Africa is a mess – economically, politically and socially. Despite Africa's vast natural resources, its people remain mired in the deadly grip of poverty, squalor and destitution while buffeted by environmental degradation and brutal tyranny. Most Africans are worse off today than they were at independence in the 1960s. African leaders have failed Africa.

This crisis extends from family, community and national level. Instead of being sources and foundations of security, the families and communities have become mechanisms of suppression and subordination, particularly for women, children and the weak (Korten, 1990: 170). Most leaders who come from these families and communities, and are in positions of power and influence are concerned with maintaining their relatively privileged status (Burkey, 1993: 41) to the disadvantage of the less powerful and less privileged. This shows that leadership structures perpetuate socio-economic injustices from a grass-root level, therefore, the presence and effects of sin in these structures and its impact on society is undeniable. Sin is in the very fabric of traditional/local community leadership structures that make people to

live selfishly, exploit others and accumulate wealth in order to have a 'fulfilling' life. Sin prevents people from experiencing the abundant life that God offers humankind through his son Jesus Christ. It is sin that causes people to oppress others and institute laws that deprive millions of their basic human rights (August, 2010: 18).

There are also a lot of power struggles among community leaders (e.g. chiefs) because they are now appointed and bankrolled by governments to serve their interests (Burkey, 1993: 41). In essence, these leaders play a political role on the grass-root level. They do not represent the diverse interests of local people under them, but political leaders above them who victimise the poor and the marginalised. This kind of leadership leaves a lot to be desired as far as local community leadership for community transformation is concerned. In communities where leaders are held in high regard and are a point of contact with development agents, one can only assume that much price is being paid because of this problem. The consequences on the development of communities are enormous.

When the local community leadership is assumed or inherited (e.g. chieftaincy in most cases) and not appointed based on a person's leadership qualities and capacity, leadership problems obviously become inevitable, not only in the day-to-day running of community affairs, but also in community development process.

In Malawi, which is the context of this study, leadership has not been spared in the above mentioned crisis. In the past three years, the country has experienced different challenges; inter alia, social, economic and political in nature. There has been chronic fuel and foreign currency shortages, high inflation rates, tribalism and nepotism², passing of repressive laws by the legislature, politically instigated violence, and abuse of human rights by the government leadership (The Episcopal Conference of Malawi: 2010). In the midst of all this, ordinary citizens, especially in rural areas are seemingly the ones who pay the biggest price because the majority of the population are poor and live in rural areas.³ Rural community leadership seems to be corrupt and manipulated by the government to serve the interests of those with more power. It appears that rural community leadership is simply a replica and a puppet of the supreme political authorities in the nation. Gilchrist and Taylor (2011: 123) summarise this by observing that:

Paradoxically, community leaders are not always the best people to champion community interests, even though they may be hard-working and articulate. Their role can sometimes put them at odds with other members of the community that they purport to represent. This can be for a variety of reasons. They may have got caught up in partnership arrangements, devoting lots of spare time to committees and leaving little energy to keep in touch with what ordinary residents want. Or they may be too partisan, interested only in narrow issues or obtaining resources for their favourite groups.

Unfortunately, the local church finds itself operating under such kind of community leadership and seems not to be spared of this leadership crisis as well. Prime (2005: 16) says, "the church of our Lord Jesus Christ is desperately in need of leaders." He finds that "[t]he lack of outstanding leaders in the church as a whole is a symptom of the health of the church in its local context." Evidently, the problem emanates from the local context. This is because often, it is the same community leaders with money, power and authority that have influence in the local church and the whole

²The use of one's power and influence to obtain/give good jobs or unfair advantage for members of your own family

³Source: Malawi National Statistics office. Link: http://www.nso.malawi.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=72%3Ademography-and-other-social-indicators&catid=2&Itemid=1

community at large. Owing to their positions and resources, they know how to pull strings from every angle of the community. This means that there is a need for good leadership in both the local church and community at large. This seems to be one of the factors that perpetuate the existence of poverty in most communities. The assumption is that a transformed and transformational leadership is ideal for sustainable community development.

Given the leadership situation discussed above, it can be concluded that unless the leaders are transformed there cannot be transformation in the community. This is explained further by August (2010: 18) who contends that the transformation of the human heart is so important. He also asserts that “when people’s lives are changed through the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ they will begin to see the need to help others in need – especially the poor” (*Ibid*). This is vital because people cannot transform others if they are not transformed themselves; they cannot give what they do not have and cannot take others where they have not been or cannot reach. However, this leaves one wondering, if the church is the vehicle for community transformation, how can it spear-head change if it lacks the desired leadership within itself? What hope is there for the local church and the local community at large?

1.2.2 Research Question

The research question of this study is basically two-fold:

- What is the impact and role of local community leadership on the community transformation process? What challenges are associated with their role?
- What role and impact can the local church play in changing the current status quo of local community leadership in order to bring community transformation despite its pitfalls?

1.2.3 Aim and objectives

This study’s aim is to:

1. Explore and assess the implications and role of current local community leadership in the transformation of a rural local community in Lilongwe, Malawi.
2. To reaffirm the role the local church can play, as a vehicle of community development, in shaping a leadership that is dynamic and transforming

The objectives are as follows:

- To assess the role and impact of local community leadership for community development.
- To establish the effects of local community leadership for the development of a community.
- To explore the role of the local church, as a vehicle of community development, in transforming local community leadership for the development of a community.
- To enlighten the local church and development agents about current issues surrounding local community leadership as far as community development is concerned.

1.2.4 Hypothesis

The guiding hypothesis for this study is that *the local church, though not perfect, can play a vital role in modelling good leadership in local communities and can reach-out to transform local community leadership for community transformation. The local church is key to the transformation of local community leadership in order for it to facilitate community transformation because of the church's nature, call, and strategic position in the community.*

1.2.5 Motivation

This study is derived from the researcher's personal experience. The researcher comes from a background of working with a Christian Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) for almost five years. Through this experience, he worked with five different local communities in which the organization had different projects. This exposure gave the researcher first-hand experience with the poor masses in local communities and their leadership at grass-root levels. The researcher became convinced of the crucial role the community leadership can have and ought to play if communities are to be transformed. Their role and influence are key towards community transformation. Hence, the researcher developed an interest to study this vital field and endeavours to make a positive contribution regarding this topic.

1.3 Conceptualisation

The definitions of terms used in this study are subjective to the practical theological perspective and understanding of development. However, they are not intended to be absolutised since this study takes an interdisciplinary approach with the aim of analysing and understanding community leadership in a holistic manner. Therefore, this study finds great enrichment in some concepts through dialogue with other disciplines.

1.3.1 Transformation

Transformation is a key concept in this study and it is considered from Bragg's perspective. Bragg (1987: 39) defines transformation as God's action of taking what is and turning it into what it could and should be. Its goal is that "God's purposes be realised, as is revealed in the Old Testament concept of shalom – harmony, peace, health, well-being, prosperity, justice – and in the New Testament image of the kingdom, which is both present and coming" (*Ibid*). Characteristics of transformation are: life sustenance, equity, justice, dignity and self-worth, freedom, participation, reciprocity, cultural fit, ecological soundness, hope, and spiritual transformation (Bragg, 1987: 40-46).

On a different note, Sine (1987) observes that the term *development* has a Western origin and is a secular concept. It carries with it Western values of a better future economically and "focusing largely on human activities of production and consumption. The 'good life' [is] synonymous with self-seeking and the ability to produce and consume ever-increasing quantities of goods and services" (Sine, 1987: 3). Therefore, the concept of *transformation* is much preferred to the traditional concept of *development* in this study, which is synonymous to Westernisation and is limited in its scope according to the researcher's view. However, development carries an important aspect of *growth* which is also key to the concept of transformation. Hence, the two terms are interchangeably used in some circumstances in this study.

1.3.2 Transformational/transforming leadership

Transformational or transforming leadership is another concept vital in this study and worth explaining in this initial stage. Osmer (2008: 178) describes transforming leadership as a kind of leadership that leads “an organization [or community] through a process of ‘deep change’ in its identity, mission, culture, and operating procedures.” He also discusses two other forms of leadership in addition to transforming leadership:

- *Task competence*: which deals with “performing well the leadership tasks of a role in an organization”;
- *Transactional leadership*: which deals with “influencing others through a process of trade-offs [i.e. reciprocity and mutual exchange]” (*Ibid*).

In concluding his analysis, Osmer (2008) acknowledges the need of all the three forms of leadership. However, he observes that it is *transforming leadership* that is needed most today (e.g. in traditional congregations) because it can guide an organisation through a process of deep change.

This kind of leadership is also crucial in the process of transformation because one of its major tasks is to cast a vision of what the organisation (community, in our case) should become and mobilising followers who are committed to this vision (Osmer, 177). Most importantly, it is a calling from God to lead people with Christ-like character (Barna, 1997: 25), that is, leading them from where they are to where they ought to be according to God’s plan for them.

According to Osmer (2008: 178), one of the major challenges of this remarkable leadership form is that it is risky and costly because it encounters great resistance from followers. This challenge might even be experienced on a greater scale in a community than a church context because a community consists of a diverse group of people, both Christians and non-Christians. However, this study considers the concept of transformational leadership as ideal for community transformation because of its nature despite the risks and cost.

1.3.3 Local community

In this study a local community is regarded as a diverse group of people and all creation living in a particular geographical area – rural or urban (Gondwe, 2010: ii).

Here, much reference to local community is made to “Mgwayi” community in Malawi where this empirical study was conducted.

1.3.4 Local church/congregation

This researcher’s basic understanding of a local church or congregation is that it is an assembly of Christians in a particular context instituted and called by God (Gondwe, 2011: ii). It “is the local manifestation of the [universal] church in society. Congregations are faith communities that endeavour to be faithful effective witnesses and God’s servants in this world where they proclaim the Good News in word and deed” (Hendricks, 2004:19). Key aspects to the church concept are that it is *called by God, constituted by God and called to a community*. The number of congregants and where they meet is insignificant but its presence and power through Christ Jesus. According to August (2010: 43),

The Church as an integral part of God’s new creation, embodies the holistic meaning of the Biblical message, viz. that salvation is not only spiritual – it not only changes people’s lives, it changes people’s relationships and living conditions, it alters structures, in fact it changes the world.

The understanding and role of the local church cannot be over emphasised. This study considers it as an ideal context in which transformational leadership can be moulded and modelled; as well as a catalyst for community transformation. In this study, reference to *local churches* is made to some congregations/denominations which were studied in “Mgwayi” community; for instance, the Baptist Church, Seventh Day Adventist Church, and African Abraham Church. These churches are not synonymous to the concept of the local church by virtue of being Christian congregations, according to this study. However, the local church or its elements may be present in these denominations.

1.4 General indication of research methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach in order to have a better understanding of the current situation of the local community leadership from an insider perspective and in a holistic manner. Hendricks (2004: 226) says that a qualitative approach examines and interprets observations with a purpose of discovering the underlying meanings and patterns of relationships. It “describes in order to understand human behaviour” (Ibid)and ultimately find solutions to issues affecting humans. Louw

(1998: 5) echoes this sentiment by indicating that qualitative research focuses on interpretative and naturalistic approach; meaning that “qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.” Hence, this study used a case study research design in order to achieve its purpose.

This study gathered both primary and secondary data relevant to the theme. Collection of primary data was done through a multiple method approach that consisted of semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and participant observations; while secondary data was collected by examining several documentary sources. Data analysis involved examination and interpretation in light of the theme of this study.

1.5 Area of field study and target population

The empirical study in this project was conducted in a community referred to here as “Mgwayi,” a semi-rural⁴ area in a Malawian district of Lilongwe. This community was chosen because of convenience; it is easily accessed since it is close to Lilongwe City. The researcher had to choose a community of convenience for this study because he was working under very limited financial resources for this project. In addition to this, during the time of this study the Malawi nation was going through economic crisis – with chronic fuel shortages which paralysed the transport system. This implied that travelling to very remote areas, which could have been more ideal for this study, on a regular basis as required for such a study was almost impossible. Hence, he had to settle for a convenient community (with rural features) as the case for this study.

The community under study is commonly referred to as “Mgwayi Village” by outsiders, but it is actually comprised of seven villages (or chiefdoms⁵) each with a chief (formally called Village Headman). These chiefdoms are: Mgwayi I, Mgwayi II, Ntondo, Njiwa, Moyo, Chisemphere, and Nkhala. All of them are under Chief Njiwa as the Group Village Headman (GVH) and are in the same geographical area of

⁴This word is used because “Mgwayi” community is within the vicinity of Lilongwe City; however life in this community is typical of a rural area.

⁵A chiefdom is a territory under the rule of a chief

approximately 900m² with an estimated population of 3,000; consisting of about 200 households.⁶ Although these chiefdoms are in one local community, they do not have an umbrella name for the whole community. The community is called according to the different chiefdoms that exist despite the fact that there are no physical demarcations separating these chiefdoms. In fact, they are very inter-connected in many ways – for example they share the same culture (except for the Moyo chiefdom, which belongs to a different tribe); they inter-marry and work together in development activities. Therefore, it was ideal to study these chiefdoms as one community since some of the chiefdoms are too small⁷ to be studied in isolation for the purpose of this research. The researcher will use the umbrella name “Mgwayi” *Community* in reference to the seven chiefdoms in this study just for convenience sake and because of its familiarity with outsiders.

The target population group for this study was men and women, leaders and non-leaders, as well as young and old. The minimum age for the youth that were interviewed was thirteen years. However, general and informal interactions and observations were made with children under the age of thirteen in order to learn and see things through their eyes.

1.6 Basic outline of the thesis

The outline of this thesis is as follows:

Chapter 1: lays a background of the theme and study. It states the problem, aim and objectives, and hypothesis of this thesis. It also defines key concepts used in this study.

Chapter 2: In this chapter a profile of “Mgwayi” community where the empirical study was conducted is presented. The profile includes the political, socio-cultural, economic, demographic and ecclesiastical environment. Data relevant to the theme of study is presented and discussed.

Chapter 3: This chapter gives a theological framework which informed and guides the theme of this study. It also gives a demarcation of the literature covered in this

⁶Source: Children of the Nations. Link: <http://www.cotni.org/pages/mgwayi>

⁷Comprising of the chief’s close relatives only – at least 10 house-holds

research study and its rationale. Leadership and the role of the local church in community transformation are discussed.

Chapter 4: This chapter presents the research methodology followed in the execution of the empirical study. An account of practical procedures undertaken before embarking on field study and during the empirical study is presented.

Chapter 5: Here data is presented, analysed, interpreted and discussed with a focus on local community leadership, the local church's role and general challenges facing "Mgwayi" community.

Chapter 6: In this final chapter of the thesis, significant points are summarised and a conclusion is drawn basing on the research findings. Then an interpretation of the study in light of the hypothesis and theory is done. Recommendations are made and a ministry strategy is finally proposed.

CHAPTER TWO

A PROFILE OF “MGWAYI” COMMUNITY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a profile of “Mgwayi” community where an empirical study was done. The profile is presented in light of the theme of this study. Different aspects of the community are discussed in its context in order to have a better picture of different issues that affect the local leadership, community development and life in general. This is important because “a community does not exist in isolation. It must be studied and understood in terms of its external and internal environments” (Swanepoel & de Beer, 1996: 1). This kind of study helps outsiders to understand factors that influence everyday life in a community, that is, why things happen the way they do.

2.2 Location and a brief history of “Mgwayi” community

“Mgwayi” community is located about 5 kilometres west of Malawi’s Capital City Lilongwe in the area of Traditional Authority (TA) Njewa. Lilongwe is in the central region of Malawi and became the capital city in 1975 after being moved from Zomba, the colonial capital. Lilongwe District⁸ has a total population of 1.9 million people according to the Population and Housing Census Report (2008); of which about 55% live in the city and 45% in Lilongwe rural (*Ibid*).

“Mgwayi” community was originally located across the stream, to the east of where it is today. According to the local people’s account, the land was then sold to a seed producing company, apparently Seed-Co,⁹ and was turned into a farm. The village was hence relocated by TA Njewa to where it is today. The people divided the land by themselves according to their chiefs, Village Headmen, and there were no physical boundaries demarcating the chiefdoms. The land they relocated to was previously used as their crop-field.

⁸ Lilongwe District comprises of Lilongwe city and rural.

⁹ Seed Company

Figure 2: Map of Lilongwe/Malawi



Map source: Lilongwe Profile, 2006 (Lilongwe District Assembly)

2.3 Political Environment

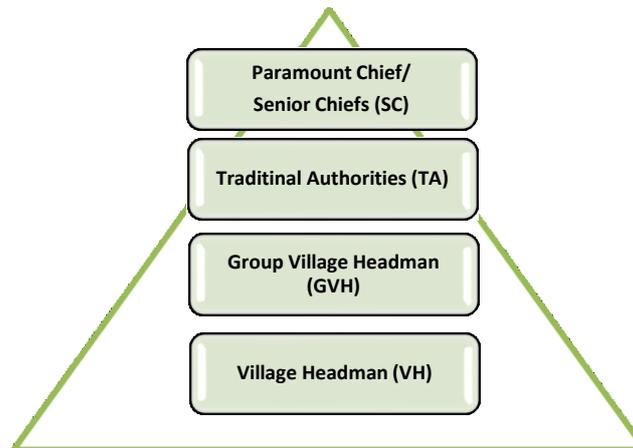
2.3.1 Chiefs and the power struggle

Chiefs and other community leaders are held in high regard in this community like in many African communities. Chiefs have undisputable power and authority and hold the key to access to their chiefdom. No significant activity can take place in their community without their knowledge and authorisation. Every development agent has to be authorised by the chief before conducting any development activity.

Chiefs in Malawi are on government's pay-roll on monthly basis. This is said to be honorarium aimed at encouraging and appreciating the leadership and development role they play. However, this seems to put them in an awkward position – in that this makes them government employees with an obligation to be loyal to the political ruling party of that time. This makes it difficult for them to speak against the party or government in any sense because, as it is commonly said, they cannot bite the hand that feeds them. It also makes it difficult for them to be objective and democratic in dealing with their people who are diverse politically. Hence, chiefs seem to be actively involved in politics and act as grass-root political agents of the governing party. Some chiefs may be against the idea of being used as the government's political agents, but in reality it is difficult for them to openly show that because of the government's envisaged "heavy hand" on them.

The higher their position, the higher their perks, power, and authority; the highly paid are the Senior Chiefs (SC) and TA's who also enjoy the benefits of a house constructed by the government, among others. "A TA has an extremely strong power [and authority] on any chiefs [under him]. Yet, due to the scale of his area, his direct intervention is rare" (Delaplace, 2010: 5). It is usually the Group Village Headman and Village Headman who are constantly in touch with the people on the ground and are the ones who have direct power, authority and intervention in daily community life.

The following diagram shows the chiefs hierarchy which determines their power, authority and honorarium:

Figure 3: *Chiefs' hierarchy*

The power, authority and financial benefits chiefs enjoy, create a situation in which power struggles concerning chieftaincy are inevitable. In “Mgwayi” community this is evidenced by the number of chiefs and chiefdoms in a not so large community. Seven chiefs rule an area of approximately 900m² with a population of about 3,000 people (about 200 households).¹⁰ Some of the chiefdoms in this community are composed of about ten households – their close relations only. According to the local people’s account, some chiefdoms broke away from others due to power struggles or dissatisfaction with service delivery of their previous chief, especially in distribution of aid. It is also said that some chiefs bribe the TA to install them as the VH. Delaplace (2010: 3) elaborates on chief creation, elevation and some of the power struggles among the Chewa communities:

A new chief position can be created if a family, when its number of members reaches a critical size, decides to split. It can also be a powerful and ambitious chief who denies the authority of the existing Group [GVH] and who becomes Group [GVH] himself...The creation or upgrade of a chief requires payment to the TA (around 40 000 Malawian Kwacha [i.e. about R1 250]) and his authorization. The TA usually agrees. The reasons commonly given to create a new chief are (most commons first):

- A high number of people is difficult to rule
- Various privileges can be expected from political leaders and according to the chief position: infrastructures, equipments, coupon for fertilizer or cash.
- The existing chief rules the different families with inequity – he favours his own family – or creates disagreement.
- Pride, prestige.

Note about creation and upgrade: for the last few years, there has been a huge increase in the number of chiefs. This trend has several causes. Among them are the advantages related to the fertilizer subsidies: families can get more and have better control on coupons. The TAs, who are paid when a chief is created or

¹⁰Source: <http://www.cotni.org/pages/mgwayi>

upgraded, can be cupid. So, to become a chief can be seen as an investment with promising social and financial benefits. This “feudal” system is still very alive in rural areas, despite new societal trends induced by democratization, multi-parties, right and freedom claims (sic).

This seems to be true and evident in “Mgwayi” community looking at the number of chiefs located in one small community with a small population. Development agents, especially NGOs, also seem to fuel divisions among the chiefs in this community. They do not make proper research and consultation about local community leadership and challenges; hence, they do not follow right protocols in getting consent and support from local leaders before embarking on development projects.

The government has much influence on the selection and appointment or elevation of SC/TA’s. Despite that the selection of the chief is culturally the royal family’s role, “due to political pressures, families may have to propose the one selected by the government” (Delaplace, 2010: 6). The government usually wants senior traditional leaders that support its political agenda and can thereby influence other traditional leaders to mobilise people to support the party in the government.

2.3.2 Chiefs and development committees

Chiefs and other local leaders form development committees on village, area, and district levels which facilitate development programmes and liaise with NGO’s and the government. These development committees are called: Village Development Committee (VDC), which comprises of VH, GVH, other local leaders and village representatives; Area Development Committee (ADC), which comprises of GVH, TA, Member of Parliament (MP) and Ward Councillors (WC)¹¹ from that particular area, and development agents; District Assembly, which comprises of the District Commissioner, MPs, WCs and TAs from the district. In the absence of Ward Councillors, as it is the case at the moment in Malawi, it is the chiefs who seem to play Ward Councillors’ role as far as rural development is concerned. This, apparently, makes these local leaders to be even more actively involved in politics by virtue of their role.

¹¹Currently there are no Ward Councillors since their offices become vacant after the end of their term of office in 2004 and since then Malawi has not conducted local government elections.

Therefore, the power, authority, and political roles chiefs play in local communities in Malawi, particularly in “Mgwayi” community are very significant as far as community development is concerned. They are an entry point for development as well as contact persons who liaise with development agents. The success of every development activity depends on the support and initiative of the chief. Every development agent intending to work in this community has to understand the political environment and gain the chief’s blessing in order to succeed.

2.4 Socio-Cultural Environment

2.4.1 Communal life

Chewa communities, like many other Malawian and African communities, are very communal in life-style; among other things, they share basic life necessities, do things together, and embrace extended family members. Through participatory observations conducted during field study, it was noticed that women share things like crop-seeds, food-stuff, and help one another in doing household tasks. Families usually have communal meals.

During funerals the community’s inter-dependent and *umunthu (ubuntu)* practice of “I am because we are” becomes more evident. Every household in the community contributes maize flour and money (K20; about R0.60) depending on their ability to be used during the funeral ceremony. Ladies from the same chiefdom prepare food together on open fires and the people attending the funeral also eat together based on the same category (chiefdom). Visitors are accommodated in these categories depending on their status. High profile visitors are usually served together with chiefs.

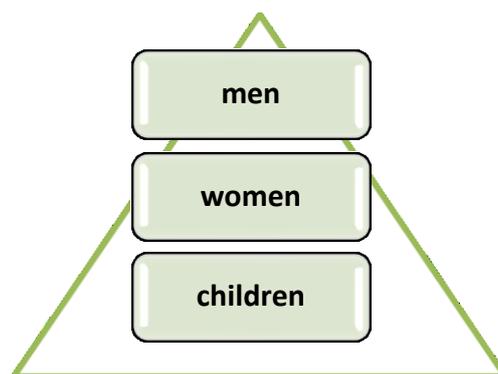
2.4.2 Social structures and gender issues

The Chewas are a matrilineal community, which means that they trace descent through maternal line. For instance, it is the nephew to the chief (the son to the chief’s sister) that inherits the throne. However, this does not imply that they are matriarchal – meaning women have more power and authority than men. In terms of power and authority in the community and families, the Chewas are actually patriarchal. Men have much power and authority over women. In a family set-up, the

wife's brother is the head of the family culturally even when the husband is still alive. Children belong to the maternal side in case of divorce or death of a spouse. The husband is answerable to his brother-in-law (the wife's brother) in terms of how he raises his children.

On the contrary, Moyo chiefdom is different from the Chewa chiefdoms in Mgwai community. It is patrilineal and patriarchal because it is of a different tribe and culture (Ngoni tribe) who trace descent through paternal line. In this tribe, the chief's son inherits the throne. However, this Ngoni tribe seems to be so much assimilated into the Chewa culture that they have a lot in common and there seems to be no significant difference as far as gender issues are concerned. In all, men seem to dominate.

Figure 4: *social structure hierarchy*



Therefore, gender inequalities are common in “Mgwai” community being a patriarchal society. This is evidenced in the local leadership positions. All the seven chiefs in this community, as well as the TA Njewa, are men. Although there are some women working as advisors to the chief or acting chiefs in absence of the chief, they are not usually chosen as heirs except when there is no suitable male heir. This is consistent with what happens in the local churches. It was observed that most important positions in the local churches are filled by men (i.e. deacons, church elders and pastors) despite that all are allowed in these positions. Hence, it is clear that women do not have much power in decision making on important things in the daily life of the community.

Abuses and maltreatments of women and girls are common. Men are allowed to be polygamous (to marry more than one wife), while it is a taboo for women to marry more than one man or have extra-marital affair. Most chiefs and other men practice polygamy. This kind of practice results in the spread of diseases, especially HIV & AIDS in the community and leads to an increase in number of child and female headed households – as a result of divorce or death of a husband. In such kind of a polygamous community, one would suppose that the death of a husband leaves at least three women widowed and at least five children fatherless.

There is a clear division of gender roles in “Mgwayi” community. From an early age, boys and girls are taught roles and values that are culturally accepted according to their gender. This was observed even in the games children play; there is a clear division between games that boys and girls play. In daily activities, women and girls usually clean the house, cook, fetch water, do laundry, pound maize and go to the maize mill, raise children; while men and boys usually split firewood, work in the crop-fields, dig graves, dig pit latrines, build houses, and dig wells. Usually men and boys do out-door and manual activities while girls and women do in-door activities/household chores.

However, girls and women often find themselves in a position whereby they are required to do all kinds of roles due to the absence of fathers and male figures in a number of households. Men are often absent from their families and communities due to their jobs, beer drinking habits, divorce, death or migration. A considerable number of men and young men work outside their community to provide for their families. Some men move out of the village when they get married due to their cultural practice called *chikamwini*, whereby the husband follows the wife.

2.4.3 Education and Literacy

Illiteracy levels are very high in “Mgwayi” community due to a number of factors. There is lack of motivation to study among many school-going children and the youths because of poor quality education they receive from the public primary and secondary schools they attend. These schools do not have good or enough structures to conducive accommodate the number of school-going children within their catchment area. A high number of adults (parents and guardians) are also

illiterate; as a result, they do not have much interest in their children's education and do not motivate them to go to school. Hence, most children drop out of school and end up beer drinking with early pregnancies and marriages.

A Christian NGO called Children of the Nations (COTN) is doing a commendable task in providing quality education to orphaned and vulnerable children in this community. COTN provides free education to selected nursery school children as well as elementary school (grades 1-3). They also have a high school called COTN International Christian Academy next to "Mgwayi" community which provides quality education to orphaned and vulnerable children under their care, which includes some from "Mgwayi" community. Apart from the educational programmes, they also do other programmes in the community aimed at transforming the lives of children and the community. For instance, COTN conducts occasional evangelistic programmes, micro-finance programme for widows (e.g. pig farming), feeding programme for nursery school children, and also provides basic material needs e.g. clothes, blankets, and soap. The Organisation's presence in the community makes a huge difference despite that it does not reach out to the entire "Mgwayi" community (i.e. all the seven chiefdoms).¹²

2.4.4 Cultural practices

An understanding of the cultural environment in any society is crucial to development because culture tells about people's norms and values and these are not universal. Culture can be expressed in language, beliefs, norms, values, dressing, food, and dances among other things. The Chewa community under study has a unique culture and here are some of the key aspects of their culture.

A. Deep respect for leaders

The "Mgwayi" community has a deep respect and loyalty to its leadership (chiefs and other community leaders). People have great fear for their chiefs because of their absolute power over the people. This may have its roots in their cultural tradition called *Nyau*. Msangaambe (2011: 62) elaborates that "leadership in the Nyau cult is

¹² Out of the seven chiefdoms under study, COTN basically works in two chiefdoms only (beside other areas and countries): Mgwayi I and Mgwayi II. This, somehow, causes divisions and tensions among community members of the seven chiefdoms. The other chiefdoms feel sidelined from the NGO's development activities that they can also benefit. On the other hand, Mgwayi I and II consider COTN's development activities as their own initiative and therefore they are primary beneficiaries.

autocratic and members are groomed to take instructions without questions – out of obedience and respect for elders.” This has a bearing in community leadership in general. People who disobey or offend chiefs can be expelled from the village or fined,¹³ and it is usually not negotiable.

Chiefs also play a central role in settling disputes, disseminating important information to the community (e.g. death of a community member) and they authorise the release of the deceased body from the house for burial (*kutulutsa maliro*) – after settling any disputes that might have been there. In some sense the Chief owns the community within his territory.

B. Funeral ceremonies

People have a deep sense of community and belonging to one another as mentioned above. This is so much evident in funerals. Funerals seem to be the biggest event of the village where a number of cultural practices come to life. Van Breugel (2001: 102) remarks that “this is the major event in the life of the village [Chewa communities]. Everything else has to give way to it. Meetings may be planned, but if there is a *maliro* [funeral] nobody will turn up.” All activities in the village are suspended (including school in some cases) until after the burial. Van Breugel (2001: 102-103) gives several reasons why this happens

1. People want to comfort the relatives of the deceased, to distract them with dances and songs and help them forget the deceased.
2. They fear that if they do not go to the *maliro*, they may be punished. There is tremendous social pressure to go and help at a *maliro*. I have on record several cases where the chief punished a person by forbidding people to help him with a *maliro* in his home; he had to dig the grave all by himself and prepare the coffin.
3. There is a great deal of work to be done at a *maliro*. To dig the grave, to make the coffin, to cook the food, to collect stones, to fetch water and firewood. This demands many hands, so that both men and women have to be ready to help.
4. Fear of being accused of having caused death. Someone who does not go to *maliro* will readily be accused of witchcraft (*ufiti*), since the people cannot see any other real reason for not attending.

This seems to be true in “Mgwayi” community. During the field study, one community member died and the researcher had a privilege to attend the funeral ceremony.

¹³Fines are usually in form of chickens and goats and can be paid in monetary form. The researcher witnessed a situation where a young man was fined 3 chickens (each worth K1000 = about R30) for advertising his business during a funeral ceremony without the chiefs’ consent. There was no hearing for the case nor could the “offender” appeal anywhere.

Almost everyone in the community, apart from little children, attended the ceremony such that there were a lot of people. All other activities came to a stand-still until after the burial. Therefore, an understanding of such cultural practices is crucial when engaging with this community and other communities in any development activity.

C. Oral cultural tradition

The “Mgwayi” community has an oral cultural tradition; meaning that information is passed from generation to generation orally through stories, songs/ballads, and folk tales. History, laws, literature, and knowledge are transmitted orally. Hence, old people are culturally held in high esteem and are considered as the most knowledgeable and experienced in all aspects of life. Old people are said to be *m’dambo mozimira moto* (literally, a valley for quenching fire); people who have final solutions to community problems. They are a library of information and knowledge that young people can tap from. Parents are said to be *Mulungu wachiwiri* (second “God”) to children, therefore, parents are to be obeyed and respected. Unfortunately, the negative side of such a culture is that the death of the elderly people means extinction of knowledge if they do not pass down the knowledge to younger generations. Some important historical facts can also be changed and inaccurately told after a period of time because some information can be forgotten.

D. Cultural practices that hinder change?

The major identity of the Chewa culture is their traditional dance called *Gule Wamkulu* (literally-“the big dance”) also known as *Nyau*.

The *Nyau* (Mask) dance according to tradition originated in a land called Phokera. Starting as a dance for ordinary amusement the *Nyau* became specially linked with performances at funerals, and initiation ceremonies (Phiri, 2004: 31).

Van Breugel (2001: 126) calls it “the heart of the Chewa identity.” It is a secret cult and therefore, it is usually difficult to get information about it. On the one hand “*Nyau* is an integral part of the structure and life of the tribe in the sense that in the old days all the boys had to go through the *Nyau* initiation [*kumeta*] before marriage” (*Ibid*, 129). It used to be considered as an initiation ceremony into adulthood for boys. “Among the Chewa people, those who are not initiated in the *nyau* cult are regarded as ignorant children regardless of their age or a high level of education” (Msangaambe, 2011: 62). On the other hand,

it is also true that the *Nyau*, as it exists today, is a secret society whose membership is restricted to initiates only. Some sort of secret language is employed, the places where they assemble [i.e. at the cemetery] are forbidden to anyone else, their activities are secret, the identity of the dancers is concealed with masks. Revelation of these secrets is severely punished. During the dances the identity of the dancer is carefully concealed (Van Breugel, 2001: 129-130).

It is believed that women or girls do not participate in wearing masks because they are considered as incapable of keeping secrets. However, the chiefs' wives perform a dance known as *Chisamba*; it is a sister dance to *Gule Wamkulu* because the two dances are usually performed together. The *Chisamba* women sing for the male masked dancers and dance alongside them. These women are regarded as *ometa* (initiated into *Gule Wamkulu*).

UNESCO calls *Nyau* an "intangible cultural heritage"¹⁴ and gives an account on occasions when the *Nyau* dance is performed and the appearance of the dancers:

Gule Wamkulu is performed in the season following the July harvest, but it can also be seen at weddings, funerals, and the installation or the death of a chief. On these occasions, the *Nyau* dancers wear costumes and masks made of wood and straw, representing a great variety of characters, such as wild animals, spirits of the dead, slave traders as well as more recent figures such as the honda [motor bike] or the helicopter. Each of these figures plays a particular, often evil, character expressing a form of misbehavior, teaching the audience moral and social values. These figures perform dances with extraordinary energy, entertaining and scaring the audience as representatives of the world of the spirits and the dead.¹⁵

It is believed that this sect has some strong connections with ancestral spirits and the use of magic. The masked dancers are not referred to as human beings, but *zilombo* (beasts). It is more than just a traditional dance; some say it is a traditional religion called *Mpingo wa Aroni* (Church of Aaron¹⁶). According to local accounts, there are a number of evil practices associated with this tradition; for instance, the use of juju (charms, black magic), witchcraft, excessive beer drinking, stealing, bullying and forcing people who oppose the cult to be initiated into it or give them money. Hence, it seems to be incompatible with Christianity.

¹⁴Intangible cultural heritage is a counterpart of tangible or touchable culture. It "includes song, music, drama, skills, crafts, and the other parts of culture that can be recorded but cannot be touched and interacted with, without a vehicle for the culture" (source: Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intangible_cultural_heritage).

¹⁵Source: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/RL/00142>

¹⁶ Apparently it is named after Aaron, the priest, based on the golden calf he made with the children of Israel in Exodus 32

Gule Wamkulu dates back to the great Chewa Empire of the seventeenth century. Despite the efforts of Christian missionaries to ban this practice, it managed to survive under British colonial rule by adopting some aspects of Christianity. As a consequence, Chewa men tend to be members of a Christian church as well as a Nyau society [syncretism]. However, Gule Wamkulu performances are gradually losing their original function and meaning by being reduced to entertainment for tourists and for political purpose (UNESCO).

In addition to the evil practices believed to be associated with *Nyau*, it also seems that it is retrogressive to development in some way. It is said that some boys who belong to this group drop out of school because they prefer wearing the masks and performing the dance instead of going to school. These dancers sometimes wear the masks and just roam around the community scaring women and children. School going children that are not initiated into this sect are so scared of them to the extent that they choose to remain indoors than going to school.

On the other hand, such negative reports about *Nyau* have made the government and other development stakeholders to engage with the Chewa community leaders on how to positively use *Nyau* for the development of their communities. It is therefore said that *Nyau* dancers are sometimes used to chase children (who deliberately do not want to go to school) from their homes to school. They are also used to appear and perform during community development activities as a way of luring people to participate in development activities. This could be a creative way of using the local people's culture to foster development. For such a change to happen, the local community leaders were at the centre stage in the dialogue process with development agents because they are the custodians of cultural traditions. Culturally, it is a pride of the tribe and its leadership. "The whole Gule Wamkulu institution is called *Mzinda*. Each chief is respected with *Mzinda*, which like any other institution has its own hierarchy" (Lilongwe Profile, 2006). The chief is usually the head of *Mzinda* and he is decisive in the preservation of their culture.

Therefore, *Nyau* cult stands as a challenge or opportunity to transformation agents working or intending to work in Chewa communities with the local community leaders at its helm. The most important thing to take note is that *Gule Wamkulu* is a very crucial part of the Chewa culture and it cannot be simply ignored by any transformation agent intending to work in such communities.

E. Threats to communal life: *modernisation*

The communal life and general existence of the “Mgwayi” community as it originally was is under great threat. Since it is very close to the capital city, it is so much affected by the growth of the city – modernisation. As the city grows and land becomes more and more scarce, the working class from the city buy big portions of land at a cheap price in communities surrounding the city, like “Mgwayi,” and construct big modern houses with brick fences to protect their land. This breaks the free and communal life that used to exist in rural communities; for instance in “Mgwayi,” brick fences have cut out some foot-paths that used to exist within the community thereby blocking easy access and mobility of people in the community. As a result of these developments some community members are selling their land and moving further away from the city in fear that the government might move them out by force in future when the city grows in order to construct modern structures. Many people are uncertain about their future in this community.

2.5 Economic environment: Poverty

The economic condition of “Mgwayi” community is diverse but generally very harsh. Scenes of abject poverty are not uncommon and are patched with “affluence” of the few working or business people. Despite that this community is close to the capital city, no significant difference exists between this community and “typical” rural communities in terms of its economic condition. Most of the houses are grass-thatched and in poor conditions; many people lack basic necessities like food, clothes, clean water and access to good education. A number of factors contribute to these conditions.

As mentioned above, there is a high illiteracy level in “Mgwayi” community which mean that most people cannot access decent jobs. Consequently, most jobs that they do are casual and temporary; for instance, working as security guards, builders, farm labourers, moulding and baking bricks, and working as maids and garden boys for the working class in the city. Unsurprisingly, levels of unemployment are very high.

Most women end up doing small-scale businesses as source of income. Common businesses are brewing beer (mainly *Kachasu*¹⁷), selling mangoes, popcorn, and *zitumbuwa* (traditional fried cakes). Brewing *Kachasu* is the most common business among women. It was noticed that in a day, almost at every other household it was brewed and being sold. They usually put an empty beer bottle next to the house to indicate that there is *Kachasu*. This business is common because of the high number of consumers in this community – both men and women and even teenagers.

This common and uncontrolled practice of brewing and consuming *Kachasu* has a number of health and social implications. For instance, because of its high alcohol content, some people have reportedly died from over drinking, especially when taken without food. Young people (under the age of 18) uncontrollably indulge in drinking as early as the age of 10 and end up dropping out of school. Men drink excessively and regularly (some almost daily, especially addicts) instead of working or spending time with their families, which leads to family problems. Drunken men and women end up indulging in indecent acts of violence and promiscuity which destroy relationships and spread sexually transmitted diseases.

Amazingly, Moyo chiefdom is an exception in *Kachasu* brewing. According to the members of this chiefdom, their chief does not allow the members to brew this beer because of its social implications. *Gule Wamkulu* is also not tolerated in this chiefdom by tradition because they are not of Chewa tribe but Ngoni and have their own traditional dances e.g. *Ingoma*. As a result, life in this chiefdom is very different economically from the Chewa chiefdoms in this community. A good number of houses have corrugated iron sheets, children are encouraged to go to school, the neighbourhood looks tidy and clean, and they are not much affected by the selling of land by their members. This chiefdom seems to be a great example of the difference a culture and the leadership can make in a community. Despite that it has been greatly assimilated into the Chewa community in terms of language and other practices, it remains distinct in its core cultural values.

Generally, the major asset and source of wealth for most of the people of “Mgwayi” community is land. Land is a source of income and food for those who possess a

¹⁷*Kachasu* beer is a dry spirit with a very high alcohol content which is not controlled since it is locally brewed.

good-size piece of land because the community survives on subsistence farming. Chiefs usually own bigger portions of land. Unfortunately, selling land is a quick way of getting rich due to increased land demand and increased prices as the city expands. Abject poverty, hopelessness, and the pressure to keep up with the modern city life have made (and still tempts) many people to sell their land in an attempt to uplift themselves out of poverty and “catch-up” with life. Unfortunately, many (especially men) end up squandering all the money (on drinking and womanising) and plunge into much worse conditions than before. Some families have even been torn apart because of such practices.

2.6 Demographic environment

The total population in Malawi at the moment stands at 14.8 million of which women comprise of 52%; and 46% of the total population are people under 15 years of age (Malawi Population Data sheet, 2012: 6). 6.3 million of the total national population resides in the central region where Lilongwe is located of which 51% is women and similarly, 46% are under the age of 15. Out of the total population of the people living in rural areas of the country 47% are people under the age of 15.

These population characteristics are very evident in “Mgwayi” community. Children under the age of 15 seem to be in majority compared to other age groups as well as the number of women against men. Women and children form the bulk of the total population of “Mgwayi” community. This kind of population has serious implications on the community leadership and the needs of the community in general.

Such a population calls for pre-school, primary, and secondary school education capable of catering for such a population. It also requires a clinic that caters for children and pregnant women. Unfortunately, the closest clinic at the moment is located in the city, about 6 kilometres away and is usually congested because of high population in the city. The schools also seem not to meet the needs of this population.

Such demographic conditions also call for a leadership that is youthful or/and sensitive to the needs of young people as well as being gender balanced and sensitive. Unfortunately this is not the case with this community. As mentioned

above, all the chiefdoms are headed by men. Conversely, some women occupy other positions like chief advisor or acting chief in the absence of the chief. Young people also seem not to be much involved in leadership positions and key decision making. This does not reflect the population characteristics in this community.

Women are seemingly the back-bone of the community because of their number and the role they play in daily life. Therefore, women and children form a quite significant people group to be targeted if the transformation of “Mgwayi” community is to take place.

2.7 Ecclesiastical environment

Generally, the people of “Mgwayi” community are very religious. Many are aware of God as the Creator of the universe. There is so much acknowledgement of God in their conversations. Statements such as, “we thank God for what He gives us” and “we don’t know what God has in store for us” are very common in people’s speeches. The majority of the community members seem to be Christian or belong to a church.

Some of the local churches that people belong to in this community are Seventh Day Adventist Church (SDA), Baptist Church, African Abraham Church, Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), Roman Catholic, and Assemblies of God. The Baptist Church, CCAP and Assemblies of God are evangelical churches. African Abraham Church is an indigenous church. The Roman Catholic and CCAP church buildings are not within this community despite that they have some members in this community. The CCAP is about 2 kilometres away. The Assemblies of God Church is new in this community and does not have a church building in this community. At the moment it seems to be more of a cell-group that gathers in a house. These churches seem to play a crucial role in the people’s daily life.

The local churches in this community, for instance, Seventh Day Adventist, Baptist Church and all the evangelical churches do not allow their members to drink or brew *Kachasu* and any other kind of beer. Their members are also prohibited from practicing polygamy. Members who indulge in such practices are disciplined or excommunicated from these churches. However, it was observed that some

members of these churches secretly brew *Kachasu* and use other people to sell it for them.

The African Abraham Church, however, seems to have a different view on beer drinking and brewing, and polygamy. It seems to be liberal and, apparently, allows such practices or they are not strict about these issues. Due to such lenience on these cultural practices, the church accommodates many people who indulge in these practices and those that have been excommunicated from conservative churches. Therefore, apart from the Baptist Church, it seems it has the largest number of church members in “Mgwayi” community.

The demographic condition in this community has a bearing on church membership and involvement as well. It is mostly women and children who fill the benches in the local churches on Sunday morning and during other church activities. They seem to comprise between 60-70% of local church memberships. Unfortunately, women are not also well represented or considered in the local churches leadership.

2.8 Summary

The “Mgwayi” community faces unique political, social-cultural, economic, and ecclesiastical challenges because of its location and social conditions. It is a volatile community which is so much affected by expansion of the capital city. The male dominant social structure and authoritarian leadership seem to be a huge impediment to meaningful development in the community. However, its communal culture holds it together in the spirit of *umunthu (ubuntu)*, which is unfortunately under threat. On a different note, the local churches seem to play a significant positive role in the lives of their members. The impact is evident in some community members. It can, therefore, be said that the condition in “Mgwayi” community is both a challenge and an opportunity for transformation. There is need for transformation in the socio-cultural, economic, political, ecclesiastical sphere; and there is need for a transformational leadership to be able to move from its current state to a desirable future.

The following chapter presents a theological framework which informed and guides the theme of this study.

CHAPTER THREE

LEADERSHIP, LOCAL CHURCH AND COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION: A THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This research project is a practical theological study. It endeavours to understand local community leadership and community development phenomena from a biblical point of view and the practice of theology in everyday life. Hendricks (2004: 19) defines practical theology as “a continuing hermeneutical concern discerning how the Word should be proclaimed in word and deed in the world today.” Its task is four fold according to Osmer (2008: 4), namely:

- *Descriptive-empirical task*: which asks the question, what is going on?
- *Interpretive task*: which deals with the question, why is this going on?
- *Normative task*: which asks, what ought to be going on?
- *The pragmatic task*: which asks, how might we respond?

However, the nature of qualitative research necessitates an interdisciplinary approach, which is employed in this study. This approach has proved to be enriching in practical theology in that it enables theologians to see phenomena through the eyes of other key players in community development studies. Therefore, the literature covered in this study is interdisciplinary in nature, drawn from other disciplines such as social sciences and public management from a theological perspective.

This research does not intend to do an exhaustive study on local community leadership, community transformation, and the local church. It intends to explore these themes with a focus on Malawi and the African context; and more specifically the rural areas of Lilongwe District in Malawi. Therefore, only literature that is relevant to the context of this study is covered. Unfortunately, it seems there is not much literature or recent studies that have been done and published that are relevant to the theme of this study. This dearth of research relating to the theme is perhaps a clear indication of the significant contribution that this empirical study will make in this field. Hence, much literature covered in this study pertains to the

leadership and community development topics in general, which are then contextualised in line with the theme of this study.

3.2 Leadership: Africa in focus

“Leaders have existed throughout the history of mankind. All societies have leaders” (Dalglish, 2009:3), and it can also be said that all societies need leaders to influence and guide people into a desired destiny. Yet leadership cannot be easily defined. Northouse (2007:2) says “...there are almost as many different definitions of *leadership* as there are people who have tried to define it.” There are many ways that leadership has been defined. According to Bass in Northouse (2007:2),

Some definitions view leadership as the *focus of group processes*... The leader is at the center of group change and activity and embodies the will of the group. Another group of definitions conceptualizes leadership from a *personality perspective*, which suggests that leadership is a combination of special traits or characteristics that individuals possess and that enable them to induce others to accomplish tasks. Other approaches to leadership have defined it as an *act or behavior* – the things leaders do to bring about change in a group.

Northouse (ibid) however provides a very basic definition of leadership. He defines leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.” This definition seems to encompass different leadership dimensions mentioned above. Defining leadership as a *process* is very vital in understanding the concept of leadership. It implies that it is not a linear, one way traffic activity. It is rather an interactive event that involves and affects both the leader and the followers (Northouse, 2007:3).

Furthermore, there are different forms of leadership. In chapter one the researcher discussed three forms of leadership: task competence, transactional leadership, and transformational leadership. Looking at the nature and impact of these three forms of leadership, the researcher is convinced that transformational leadership is the kind of leadership that Africa needs today. Africa is a unique continent facing extraordinary challenges that are, inter-alia, socio-cultural, religious, economic, political, and geographic in nature. Such a context requires leaders that are able to take into account such circumstances and bring about meaningful transformation. This kind of change can be achieved by transformational leaders. Therefore, we now turn our attention to transformational leadership.

3.2.1 Why transformational leadership?

According to Northouse (2007), the term *transformational leadership* was first coined by Downton in 1973; however, it emerged as an important approach to leadership through the classic works of Burns on leadership in 1978. “Burns distinguished between two types of leadership: *transactional* and *transformational*” (Ibid).

Transactional leadership refers to the bulk of leadership models, which focus on the exchanges that occur between leaders and their followers... [e.g.] teachers are being transactional when they give students a grade for work completed...

In contrast to transactional leadership, transformational leadership is the process whereby a person engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower. This type of leader is attentive to the needs and motives of followers and tries to help followers reach their fullest potential (Northouse, 2007: 176).

The two types of leadership are in sharp contrast because the transactional leadership is mainly concerned about the exchange of gains between the leader and the followers; while transformational leadership is concerned about the wellbeing of both the leader and followers.

As its name implies, transformational leadership is a process that changes and transforms people. It is concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals and includes assessing followers' motives, satisfying their needs, and treating them as full human beings. Transformational leadership involves an exceptional form of influence that moves followers to accomplish more than what is usually expected of them (Ibid).

This makes transformational leadership an incredible form of leadership. As indicated above, this concept of leadership was expounded by Burns but it was Bass who deeply developed it in 1985 (de Lacerda, 2010). He “developed four dimensions to conceptualize transformational leadership” (de Lacerda, 2010: 18), namely: *idealised influence/charisma*, *inspirational motivation*, *intellectual stimulation* and *individualised consideration*.

A. Idealised influence/charisma:

“It describes leaders who act as strong role models for followers; followers identify with these leaders and want very much to emulate them” (Northouse, 2007: 181). They have very high moral standards and ethical conduct that people can trust them to do what is right. Charisma “describes people who are special and who make others want to follow the vision they put forward” (Ibid). Africa is in great need of such leaders.

B. Inspirational motivation:

This describes “leaders who communicate high expectations to followers, inspiring them through motivation to become committed to and a part of the shared vision in the organization” (Northouse, 2007: 183). This type of leadership enhances team spirit.

C. Intellectual stimulation:

This dimension “includes leadership that stimulates followers to be creative and innovative and to challenge their own beliefs and values as well as those of the leader and the organization” (Northouse, 2007: 183). It encourages followers to be innovative and create new ways of problem solving.

D. Individualised consideration:

The fourth dimension “is representative of leaders who provide a supportive climate in which they listen carefully to the individual needs of followers” (Northouse, 2007: 183). The leader spends time with individual followers and provides support to them in a unique and special way, thereby, promoting human dignity.

In essence, the nature of transformational leadership makes it more effective and produce more than expected outcomes in followers.

3.3 Transformational leadership and community transformation

The researcher’s understanding of transformational leadership so far clearly shows that there is a significant connection between transformational leadership and transformation. To have a better understanding of this connection we find help in the literature of public management, incorporated here as an interdisciplinary dialogue partner. Although the following change theories focus on organisations, a lot can be learnt on how change can be effected in a local community.

3.3.1 Change theories: in an organisation context

In the public management discipline, four schools of thought are presented as far as organisational change is concerned, namely; *the classical school*, *the behavioural school*, *the open systems school* and *the contingency school* (Fox *et al*, 1991). The evolution of these theories clearly indicates that “there is a move away from a closed

systems perspective¹⁸ [i.e. classical theory] to an open systems perspective” (*Ibid*: 8). Therefore we give attention to the recent schools of thought in organisational change.

A. Open systems theory:

This school of thought considers an organisation as a complex living organism that interacts with its external environments in order to survive (Osmer, 2008). According to Osmer (2008: 199-200),

“Open,” thus, indicates the way all forms of life are dependent on and in continual interaction with the environment in which they reside. They draw energy and resources from the environment, transform them to maintain themselves, and turn them into output. “Systems” indicates the interconnection of the various parts, or subsystems, within the boundaries of the life-form.

This clearly shows that change in an organisation may be triggered by external or/and internal factors. What is happening inside the organisation can bring change and eventually affect the external environment, and vice versa. Hence, this school of thought calls for a leadership that is visionary and thinks contextually putting into consideration different subsystems that affect the life of the organisation (or community). The required and desired change in an organisation or community has to take shape in relation to its context.

B. The contingency theory:

This school of thought is based on the open systems theory. Fox *et al* (1991: 11) elaborate that

The essence of [this] approach is the argument that an organization’s relationship to other organizations as well as to its total environment depends on the situation it finds itself in. The notions of universal principles and the “one best way” found in other schools are therefore rejected by this school. The tenets of the contingency school [imply] that managers should be adaptable, flexible, analytical and ingenious in their decision-making and management. Management strategies have to be selected and/or adapted for the particular situation facing the organization.

Specific factors in a given context entail how an organisation operates. Its success depends on how it operates in relationship to other organisations and its environment. Lack of vision, adaptation, flexibility, and ingenuity in its leadership means failure.

¹⁸This perspective advocates for a standardisation and generalisation of change management principles regardless of context

Therefore, putting the contingency theory into the community transformation context means that the community leadership has the task of casting a vision of what the community should become and how this could be achieved considering contextual factors that effect and are affected by change in a community. This makes transformational leadership ideal in this situation because it is a kind of leadership that is capable of managing organisations or communities and facilitating the desired transformation.

3.3.2 Implications to local community leadership and transformation

The change theories outlined above have serious implications to the understanding of local community leadership and community transformation. Though communities do not operate in the same manner as organisations, there is a lot to learn from. Every community is unique in a sense. However, communities do not exist in isolation; what happens in a community affects other communities, and what happens outside a given community affects what is happening inside. Many factors affect conditions and activities of a community because the world has become a “global village” today. Therefore, its leadership has to take cognizance of such factors. Above all, the leadership has to have the calibre to handle such factors and lead the community to a desired destiny.

Therefore, transformational leadership is the kind of leadership that is needed in local communities and Africa at large if transformation is to take place. It is more effective and holistic in its approach to leadership than any other form of leadership. du Plessis (2009:144) says,

Leaders in Africa often make the mistake of adopting first world theories, including leadership styles, business methodologies and other concepts, to be transferred to or applied in their businesses. However, they do not invest enough time to investigate changes that should be considered to account for the culture, values and the composition of their workforces. [On a different note,] it is important to reflect on some of the African leaders that were transformational leaders. Nelson Mandela is viewed as one of the best examples of transformational leadership.

It is transformational leaders that have made a significant difference in Africa and it is such leaders that Africa needs from a local community level in order to facilitate community transformation.

3.3.3 Significant criticism of transformational leadership

In spite of all the strengths and praises transformational leadership has received, there are some significant criticisms against this form of leadership that need to be considered. One of the important criticism to be considered in this study is that this form of leadership

...has the potential to be abused. Transformational leadership is concerned with changing people's values and moving them to a new vision. But who is to determine whether the new directions are good and more affirming? Who decides that a new vision is a better vision? If the values to which the leader is moving his or her followers are not better, and if the set of human values is not more redeeming, then the leadership must be challenged... History is full of examples of charismatic individuals who used coercive power to lead people to evil ends (Northouse, 2007: 194).

These are very vital questions to pose at this juncture. More importantly, what is the basis/standard of the moral values and ethical conduct that the transformational leader champions? Surely there has to be a standard that is beyond the human making. That is why in this study the Bible fills this void. The Holy Scriptures provide the basis/standard for the moral values and ethical conduct, and define God's vision (a better vision) for mankind towards which the leader guides his followers. Therefore, in the next section the researcher discusses leadership from a biblical perspective which informs the researcher's understanding of transformational leadership, first in the context of the local church and then the community.

3.4 Leadership in the context of the local church: A biblical perspective

Leadership in the New Testament flows out from the understanding of the priesthood of all believers (Bolger *et al*, 2005). In this understanding, leadership is a gift from God to believers for the edification of the body of Christ (Romans 12:4-8). God chooses to equip members of the body of Christ with different gifts for service in His Kingdom according to His grace. These gifts are given according to God's will regardless of a believer's status. Therefore, leadership in the local church "cannot be distinguished by categories of lay or clergy" (Bolger *et al*, 2005: 580). All believers are equal but gifted differently for God's service. Leadership is not about a position or status, but rather it is a "God-given capacity and God-given responsibility [to influence] a group of followers toward God's purposes for the group" (Bennett, 2005: 682).

The gift of leadership is vital in the context of the local church because it creates the necessary environment for the other people with different gifts to flourish. Hybels (2002: 26) remarks that

What flourishing churches have in common is that they are led by people who possess and deploy the spiritual gift of leadership. Whenever and wherever I have found a high-impact, Acts 2, prevailing church, I have also discovered a little band of brothers and sisters who were humbly and prayerfully providing the vision, the strategy, and the inspiration that enabled an entire congregation to bear fruit abundantly.

This does not mean that the gift of leadership is more important than other gifts in any sense. It simply means that “people with the gift of leadership are uniquely equipped to come up with strategies and structures that provide opportunities for other people to use their gifts more effectively” (*Ibid*) in the church to make a difference in the world.

The perfect model of a transformational leader for the church is Jesus Christ, the servant leader. Through His life and teachings He challenged the traditional and cultural understanding of leadership of His time on earth and set an example for His disciples and all believers to follow Him and learn from Him (Matthew 11:29-30).

In a context where the disciples were competing with one another for primacy, Jesus reminded them: ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Matthew 20: 25-28, NIV)’ (Bennett, 2005: 690).

This was perhaps the most challenging aspect of Christ-like leadership (*Ibid*). It was against the conventional understanding of leadership at that time, and so it is even today. Against such tradition, Christ demonstrated servant leadership by performing even the menial task of washing the disciples feet and He “completed the ultimate act of servanthood [by] laying his life down for the sins of the world” (Bennett, 2005: 690). He transformed people and communities and called His followers to follow after Him. Therefore, “Christ-like character is the product of a life that is genuinely submitted to Jesus Christ and His word just as Jesus, the Son of God, submitted to the Father. Leadership begins with follower-ship” (*Ibid*: 689) – being obedient to follow Jesus’ life and example.

However, this biblical understanding of leadership is not often the reality of how leadership is understood and practiced in many local churches today. Often leadership is confused with position, status and power which lead to divisions in the church and formation of different congregations or denominations. Churches “sink into confusion and malaise” without good leadership (Sanders, 1994: 18). To explain this further, Prime (2005: 15) reports about a survey on common problems facing the church today,

An in-depth questionnaire on far-reaching issues affecting the contemporary church reported, ‘major church issues were fundamentally relational, arising either from overbearing, heavy-handed leadership, or non-existent, [fuzzy] leadership, or simply because the church was cursed by the kind of power games that were more readily associated with the workplace.’

Nonetheless, the local church still has the potential to make a difference in its community and the world because God, through His Word and Spirit, constantly calls His church to repentance and renewal. The mess and chaos in the church “arise...not from the holy will of God, but from the failings of the men who make up the Church” (Küng, 1971: 28). But it is God who sustains the church and from time to time He preserves and appoints people to carry on His mission. “In all its historical forms the true nature of the church is accompanied, like a dark shadow, by its ‘unnature’; the two are inseparable” (*Ibid*). Hence, it is the true nature and call of the church that makes it indispensable in modelling biblical leadership for the community. Hybels (2002: 27) boldly remarks that “the local church is the hope of the world and its future rests primarily in the hands of its leaders.”

3.4.1 Responsibilities of biblical leadership

From Jesus’ leadership model, three leadership responsibilities resonate: *service*, *stewardship* and *shepherd-hood*.

A. Service:

Jesus said, “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve” (Matthew 20: 28) – clearly laying down His leadership style from the onset. He demonstrated this through His servant leadership style, thereby defining leadership as service (Sanders, 1994: 16). Leadership exists not for the leader, but for the led – the followers. “The true leader is concerned primarily with the welfare of others, not with his/her own comfort or prestige” (*Ibid*). Hian (2010: 20) remarks that “leadership

begins at the foot of the cross. And our continuing motivation to serve Christ and others is governed by our understanding of Christ's death and by the time we spend at [*the cross*]." As a follower-leader, he¹⁹ follows the example of Christ to lay down his pride, status, self-interests, and life for others. He understands that he is a leader because there are people to be served and a mission to accomplish. Daft (2008: 156-157) echoes,

Servant leaders transcend self-interest to serve the needs of others, help others grow and develop, and provide opportunity for others to gain materially and emotionally...In their minds, the purpose of their existence is to serve; leadership flows out of the act of service because it enables other people to grow and become all they are capable of being.

The leader leads through an exemplary life of service to others. His life and actions speak louder than his words. It is commonly said that the difference between a boss and a leader is that a boss gives commands and instructions on how to do things, but a leader demonstrates how to do things; and that is service.

B. Stewardship:

The leader's role of stewardship flows from the understanding that leadership is a gift from God entrusted to a person for His glory. The leader is responsible and accountable to God, above all, and to the followers and all members of the body of Christ. All he has belongs to God and he leads on behalf of the Master (Matthew 25:14-30). Hian (2010: 27-31) outlines some of the roles involved in a leader's responsibility as a steward:

- *Serving as trustees*: leaders are entrusted with secret things of God, the Gospel (1 Corinthians 4: 1-2).
- *Stewards are guardians*: leaders have the responsibility of guarding what has been entrusted to them with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in them (2 Timothy 1: 14).
- *Stewards are reproducers*: they reproduce other leaders and pass on the mantle and their teaching to others (2 Timothy 2: 2)
- *Stewards are managers*: they plan and organise for God's people – they are appointed to manage His household (Luke 12:42- 43).

¹⁹ The researcher is non-sexist in use of language; personal pronouns "he" and "his" are used just for convenience sake and to make the text more readable.

C. Shepherd-hood:

The Lord Jesus portrayed Himself as the Good Shepherd. Using the same metaphor, He commissioned Peter, the leader of the Twelve and the early church to, *feed His lambs and take care of His sheep* (John 21: 15-17). The concept of shepherd-hood speaks volumes of the leader's role. Hian (2010: 36-39) again highlights some of the leader's roles as a shepherd drawing from the life and teaching of Jesus Christ:

- *The leader knows each sheep by name* (John 10: 3, 14, 27): leaders are concerned about every individual under their flock because they are not alike and their needs are different.
- *The shepherd is always with his sheep* (Luke 22: 27): the leader is approachable and gets alongside his people in order to know and serve them well.
- *The shepherd leads the flock*: "He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him..." (John 10: 3-4). The leader is the first to smell and face danger. He does not sacrifice the followers to protect his image or life.
- *The shepherd shows a deep concern for the lost sheep* (Matthew 18: 12-14): leaders are deeply concerned and care about a few who are lost, going astray or backsliding. To them every soul matters because it is made in God's image and hence, worth the leader's time and effort.
- *The shepherd protects the sheep* (Psalm 23:4): they jealously and tirelessly guard their flock against all kinds of danger. They teach and prepare their flock for any attack from the enemy.
- *The shepherd is prepared to lay down his life for the sheep* (John 10: 11, 15, 17-18): Hian (2012: 39) calls this the "acid test of leadership." A leader who passes this test is the one who loves the people under his care so much that he is prepared to lay down his life for them.

3.4.2 Essential qualities of biblical leadership

There are special qualities that characterise (or have to characterise) a leader. God calls and endows some people with the gift of leadership and exceptional qualities that would enable them to fulfil His mission. That is to say, He calls and uses ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things. God calls and "prepares leaders

with a specific place and task in mind” (Sanders, 1994: 51). This preparation always equals the called-for task. As a result, leaders’ tasks and preparation are usually different. However, there are qualities that are essentially endowed with leaders on God’s call as outlined by Sanders (1994: 51-83)

A. Vision:

One of the qualities outlined by Sanders (*Ibid*) is vision. He describes vision as the ability to see what the crowd does not see, and to see wider and fuller than anyone. Through-out history, people “who have most powerfully and permanently influenced their generation have been [seers] – people who have seen more and farther than others – persons of faith, for faith is vision” (Sanders, 1999: 55). Vision is crucial because it gives the leader and the whole group a picture to where they are heading. It creates hope and expectation. Hybels (2002: 31) summarises this by saying that,

Vision is the very core of leadership. Take vision away from a leader and you cut out his or her heart. Vision is the fuel that leaders run on. It’s the energy that creates action. It’s the fire that ignites the passion of followers. It’s the clear call that sustains focused effort year after year, decade after decade, as people offer consistent and sacrificial service to God.

God gives a leader a vision of a destination He desires to be reached. Without a vision, there is no hope and purpose to move forward. In the same context, the writer of proverbs clearly states that “where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29: 18 KJV).

B. Wisdom:

Another leadership quality is wisdom. Sanders (1994:57) defines wisdom as “the faculty of making the use of knowledge, a combination of discernment, judgment, sagacity, and similar powers...in Scripture, right judgment concerning spiritual and moral truth.” It begins with the fear of God (Proverbs 9: 10) and is a result of the filling of the Holy Spirit. Wisdom helps the leader to use his knowledge and all that the Lord has entrusted into his care correctly. Knowledge and wisdom are not synonymous; “knowledge is proud that he has learned so much, wisdom is humble, that he knows no more” (Sanders, 1994: 58). Therefore, being educated is not the same as being wise. Local, poor and uneducated leaders can have wisdom and be used mightily by God to lead His people.

C. Effective decision making:

A leader has to be marked by the ability to make good decisions upon being sure of God's will and analysing the facts regardless of the consequences (Sanders, 1994). A leader's decision-making skills are tested every day in matters of judging between right and wrong, among other things. However, "in most decisions the key element is not so much knowing what to do, but in living with the results" (Sanders, 1994: 59). Therefore, wise leaders consult and take time to listen to other people's opinions before reaching a critical decision because they realise that the consequences of their decision will affect many people and generations. Procrastination and vacillation have no place in such a leader.

D. Courage:

In many cases decision making in leadership involves risk taking; hence, courage is a necessity. "Courage is [the] quality of mind which enables people to encounter danger or difficulty firmly, without fear or discouragement" (Sanders, 1994: 59). The enemy often uses fear to destroy and discourage God's people. Therefore, a leader needs courage to face and confront the enemy of peace, justice, joy, righteousness, human dignity, and love that the leader is promoting. The indwelling and filling of Holy Spirit gives such inner power and courage (2 Timothy 1: 7). That is the characteristic of leadership.

E. Humility:

Sanders (1994: 61) describes humility as "the hallmark of a leader." It flows from the understanding that the leader is simply an instrument in the hands of the Creator who graciously chooses to use it for a specific moment and task. It is from this bearing that the leader is able to humbly serve, steward and shepherd the Master's flock and household diligently. Humility is not synonymous to timidity. Humility is a strength and quality of a leader; while timidity is regarded as a weakness.

F. Integrity and sincerity:

On one hand, "integrity is the glue that holds together our private and public life. It keeps our actions and our works connected to the truth" (FCS²⁰: 39). Some have defined integrity as "choosing to do the right thing even if no one sees you." This is

²⁰Fellowship of Christian Students

so critical for the leader because he represents the Master who sees what happens in the closet and searches the hearts and minds of all people (1 Chronicles 28:9).

Integrity and sincerity can be demonstrated in one's life when:

- You mean what you say
- You live the way you say you believe
- You do not present to be something you are not
- You have motives that are pure and unbidden
- You do not keep silent when you are to speak up
- You are honest with God about the real you
- You do not teach something you do not do
- You do not misrepresent the facts
(FCS, 39)

On the other hand, Sanders (1994: 62) says, "surely the spiritual leader must be sincere in promise, faithfulness in discharge of duty, upright in finances, loyal in service, and honest in speech." Such are the leaders God seeks and delights in (Psalm 119:1). Consequently, leaders and all people that display integrity and sincerity are bound to face opposition. People and the world hate them (Daniel 3:8; 6:4), they are persecuted (Daniel 3:19; 6:16), and they can lose friends and jobs. Despite all this, integrity and sincerity is worth the cost because God vindicates and uplifts his people.

G. Spirit-filled:

Above all else, leadership for God's mission requires people that are filled by the Holy Spirit. "Other qualities are important; to be Spirit-filled is indispensable" (Sanders, 1994: 79) because it is the Spirit who gives discernment, guides the leader and empowers. He gives courage, wisdom, humility, and enables a person to live a life of holiness and integrity. Kingdom building is primarily God's work and therefore the Spirit has to be the guide, otherwise it becomes mankind's work. There is no compromise on this.

The Spirit will not delegate authority into secular or carnal hands, even when a particular job has no direct spiritual teaching involved; all workers must be Spirit-filled and filled. Selection of kingdom leaders must not be influenced by worldly wisdom, wealth, or social status. The prime consideration is spirituality (*Ibid*, 1994:79-80).

Not all leaders might have all these qualities in full capacity, except being Spirit-filled. Some qualities may be more visible or stronger in some leaders than others. This is where the beauty of the church or the priesthood of all believers comes in play. God gifts other people close to leaders to complement them. Wise and humble leaders

make use of the giftedness of other people around them to complement areas of their weakness for the common good of the church and community. Team leadership style is more viable in such situations and generally.

3.4.3 Leadership and empowerment: Accompanying leadership

One of the major tasks of leadership in any capacity is to empower people. Empowerment is about giving people responsibility and making power, authority, information and resources available to them in order to be self-reliant and reach their full potential. Maxwell (2007: 145) remarks that “to lead others well, we must help them to reach their potential. That means being on their side, encouraging them, giving them power, and helping them to succeed.” Empowerment in leadership flows from the understanding that sustainability of the mission to which the leader is called is more crucial than leadership in itself. With such an understanding, it is imperative that the leader nurtures and empowers the followers and emerging leaders. Empowerment can be considered in two aspects: *reproducing leaders* and *guiding followers towards self-reliance*.

A. Empowerment as reproducing leaders:

Leaders, like any other person, come and go but the journey continues. God calls and uses them just for a season and a reason – they are not indispensable. “No work of God will be left destitute until its purposes are achieved” (Sanders, 1994: 144). Therefore, every leader has to prepare for his departure because the “true test of a person’s leadership is the health of the organization when the organizer is gone” (*Ibid*). If the organisation remains afloat even after the leader is gone it means the departed leader reproduced other leaders and prepared them to take over after him; but if it ends in a nosedive it means that the organisation was built around the departed leader and no leadership reproduction took place to prepare for his departure. It is the nature of transformational leadership to develop followers into leaders (Daft, 2011) for the well-being of the organisation or community.

Empowerment in form of reproducing leaders can be rewarding in two ways: Firstly, it enlarges the leader. Maxwell (2007:146, 151) says “the truth is that if you give some of your power away to others, there is still plenty to go around. Empowerment is powerful – not only for the person being developed but also for the

mentor. Enlarging others makes you larger.” Investing in other people leads to growth. As the leader lifts other people he lifts himself up as well.

The opposite is also true; when a leader keeps others down, he also goes down with them. When he does this, he loses any power to lift others up (Maxwell, 2007: 146). In this case, both the leader and the organisation (community) or followers lose. It is insecure leaders who do not want to empower others. They are afraid. “The number one enemy of empowerment is the fear of losing what we have” (Maxwell, 2007: 147) – losing the leadership position and all the benefits that come with it. However, leaders who understand their calling realise that they are stewards, shepherds, and servants of God and are not interested in saving their position but serving their Master. Therefore, in this context their long-term goal is to reproduce leaders and not just followers.

Secondly, reproducing leaders multiplies Kingdom impact. Hybels (2002: 122) says

When a leader develops not only his or her own leadership potential, but draws out the leadership potential or scores of other leaders as well, the kingdom impact from one life is multiplied exponentially. It provides far more fruit than any single leadership achievement could have. The impact of that leader’s life will be felt for many generations to come.

Reproducing leaders means reproducing the impact on the organisation (community) and God’s Kingdom in general. In this context, Moses case comes in mind (Exodus 18: 13-26). His leadership was more effective, convenient and had much impact on the children of Israel when he empowered and delegated his leadership responsibility to other potential community leaders. He appointed capable and godly men to exercise leadership on his behalf. It lessened the leadership burden on him, but above all it benefited the people – they were better served. It made his leadership services to be more convenient with a deeper and wider impact. That is a true mark of biblical and Christ-like leadership because “Christ-like leadership is servant leadership that empowers and motivates others to their full potential” (Bennett, 2005: 690). It is for the welfare of the body of Christ and God’s Kingdom.

B. Guiding followers towards self-reliance:

Empowerment uplifts followers because it gives them a sense of human dignity in the community. It creates autonomy, innovation, flexibility, motivation and superior performance capabilities (Daft, 2011). Leaders have to empower their followers to be

independent (i.e. being leaders in their own capacity) and not leader-dependent. Leaders have to avoid the temptation of playing “God” in the lives of their followers, that is, creating a mentality in followers that they cannot do without a leader. Therefore, in this context their long-term goal is to create self-reliant people who are living inter-dependently in a community.

A leader has to create a culture in which new ideas and talent can flourish and followers are empowered to be self-confident, self-reliant and have a sense of self-worth. Creating followers who are able to identify and use wisely their God-given strength, knowledge, skills, and resources to sustain their livelihood without depending on others; followers who are able to take what is and turning it into what it ought to be according to God’s will and plan for them.

3.4.4 General challenges to leadership in African context

African leadership faces a number of unique challenges that need to be acknowledged. These challenges range from socio-cultural, political, economic, and religious (or theological) in nature. Dalglish (2010:11) outlines some of these challenges as follows:

A. “Confronting long-standing poverty and disadvantage”

It is appalling that “the average African is poorer now than during the age of colonialism” (Ibid). So the African leader has to deal with issues of deepening poverty and the growing gap between the rich and the poor; the rich becoming richer and richer while the poor becoming poorer and poorer every day.

B. “Limited education and health infrastructure”

The education infrastructures and system do not support the booming population of most African states. The quality and effectiveness of such infrastructures and systems are also dwindling. Lack of proper education and illiteracy among leaders and followers as well as lack of access to good health facilities is a huge concern.

C. “Great disparity in access to technological innovation and sophisticated communication systems”

In today’s world (a “global village”), technology and communication play a vital role in development. For instance, “technology makes it possible for the whole world to

watch what is happening” (Dalglish, 2010:54). Therefore, Africa faces the challenge of “catching up” and living up to date as far as communication and technological development is concerned.

D. Cultural diversity

African leaders face the challenge of being cultural relevant and being able to tap into the rich cultural diverse resource which Africa is endowed with for the common good of its people. Unfortunately, racism, tribalism and nepotism seem to characterise most African societies and leaderships. These are a cause of most wars, genocides, and violence in a number of African countries.

E. “A history of colonisation which often means that people are looking back to blame rather than looking forward to achieve”

It is undeniable that colonialism played a significant role concerning the woes Africa is facing today. However, Dalglish (2010: 52) says, “colonialism, whilst a contributing factor in the current situation, cannot be held solely responsible for what is currently happening in Africa.” Rather it is because African leaders have not been responsible to deal decisively with post-independence poverty. Neo-colonialism provides another greater challenge in the 21st century in Africa.

In addition to the above challenges as stated by Dalglish we can also add one more challenge:

F. Secularism/secularisation

Secularism and secular humanism of the West have made significant inroads into Africa because most of the things that happen in the West end up being “exported” to Africa. For instance, Africa today is at great pains to accept issues like same sex marriages and abortion with great pressure from the West. Secularism has led to moral decay in communities.

With such challenges in mind, for transformation to take place in local communities and Africa at large will require transformational leaders who will rise above their self-interests. Leaders that are capable of utilising the human, natural, and cultural blessings and resources that Africa is richly endowed with for the wellbeing of all creation and to the glory of God.

3.5 The local church and community transformation

In this study, the local church is deemed to be strategically positioned in the local community and is, therefore, considered as key in transforming local leadership in order to bring about community transformation. The oncoming section discusses the nature and the call of the local church and its implication to the community.

3.5.1 The nature and call of the local church

To better understand the church, it is appropriate to look at it from a bigger picture of God's *Kingdom*. God established His Kingdom through Jesus Christ. Through Christ's life and work on earth, he inaugurated the Kingdom and commissioned His disciples to continue the work. Through the work of the Holy Spirit in the local church, God continues to establish and expand the Kingdom to the uttermost parts of the world. Myers (1999:37-38) says that

The kingdom is the Father's, while Jesus is the embodiment of the kingdom. The Holy Spirit is the first fruit of the kingdom, the assurance that there is more to come, and the one who helps us discover the truth and fullness of the kingdom. When it is at its best, the church is the sign, a witness, to the kingdom of God breaking into the world.

Christ entrusted the disciples and the local church with His work of establishing and expanding God's Kingdom on earth despite their imperfection. A number of very important facts are clear from Myers statement above:

Firstly, *the Kingdom belongs to God and He establishes it*. The task of establishing the Kingdom belongs to God and it is His work for His own glory. He establishes it according to His power and will based on His standards. This task does not rest upon the shoulders of the disciples, the local church or transformational development (*ibid*). He begun it and is carrying it on until it is fully realised when Christ returns.

Secondly, *the church was instituted by God for His own purpose, though not perfect and it is a sign of God's Kingdom "when it is at its best."* The church is not the Kingdom but the sign and a tool God uses to establish and expand His Kingdom. It is only a sign when it faithfully embodies the standard of the One who instituted it. It is only a sign when it truly reflects what the real thing (the Kingdom) looks like. "The church is a true sign only to the degree that it lives up to the spirit and life of the

kingdom. The church is not the end of mission, the kingdom is the end” (Myers, 1999: 39).

Thirdly, *Christ did not leave the church alone; He is present in it through the person of the Holy Spirit*. The Holy Spirit enables and aids the church in its endeavour to truly be a sign of the Kingdom. He empowers it to carry on the Kingdom’s work and sanctifies it along. In the church is the power for the transformation of people and communities. “The Holy Spirit is the source of power (Luke 24:49) that transformed a fairly ordinary group of disciples, who had abandoned their Lord, into a fearless group of witnesses who would not surrender their mission even under threat of death (Acts 4:19)” (Myers, 1999: 40). It is the Spirit’s work to change what is into what it ought to be as God intended it. The Spirit also helps the church discover the truth through the Scriptures, the standard upon which the Kingdom is built.

Lastly, in addition to Myers statement, *the Scriptures are a very important tool God has given the church*. The Bible is a source of wealth and a road-map that tells us what God “has done, is doing, and plans to do” (*Ibid*) and in it we find answers to tough questions of life. God uses His Word to transform people’s lives. In the Scriptures the church has all it needs to know, as far as the task of establishing and expanding God’s Kingdom is concerned.

The church is a unique people called by God and called into the community. According to August (2010: 43),

The Church as an integral part of God’s new creation, embodies the holistic meaning of the Biblical message, viz. that salvation is not only spiritual – it not only changes people’s lives, it changes people’s relationships and living conditions, it alters structures, in fact it changes the world.

It is the call of the church to bring the whole Gospel to the whole community and all aspects of human life. Moffit (1987: 237) echoes that “development is the mission of the local church. It is nothing less than the obedient response of the church to both the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. This definition of development is thus a view of holistic ministry.” The goal of this mission has to be transformation of people and relationships (Myers, 1999).

One of the beauty and uniqueness of the church is that it draws its membership from all people in the community regardless of age, gender, status and race. It

accommodates and reaches out to all. Hence, this puts the local church at a vital and strategic position as far as the transformation of people and communities is concerned. Myers (1999: 127) clearly drives this point home by saying that

The church is more important as a source of people than as a source of instruction or prophetic word... The major role of the church in relationship to the great issues of justice and peace will not be in its formal pronouncement, but in its continually nourishing men and women who will act responsibly as believers in the course of their secular duties as citizens.

And through this role of the local church, “transformation takes place in the lives of Christians as individuals, families, and communities; through their words and deeds they demonstrate both the need and reality of ethical, moral, and social transformation” (The Wheaton '83 Statement, 1987: 261). By His nature, “God is a missionary God” (Bosch, 1991: 390); hence, Christians are also missionary by their nature as well.

Their lifestyle is either attractive or offensive [to the outsiders]. Where it is attractive, people are drawn to the church, even if the church does not actively ‘go out’ to evangelize them (Bosch, 1991: 168).

Therefore, what makes a difference most is not what the church and its people have, but who they are. Their nature in Christ is a great resource for community transformation.

In conclusion, transformation of societies is primarily God’s business through the church He established. Transformation originates from God to individuals, communities and all humanity through the local church. In spite of “all its imperfections, the church has been in the transformational development business since its beginning” (Myers, 1999, 41). In addition, the local church is strategically located in local communities with all the potential and capability to be a transformation agent. With God on its side, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, and the Scriptures in its possession, it is undeniable that the church is indispensable and has all it takes to transform people and societies.

3.5.2 The role of the local church in community transformation

The local church has a big role to play as far as God’s work of transforming communities is concerned. Its nature and call makes it vital and indispensable in changing lives and communities. “The Church of Jesus Christ is the only cooperative

society that exists primarily for the benefit of its non-members” (Bolger *et al*, 2005: 569). It is strategically positioned to be an agent of change. Hybels (2002: 23) without mincing words remarks,

There is nothing like the local church when it's working right. Its beauty is indescribable. Its power is breath taking. Its potential is unlimited. It comforts the grieving and heals the broken in the context of community. It builds bridges to seekers and offers truth to the confused. It provides resources for those in need and opens its arms to the forgotten, the downtrodden, the disillusioned. It breaks the chains of addictions, frees the oppressed, and offers belonging to the marginalized of this world. Whatever the capacity for human suffering, the church has a greater capacity for healing and wholeness. Still to this day, the potential of the local church is almost more than I can grasp. No other organization on earth is like the church. Nothing even comes close.

The capacity of the church to transform lives and communities can never be over emphasised. It is in fact the hope of the aching world today; the help for the helpless, the hope for the hopeless, and light in darkness as a city on a hill that cannot be hidden.

Based on this theological premise of the local church's nature and potential, its role can be viewed as being a catalyst of community transformation process. The community development task is God's task primarily in the hands of the local church.

Through the local church,

this development process must promote self-reliance in meeting basic individual and community needs; it should progress toward the equitable distribution of human, economic and material resources; and it should provide each person with an opportunity for fuller participation in the economic and political life of his/her community or country, providing personal life-experiences which are consistent with God's intentions for humankind (August, 2010: 48).

The church champions a biblical approach to development taking into consideration basic principles of people centred social development paradigm; participation, empowerment and sustainability (*Ibid*). This means that the local church's role is to bring the whole gospel to the whole person and community. It is the mouth, hands, ears, and eyes of God – the body of Christ through which He works to establish His Kingdom on earth.

The local church has a unique approach of transforming communities. Like a mustard seed, it begins small from individuals who make a difference in their immediate families and then reach out to communities.

Local churches have been the vehicle for the transmission of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and that their primary, though not their only, role is a threefold ministry:

the worship and praise of God, the proclamation in word and deed of the Gospel of the grace of God, and the nurture, instruction, and discipleship of those who have received Jesus Christ into their lives. In this way transformation takes place in the lives of Christians as individuals, families, and communities; through their words and deeds they demonstrate both the need and reality of ethical, moral, and social transformation (The Wheaton '83 Statement, 1987: 261)

The local church's approach in the role of transforming communities does not depend on the number of people but the power of their message. An individual or few individuals can make a difference – this is evidenced throughout human history.

On a different note, as the local church immerses itself in the local community to transform it, there is a danger of conforming to it. It can become part of it and lose its prophetic role. That is why it is important that the local church be part of the universal church. "There is... a genuine need for help and sharing (*diakonia*) built on fellowship (*koinonia*) between churches of different localities and contexts" in a reciprocal relationship to avoid paternalism (The Wheaton '83 Statement, 1987: 262). Such relationships are important and can help the local church to see her context and the world through the eyes of others and avoid compromising with her context (The Wheaton '83 Statement, 1987: 262). It can then be said that the local church can only be a church and a true sign of God's Kingdom if it is part of the universal church.

In conclusion, the local church is a catalyst of transformation – changing people and communities. That is its call and mandate. Through Christ and the work of the Spirit, it has the power to permeate and transform all aspects of life in a community. Like salt added to food in a pot, it makes a difference to everything in the pot without choosing. It preserves food and transforms the taste. The local church is capable and able to transform local and traditional community leaders to be agents of transformation in their communities.

3.6 Summary

The local church's nature, call and strategic position in the community make it an ideal agent of transformation. This transformation begins with individuals who eventually effect change in their families and community structures and systems. "It is changed people who change people" (Myers, 1999:16) and this leads to a

changed society and more especially if they are in leadership positions. The nature of circumstances and challenges facing African communities today requires transformational leaders. There is need for leaders that are transformed and Christ-like; leaders that are shepherds, servants and stewards. Therefore, transformational leadership is imperative for community transformation.

The next chapter (chapter 4) outlines the methodology and practical procedures followed during the empirical study. This chapter is important because it gives a specific and contextual detailed outline of the methodology employed in this study. This is followed by a presentation and discussion of results in chapter 5. The data presented in chapters (chapter 2 and 5) will be reflected against the theological framework presented in chapter 3. Lastly, a conclusion and recommendations are made in chapter 6 based on the research findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the selection of research approach, design, sampling, the basic practice of field study and how issues of ethics were dealt with. Hendricks (2004: 211) states that “the primary purpose of research is the solution of a problem or an answer to an important question. Research is about inquiring, about discernment.” In the context of practical theology, it is about understanding what is happening around us and seeking God’s will and intervention in such situations. Since this research involved the study of people’s lives, their behaviour, lifestyles and how they interact with other people, it was imperative that the right research approach, design and methods be used in conducting this study in order to find appropriate answers to the research question.

4.2 Research approach

This is an empirical study because, according to Hendricks (2004: 226), an empirical study takes a qualitative research approach due to the nature of the research question and the desired outcome. Although the researcher acknowledges the limitations associated with this approach, such as non-standardisation of measurement and unreliability, the approach is more preferable than a quantitative approach in this study because the research question is to do with interpretation of phenomena and not measurement. Its aim is to produce an inside perspective of the people being studied and their practices.

In spite of asserting that qualitative research data is “richer in meaning and detail than are quantified data,” Babbie (2011: 24) advocates the use of both approaches for the purpose of strengthening social research. He notes that “quantification often makes our observations more explicit. It can also make aggregating and summarizing data easier” (*ibid*). Therefore, quantitative data is also used in this study as a supplement to give structure to qualitative data.

4.3 Research design

This research employed a case study research design in order to have a closer look at the problem at hand basing on a specific context. Babbie (2011: 301) describes a case study as “the in-depth examination of a single instance of some social phenomenon, such as a village, a family, or a juvenile gang.” He recommends this approach in studying topics in which peoples’ attitudes and behaviours can best be understood within their natural setting (Babbie, 1995: 281). The major and common limitation of this design is “lack of generalisability of results” (Mouton, 2001: 150). However many lessons can be drawn from case studies and applied in different related contexts. Mainly the logic behind the case study design, despite its limitations, is that

there may be insights to be gained from looking at the individual case that can have wider implications and, importantly, that would not have come to light through the use of a strategy that tried to cover a large number of instances – a survey approach. The aim is to illuminate the general by looking at the particular (Denscombe, 2007: 36).

Therefore, this strategy serves the purpose of this study best. Furthermore, the in-depth description and analysis this design provides to a study makes this strategy ideal for this research theme.

This study had three main stages: firstly, a preliminary review of literature relevant to the topic was conducted. Secondly, an empirical study during which primary data was gathered through participant observations, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and documentary sources. Lastly, a process of data analysis, integration, and interpretation was done. Throughout this process a dialectical interaction between development issues in our context of study and the theological reflection regarding transformational leadership and community transformation was undertaken.

During the process of data collection, three research assistants or investigators (one male and two female) were hired to assist with this process because it could not be managed by this researcher alone in a specific period of time. Female investigators had to be included for the purpose of being gender-sensitive during the study and to reduce male-bias in the process of dealing with female participants during data collection.

4.4 Pilot study

Due to resources and time constraints, a pilot study was not conducted as initially arranged. Instead, the research tools were tested and modified in the course of the field study. The research team (this researcher and the three research assistants) conducted de-briefing sessions almost each day after a field study to reflect and discuss the adequacy and relevance of the research tools. Flexibility was exercised in terms of the research tools used depending on the context and changes were made accordingly. For instance, some questions were modified, paraphrased or added on the interview framework in order to make them more suitable, easy to understand and generate the data needed. Questions like, *what is your understanding of who a leader is*, were added. The nature of semi-structured interviews accommodates such changes.

4.5 Sampling methods

Selection of cases or sampling is more complicated in qualitative research than in other research approaches. Babbie (1995: 286) says “field researchers attempt to observe everything within their field of study; thus, in a sense, they do not sample at all.” However, he recommends three types of case selection methods in qualitative research which this study employed: “the quota sample, the snowball sample, and deviant cases” (*Ibid*: 287).

Quota sample – studies persons representing all different participating categories in case a representation is needed in the study (Babbie, 1995: 287). The sampling categories included persons from the age of thirteen and above – male and female, leaders and non-leaders, church leaders and community leaders, micro-economic leaders, formal and informal leaders. After a preliminary investigation of the community under study, which gave the researcher a general idea of the population distribution of the target population, different categories of people representing the target population were interviewed.

Snowball sample – a technique that begins with a few relevant subjects identified and then expanding the sample through referrals (*Ibid*). This technique was ideal in

identifying informal leaders²¹ who could not be identified by the researcher on the onset without an insider perspective. Hence, non-leaders were deliberately interviewed first, both in the local church and community at large, in order to have a better understanding of the situation in the community at the grass-root level before engaging with the leaders. The non-leader respondents provided information for the leaders that meet the study criteria. This procedure also allowed the researcher to first see things in the community through the eyes of ordinary people and then later draw comparisons with the leaders' perspectives.

Deviant cases – this technique examines cases that do not fit into the regular pattern (Babbie, 1995: 287). This technique was applied to include cases like children (under the age of thirteen) and drunk people who would not be considered for interviews in most instances. Such cases were “informally interviewed” within the community depending on their availability through interacting and chatting with them.

A combination of these techniques was used in this empirical study bearing in mind the nature of our research approach and design. In total 62 interviews were conducted: 21 with leaders – community leaders (e.g. chiefs, chief advisers, and microfinance leaders), church leaders, and teachers; and 41 with non-leaders. Out of 62 interviews conducted, 15 were focus group discussions with men, women, and the youth aged between 13 and 18. Each focus group comprised of an average of 5 people. Such a broad and diverse sample was identified in the community under study for reasonable and appropriate findings.

4.6 Data collection methods and field practice

One of the strengths of the case study research design is that it allows the use of multiple data collection methods – triangulation. Denscombe (2007: 45) states that “...the case study approach fosters the use of *multiple sources* of data. This, in turn, facilitates the validation of data through *triangulation* (sic).” This is important in checking and keeping a balance in issues of validity and reliability. Hence, Mouton (2001: 150) recommends the following data collection methods in case studies:

²¹Individuals in a community that do not have formal leadership positions but have influence in the community and play a crucial role in decision making and day-to-day community activities.

“participant observation, semi-structured interviewing (individual and focus group); use of documentary sources and other existing data.”

4.6.1 Participant observation

Participant observation was the first data collection procedure to be done during the empirical study. According to Denscombe (2007: 217), “[p]reserving the naturalness of the setting is the key priority for participant observation.” This was paramount in this study due to its nature. This was aimed at “gathering verbal and visual data by observing practices and events while participating in the setting in which they occur” (Osmer, 2008: 54). During this process no formal interviews were conducted. The researcher and research assistants observed and participated in the daily activities of the people in the community under study for three days from around 7:00 am to 5:00 pm (some days earlier and later than this time range). This period was significant in that it helped the research team to get acquainted with the community and establish a rapport with the people. Thereafter, Participant observations were combined with semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions throughout the data collection period.

The researcher and the research assistants spent almost a month in “Mgwayi” community in order to have a first-hand experience and a better understanding of the community holistically. That is, to understand the people and their interaction, the leaders and the leadership systems, and “what events, activities, and symbols mean to them” (Osmer, 2008: 54). Field notes were being taken throughout this period.

4.6.2 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews with individuals (leaders and non-leaders) and focus groups were used with much flexibility and sensitivity. This method is ideal considering the nature of this study. Gray (2009: 370) elaborates that interviews may be the best approach if the study is “largely exploratory, involving, say, the examination of feelings or attitudes... The use of semi-structured interviews also allows the researcher to ‘probe’ for more detailed responses where the respondent is asked to clarify what they have said.” Hence, both open-ended and closed questions in a planned and informal-naturally occurring environment were employed.

Participant observation and interviews were crucial in this study because the study was conducted in a rural community that has an oral cultural tradition and with a high level of illiteracy,²² hence, questionnaires were not ideal. Interviews also gave an opportunity to the interviewers to elaborate some questions not clearly understood by respondents. Respondents also had an opportunity to reflect on a number of issues in their community within the context of this study “without having to commit themselves in writing” Gray (2009: 370).

4.6.3 Use of documentary sources

Documentary sources available in electronic and hard copy were gathered and used as secondary data. This was in form of newspaper articles, reports, and books concerning the culture, religion, and general information about the “Mgwayi” community, Chewa people, and the Malawi nation. This data was analysed and integrated with primary data for the findings of this research. However, very limited documentary sources about “Mgwayi” community were sourced due to a strong oral cultural tradition existent in this community.

4.7 Ethical considerations

The researcher took high consideration of ethical issues in the process of research to ensure that the study is conducted in a manner that people’s (and all creation in community) rights, dignity and integrity are safeguarded. The researcher was obligated to abide by the following ethical principles, among other things:

- Participation in the study was voluntary and on mutual trust. To ensure this, respondents were asked to sign consent or assent forms after being adequately informed and understanding the nature, purpose of the study and what was expected of them. The consent forms had the necessary information concerning the purpose of the study and the researcher’s details (see appendix v and vi)
- The study was conducted within the natural environment.
- The researcher maintained objectivity, integrity and accountability in research conduct.

²²Literacy rate in Malawi rural is estimated at 69% (male) and 44% (women). Source: Malawi National Statistics office, 2004.

Link:http://www.nso.malawi.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=72%3Ademography-and-other-social-indicators&catid=2&Itemid=1

- Right to privacy and anonymity was respected in that informants were not forced or coerced to give information and reveal their identity. Informants' identities are, therefore, not disclosed in this study and report.
- Informants' contributions and authorship was ascribed appropriately.

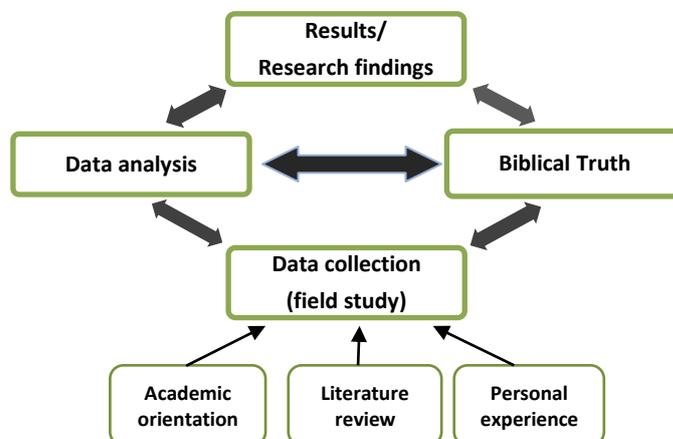
The researcher had to get a number of authorizations before embarking on the empirical research. Clearance had to be granted by the following authorities:

- The University of Stellenbosch Research Ethics Committee (Humanities) – which was granted in October, 2011 (see appendix **iv**)
- The District Commissioner of Lilongwe, Malawi (see appendix **vii**)
- The Traditional Authority Njewa through the Village Headman Mgwayi. (see appendix **viii**)
- The local church (Baptist Church) in “Mgwayi” community (see appendix **ix**) and
- The Country Director of Children of the Nations, an NGO working in “Mgwayi” community (see appendix **x**)

4.8 Data analysis

The data analysis in this study takes a dialectical interaction approach, since this is a practical theological study. In this approach, “special attention is therefore paid to theology as a dialectic interaction between the events being studied in the process of development and reflection upon the Biblical truths...” (August, 2010: 44).

Figure 1: *Data analysis model*



Throughout the process of data analysis, interpretation, and integration, the four key tasks of practical theology (i.e. descriptive-empirical task, interpretive task, normative task, and the pragmatic task) (Osmar, 2008: 4) are engaged in order to study and interpret the phenomena under study contextually. Data is analysed in light of the local community leadership challenges facing the community under study and its implication to community transformation; as well as the role of the local church in transforming local leadership for the well-being of a community.

4.9 Limitations and possible sources of error

There are a number of possible limitations and sources of error in this study due to its nature and the circumstances it was conducted in:

Research design (i.e. case study): the nature of the strategy employed in this study entails that its measurement tools and results cannot be generalised nor standardised (Mouton, 2001) as already outlined above. However, a lot of practical lessons can be drawn from it and applied in similar contexts.

Time frame and field study period: the limited time-frame in which the researcher had to conduct the field study (due to limited resources) and the period the study was conducted can draw some researcher biases (Chambers, 1983). Data that is collected in a month and during a rainy season may not wholly portray a picture of phenomena in a particular community. A particular season entails that only certain activities occur while others do not; in fact, seasons change people's life-style and daily activities from time to time. Therefore, this may not portray a full picture of the community under study. The rainy season also negatively affected the data collection process; some interviews were interrupted, some participant observations cancelled, and some people were unavailable for interviews because they were busy working in their crop fields.

Selection of case & sampling: the selection of the case (the community to be studied) for this empirical study was done based on convenience due to limitations of resources for the project. This means that the case under study was not so ideal; however, it served well the purpose of this study. The people interviewed were mostly women and the youth; most men were unavailable for interviews because they were at work or beer drinking due to the culture and social-economic conditions

of the community under study. Some people were unwilling to participate in the study upon realising that there was no financial benefit attached to it. Others, especially women, were resistant to answer some questions due to suspicion that they might be in trouble.

The following chapter presents and discusses the data collected through interviews and focus group discussions. In presenting and discussing the results, attention is given to local community leadership, community challenges and the role of the local churches in community transformation.

CHAPTER FIVE:

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses results of the empirical study conducted in “Mgwayi” community. These results are based on the interviews conducted with people in this community as individuals and focus groups. The results are discussed and interpreted in line with the theme of this study.

In total, 62 interviews were conducted: 21 with leaders – community leaders (e.g. chiefs, chief advisers, and microfinance leaders), church leaders, and teachers; and 41 with non-leaders. Out of 62 interviews conducted, 15 were focus group discussions with men, women, and the youth aged between 13 and 18. Each focus group was composed of an average of 5 people of the same age range and sex.

5.2 Local community leadership

The community leaders interviewed are composed of four main categories: village (or chiefdom) leaders, church leaders, community development project leaders, and school leaders. Village leaders include: Group Village Headman, Village Headmen, chief advisers (*nduna*), traditional culture leaders, women instructors (*namkungwi*), and care taker chiefs. Church leaders comprise of the pastor, church elders, deacon and deaconesses, church secretary, women’s guild leaders, and choir masters. Community development project leaders include: microfinance group leaders, Village Development Committee members, water project leaders, and NGO initiative project leaders. In the school leaders’ category are head teacher and teachers of schools initiated by an NGO operating in “Mgwayi” community. Here are the results of a study about general local community leadership issues in this community.

5.2.1 Definition of a leader according to the local people

Some respondents were asked to define who a leader is in their own terms according to their understanding. This was aimed at finding out about the community members’ perceptions of leadership and how this possibly impacts on their relationship with the leaders and the leader’s role in the community. Therefore,

according to this study, some of the people who were asked this question had the following responses:

Table 1: *Interview results (definition of leadership)*

Respondent	Response
A. (male)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A leader is a chief or anyone chosen to lead a group of people ▪ Men are also leaders in their homes; they are not chosen, it is a God-given role. A man has a role to take care of his family. ▪ Rich people are also leaders because poor people go to them for help
B. (male)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anyone who leads a group e.g. football team leaders, church leaders, drama group leaders ▪ Men are leaders in families because they are responsible for everything. It does not matter whether they are working or not
C. (male)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anyone heading something or a group of people anywhere where there are people
D. (male)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An elder or someone worthy listening to or leading a group of people e.g. chiefs ▪ Chiefs
E. (male)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anyone who leads a group of people e.g. chiefs or any other people who are trusted by chiefs and can be sent by them.
F. (male)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One who leads in church like a pastor, etc ▪ Someone with a responsibility of managing or taking part in development tasks
G. (female)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A person who leads people in what is happening in the community
H. (female)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chief
I. (female)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A man or person ▪ A lady

These responses seem to indicate that the general perception of a leader seem to be associated with a position and status. There is also an indication of the paternalistic dominant nature in this community. A chief or male person is closely

associated with leadership to the extent that the word chief is synonymous to a leader; a chief is a leader and a leader is a chief. No wonder, much reference on leadership made by most respondents was about chiefs. It is also interesting that a rich person is also regarded as a leader just by virtue of being rich. This mind set entails that the “haves” (the affluent) would be put on top of the ladder while the “have-nots” (the poor) would find themselves at the other end, the bottom, of the ladder in the community creating a social-economic gap.

5.2.2 Community leadership roles

Community leaders have different responsibilities and play a crucial role in different sectors of the community (as categorised above). According to interviews conducted with some key leaders in “Mgwayi” community, here are some of the roles they play:

A. Village (or chiefdom) leaders:

This category has a number of leaders who have different roles in a chiefdom and here are those that were interviewed.

i. Chiefs

- Settle disputes among community members
- Appoint people for different community development activities e.g. building traditional court and police unity
- Call for meetings to discuss important issues in the community
- Organise and oversee funeral ceremonies
- Guide and lead people in development activities by being exemplary
- Encourage people
- Oversee other chiefs (i.e. the Group Village Headman)
- Bring development – acting as liaisons for development

ii. Caretaker chief (acting)

- Performs duties of a chief in the absence of the chief
- Communicates messages from the chief to community members

iii. Counsellors/advisors (*anankungwi*)

- Counselling girls in puberty stage
- Counselling women and helping during child delivery

- Settling disputes among women
- Conducting marriage counselling
- Bathing dead bodies and preparing them for burial

B. Community development project leaders (e.g. microfinance groups)

- Look after HIV & AIDS patients and distributing medication according to prescriptions
- Counsel sick people and encouraging them to go for Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT)
- Visiting and looking after the welfare of the sick in the community
- Collecting and keeping financial contributions for group projects
- Keeping stuff (e.g. soap, maize flour) from development agents to be distributed in the community.
- Encouraging women to work together and do business for income
- Overseeing development activities
- Requesting development activities from NGOs or government
- Leading in community development activities
- Fixing/maintaining boreholes

C. Church leaders: general roles of church leaders

- Leading church service
- Overseeing church operations and development
- Encouraging fellowship among women
- Observing Sabbath (i.e. Seventh Day Adventist leaders)
- Learning, composing, and teaching songs
- Collecting financial contributions for church activities, funerals, etc.
- Counselling and executing disciplinary actions among church members
- Settling disputes among church members
- Teaching and preaching the Word of God
- Teaching Sunday school (Sabbath school in SDA)
- Coordinating church activities e.g. prayer meetings, Bible studies, and outreach programmes
- Organising funeral ceremonies for church members
- Encouraging members to be actively involved in church activities

- Act as a medium of communication between village leaders and church members in community development matters
- Writing minutes for church meetings and keeping records
- Raising funds for different church projects

D. School leaders/teachers

- Teaching preschool, primary school pupils
- Overseeing teachers (head teacher)
- Making sure that teachers have resources (head teacher)
- Making sure that discipline is maintained in school

These results indicate that community leaders have a handful of roles and responsibility in the day-to-day life of the community. Most development activities, both in chiefdoms and churches, rest upon the leaders. They set the pace and the tone of the community life and development. They are entrusted with key roles such that community members seem to be entirely dependent on them.

5.2.3 Influence of local community leaders

Respondents were asked about how much influence the leaders have on them and the community in general. Most respondents indicated that local community leaders (mainly chiefs) have much influence in the community giving the following reasons:

- They settle disputes among community members, counsel people and maintain peace
- They bring or initiate, lead and encourage people in community development activities
- They punish community members who do not participate in development activities
- They know and keep information about the community e.g. population figures
- They receive and distribute aid to community members e.g. blankets, clothes, and fertilizer coupons
- They are a bridge between development agents and the community, and between the Traditional Authority and the community; they take people's problems to the TA
- They have much influence because what they say goes; no one can refute it.

- They manage the community and look after the people's welfare
- They take care of orphans
- They supervise donations from government
- They keep discipline in the community by correcting people's behaviour
- They disseminate information to the community (e.g. about death of a community member) and organise funeral ceremonies
- They supervise community celebrations and cultural functions e.g. weddings and *Ngule Wamkulu*
- They set rules in the community for people to follow
- Protect people and make sure that foreigners do not come to disturb
- They distribute land to people
- They receive and guide strangers or visitors
- They make sure that people are involved in decision making and participate in community activities
- With regard to church leaders; they influence people because of their Christianity – their preaching transforms people, and their hard working spirit encourages people to do development activities

These results clearly indicate how much influence the local community leaders have, especially chiefs. However, their influence comes from their power, authority, status and role; and not on who they are. It is not their life style, personality or leadership that seems to have influence on the people. People seem to be influenced by them because of what they have. This means that without their leadership positions they are not influential. One respondent even mentioned that the local community leaders have influence on the community but not on his personal life.

On a high note, it is remarkable that some respondents mentioned that church leaders have influence because of the Gospel; their message transforms lives and their exemplary life inspires people. This shows some elements of transformational leadership and its impact on the community.

5.2.4 General leadership challenges

Here is an outline of some of the challenges leaders face in “Mgwayi” community in different sectors based on interviews with them (leaders).

A. Village leaders:

- The government gives them inadequate fertiliser coupons to distribute to needy community members which causes a lot of problems when some people do not receive coupons
- Hatred and back-biting which causes disputes
- It is difficult to settle some family disputes, especially marital problems
- “Freedom” – some people when drunk swear at leaders
- Lack of understanding in some people, especially in distribution of aid e.g. coupons; they think chiefs are corrupt.

B. Church leaders

- Laziness among other church members; they lack commitment
- Some leaders (e.g. women leaders) are chastised and disciplined because of the indiscipline of church members under their care.
- The church is surrounded by a community that brews beer
- Some people do not understand the meaning (or importance) of church
- Some people do not come to church or do not observe the Sabbath (i.e. in SDA)
- Youth ministry is going down (i.e. in SDA)
- Lack of accommodation for the pastor when he comes to visit the church (i.e. in SDA)
- Lack of resident pastors (in all the local churches except the African Abraham Church)
- Lack of resources to reach out to people
- Church members want their beliefs and wishes to override the church teaching; hence, this brings hatred towards elders that enforce discipline.
- Conflicts between village leaders and church members due to ownership of land where the church building is located (i.e. Baptist Church)
- Someone sold the land where the church building is located (i.e. the African Abraham Church).
- Lack of cooperation and understanding in groups like choirs
- Double standards of some church members
- Inadequate education of church leaders
- Too much workload

- Some senior members look down upon young church leaders
- Jealousy and back-biting
- Lack of financial support for the Bishop; he is not paid by the congregation for his services (i.e. in African Abraham Church).

C. Community development project leaders

- Lack of market for those doing group small scale businesses e.g. tree breeding
- Most people do not report for community development tasks due to beer drinking behaviour
- Government does not attend to their concerns
- Being looked down upon by some people
- Resistance from some sick people to disclose the disease they are suffering from (especially people suffering from diseases that are associated with stigma)
- Appointment of development committee members is not done on merit – chiefs appoint their close members because of financial benefits they gain.
- More time and commitment goes to community development activities than person and family development.

D. School leaders/teachers

- Lack of training – they are unqualified teachers; hence, do not teach effectively
- Lack of cooperation among teachers
- Low salaries
- Lack of understanding and cooperation between teachers and children's parents since there is no parents' school committee
- Poor relationship between the teachers or school management and the chiefs due to greed, low levels of education, and lack of proper information (among chiefs)

It seems there are serious problems that exist among the community leaders as indicated in the above results. Most of these problems seem to be internal; triggered by internal circumstances of the community but with a direct link to external factors. There is inability among the leaders to amply and effectively handle the challenges

and affairs of the community. This may be attributed to lack of essential leadership qualities and low education levels. Disputes, back-biting, greed, double standards, and lack of cooperation are evidence of lack of transformation in some leaders and community members.

External factors also play a huge role in the leadership challenges in this community. For instance, the way development agents deal with the leaders and the kind of aid they bring to this community has a big impact on the leadership. Unhealthy relations and dealings between leaders and NGO or government in development activities fuels conflicts among the community leaders, and between the leaders and community members. Such issues require competent leaders that are able manage both internal and external factors that affect the community affairs.

5.2.5 Strength and weaknesses of leaders

The table below shows some of the things that the community members appreciate and do not appreciate about their leaders. There are a number of good things that respondents mentioned about their leaders (village leaders in particular); things that community members appreciate them for. Most respondents were referring to their village leaders when responding about this. However, some responses were general, that is, they were not about a particular leader but all of the “Mgwayi” community leaders in general.

Interviewees were asked to mention things that they do not like about their leaders or the things they would like to see changed. This was aimed at establishing some of the leadership challenges that are encountered in this local community. This was a very sensitive question but it was necessary for this study.

Table 2: *Interview results (strength and weaknesses of leaders)*

Village leader	Things that are appreciated	Things that are not appreciated and people would like to see changed
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pays attention to people’s concerns needs and call people for meetings to discuss the challenges they face ▪ He financially and materially supports members during funerals ▪ Fairly distributes resources from NGOs and government e.g. coupons and maize ▪ Justice in settling disputes ▪ Maintaining peace ▪ They bring development e.g. school, bridges ▪ Friendly and caring ▪ Hardworking and patriotic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Beer drinking; all money is spent on drinking (sic) ▪ Nothing²³
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leading people ▪ Settling disputes fairly ▪ Love all people ▪ Allowed an NGO to work in the community ▪ Nothing²⁴ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Segregation (corruption) in coupon distribution ▪ Disputes among women (quarrelling) ▪ Lack of communication skills
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pays attention to people’s concerns, needs and calls people for meetings to discuss the challenges they face ▪ Help bring people together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Segregation (corruption) in coupon distribution ▪ Unfair distribution of aid due to family members’ influence; they only give their close relatives

²³ Some interviewees mentioned that there is nothing they would like to see changed about their leader

²⁴ Some interviewees mentioned that there is nothing they appreciate about their leader

	<p>when conflicts arise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inclusiveness and respect for community members ▪ Looks after people’s welfare and is not abusive ▪ Communicates to people about development issues and other things ▪ Nothing ▪ Bring order in the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nothing ▪ Disrespect by royal family members ▪ Corruption (injustice) during settling of disputes ▪ Dependence on donations or aid (e.g. fertiliser coupons) from outside the community ▪ Lack of dedication and commitment ▪ Time a leader is supposed to hold leadership position; length of time compromises the duties because power corrupts ▪ People should be allowed to participate in choosing a leader (chief) rather than just following traditions e.g. inheritance through royal family.
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintains peace in the community ▪ Justice when settling disputes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unfair distribution of aid due to family members’ influence; they only give their close relatives ▪ Lack of involvement in development ▪ Chiefs should oversee development – putting people first
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Settling disputes fairly ▪ Demonstrates and works together with the community in development activities ▪ Management of development work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ He needs to be strong and stand up of his people to be a strong voice for the needs of the community ▪ There is need for proper communication between chiefs,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peace loving, humble, and considerate ▪ Encourages Christian life (values) by discouraging people not to be involved in bad traditional practices e.g. beer brewing and <i>Nyau</i> ▪ Involves people in development activities ▪ Construction and repairing of boreholes 	<p>people and their advisors (<i>nduna</i>); better communication helps community members to be aware of what is taking place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The chief stays outside the community and is committed to another job. So the chief should be staying with his people and be committed to their welfare, and hear their views and concerns ▪ There is need for more love for their people, especially with big chiefs
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coupon distribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corruption (injustice) during settling of disputes
G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brings development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Greed – love of money

Note:The number of comments in a column concerning a particular leader does not necessarily mean that that leader is a good leader and liked by people or is a bad leader; it might mean that few people were interviewed under that particular leader (chiefdom) because of its size and/or availability of people the time interviews were conducted.

In responding to the question about things that need to be changed in leadership, there were indications that some women were afraid to mention leadership problems that need to be changed. This is evidenced in that 7 women and one focus group of girls (4 girls) declined that there is nothing that needs to be changed about leadership challenges despite mentioning some community problems that seem to have a direct link to leadership. Though it might be that they do not know or think that there are no any leadership problems, it is more likely that they were afraid; they were suspicious about the researcher's motive and were afraid of being reported to their leaders. This clearly shows the fear people have about their leaders; fear of being punished. On another note, the fact that these people were women and girls would indicate how they are treated by a male dominated leadership and community. All male respondents who were asked the same question fearlessly mentioned the problems they would love to see changed regarding the community leadership.

On a different note, some respondents could not point out anything they appreciate about their leaders. This may be an honest answer regarding the personality, character and conduct of the leaders or it may be out of personal resentments which some respondents have towards their leaders. It seems like some complimentary comments about leaders could be biased depending on the respondent. If the respondent is closely related to the leader (e.g. family member) he or she is likely to say only good things about the leader. Culturally, people shield their relatives and close friends and do not expose their bad conduct. The Chewa people also have a deep respect for their leaders. They say *wamkulu salakwa* (an elderly person or a leader does not make mistakes). This may have a significant connection to people's responses to sensitive questions about their leaders.

Village leader **E.** seems to demonstrate exceptional personality and qualities of leadership as compared to the other leaders according to the results. The leadership challenges in his chieftom seem not to be very serious. No mention is made about problems like greed, corruption and injustice. The things that people appreciate about his leadership seem to greatly outweigh the weaknesses.

5.2.6 Solutions to leadership challenges

As a follow-up question to the above question about leadership challenges, respondents were asked to give their views on what they think should be done in order to deal with leadership challenges in their community. Here are some of the responses given:

A. Sit down with the chief: some respondents suggested that the solution is to ask some community elders to sit down with the chief (dialogue) and reason with him to change his conduct e.g. excessive beer drinking and corruption. Traditionally, ordinary community members cannot do this. It has to be through community elders or chief advisors (*nduna*). It would take very uncommon courage for the people to do this looking at the tradition and culture of this people group.

B. The TA and DC should intervene: the other solution suggested is to ask the senior chief (TA) and District Commissioner (DC) to intervene in the situation. Traditionally, chiefs (both VH and GVH) are responsible to the TA, and the TA is

responsible to the DC. According to protocol, community members cannot see the TA by themselves, they need to go through their chief (VH or GVH). Hence, it is ironical that the people can go through their chief, whom they have problems with, to report their grievances to the TA. Taking their grievances to the DC might be possible, but may be a difficult and tedious process due to the bureaucracy in government operations. The community members may not have the knowledge and audacity to embark on such a process.

C. Counsel from other chiefs: other respondents mentioned that other chiefs can counsel a chief who is not doing well. This means that the people have to present their concerns to other chiefs in the community who can summon their fellow chief (possibly being led by the GVH). In this process the people might need to be very careful to be anonymous (if possible) in order to avoid reprisal. This would be a possibility but would require much courage as well.

D. Unity: regarding conflicts that arise among the community leaders, unity is a solution. Some respondents mentioned without mincing words that there is need for unity among the leaders. This might indicate that there is no significant unity among the leaders. However, they did not give ways as to how this can be achieved.

E. Alternative local solutions: it was noted that leaders depend on development agents from outside the community to solve the community's problems. They do not take initiative to find solutions to their own problems e.g. dependence on subsidy fertiliser coupons in farming. Hence, it was suggested that people should be encouraged to make compost manure for their crops instead of depending on fertiliser. Some people in the community are already taking this initiative.

F. No solution: some people believe that their leaders (chiefs) cannot be changed according to their knowledge. They think that even if these leaders can be counselled there is no possibility that they can change. This seems to come from a people who are hopeless and helpless about their condition and have accepted their fate and status quo. This comes clear in their language, Chichewa, in which they say, *wamkulu sawuzidwa* (an elderly person or leader cannot be corrected); meaning that they know it all. This requires for a mindshift about their condition and their leadership that no condition is beyond the transforming power of the gospel.

5.2.7 Appointment of leadership in the community

A. Village Leaders (Chiefs)

According to the local people, chieftaincy is inherited. The Chewa people being a matrilineal society, inheritance is done through the maternal line. The chief's nephew, the son of his sister, inherits the chieftaincy upon the death of the chief or if the chief is rendered incapable of discharging his duties due to other circumstances. Elderly women from the royal family discuss and choose among the sons of the chief's sisters. This is usually done at night and in secret. Among other things, they look for character, good behaviour, and wisdom. Women choose the heir not because they want to involve them in making key decisions in the community, but because traditionally it is women who bring up children. Therefore, they believe that women know children better than men. Msangaambe (2011: 62) says,

Women, especially those from the royal families, are the decision-makers when it comes to choosing leaders, such as village headmen. But, once they have chosen and inducted one, the women are disregarded. They are not even allowed to take part in highly powered village causes.

Women are only used as a means in this case; but not trusted with leadership roles. Women are said to know who is kind-hearted and also know the true father of a child. This also explains why inheritance is traced through the maternal line. They choose the son of the chief's sister to keep the blood line because if they choose the chief's son and suppose it happened unknowingly that the chief did not father that particular son, in case of marital unfaithfulness, there would be no blood connections between the chief and his heir. While this whole process is being done, a caretaker chief can be chosen until after the process is concluded (i.e. the new chief is installed).

This is not the case with the Moyo chiefdom (as already explained above). They are patrilineal – they trace inheritance through the paternal line. The chief's son inherits the chieftaincy; usually the first born son of the first wife in cases where the chief is polygamous.²⁵ If the chief does not have a son, his daughter may inherit the chieftaincy. The Ngoni procedure of chieftaincy inheritance seems to be simple as compared to the Chewa procedure. However, in both cultures it is paternalistic; males are given preference to females in chieftaincy inheritance.

²⁵ Polygamy is culturally accepted among the Ngoni's. In fact, a man's number of wives and children used to be a sign and measure of wealth.

When the heir has been appointed, the name is presented to the TA. Gifts are given to the TA when presenting the name for the senior chief's approval (which is more of a formality). Upon approval, the installation ceremony is organised. Beer is brewed, food prepared (animals slaughtered), and *Gule Wamkulu* performs the traditional dance. Chieftaincy is culturally for life unless the chief is rendered incapable of performing his duties e.g. due to continued display of deplorable behaviour.

B. Church Leaders

Church leaders' appointment varies depending on the churches. Church leaders like church elders, deacons and deaconesses, choir masters, youth leaders, and women's guild leaders are appointed by the local congregation usually through vote. Appointment is usually based on long-term membership, commitment, maturity, leadership capability, etc. Generally, the position's term of office is between one and two years after which elections are conducted again. Other positions (e.g. choir master) can be held for quite a long time depending on the willingness and giftedness of the leader, and also the availability of other people who are equally capable and gifted to replace the incumbent.

Pastors are not appointed by the local congregation in most of the churches except for the African Abraham Church. The pastors are usually allocated to the local congregations by the main council of the local church. The local churches are mainly on a receiving end; they do not have a choice or say on who should be their pastor (except for the African Abraham Church). Out of the four churches in the "Mgwayi" community, only the African Abraham Church has a resident pastor. The other three churches are led by church elders and deacons. Their pastors visit once in a while when invited to preside over important issues e.g. conducting sacraments.

C. Community Development Project Leaders

In most cases, leaders for community development projects e.g. microfinance project and pig rearing group, are chosen by the group members. This may be based on a person's education or knowledge in that particular field, leadership ability, integrity, and commitment. Tenure for office bearers varies depending on the project's regulations and life span.

However, there are circumstances where the chiefs have a mandate (by virtue of their power and authority) to appoint people in particular community development committees, for instance Village Development Committee (VDC). This is one of the areas where the chiefs are accused of nepotism because such appointments are not democratic; people are not involved in choosing their leaders.

D. School leaders

School leaders are employed and appointed by the school management. The school referred to here is Big Johns School²⁶ which is run by Children of the Nations (grades 1-3 with over 200 children) in “Mgwayi” community. COTN also runs a Nursery school (pre-school) in this community. The teachers in both schools are employed by the NGO and some are recruited as volunteers from the community. Recruitment is mainly based on knowledge, skills, experience and passion for the children. Tenure of office is normally three years on contract basis. However, in informal recruitments (e.g. community volunteers) tenure of office mainly depends on the commitment of volunteers and the project’s lifespan.

The appointment of leaders in “Mgwayi” community seems to be participatory on one hand; that is, some community members are involved in the process of choosing some leaders. On the other hand, there seems to be autocracy in appointment of some important leadership positions. Community members do not play a role in choosing the leadership. This can be a cause of resentment and conflicts in the community, especially when a majority of the community members do not like the leaders appointed.

5.3 Decision making on development activities

According to the interviews conducted, various responses were given on the question: who decides about development activities in the community? Here are some of the answers provided by some non-leader respondents:

²⁶This school was previously run by a Canadian lady who later could no longer run it due to lack of funding. It was this lady who named it Big Johns and it initially catered for grades 1-5 in two school blocks. This Canadian lady also used to run an after school feeding programme for children and a skills training programme for women; teaching them sewing. All these programmes stopped after she left for her home country.

Table 3: *Interview results (decision making)*

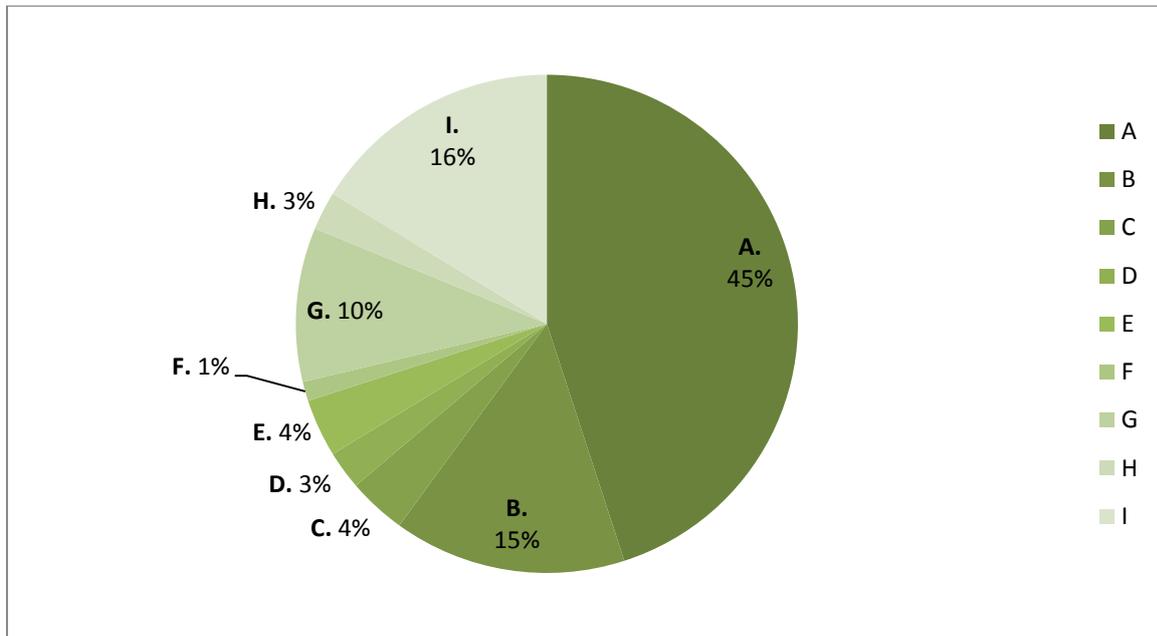
Answer Given	Number of people who gave a similar answer
A. Chief, his assistants (<i>nduna</i>), and elderly people in the community: (the chief identifies a need and calls for a meeting – people accept what the chief proposes) In church context: Church leaders decide and inform church members	36
B. Community members tell the chief what they want	12
C. Both chief and elderly community members	3
D. Depending on the development activity, sometimes youths are given opportunity to say their views	2
E. Development committees in consultation with the people	3
F. Member of Parliament	1
G. NGOs	8
H. The government	2
I. *	13

*I. Represents respondents who did not give an answer to this particular question or were not asked this question.

Village leaders and church leaders who were asked this question responded differently from most non-leaders interviewed. They said that usually development needs or ideas come from community members. Then leaders organise meetings to discuss what should be done. In the end, relevant development agents are approached to assist about that particular need in the community. However, this is contrary to what the majority non-leader respondents said. This indicates that either this is not what actually happens or (if it happens) very few people are involved in this process such that the majority of community members are simply informed about the decision made at the end.

The following is a clear indication and representation of decision making in community development activities in “Mgwayi.” The pie shows who have more power in decision making based on interview results presented in a table above. The letters A, B, C... represent the answers on who makes the decision as indicated in the table above.

Figure 5: *Decision making representation*



According to these results, it is the leaders who mainly make decisions for most development activities in the community. These decisions include what is needed in the community, how things should be done, who should be consulted for a particular need, and appointment of development project leaders/representatives. Nevertheless, it also shows that some community members are involved in the decision making process, especially elders or adults.

The results also indicate that some development activities come as an initiative of development agents or with little consultation with the local people. Development agents identify a need in the community and come up with a solution. Then they simply ask for permission from the chief to embark on their project. In this case, development agents seem to be defining development and its course in this community. This may not be sustainable in the long run because it makes the local people dependent on outsiders.

5.4 General challenges “Mgwayi” community faces

“Mgwayi” community faces a number of challenges. Through observations and interviews, the following challenges were noted:

Table 4: *Interview results (community problems)*

People group mostly affected	Problems the community faces
Men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Old age (also applies to women): strength going down and unable to work to earn a living ▪ Chiefs want money from the people that seek their service – even from the local churches. ▪ Doing corrupt fuel businesses (black market). Truck drivers and others sell fuel from company or government vehicles to men in this community who resell it at a higher price to other buyers (this is common when there is fuel shortage in the country) ▪ Laziness: most men do not participate in community development activities, instead, indulge in excessive beer drinking which lead to marital problems, etc.
Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Marital unfaithfulness: some men are unfaithful to their wives and divorce their wives or marry other women ▪ Abuse by men: some men leave their wives when they have borne them children ▪ Single motherhood: there are a number of widows and divorced women who are raising children by themselves. Some husbands are absent from their families due to work or other commitments ▪ Hospital is far: the nearest hospital is a private hospital and its services are expensive. This greatly affects pregnant women ▪ Lack of sanitary materials used when pregnant women deliver at home ▪ Lack of capital (money) to start small businesses
Young people/ Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stealing from each other at school ▪ Their views and concerns are not heard in the community; there is need for youth clubs/organisations ▪ Malnutrition

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in number of orphans ▪ Early marriages and pregnancies ▪ School drop-out: some parents are not interested in their children's education (especially men); hence, children are also not interested in school. ▪ Lack of school resources ▪ Lack of family support (i.e. physically, spiritually, etc) ▪ Myths/bad cultural practices: when girls reach puberty stage they are told to get married within 5 years otherwise they can suffer from incurable diseases. This leads to early marriages (at the age of 14-15) ▪ Public schools are far: there is no public primary or secondary school in this community. The schools are located about 3 kilometres away from the community and children have to cross the main road to get to school, which puts their lives at risk ▪ Disobedience: some youths do not accept counsel from parents and elderly people in the community which leads them into problems
<p>General problems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hunger: people depend on buying food due to lack of land and farm inputs, in the end it is not sustainable due to poverty. ▪ Lack of clean water: boreholes in this community were drilled in 1997. Out of 5 boreholes, 2 are broken. Hence, some people do not have access to clean water and have to make a monthly financial contribution in order to draw water from boreholes in other chiefdoms. This makes many people to use unclean water from the river and shallow wells dug in river-banks* ▪ Corruption in fertiliser coupon distribution ▪ Poverty: this includes lack of farm inputs, food, land, proper shelter and other basic needs* ▪ Beer brewing and excessive beer drinking which lead to violence when people are drunk (beer brewing does not affect Moyo chiefdom because it is not allowed; however, some people drink beer in this chiefdom)* ▪ Land selling: people (especially men) sell their land and squander the money leaving their families in abject poverty and landless. Some families are staying in rented houses. Some people reportedly sell other people's land or sell one piece of land to two buyers which causes conflicts*

- Diseases (e.g. Malaria, diarrhoea, cholera, and HIV& AIDS related diseases) which lead to untimely deaths: money and time is spent on attending to the sick and in funerals instead of doing something productive. It also contributes to the increase in widows and orphaned children. Stigma and lack of openness seem to exacerbate challenges associated with HIV & AIDS*
- Illiteracy/Ignorance: lack of knowledge and wisdom to use the resources they have e.g. using land to cultivate crops*
- Jealousy and back-biting
- Community members wait for help from outside. They do not take initiative to find solutions to their own problems
- Cultural problems: *Gule Wamkulu* (this does not affect Moyo chiefdom because they do not practice this cultural tradition)
- Prostitution: this leads to the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and breaking up of relationships (marriages)
- Hard heartedness: some people do not accept the Gospel
- Non-Christian (unsaved) people occupy key leadership positions
- Churches and development agents bring inappropriate things to the community
- Help (aid) does not reach the needy people it is intended for
- Lack of church leaders that can set good examples for community leaders
- People want to live a “modern” life which they cannot afford
- Some people fail to give back loans they take from money lending groups within the community and are reported to police
- Theft of properties (e.g. goats and chickens); as a result people keep their animals inside their houses which poses great risks to their health
- Disputes in families and among community members*
- Conflicts: fighting for positions
- Unemployment due to high illiteracy levels

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some national economic problems have direct impact on the community e.g. high transport costs which are triggered by fuel shortages and increase in fuel prices. This negatively affects the price of goods in the community.
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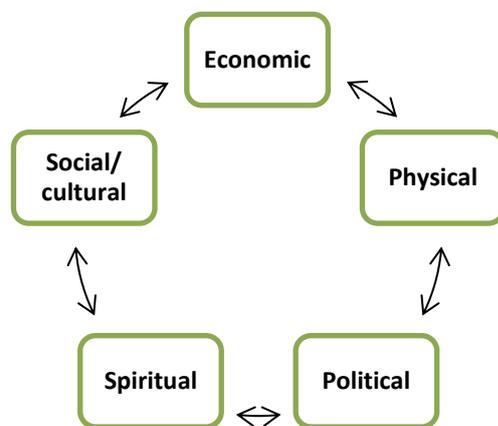
*These problems are general but mainly affect women

Some (or most) of these challenges have a direct bearing on the leadership in the community. Problems like corruption in coupon distribution, injustice in settling disputes, excessive beer drinking, lack of unity, and other cultural problems are ignited and exacerbated by poor leadership according to these results. The local community leadership is failing deliver as it is expected by the community in this case.

5.4.1 Causes of the challenges

There seems to be a “vicious circle” (Burkey, 1993:13) of causes of problems in this community. There is an interconnectedness of problems and their effects. One problem is caused by one thing and leads to another problem.

Figure 6: “vicious cycle” of the nature of problems

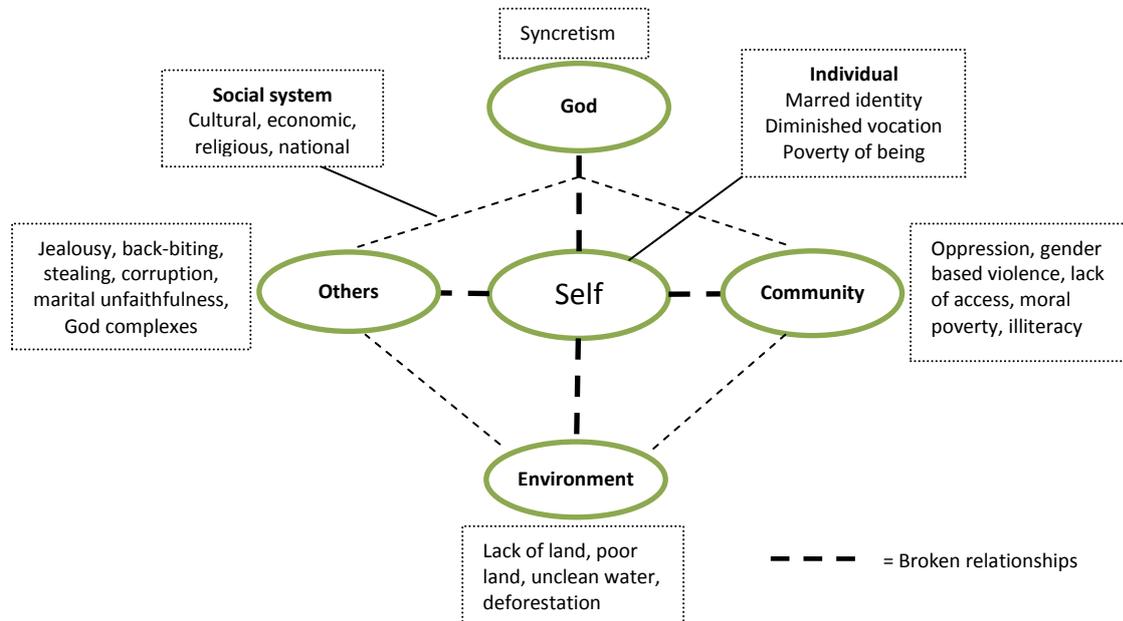


Adapted from Burkey (1993: 13)

However, a critical analysis of the poverty and other challenges faced in this community shows that the root cause is “fundamentally relational” (Myers, 1999: 86). “Poverty is a result of relationships that do not work, that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable. Poverty is the absence of shalom in all its meanings” (*Ibid*). That is, dysfunctional relationships and lack of shalom between

man and God, man and others, man and community, as well as man and environment (Myers, 1999:86). The following diagram illustrates this.

Figure7: *Causes of poverty and general problems*



Adapted from Myers (1999: 87)

5.4.2 Local initiatives in overcoming challenges

Respondents were also asked to mention local ways they use to overcome problems (mentioned above) in the community, and here are some of the responses given:

- **Water problem:** community members, especially women, use water from the river and shallow wells dug in river banks. For those that can afford, they pay monthly financial contributions to draw water from boreholes in neighbouring chiefdoms. The problem worsens in dry seasons when wells and boreholes dry-up; hence, some community members think that the permanent solution is to connect running water from the city in future.
- **Poverty:** to make a living, people do casual labour. Men and boys work in construction, farms, guarding, etc; women and girls fetch water for construction projects, and work as house maids for the working class. A lot of women do small scale businesses like brewing beer, selling vegetables and groceries. Some people also steal other people's properties to meet their needs.

- **Sicknesses and funerals:** when faced with such challenges the community works together to take the sick to the hospital and support them in different ways. Many community members buy over-counter medicines, which can be a health risk. In times of death the whole community comes together to support and be with the deceased family until after burial. During such times, differences are put aside and people work together. They have a saying in Chichewa which says, *chawona mzako chapita, mawa chili pa iwe* (literally it means, problems one faces will be gone, tomorrow it will be someone's problems). In this spirit, one's problems are everybody's problems, especially sickness and death. Local congregations also support in sicknesses and funerals. They visit the sick and organise funeral ceremonies.
- **Orphans, widows, and old age:** some local congregations (e.g. Baptist Church and SDA) support these needy people. They visit them, occasionally provide some material support, and do some chores for the elderly.
- **Beer brewing & drinking:** some local churches preach against this and do not allow their members to participate in these practices. They try to enlighten the members (e.g. the Baptist Church) who brew beer on the consequences of this practice and help them with alternative business ideas. However, the problem seems to be big and the local churches do not have deliberate and viable programmes to curb this practice.

These initiatives show that challenges people face in everyday life make them devise ways of overcoming them – survival strategies to sustain their lives. This is crucial for development agents to take note of; before outsiders offer help, they have to learn from the local people as to how they are surviving and build on that. This calls for patience, humility, and discernment to learn and perceive what God is already doing in this community. God is at work sustaining the lives of the people in such unbearable living conditions.

Beside these local initiatives mentioned above, there are a number of NGO and government initiatives addressing different challenges this community faces and these are discussed in the next section.

5.5 Development activities taking place in the community

The following development activities are taking place in “Mgwayi” community according to local people’s response to the question: what development activities are taking place in your community?

- **Drilling and maintenance of boreholes:** 5 boreholes were drilled in 1997, which eased the water problem. Some local people were trained to do maintenance of these boreholes and the people contribute funds for buying spare-parts.
- **Police unit and traditional court:** the government is constructing a police unit and a traditional court for TA Njewa next to this community (close to the residence of the TA)
- **Construction and maintenance of roads and bridges:** a government programme called Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) is running a road construction and maintenance programme whereby local people are paid for making roads, filling potholes and clearing road-sides. A Member of Parliament for this area helped to construct a bridge (or two)
- **Economic empowerment:** there are a number of projects aimed at empowering the local people economically as follows.
 - *Pig rearing for widows;* this was introduced by Children of the Nations to economically empower women who are raising orphans
 - *Goat rearing for orphans;* this was introduced by a local radio station called Zodiak Broadcasting Station. Goats were donated to some few families who are raising orphans. After a goat reproduces the kid is passed on to another family
 - *Microfinance programme;* some women were trained in microfinance programme by Plan Malawi and formed a money lending group. They contribute money to the group and lend to community members for an interest. This helps women and other community members to have capital for starting small scale businesses.
 - *Maize mill and grain silo programme* – Plan Malawi donated a maize mill and a grain silo in 1998 to generate funds for supporting orphans in the community. However, these are not operational due to some unspecified reasons.

- **Permaculture (sustainable farming):** an American lady²⁷ who resides in the community teaches the community members about sustainable farming – using natural ways to grow crops without using fertiliser. This project is viable and can be an ideal alternative to the conventional fertiliser dependent crop production. It can be a solution to sustainable food crop production in such a community that lives on subsistence farming. Besides this project, the lady is also teaching cookery and sewing (knitting) to some women in the community. Women can use such knowledge and skills to bake and sew for a living. However, the sustainability of these programmes is yet to be tested against time.
- **Dambo (river bank) farming:** some people cultivate crops in river banks in dry seasons to supplement the normal planting season (i.e. rainy season) in order to have food throughout the year. Apparently, some people do not make use of their *dambo* land due to lack of interest or laziness.
- **Cassava farming:** people are encouraged to grow cassava as an alternative crop to maize (corn)²⁸ because it does not need much rainfall and it perseveres in droughts
- **School programmes:** Children of the Nations is running early childhood education programme (nursery school) and an elementary school (grades 1-3) for vulnerable and orphaned children who were selected to be under the NGO's programme. The NGO also runs a feeding programme for the nursery school, pays tuition for some selected children in secondary and tertiary education level; and those that are bright qualify to be in the COTN International Academy. The selected orphaned and vulnerable children are also provided with some basic supplies e.g. clothes, blankets, and soap
- **Construction of Church buildings and church growth:** SDA church members managed to build a nice church building with corrugated iron sheets (with the help of their church headquarters). The African Abraham Church is also in the process of constructing a new church building; they have already purchased iron sheets with money raised by the congregation. The African Abraham Church membership has significantly increased the past two years.

²⁷This lady bought land in this community and constructed a big brick fenced house with modern facilities standing side-by-side with poor local structures.

²⁸Malawi's staple food is *nsima* (pulp) made from maize flour. Maize crops require substantial rainfall; hence, cassava is being encouraged as an alternative to maize because it does not require much rainfall. Cassava flour can also be used to make *nsima*, which is already one of the staple foods in the lake-shores in Malawi.

- **Presence of Churches:** some interviewees mentioned that the presence of churches in their community shows that there is development taking place because many church members' lives have been transformed.
- **Farm inputs coupon distribution:** the government distributes farm input coupons to some community members. Some few years ago, the government introduced a subsidy programme for farm inputs (fertilizer and seeds) to assist poor people who depend on subsistence farming and cannot afford to buy farm inputs. This was aimed at increasing crop yields in order to alleviate hunger. Though this programme makes a huge difference to many Malawians, a lot of corruption is involved in the distribution of coupons which are used to buy farm inputs at a very subsidised price.
- **Health education:** government health personnel and volunteers teach people about basic hygiene and general health education. They also introduced a home based care and support programme for people suffering from HIV and AIDS related diseases.
- **Provision of kitchen utensils and other materials** that are used in the community during funeral ceremonies (it is not clear whether these things were donated or locally provided).
- **Construction of houses:** some people are selling land and construct better houses. Those that purchase the land (the working class in the city) are also constructing much better and bigger brick fenced houses in the community.

Generally, most community members look at development as provision or availability of basic necessities for the welfare of people; and these provisions are mainly physical. They understand development as a physical activity. To some, development is as simple as having food and being able to care for family. This indicates the poverty conditions some people in this community are facing. Due to the impact of urbanisation, the people seem to have a western concept of development – *modernisation*. Development seems to be defined to them by other people (outsiders) and they are simply on the receiving end. More importantly, root causes of poverty and other challenges seem not to be addressed by development agents (outsiders); which are unjust and broken relationships as discussed above. However, the local church seems to be doing a commendable job in addressing the

spiritual needs of the people – transforming their lives, though the focus seems to be mainly on the vertical relationship; mankind and God.

5.6 Roles of different genders and age groups in development

Not all community members play the same or equal role in development in this community. The community leaders who were asked to outline roles that men, women, boys and girls play in community development provided the following answers:

Table 5: *Interview results (gender and age group roles)*

Gender/ age group	Roles	
Men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leading and providing for their families ▪ Building houses, pit latrines ▪ Making mud bricks ▪ Clearing the grass at cemeteries, construction sites, etc. ▪ Drilling wells and boreholes ▪ Maintaining boreholes, roads ▪ Doing clerical duties during development projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protecting the community ▪ Preaching, teaching Sunday school for elders ▪ Supervising development activities at church ▪ Advising young people ▪ Do not do much community development work because they go to work*
Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cleaning the church building and surrounding ▪ Smearing housefloors and walls with mud ▪ Cleaning and clearing up the borehole surrounding ▪ Fetching water and sand for construction projects ▪ Doing household chores and caring for their families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Raising children ▪ Preaching, teaching children's Sunday school and singing ▪ Encouraging children to go to school (especially women that are literate. Apparently, most men do not have interest in their children's education) ▪ Advising girls ▪ Road maintenance
Boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building houses, pit latrines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ responsible for their future,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Helping parents ▪ Involved in church activities like choir ▪ Teaching children’s Sunday school and singing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> making wise decisions ▪ Do not participate in community development*
Girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cleaning and clearing up the borehole surrounding ▪ Fetching water ▪ Road maintenance ▪ Responsible for their future, making wise decisions ▪ Tomorrow leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involved in church activities like choir ▪ Doing household chores ▪ Teaching children’s Sunday school and singing ▪ They do as women do ▪ They do nothing, just watch*

*Some respondents mentioned that men, boys and girls do little or nothing in community development activities.

It seems that in responding to the question about roles of different genders and age groups, some people responded about what they think these people groups’ roles should be and not what it is at the moment. This is evidenced by other interviewees’ responses which indicated that men, boys and girls do not really participate in community development tasks. They are usually busy with their personal jobs and responsibilities. At the same time, other respondents are indicating a number of roles that these groups do, which is conflicting. The truth might be that very few men, boys and girls are committed and fully participate in community development activities. This is also evident in some local churches like SDA and African Abraham who have very few male members (men and young men). SDA church does not have young male members (aged between 10 and 20), and African Abraham Church attendance ratio of male to female during Sunday service sometimes can be 1 to 10.

These results indicate that key roles in community development of “Mgwayi” are done by women. The social-cultural circumstances in this community dictate and put a huge role on women’s shoulders as far as community tasks are concerned. Women literally manage their homes, raise children, and perform practical tasks in church and community development.

5.7 Impact of religion on community members' life

Respondents in this study were also asked the following question with an aim of establishing the role religion (specifically Christianity and local church) plays in this community: what impact does your religion have on your role in the community? Suffice to say that people were not interviewed based on their religious affiliation. Community members of any religion qualified for the interview. The table below presents some statistics about religious affiliation of people interviewed during field study. This will give an indication of the role of religion in this community.

Table 6: *Interview results (religious affiliation)*

People group	Religious affiliation			
	Christian	Muslim	Traditionalist*	Other*
Leaders	20	1	1	
Non-leaders	84	2	3	23
Total	104	3	4	23
Percentage	77.6%	2.2%	2.9%	17.1%

***Traditionalists:** are those that follow cultural traditions (*Gule Wamkulu*) and are not associated with any religion

***Other:** Not sure of their religious affiliation; not noted during interviews

The figures above give an indication that Christians are in majority in “Mgwayi” community. However, it should be noted that being Christian here may include nominal Christians – those that are simply church-goers or identify themselves with a certain church. They have not accepted the Lord Jesus as their Lord and Saviour; their lives have not been transformed by the Gospel. It should also be noted that syncretism is very common in this community; many people identify themselves with a church/religion but still practice cultural traditions like *Gule Wamkulu*. This is evidenced by the common conflicts that arise during funerals because of divided allegiance some community members have. Local churches and *Gule Wamkulu* members tussle to conduct funeral ceremonies both sides claiming that the deceased was their member. Non-church members’ funerals are conducted by *Nyau* by default.²⁹

²⁹There used to be a Christian group which conducted funeral ceremonies of non-church members (with no other religious affiliations), but apparently *Nyau* members stopped it from doing this; meaning that all such funerals are conducted by *Gule Wamkulu* members.

Another thing to note is that among the Christian category are both evangelical and non-evangelical Christians. Hence, their church teachings would not have the same impact on their members' lives because of differences in key doctrines like the Trinity and salvation. However, the impact of the Gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit cannot be underestimated in any sense.

For the Christians that were interviewed, here are the responses they gave regarding the impact of their Christian faith and local church in their lives. Each or two of the points below were given by one or more respondents.

A. Leaders

(i) Church leaders

- Protection and healing from diseases; no longer depends on *mankhwala achikuda (muti; traditional medicines)*, but God
- God protects them from evil
- The Lord gives them peace in troubles
- God gives the grace and break-through in life challenges: one church elder narrated that before coming to Christ he was illiterate; but after being saved, God miraculously enabled him to read and write. He now reads his Bible by himself
- They pray and God answers their prayers
- They find encouragement in God's word
- Their lives have been transformed and do not get involved in evil cultural practices like *Gule Wamkulu* and other evil deeds
- Find favour in people's eyes
- Strength to do what they have to do daily
- Provision of daily needs by faith
- Christianity helps to practice biblical values (e.g. love) at a work environment
- Transformed marriage relationships
- Modelling good living in the community
- Christianity brings hope and encouragement in their life
- They seek God for direction
- They preach and teach the Word of God

(ii) Village leaders

- Transformation of life: one village leader narrated that he stopped smoking due to prayer and he lives because of Christ; church and relations are first now
- One chief said: he was so much involved in church activities before being installed as chief – he used to preach, sing and lead choir. The church helps him in everyday life to follow the truth and justice in judging disputes. He, therefore, cannot stop going to church because he values his relationship with God despite his commitment to his position and cultural traditions as a chief.³⁰
- They seek God for direction
- The Christian life gives self-control in times of disputes
- It enables them to understand different parties during conflict resolution
- It transforms their character
- They pray before and after community meetings seeking God's guidance and intervention.
- It helps some women leaders to give good counsel to women and girls; encouraging them to trust in God
- It helps them to do charity works e.g. visiting the sick and supporting the needy
- It helps in dealing with marital problems

B. Community members

- Their Christian faith helps them to have good behaviour and overcome personal challenges
- It teaches them holiness, love and obedience to authority
- God gives them peace in troubles and protection from evil
- It helps them realise that life and strength come from God
- Church leaders encourage praying and the fear of the Lord
- It teaches them self-control and gentleness in taking community roles
- Enables them to be faithful and responsible in taking community roles
- Humility; not responding to insults

³⁰This chief, despite that he goes to church, is not considered as a member by his church leadership because of his involvement in unacceptable cultural traditions like *Gule Wamkulu*. However, he still believes to be a member of his church.

- Helps the church to be responsible towards the needy e.g. orphans and the aged
- Helps church members to participate in church activities
- It helps them to witness about the Good News of Jesus Christ
- It transforms their lives to be responsible in the community and do charity works
- Helps them to abstain from bad practices e.g. beer drinking
- Church members have a spirit of togetherness which helps in working together for a certain cause
- It is easy for church members to meet in groups and discuss important issues about their community.

Based on these responses, there is no doubt that the Christian faith and the local church has a significant impact on the daily life of many people in this community. The Christian faith, through the local churches, transforms and teaches them fundamental values which would help them in their personal and community life. It seems some people responded about what they think the impact of Christianity is instead of how it impacts their lives. Although these responses cannot be a measure of how many and how much people are being impacted by the Gospel, they give a better glimpse of the church and the Gospel's impact. Definitely, some people's lives are being transformed because the *Missio Dei* (missionary God) is at work in this community.

5.7 Local churches' role in community transformation

The local churches in "Mgwayi" community play a number of roles aimed at reaching out to community members and transforming their lives. Much reference here is made to the Baptist Church because of its vibrancy in this community. It is also the biggest congregation in terms of membership followed by African Abraham Church. The Seventh Day Adventist has the least membership with only 22 members. Here is a general outline of the activities these congregations do:

A. Outreach and discipleship: they conduct outreach programmes aimed at evangelising community members. They also have discipleship programmes like prayer meetings and Bible studies for the church members. Overnight intercessory prayers are occasionally organised to intercede for the church and community. There

are also different ministries in the church for spiritual uplift e.g. youth ministry, women's guild, children and adult Sunday school, and different choir groups. Fellowship and revival meetings are usually organised with other congregations under the same denomination.

The SDA church puts more emphasis on piety. Therefore, weekly Bible study and prayer meetings are conducted. Saturday is their holy day (Sabbath day) and members are not supposed to do any work, even cooking their meals. During church service only hymns are sung and dancing is not allowed. This seems to be very difficult for many community members to adhere to because music/singing and dancing are the heart of their culture. This may be some of the reasons why this congregation does not have many members.

B. Community welfare programmes: they provide spontaneous support to some orphans and the aged people in the community e.g. paying tuition for orphans. Church members that are sick are usually visited in their homes after the church service; they are cheered up, prayed for and given some financial support.

Funeral and wedding ceremonies are other opportunities the local congregations use to reach out to the community. During these moments moral and spiritual support is offered through the preaching of the Word and singing of spiritual songs. Church members support the deceased family and the couple wedding in cash and kind. All these and many other circumstances offer an opportunity for the local church to reach out to the community.

5.9 Summary

In this chapter field study results were presented and discussed. It has been established that "Mgwayi" community experiences a number of leadership challenges and general community problems. Problems are triggered by internal and external factors which pose a huge test to the local leadership capacity – both village and church leadership. At the same time, a number of local initiatives are being taken to deal with some of the challenges. Development agents are also bringing in a number of development programmes, mostly physical and economic, to deal with the challenges; however, it appears that root causes of the problems (i.e. broken

relationships) are not being dealt with adequately to bring the desired transformation in the leadership and community in general.

Therefore, having outlined the situation in “Mgwayi” community, the following questions can be posed in light of the theological framework of this study:

- Has the local church lived to what it is supposed to be in this community? Is it an agent of change that it should be?
- Is the leadership in the local church and community at large transformational?
Are the leaders exercising biblical leadership as modelled by Christ?

These questions will finally be integrated and discussed in the last chapter (i.e. chapter 6).

6.0 CHAPTER SIX

TOWARDS TRANSFORMATIONAL LOCAL COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Summary of significant findings based on field study

The data presented in chapter five shows that local community leaders in “Mgwayi” community play a crucial role in the development and general welfare of the community. The results indicate that community leaders are responsible for making most important decisions and performing key tasks. They initiate development activities and act as contact persons with development agents. They appoint people in development committees, approve and supervise development activities, and distribute aid to community members from development agents. Their undisputable authority and power over their subjects and their role in daily community activities make them to have tremendous influence. Results also show that their influence comes from their power, authority and roles; not from their personality, character or leadership style. Therefore, leaders (especially chiefs) are more feared than respected.

The roles and influence of leaders emanate from the Chewa cultural tradition which deeply respects leadership without questioning it. It is also a culture that is so paternalistic and male dominant despite its matrilineal tradition. Therefore, many community members think that it is the role of their leaders to find solutions to problems facing their community. As a result, development is mainly spearheaded by community leaders, both in church and community in general, with little initiative from ordinary community members. Community change is basically driven by the leadership who are dependent on outsiders – development agents.

The “Mgwayi” community faces a number of problems that have a direct connection to the community leadership. The leaders are faced with problems like greed and corruption concerning aid distribution; injustice in settling disputes, unbecoming behaviour (e.g. excessive beer drinking and marital unfaithfulness), abuse of power, and nepotism. There is also evidence of poor leadership qualities, low levels of education, and power struggles evidenced by the number of chiefs in a single small community.

The cultural tradition in “Mgwayi” community is two faced, like any other culture. It has a negative and positive side. The negative side of it include issues involving cultural traditions like *Gule Wamkulu*, polygamy, beer brewing and drinking, and early marriages. On the other hand, their culture has positive aspects that are very powerful. Their communal life based on the *umunthu (ubuntu)* values that make the community work together, especially in problems (e.g. sickness and death), is remarkable. They share their basic life necessities (e.g. food) as one extended family. This is a very strong side of the community that the local church and development agents can utilise and build on.

The local churches are playing a number of roles in community transformation. Teaching and preaching of the Word of God in church, conducting evangelistic and discipleship programmes, running spontaneous charity programmes e.g. caring for the sick, orphans and the elderly. However, evidence shows that the local churches’ activities are more focussed on their members only and on spiritual transformation. They do not have deliberate long term plans and programmes aimed at reaching out to their community in a holistic approach. The local changes seem not to be actively engaged into programmes that deal with community challenges like poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, corruption, HIV and AIDS and sexual immorality, beer brewing and excessive beer drinking, among others. It seems the local churches have a dualistic view of their understanding of the church’s role in bringing transformation, which dissects the spiritual and the physical needs of people. They are more concerned with the spiritual salvation (or needs) of the people. They, therefore, miss an opportunity to make a significant difference, holistically, in their community.

6.2 Interpretation of results based on literature and theory

A. Transformation

The results of this study show that there are some elements of *transformation* in “Mgwayi” community. This transformation emanates from the gospel propagated by the local churches, development agents (i.e. Christian NGOs) and individuals. Though in part, but it is evident in people’s lives that have been transformed by the Gospel. However, this seems to be mainly spiritual and on a personal level. Transformation has not permeated into every aspect of people’s lives and the

community. It is not yet up to what is defined as transformation in this study. The presence of grinding poverty, corruption, injustice, illiteracy, divisions, gender-based violence, and HIV and AIDS due to sexual immorality is symptomatic of a lack of transformation.

B. Transformational leadership

This is also true with the concept of *transformational leadership*. Some leaders in the church and community are demonstrating good leadership qualities identifiable with transformational leadership and are making a difference in their own capacity. However, they cannot be described as transformational leaders in the strong sense of the term according to this study because of their inability to lead the community in a process of deep change, holistically:

- They seem not to have a clear vision of a better future towards which they can guide the community. Seemingly, development agents (and the government) define development for them and, therefore, define the community's destiny in a sense.
- Apparently, they are not regarded as role models to most community members because they do not have high moral and ethical standards that guide their conduct. The study results indicate that most leaders in the community are generally corrupt, immoral, greedy, and do not serve the interests of the community.
- Leadership is locally defined in terms of position and power which put the leader and follower in an unequal relationship – which makes it difficult for them to work together; mainly because of the culture.
- Leaders are unable to carefully analyse internal and external factors that effect change in their community as open systems change theories require because of lack of proper education, information, and necessary leadership qualities. Hence, their dependence on outsiders – development agents.

It can be concluded that the challenges “Mgwayi” community faces is evidence that there is a huge need for transformational leaders – Christ-like leaders that can serve and shepherd the people and be stewards of the community and all its God-given resources.

C. The role of the local church

The *local church* exists in “Mgwayi” community without doubt. The study results show testimonies of transformed lives and relationships. The church plays a number of roles, inter alia, nurturing and supporting church members, and some orphans, widows, the bereaved and the sick; and occasionally reaching out to lost people in the community through funeral ceremonies and other means.

However, the local church is not fully living up to its nature and call. This is evidenced by the challenges it is facing and the position it has taken in this community. It is present but not existing for the community. It seems it has hidden its lamp under the bowl because it is not being the salt and light it ought to be to the village leadership and community at large. Therefore, it needs renewal, reformation and empowerment so that it can take its rightful position and be the agent of transformation it ought to be. This will enable it to realise its holistic role as the body of Christ in the community. It will be able to confront the ills of the community and spearhead transformation that is characterised by life sustenance, equity, justice, dignity and self-worth, freedom, participation, reciprocity, cultural fit, ecological soundness, hope, and spiritual transformation (Bragg, 1987: 40-46).

Reflecting on this study’s guiding hypothesis at this point the question can be, can the local church in “Mgwayi” community be a change agent that can reach out and transform local community leadership and in the end bring transformation in the community? Yes, it can be. The empirical study results indicate that the local church plays a significant role in the transformation of “Mgwayi” community to some degree, but not as it ought to; it is not at its best. Therefore, the local church can be a change agent it ought to be if it reforms its nature and reclaim its call as a church and deliberately reposition itself for such a task.

6.2.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, data clearly indicate that there are a number of good developments taking place in “Mgwayi” community. At the same time, there are serious leadership problems that erode the positive changes taking place. The local churches’ leadership is entangled but thriving in the same challenges. There is great potential and opportunity for the local church to make a huge difference in the transformation

of “Mgwayi” community because of the good membership it enjoys in the community that includes some chiefs. Therefore, the challenges the community faces are an opportunity for the local church to bring hope and transformation.

In spite of the great potential and opportunity the local church has, the church lacks necessary tools on how to deal with critical issues facing the community. The local churches need to be empowered and trained in how to engage community leaders in dialogue and partner with them, and how to nurture and empower leadership in church and community at large. There is also need for a paradigm shift in the understanding and propagation of the Gospel. The church should not dichotomise its transformation role between the physical and the spiritual. It has to bring the whole Gospel to the whole human being and community.

The strong cultural traditions in “Mgwayi” community make the church to stand in a delicate position. There is a danger of completely opposing the culture or being completely in agreement with it (Hendricks, 2004: 72). So there is need to take a balanced position (i.e. inculturation), whereby the Gospel transforms the culture. The communal life and *umunthu (ubuntu)* values form a strong base of the community’s cultural traditions that the local church needs to cultivate.

6.3 Significance of results and contribution to knowledge

The findings of this study are significant in that they bring to light the challenges associated with local community leadership in rural development in Lilongwe from a grass-root level, which range from political to cultural in nature. On the other hand, the positive aspect of local people’s culture are also brought to light; including positive changes that are taking place with local initiatives as well as outsiders’ intervention. They bring afresh and highlight the significance of local community leaders in the whole process of community transformation. The study also explored the importance and role of the local church in modelling and facilitating leadership and community transformation in a rural setting.

The literature explored in this study and the theological framework presented offers a significant resource to the local church, development agents, and individuals for academic purposes and further research. Therefore, it is believed that these findings will enlighten researchers, the local church, development agents and stakeholders

intending to work in “Mgwayi” community or other similar communities about a number of issues surrounding local community leadership.

6.4 Recommendations

In light of the community and leadership challenges facing rural communities in Malawi, “Mgwayi” community in particular, the researcher recommends the following based on the findings of this research:

A. Local church

- That the local church reforms its nature and reclaims its call and position in the community as an institution called, established and commissioned by God. This internal reformation will help it to be missionary by its very nature and be more proactive in dealing with community challenges holistically and exist for the community. It should not confine itself to the church walls waiting for people to come to it. It should be proactive and confront challenges head-on in a holistic approach.
- That the local church leaders exercise transformational leadership as modelled by Christ. Following Christ’s example, church leaders can model servant leadership in church and the community which stands in tension with the community’s cultural understanding of leadership.
- That the local church aims at discipling local village leaders who confess Christianity and nurture the relationship between the church and these leaders.
- That the local churches use dialogue to engage village leaders that are traditionalists in order to deal with conflicts the church faces with them. This should be done with much care and sensitivity.
- That local churches work together in the spirit of ecumenism in dealing with challenges facing the community. This will enrich their theology and keep them in check from syncretism and being above the culture.
- That the local churches promote cultural values that are in line with the biblical values (e.g. communal life) which are under threat due to *modernisation* that is taking place rapidly. At the same time, it has to deliberately aim at transforming bad cultural practices that are unbiblical.

- Some of the programmes the local church can conduct, apart from discipleship for village leaders, include:
 - Literacy evangelism/education; targeting the illiterate population aimed at teaching them to read and write which will give them access to Scriptures and important information.
 - Economic empowerment programmes (microfinance projects) based on biblical values; targeting women and young people aimed at giving them alternative business ideas from beer brewing.

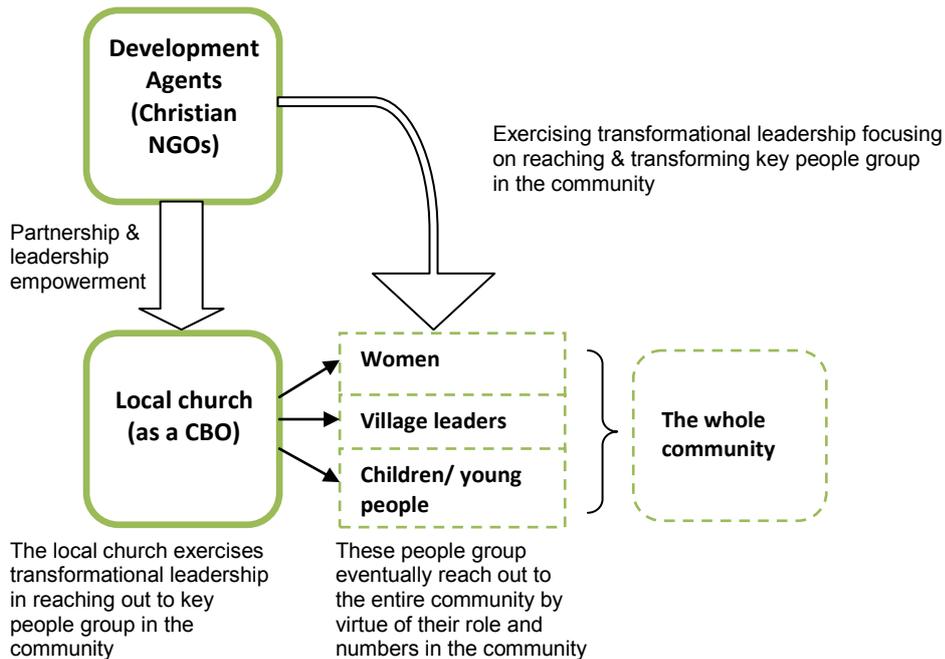
B. Development agents (especially Christian organisations):

- Exercise transformational leadership in their operations, in this community in particular.
- Understand that community transformation is primarily God's responsibility through the church; therefore, their efforts have to focus on working together or alongside the local churches which operate as community based organisations on a grass-root level.
- Support and facilitate inter-church training for local church leaders aimed at empowering them with transformational leadership skills. If possible, explore on ways how they can support so that some of the local churches can have resident pastors.
- Expose local church and village leadership to transformational leadership and provide knowledge and resources for empowerment and capacity building.
- Aim at empowering local village leaders and promote gender equity for a sustainable community development.
- Aim at transforming and investing in the lives of women and young people who form the bulk of the community population. Promote community clubs or organisations which would give women and young people a platform for their views to be heard.
- Research and build on the indigenous knowledge and solutions in overcoming the local challenges because, as Burkey (1993: xvii) puts it, "sustainable rural development will only be achieved through the efforts of the rural people themselves working for the benefit of themselves, their families and, hopefully, their communities." Therefore, Development agents ought to engage carefully and patiently with community leaders and different people groups in the

community before embarking on any development project. Learn and discern what God is already doing (with or without the local church) and partner with Him.

The researcher proposes the following ministry strategy for “Mgwayi” community which development agents and the local church can use:

Figure 8: *ministry strategy*



In this model, development agents come along side and partner with the local church as a Community Based Organisation (CBO) mandated by God with a community transformation task. They empower and provide necessary tools for the local church’s leadership to reach out to women, village leaders and young people, primarily. In the end, the whole community is reached since these three key people groups play a crucial role in the community and/or are in majority. At the same time, development agents’ direct intervention in the community focuses on the same key people groups.

6.5 Suggestions on further areas of study

Further in-depth research studies in “Mgwayi” community can be done on the following areas using participatory strategies:

- Women and gender roles in the community

- Culture and how it can be used to transform lives
- The role and impact of development agents
- How local churches can holistically be an agent of change in this community.

It is transformational local community leaders that can bring community transformation. The need for such leaders is enormous. The local church, if at its best, offers hope and can make a huge difference to meet this need.

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APPENDICES

Appendix (i): Interview framework for leaders

UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH

FIELD RESEARCH SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FRAMEWORK FOR LEADERS

PROJECT TITLE: THE QUEST FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL LOCAL COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE MALAWIAN DISTRICT OF LILONGWE: A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Researcher: Chancy Gondwe (Phone: 0 888 556 175; Address: P.O. BOX 1205, Lilongwe, Malawi)

- Interview date and time..... Place.....
- Respondent's Religion..... Sex: M/F
- If Christian, what church/denomination?.....
- Position and Institution/Community.....
- Any other leadership position(s) you hold in your community?.....
- What is/are your role(s) as a leader concerning development in your community?.....
- What are the challenges you face as a leader?.....
- What challenges does your community face and how do you overcome them?.....
- What impact does your religion have on you as a leader regarding your role in your community?
.....
- What developments are taking place in your community?.....
- Who decides about development activities in your community?.....
- Who decides about the appointment of a leader in your position and for how long are you supposed to be in your position?.....
- In your view, what are the roles of the following groups as far as development is concerned in your community:
- a. Men:.....
 - b. Women:.....
 - c. The youth:.....
 - i. Boys.....
 - ii. Girls.....

Appendix (ii): Interview framework for non-leaders and focus groups

<p><u>UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH</u></p> <p>FIELD RESEARCH SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FRAMEWORK FOR NON-LEADERS AND FOCUS GROUPS</p> <p>PROJECT TITLE: THE QUEST FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL LOCAL COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE MALAWIAN DISTRICT OF LILONGWE: A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE</p> <p>Researcher: Chancy Gondwe (Phone: 0 888 556 175; Address: P.O. BOX 1205, Lilongwe, Malawi)</p>
--

Interview date and time..... Place.....

Respondent's Religion..... Sex: M/F

If Christian, what church/denomination?.....

What responsibilities do you have in your community as women/men/youth concerning development?.....

Who decides about development activities in your community?.....

What development activities are taking place in your community?.....

.....

What challenges do you face in your community?.....

How do you overcome them?.....

Who appoints leaders in your community and what is the procedure?.....

.....

What influence do the leaders have on you and the community at large?.....

.....

What things do you appreciate about your leaders and the leadership structure?.....

What things would you like to see changed about leadership in your community regarding development and how do you think they can be changed?.....

.....

What impact does your religion have on your roles in the community?.....

.....

Appendix (iii): Letter from study leader



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jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Mr. Chancy PS. Gondwe (st. nr. 15924203) is a registered Masters Student of our University within the field of Theology and Development Studies.

The theme of his research is, **The Quest for Transformational Local Community Leadership for Rural Development of the Malawian District of Lilongwe: A Theological Perspective**. His research is both of a literature and an empirical nature, which require that he utilizes an interview and questionnaire method. Of necessity he has to conduct his research with people in communities, schools and churches for which he needs the collaboration and consent of Community, schools and church leaders.

We humbly beseech you to give him the necessary written consent, which he needs to comply with the ethical requirements of the University of Stellenbosch, before he can actually start with his field-research.

With thanks and appreciation

Yours Faithfully

Prof. K. Th. August

Supervisor and Head of Department

14 June 2011



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Appendix (iv): Research Ethics Committee clearance letter



UNIVERSITEIT-STELLENBOSCH-UNIVERSITY
Jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

Approval Notice New Application

18-Apr-2012
GONDWE, Chancy Praise

Protocol #: HS730/2011

Title: The quest for transformational local community leadership for rural development for the Malawian district of Lilongwe: A theological perspective

Dear Mr Chancy GONDWE,

The **New Application** received on **18-Oct-2011**, was reviewed by Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities) via Committee Review procedures on and has been approved.

Please note the following information about your approved research protocol:

Protocol Approval Period: **27-Oct-2011 -26-Oct-2012**

Present Committee Members:

Hattingh, Johannes JP
Theron, Carl CC
Somhlaba, Neebazakhe NZ
Bitzer, Elias EM
Engelbrecht, Sidney SF
Gorgens, Gina G
Van Wyk, Berte B
Beukes, Winston WA

Standard provisions

1. The researcher will remain within the procedures and protocols indicated in the proposal, particularly in terms of any undertakings made in terms of the confidentiality of the information gathered.
2. The research will again be submitted for ethical clearance if there is any substantial departure from the existing proposal.
3. The researcher will remain within the parameters of any applicable national legislation, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of research.
4. The researcher will consider and implement the foregoing suggestions to lower the ethical risk associated with the research.

You may commence with your research with strict adherence to the abovementioned provisions and stipulations.

Please remember to use your **protocol number (HS730/2011)** on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research protocol.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

After Ethical Review:

Please note that a progress report should be submitted to the Committee before the approval period has expired if a continuation is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) number REC-050411-032.

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki, the South African Medical Research Council Guidelines as well as the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health).

Provincial and City of Cape Town Approval

Please note that for research at a primary or secondary healthcare facility permission must be obtained from the relevant authorities (Western Cape Department of Health and/or City Health) to conduct the research as stated in the protocol. Contact persons are Ms Claudette Abrahams at Western Cape Department of Health (healthres@pgwc.gov.za Tel: +27 21 483 9907) and Dr Helene Visser at City Health (Helene.Visser@capetown.gov.za Tel: +27 21 400 3981). Research that will be conducted at any tertiary academic institution requires approval from the relevant parties. For approvals from the Western Cape Education Department, contact Dr AT Wyngaard (awyngaar@pgwc.gov.za, Tel: 0214769272, Fax: 0865902282, <http://wced.wcape.gov.za>).

Institutional permission from academic institutions for students, staff & alumni. This institutional permission should be obtained before submitting an application for ethics clearance to the REC.

Please note that informed consent from participants can only be obtained after ethics approval has been granted. It is your responsibility as researcher to keep signed informed consent forms for inspection for the duration of the research.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at 0218089183.

Included Documents:

Letter of permission 3

Consent form

Interview guide for focus group

Assent form

Research proposal

Letter of permission 2

Letter of permission 1

Interview schedule for semi-structured interviews

Application form

Sincerely,

Sidney Engelbrecht

REC Coordinator

Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

Investigator Responsibilities

Protection of Human Research Participants

Some of the responsibilities investigators have when conducting research involving human participants are listed below:

1. Conducting the Research. You are responsible for making sure that the research is conducted according to the REC approved research protocol. You are also responsible for the actions of all your co-investigators and research staff involved with this research. You must also ensure that the research is conducted within the standards of your field of research.
2. Participant Enrollment. You may not recruit or enroll participants prior to the REC approval date or after the expiration date of REC approval. All recruitment materials for any form of media must be approved by the REC prior to their use. If you need to recruit more participants than was noted in your REC approval letter, you must submit an amendment requesting an increase in the number of participants.
3. Informed Consent. You are responsible for obtaining and documenting effective informed consent using **only** the REC-approved consent documents, and for ensuring that no human participants are involved in research prior to obtaining their informed consent. Please give all participants copies of the signed informed consent documents. Keep the originals in your secured research files for at least five (5) years.
4. Continuing Review. The REC must review and approve all REC-approved research protocols at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk but not less than once per year. There is **no grace period**. Prior to the date on which the REC approval of the research expires, **it is your responsibility to submit the continuing review report in a timely fashion to ensure a lapse in REC approval does not occur**. If REC approval of your research lapses, you must stop new participant enrollment, and contact the REC office immediately.
5. Amendments and Changes. If you wish to amend or change any aspect of your research (such as research design, interventions or procedures, number of participants, participant population, informed consent document, instruments, surveys or recruiting material), you must submit the amendment to the REC for review using the current Amendment Form. You **may not initiate** any amendments or changes to your research without first obtaining written REC review and approval. The **only exception** is when it is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants and the REC should be immediately informed of this necessity.
6. Adverse or Unanticipated Events. Any serious adverse events, participant complaints, and all unanticipated problems that involve risks to participants or others, as well as any research related injuries, occurring at this institution or at other performance sites must be reported to Malene Fouch within **five (5) days** of discovery of the incident. You must also report any instances of serious or continuing problems, or non-compliance with the REC's requirements for protecting human research participants. The only exception to this policy is that the death of a research participant must be reported in accordance with the Stellenbosch University Research Ethics Committee Standard Operating Procedures. All reportable events should be submitted to the REC using the Serious Adverse Event Report Form.
7. Research Record Keeping. You must keep the following research related records, at a minimum, in a secure location for a minimum of five years: the REC approved research protocol and all amendments; all informed consent documents; recruiting materials; continuing review reports; adverse or unanticipated events; and all correspondence from the REC
8. Reports to Sponsor. When you submit the required reports to your sponsor, you **must** provide a copy of that report to the REC. You may submit the report at the time of continuing REC review.
9. Provision of Counselling or emergency support. When a dedicated counsellor or psychologist provides support to a participant without prior REC review and approval, to the extent permitted by law, such activities will not be recognised as research nor the data used in support of research. Such cases should be indicated in the progress report or final report.
10. Final reports. When you have completed (no further participant enrollment, interactions, interventions or data analysis) or stopped work on your research, you must submit a Final Report to the REC.
11. On-Site Evaluations, Inspections, or Audits. If you are notified that your research will be reviewed or audited by the sponsor or any other external agency or any internal group, you must inform the REC immediately of the impending audit/evaluation.

Appendix (v): Consent form



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jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

THE QUEST FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL LOCAL COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE MALAWIAN DISTRICT OF LILONGWE: A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Consent for participants of 18 years and above and for parents of child participants

You are asked to participate in a research study entitled: The Quest for Transformational Local Community Leadership for Rural Development of the Malawian District of Lilongwe: A Theological Perspective conducted by Chancy Gondwe, a Malawian by nationality and Master of Theology (MTh) student at the department of Practical Theology and Missiology, Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University in South Africa. The results of this study will contribute towards my MTh degree studies. You were randomly selected as a possible participant in this study because your position/status/membership and role in your community is within the context of this study.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study is aimed at finding solutions to leadership challenges that rural communities face as far as community development is concerned. The study will explore the role of the local church in finding solutions to such challenges for the wellbeing of the whole community.

2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following:

- Share with us information concerning day-to-day life in the community, development, poverty and the role of leadership.
- You are expected to discuss with us individually or in a group for about 30 minutes a day, once (or twice if need be). This will be done in your village at a place and time of your convenience. You will be required to share verbally or through writing.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There is no risk or discomfort that may occur for being involved in this study except that it will take a little bit of your time. You will be at liberty to terminate your participation in the study at anytime should you experience any discomfort with such participation.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

There is no material benefit for your participation, however, this study will give you an opportunity to discuss and reflect on issues of development, poverty and leadership concerning your

community. The results of this study will help scholars, churches, and development practitioners to be knowledgeable about current development and leadership issues facing rural communities; and how to deal with such issues.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

There will not be any remuneration for your participation.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as is required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of keeping all data, electronic or in hard copy, inaccessible to anyone except the researcher and you. Electronic data will be protected by passwords.

The results of this study will be available to Stellenbosch University because it will be conducted under this institution. However, your identity will not be disclosed in the results.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to participate in this study or not. If you volunteer to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences. You may also choose not to answer any questions you don't want to answer, and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the following people:

- 1. Prof. K.T. August** (Supervisor)
Tel: (+27) 21 808 3856
Postal Address: Private Bag XI, Matieland, 7602, South Africa
- 2. Chancy Gondwe** (Principal investigator)
Cell: (+265) 994 781 951
- 3. Pike Kaminyoghe** (co-investigator)
Cell: (+265) 999 185 555
- 4. Tinashe Saka** (co-investigator)
Cell: (+265) 995 937 057.

Postal address for principal investigator and co-investigators:
P.O. Box 1205, Lilongwe, Malawi.

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not giving up any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to me by Chancy Gondwein English and it was satisfactorily translated to me. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

[I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study/I hereby consent that the subject/participant may participate in this study.] I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Subject/Participant

Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative

Date

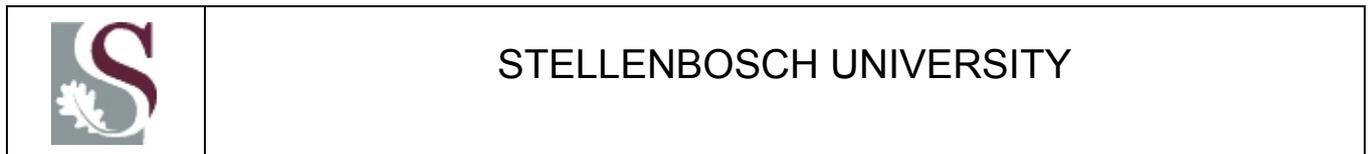
SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ [*name of the subject/participant*] and/or [his/her] representative _____ [*name of the representative*]. [He/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in [*English/Chichewa*] and [*no translator was used/this conversation was translated into* _____ by _____].

Signature of Investigator

Date

Appendix (vi): Assent form



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND ASSENT FORM



TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT: GOOD LOCAL COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP FOR LILONGWE RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN MALAWI

RESEARCHERS NAME(S): CHANCY GONDWE

ADDRESS: C/O CHILDREN OF THE NATIONS,
P.O. BOX 1205, LILONGWE, MALAWI

CONTACT NUMBER: (+265) 888 556 175

What is RESEARCH?

Research is something we do to find new knowledge about the way things (and people) work. We use research projects or studies to help us find out more about disease or illness. Research also helps us to find better ways of helping, or treating children who are sick.

What is this research project all about?

This project is about finding solutions to poverty and leadership through the church in order to make life better for everyone in your community - Mgwayi Village.

Why have I been invited to take part in this research project?

You have been invited to take part because you live in the community where we are going to do this research project and most of the things that happen in this community affect you.

Who is doing the research?

This research is being done by Chancy Gondwe, Pike Kaminyoghe and TinasheSaka. I (Chancy Gondwe) am a student at Stellenbosch University in South Africa and this research project is part of my studies. It is a requirement for my studies.

What will happen to me in this study?

If you choose to participate in this study you will be asked to share with us what you know and feel about poverty, development, leadership and related issues. Feel free to share how you see them and how they affect you in your community.

Can anything bad happen to me?

Nothing bad will happen to you for your participation.

Can anything good happen to me?

If you choose to participate in this study you will have an opportunity to share with us and/or your friends information about things that bother and excite you related to our project and what changes you would like to see happen. In the future this information might also help people who want to develop your community.

Will anyone know I am in the study?

You are free to choose whether we should keep your participation confidential or not. But the results of this study will be given to the university that sponsored this study and your name/identity will not be disclosed in the results.



Who can I talk to about the study?

If you have any problems or questions about this research study you can contact the following people:

- 1. Prof. K.T. August** (Supervisor)
Tel: (+27) 21 808 3856
Postal Address: PrivateBag XI, Matieland, 7602, South Africa
- 2. Chancy Gondwe** (Principal investigator)
Cell: (+265) 994 781 951
- 3. Pike Kaminyoghe** (co-investigator)
Cell: (+265) 999 185 555
- 4. TinashoSaka** (co-investigator)
Cell: (+265) 995 937 057.

Postal address for principal investigator and co-investigators:
P.O. Box 1205, Lilongwe, Malawi.

What if I do not want to do this?

You are free to stop participating in this study at any time even if your parents have agreed to your participation and you will not be in trouble for that.

Do you understand this research study and are you willing to take part in it?

YES

NO

Has the researcher answered all your questions?

YES

NO

Do you understand that you can pull out of the study at any time?

YES

NO

Signature of Child

Date

Appendix (vii): Letter from the Lilongwe District Commissioner



LILONGWE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS, P.O. BOX 93, LILONGWE

All communications to be addressed to:
The District Commissioner

TEL: +(265) 1 756 110
FAX: +

12th October, 2011

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

We write to confirm that P S Chancy Gondwe is Malawian who came from Karonga District. He intended to do his research here in Malawi at Njewa Traditional Authority, in Lilongwe District.

We therefore request that you assist him accordingly.


M J Njolomole
for : District Commissioner


THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER
LILONGWE DISTRICT COUNCIL
12 OCT 2011
P.O. BOX 93
LILONGWE

Appendix (viii): Letter from the Village Headman

TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY NJEWA
P.O. BOX 313
LILONGWE
11/10/2011

STELLENBOCH UNIVERSITY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Dear Sir

I write to acknowledge receipt of the letter asking us to allow Chancy P.S. Gondwe to do a research in our Community of Traditional Authority Njewa and especially in Mgwayi Village

We gladly give consent to Chancy P.S. Gondwe to do his research in this Community because we understand that this may benefit not him alone but us as a Community as well

Yours

CHIEF NJEWA
VILLAGE HEADMAN



[Handwritten signature]

Mgwayi

Appendix (ix): Letter from a local church

Machenga Baptist Church
Clo T.A NDFWA
P O. BOX 1505
LILONGWE

Dear Sir/Madam

Machenga Baptist Church acknowledges receipt of the letter from your college which is asking permission for Chancy Gondwe to do a research/survey in our community.

We gladly give consent and permission to Chancy Gondwe to do his study research. In this case we will give relevant notice to members of this church in this community and surrounding communities about this cause.

It is our hope that this letter is of help to him and the university.

yours Sincerely
George Phiri (Church Elder)

MACHENGA BAPTIST CHURCH.

Appendix (x): Letter from an NGO working in “Mgwayi” community



**CHILDREN
OF THE NATIONS®**

Malawi

**Children of the Nations – Malawi
P.O. Box 1205
Lilongwe
Malawi**

October 12, 2011

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

We acknowledge the interest of Mr. Chancy P.S. Gondwe to do field research in Mgwayi Village in which we work as a Christian Non-Governmental Organization. We therefore allow him to use our data in his project and will render him necessary support since his research findings might be of benefit to our operations.

Yours,

LilianKhofi
Acting Country Director

(+265) 888 842 519
Email: liankhofi@yahoo.com