A THEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION INTO MALAWIAN CHILD LABOUR
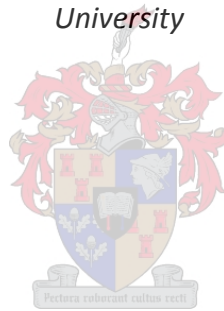
A CHALLENGE TO CCAP LIVINGSTONIA SYNOD

BY

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted it at any university for a degree.

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Signature: ....

Date: ....

i

ABSTRACT

Motivated by the observation that child labour is harmful to children, this research aims to determine whether child labour could be described as a violation of human dignity. The research further attempts to develop a theological framework which the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (C.C.A.P) Synod of Livingstonia in Malawi could adopt in restoring the human dignity that might have been trodden on in child labour practices. In order to achieve the objectives of this study, eight ministers from two presbyteries were interviewed, using a structured questionnaire as the main tool for data collection. The data was analyzed using a thematic data analysis method. The findings indicated that child labour is any work done by children that is detrimental to their welfare. Such work was predominantly on tobacco farms both at commercial and at family levels, and was carried out under hazardous conditions. As a result children experience the following effects; physical abuse; psychological torture, sexual abuse; and these children may end up in perpetual poverty experiences, to mention just a few effects. The critical literature analysis done with reference to theological concept of human dignity, characterized the effects as a violation of human dignity. The main causes of child labour identified during this study were poverty, ignorance of short and long terms impact of child labour effects on children, and the cultural perceptions that children are equipped for the future if they are trained (socialized) to work hard at a tender age. By implication, as long as these causes exist, child labour may remain a problem and children may continue to suffer since these children do not enter labour by choice, but forced by the socio-economic and socio-cultural structures. Although these children experience this human degradation there is no way they can stop working on their own, because they do not have a voice, they are under the control of parents and employers. In this context this study would like to classify working children as among the marginalized, oppressed, weak and vulnerable groups in need of people and institution that can speak and act on their behalf.

Therefore it is argued that there is a need for the church to advocate for the marginalized children in this context. The literature consulted further indicated that the church of Jesus Christ is responsible for providing spiritual and physical salvation to people, taking into account how long it may take to deal with some of the main causes of child labour. The church may consider its advocacy role of protecting the dignity of human beings created in

the image of God with compassionate love. This research suggests recommendations that are in line with theological understanding of who the church is and the human dignity of people and specifically of children, to address the challenges of child labour practices. The recommendations attempt to involve different stakeholders of the community to work in a consortium.

Opsomming

Die navorsing is gemotiveer deur die waarneming dat die gevolge van kinder-arbeid skadelik vir kinders kan wees, en stel dit ten doel om vas te stel of die effek van kinder-arbeid as 'n skending van menswaardigheid beskryf kan word. Die navorsing streef ook om 'n teologiese raamwerk te ontwikkel wat die Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (C.C.A.P) Livingstonia Sinode in Malawi kan gebruik om die menswaardigheid wat moontlik deur kinder-arbeid-gebruike vertrap is,te herstel.

Ten einde die doelstellings van die studie te bereik, is onderhoude gevoer met agt predikante van twee ringe, Jombo en Rumphi, in Livingstonia Sinode. Tydens die individuele onderhoude is 'n gestruktureerde vraelys hoofsaaklik gebruik vir die versameling van data. Die versamelde data is ontleed met 'n tematiese data-ontleding metode.

Volgens die bevindings is kinder-arbeid enige arbeid wat kinders verrig wat nadelig vir hul welsyn is. Die meeste werk wat deur kinders verrig word, is op kommersiële tabakplase of in familieverband op kleinboere se tabakplase. Die werk is meestal onder gevaarlike omstandighede. As gevolg van die gevaarlike werk, ervaar kinders fisiese mishandeling, sielkundige teistering, seksuele mishandeling en ook soms gedurige armoede, om net 'n paar te nadelige effekte te noem. Die kritiese literatuur-analise oor hierdie effekte met verwysing na 'n teologiese konsep van menswaardigheid, toon dat die gevolge gekenmerk kan word as skending van menseregte.

Die volgende primêre oorsake van kinder-arbeid is in die studie geïdentifiseer: armoede, onkunde oor die kort- en langtermyn impak van kinder-arbeid op kinders, en kulturele persepsies dat kinders vir die toekoms toegerus word as hulle op 'n jong ouderdom geleer word (sosialisasie) om hard te werk. Die implikasie is dat solank hierdie oorsake voortbestaan, sal kinder-arbeid 'n probleem bly en sal kinders steeds so ly, aansien hierdie kinders nie kies om kinder-arbeid te verrig nie, maar deur sosio-ekonomiese en sosio-kulturele strukture daartoe gedwing word. Al word hierdie kinders onmenswaardig behandel, kan hulle nie ophou werk nie, want hulle het nie 'n stem nie, hulle word beheer deur hul ouers en werkgewers. In hierdie konteks stel hierdie studie werkende kinders gelyk aan die klassifikasie van die gemarginaliseerde, onderdrukte, swak en weerlose groep namens wie mense en organisasies moet praat en optree.

Daar word dus betoog dat daar 'n behoefte is dat die kerk namens gemarginaliseerde kinders in hierdie konteks intree. Die literatuur dui verder aan dat die aard en missie van die kerk van Jesus Christus maak ons verantwoordelik om spirituele en fisiese verlossing vir mense te bied. In die lig van die uitdagings van kinderswat werk, en met inagneming van hoe lank dit mag neem om sommige van die oorsake van kinder-arbeid aan te spreek, kan die kerk sy rol in terme van die beskerming van die menswaardigheid van mense geskape in die beeld van God met deernisvolle liefde oorweeg.

Die navorsing maak voorstelle wat belyn is met die teologiese verstaan van wie die kerk is en die menswaardigheid van mense en spesifiek van kinders, om die uitdagings van kinder-arbeid aan te spreek. Die aanbevelings streef om verskillende aandeelhouers in die gemeenskap te mobiliseer om as 'n konsortium saam te werk om kinder-arbeid en die onmenswaardige behandeling van kinders te bestry.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to the memory of my loving parents Sandres J. Gondwe and Donala E. Lungu who have slept in rest with the Lord. Without your Godly counsel, love and guidance I could not have reached this far. May your souls continue resting in the Lord's eternal peace.

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Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATION

ACEM   ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN MALAWI

AYISE   ACTIVE YOUTH INTIATIVE FOR SOCIAL ENHANCEMENT

CCAP   CHURCH OF CENTRAL AFRCAN PRESBYTERIAN

CHAM   CHRISTAIN ASSOCIATION OF HOSPITALS IN MALAWI

CARD   CHURHES AND RELIEF DEVELOPMENT

CLNAPM   CHILD LABOUR NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR MALAWI

CSR   CENTRE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

EAM   EVANGELICAL ASSOCIATION OF MALAWI

ECM   EPOSCOPAL CONFERENCE OF MALAWI

EOC   EYE OF THE CHILD

EU   EUROPEAN UNION

ICCPR   INTERNATIONAL CONVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

ICESCR   INTERNATIONAL CONVENANT ON ECONOMIC SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

ILO   INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

IPEC   INTERNATION PROGRAMME ON THE ELIMINATION OF CHILD LABOUR

IPI   INSTITUTE FOR POLICY INTERACTION

MCTU   MALAWI CONGRESS OF TRADE UNION

MDG   MILENIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

NAP   NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

OVC   ORPHAN AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN

PAC   PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

SACC   SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

SADC   SOURTHERN AFRICA DEVELOPMENT COMMITTTEE

UNCRC   UNITED NATIONS CONVNTIONS ON CHRIGHTS OF A CHILD

UNHCR   UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

UNICEF   UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S EDUCATION FUND

UNIMA   UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

WFP   WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

The prevalence of child labour seems to be a challenge in most Malawian communities, and most of the children involved in child labour practices do experience various affronts to their dignity owing to the poor working conditions to which they are exposed. Although the Government of Malawi, in co-operation with other non-governmental organizations has taken several steps toward eradicating child labour practice, however more has to be done to address the challenge of child labour. It is in light of the above statement that the church would like to face up to the child labour problem as its challenge. This study explores what the role of the church could be in attempt to address the alleged dignity violations to children in child labour. The focus is to identify how the effects of indignity resulting from child labour could be addressed through the theological interpretation of human dignity. The findings of this research would help the church to come up with a theological framework to address the problem. This study is limited to the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (C.C.A.P) Synod of Livingstonia catchment area in the northern part of Malawi and it adopts an empirical survey method of individual interviews combined with a literature study as main data sources.

1.2 Background to the study

The church's role in the society is to be a holistic theological and sociological reality, aiming to improve society by addressing the spiritual and physical needs of the poor and the vulnerable. Miglore (2004:265) indicates that "the church is a community called into being, built up and sent into the world to serve in the name and power of the true God". Bevans and Schroeder (2004:70) state that "the church's mission is the proclamation, service and witness to the fullness of humanity. Furthermore, the church in its mission should practice its incarnation ministry; to reach people, to listen to them, to give them hope and to love them and care for them" (Mhobo: 2009). Therefore, in addition to preaching the message of eschatological hope, the church also has the responsibility of addressing the social challenges of people both within and outside the church. Jesus Christ addressed both spiritual and social challenges of his audience in the Gospel through his acts of teaching,

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preaching and healing. The Bible tells us that God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten son (Jn 3:16). The eternal word that became flesh and dwelt among us was the perfect combination of word and deed. (Jn 1:14) God cares especially for the destitute, the poor, the oppressed and the wronged, to which end God calls for his church to emulate Jesus. It is a biblical mandate for the church to speak publicly on behalf of the poor and the oppressed for the sake of justice and equity. The researcher is of the opinion that the church has a unique contribution to make towards the public since it is the unique servant of the Lord of the universe. And the primary solidarity of the church should be with the poor and the wronged. In other words the role of the church is to advocate for the helpless or voiceless.

In the light of the above vision of the church, with reference to the nature of its holistic mission work, many institutional churches appear to have developed their mission statements around the notion of holistic ministry. The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (C.C.A.P)[1] Synod of Livingstonia's mission statement reads, "The Synod of Livingstonia exists to spread the word of God and provide holistic social services to demonstrate the love of Jesus by the empowering of the Holy Spirit in order to glorify God". The Synod of Livingstonia is inspired by the vision of changed lives and transformed communities by the power of God (Strategic plan 2008: 4). In order to realise this vision the Livingstonia Synod has established structures to penetrate the communities it serves in the northern region of Malawi, reaching out to the communities through its established organisational structures, from Prayer houses[2], Congregations, Presbyteries and at the Synod levels. It has departments that conduct various ministries such as child rights advocacy programmes, youth economic empowerment projects, community development services, education programmes, health and HIV/AIDS intervention programmes, as a complement to the mission and vision of the synod (strategic plan 2008:8). However the synod does not have direct active interventions for child labour despite the fear that this practice violates the dignity of children. Therefore, this study seeks to explore how the church could develop a theological framework to intervene into child labour challenges. Furthermore other services

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[1] C.C.A.P Synod of Livingstonia is one of the influential Presbyterian Churches centred in the northern part of Malawi, and includes among others the Nkhoma, centre and Blantyre southern regions.
[2] Prayer house is place where people from an equidistant area within a same community to gather for worship every Sunday. Several of these prayer houses exist where a minimum of 5-6 constitute a congregation.(some call it a home cell).

rendered by the Livingstonia Synod through some of its departments are in compliance with the Malawi government's efforts to address the social needs of Malawian societies. The Government is also concerned with the impact of child labour and has put certain measures in place in an attempt to eradicate the prevalence of child labour in Malawi.

Besides operating independently, the synod is also a member of several interdenominational bodies both at national and international levels, such as the Public Affairs Committee (P.A.C), the Malawi Council of Churches (M.C.C), and the Association of Christian Education in Malawi (A.C.E.M). Through the interdenominational bodies the Synod of Livingstonia may have influence actions to advocate for the welfare of children at national level. This research will focus on the role played by the Church of Central African Presbyterian Livingstonia Synod in raising awareness of long and short term effects of engaging children in child labour. It will also discuss and analyse problems that are associated with child labour from a theological perspective. Additionally, it will further explore how the church can help communities to restore the human dignity of children.

1.3 Research Problem

Like any other country in Africa Malawi[3]is facing some socio-economic problems because of poverty, one of which is the prevalence of child labour. Malawi's economy is dependent on agriculture which in total contributes about 38% of the Gross National Product, 10% of which is tobacco(Mwangonde2012:3). Being an agro-based country has caused both commercial and subsistence farmers to engage children into child labour practices, in order to increase the profit margins by hiring cheap labour. However in most cases hiring children for work is done at the expense of the general welfare of the children, owing to poor working conditions. Despite these poor working conditions child labour prevalence rates in Malawi seem to be on increase. According to the Multiple Cluster Indicator Survey of 2006, child labour prevailed for 29-37% amongst the children between the ages of 5 and 17 with 53.5% of these being in Agriculture. According to Mwangonde (2012:3) the recent ECLT Baseline Study Report (2011) conducted in three tobacco growing districts of Malawi found that tobacco was the biggest contributor to child labour with over 55% of all the children in

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[3] Malawi is a landlocked country bordered by Tanzania to the north, Mozambique to the east, south and southwest and Zambia to the west. As a country Malawi 855km long, with varying width 10km to 250km, covering a total area of 118,484km (Malawi Housing Population 2008).

these districts participating in Child Labour. UNICEF's population statistics (2009-10) reveal that nearly 53% of the Malawi population is below the age of 18 with 13% representing orphaned children. This means that there are very few adults earning incomes and providing for children, leaving a huge number of children to fend for themselves. In the light of the above statistics for child labour and orphan hood the prevalence child labour is certainly a challenge in Malawi.

However, some of the work done by children has been declared the worst form of labour by ILO in 1999 under Convention No. 182 (ILO 2004:5).Njoloma (2012:14) observes that Child labour does more than deprive children of their education, mental and physical development: their childhood[4] is destroyed. Children exposed to child labour practices do not have access to the nurture and care that is essential for their all-round development and this eventually reduces children's ability to reach their full potential in society when they reach adulthood. Those who grew up as child labourers will socialise (train) their children also into child labourers, because they cannot send them to school. This forges a vicious circle of poverty. As a result of the high population of this unskilled labour force Malawi will not be able to eradicate poverty as one of its Millennium development goals (MDGs). Child labour is generally recognised as a growing social disease worldwide and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) is implementing programmes in different parts of the world to combat child labour. The ILO Convention No. 138 on the minimum age for employment prohibits the employment of children aged less than 15 years. Some member states of the ILO have adopted policies and other legislative frameworks which are consistent with the ILO Convention No.138, and Malawi is one of them.

As one way of aligning to these international standards, the 1994 Constitution of the Republic of Malawi, article 23 entitles a child to be protected from economic exploitation or any treatment, work or punishment that is, or is likely to be hazardous, interfere with his/her education, or is harmful to his/her health or to his/her physical, mental and spiritual or social development (The Constitution of The Republic of Malawi: 1994). Furthermore in 2000 Malawi adopted the Employment Act No. 6 of 2000[5] which is also consistent with the

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[4] Child refers to the early stages of an individual's life.
[5] Article 21 (1) no person under the age of fourteen shall be employed or work in any public or private agricultural, industrial or non-industrial firm or any branch thereof.

requirements of the ILO Conventions 138 and 182 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The act sets 14 years as minimum employment age and minimum age for hazardous labour at 18 years. Additional to these legal documents the Malawian government has put several measures in place towards the eradication of child labour in the country. Although much has been done from the government side and other non-governmental organisations, child labour still remains a problem, according to the statistics indicated in the literature consulted. Therefore much more needs to be done in addressing the effects and prevalence of child labour.

It is the researcher's conviction that the church can play a positive role, considering the nature of its holistic mission, in alleviating the sufferings of children who face humiliation in child labour. A relevant issue could be to determine whether the church considers child labour as a theological problem. In response to this question, in the first place one has to consider the presented main problem of child labour in the above discussion. In what context is a child/person considered to be subjected to child labour? It is when working children are exposed to hazardous circumstances that have negative effects on the welfare of a child. In view of the above argument the researcher will conduct this study by analysing the theological concept of human dignity with reference to children. An analysis will be presented where the identified effects of child labour will be analysed in light of the tenets of the theological concept of human dignity. Finally a conclusion will be drawn to guide a church on how to address child labour problems within a theological framework, based on the findings of the study. In order for the church to come up with an appropriate response to the child labour challenge, this study has to address the following research questions.

1.4 Research Question

What could be the role of the C.C.A.P. Synod of Livingstonia in restoring human dignity in the context of child labour? In order to answer the above primary question the following sub-questions will be considered:

1. What is child labour and what is the extent if any of this practice in Malawi?
2. What is understood by the term human dignity from a theological perspective and how does this pertain to child labour practices in Malawi?

3. How could the church be an active agent in protecting the human dignity of children in child labour in Malawi?

1.5 Objectives of the study

Here are the main aims of this study.

1. To discuss what is meant by child labour in the Malawian context.
2. To explore the extent and effects of child labour.
3. To discuss how exploitation of children in child labour can be defined in relation to human dignity.
4. To contribute towards a theological construction for the church and academy, in response to the violation of human dignity through child labour.

1.6 Motivation for the research

The research is derived from the researcher's personal experience, as an ordained minister with congregational experience of rural and urban congregations. Currently the researcher is working as the Synod youth director co-ordinating all youth programmes in the synod. The experience of working in the communities that are poor has provided the researcher with the first-hand experience on how children engaged in child labour experience undignified treatment. This experience provoked the question of what the church can do to overcome this challenge. It is therefore the opinion that the Church has the mandate to address issues that affect human beings by virtue of her calling and mission. The purpose of the church is more than just giving eschatological hope, but also addressing the sufferings of people in the present situation; Hendricks (2004:19) states that the Christian church is there to proclaim the word of God in word and deed in the world.

Further reasons motivating this study is that in the C.C.A.P Synod of Livingstonia no-one has ever written anything on child labour, which has left the church without an understanding of how much danger child labour poses against humanity. The church may not have considered this as its responsibility; an investigation is called for seek ministers' opinion on the child labour phenomenon. Additionally this study aims to explore what theological grounds can be identified for the C.C.A.P Synod of Livingstonia to be involved in addressing issues of child labour in Malawi.

This research is to complement the Malawi government's efforts in fighting against child labour, or bridging gaps that might have been left. Malawi has taken steps to address child labour issues by some legal frameworks and activities. In the first place it has since ratified ILO conventions 138 and 182 and UN Convention on the rights of a child (Tsoka 2010:1). As one way of showing her commitments to these Conventions, Malawi has adopted a new constitution of which article 23[6] protects children against exploitation.

1.7 Research Methodology and design

This research adopted a qualitative exploratory method as explained in Babbie and Mouton (2010:105), in an attempt to develop an initial, rough understanding of some phenomenon, in this case, child labour in Malawi. In other words the qualitative approach was employed in order to have a better understanding of the current situation of child labour in holistic manner. Hendricks (2004:226) states that a qualitative approach examines and interprets observations with a purpose of discovering the underlying meanings and patterns of relationships. This method allowed an inside perspective to the study by delivering an in-depth description, understanding and insight into life world of participants (Mouton 2001:150).

1.8 Data collecting methods

1.8.1 Literature
Literature such as magazines, both published and unpublished articles, journals, newspapers, and media reports, documentaries and any other relevant written information pertaining to child labour available on the internet was collected and integrated with the existing data obtained.

1.8.2 Interviews
Interviews were conducted by administering a structured questionnaire to eight ministers in the Synod of Livingstonia. The use of qualitative interviews as described by Rubin and Rubin (1995:31) for their model of qualitative interviewing emphasizes the relativism of culture, the active participation of the interviewer and the importance of giving the interviewee voice. The idea of using qualitative interviews is to obtain the opinion or attitude of people

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[6] Article 23(4) children are entitled to be protected from economic exploitation or any treatment, work or punishment that is or is likely to: a) hazardous, b) harmful to their health or their physical, mental or Spiritual, social development.

7

towards child labour. A sampled respondent from the larger community was identified for the interview exercise.

1.9 Sampling

1.9.1 Area of research

The individual interview was conducted in two presbyteries[7] of the Synod of Livingstonia, Jombo and Rumphi. Eight experienced ordained ministers aged between 37 and 55 were engaged in this interview. These presbyteries were chosen to be the pilot study because they are located in predominantly tobacco growing areas. The interviews took place between 20 June and 20 July 2014. The focus of this study was on child labour issues, seeking the ministers' knowledge on the concepts of child labour, whether it occurs in the area, its prevalence, how they relate it with human dignity and the perception of the church towards child labour.

1.10 Data analysis

Data was analysed using a thematic data analysis method. The data was transcribed into English text before subjecting it to thematic analysis procedures.

1.11 Research Ethics

The research was conducted within the ethical boundaries of the Stellenbosch University' Research Ethics Committee, Division for research development. The researcher was granted Ethical Clearance on 13 May 2014 under number (DESC/GondweMAY2014/15) prior to data collection in the field. The C.C.A.P synod of Livingstonia also granted the researcher written permission to enable him to conduct individual interviews with ministers within in Jombo and Rumphi presbyteries. The researcher had worked independently under the supervision of his academic supervisor. The findings reported in this study reflect results obtained though this research, unless otherwise stated. All sources that are used, either quotations or paraphrases, are clearly referenced.

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[7] Presbytery in the C.C.A.P Synod of Livingstonia is a cluster of minimum of 4-5 congregations more or less depending on the demographic setup. This presbytery is under the leadership of an elected moderator. Several presbyteries constitute a synod. In the case of synod of Livingstonia it has 25 Presbyteries.

1.12 Purpose and Theological significance for the study

The aim was to investigate the church's involvement in child labour issues because it appears that the church is doing little or nothing in terms of addressing child labour issues in Malawi. Livingstonia Synod was selected for a pilot study so that its findings can set a standard for other churches too, on how to deal with child labour challenges. Considering the above statements, it is the researcher's opinion that child labour is felt to be a problem especially in Malawi according to statistics in literature consulted[8]. Therefore it is likely to be considered a challenge to the whole church in Malawi.

In view of the above consideration, the primary significance of this study is to investigate and evaluate the church's involvement in addressing effects of child labour that are associated with an element of human dignity violation. As a result of this investigation the church may identify areas to consider for its advocacy role for the victims of child labour in the society. Furthermore, the findings of this study will enhance the capacity of C.C.A.P Synod Livingstonia youth department with a missional strategy on handling issues of the effects of child labour from a theological framework. Additionally, the impact that this study will give to the community will make people appreciate and recognise the role of the church in the society, as Root (2007:19) observed that theology without concentration on human action, practical theology is no longer practical and thus no different from the other theological disciplines. The Department of Practical Theology in the Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University, will benefit from findings made from this study by using it as an academic resource material. The findings of the study will promote what Osmer (2008:163) calls interdisciplinary dialogue: this brings the perspective of two fields into conversation, in the case of this child labour study, historically child labour issues are considered to be socio-economic, educational, cultural and socialisation problems but even more, child labour can also be considered a theological problem that needs to be addressed in a theological framework. The church will enter into dialogue with other disciplines on how together they can address this challenge.

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[8] The child labour survey conducted by the National statistics office in 2002 shows that 23.3 %(0.73 million) of children aged 5-14 work. This represents 25.4 %(0.39) of boys and 21.3 %(0.34) million in that age group (MCIS 2002:3) Multiple Cluster Indicator Survey.

1.12.1 Theological theory of communicative action

This study adopts practical theology[9] as a theological theory of communicative action in attempt to address the research question of this study. This is in view of the understanding that the main objective of the contextual and critical nature of practical theology is transformative action (Pietersen 1999: 411). Theorising from a South African context faced with enormous political, social, and economic problems Pietersen proposes two main approaches; as a critical, contextual theology of a liberational, transformative nature and as a theological theory of religious communicative action based on a critical hermeneutical framework, working with a theory of action, and oriented empirically (Pietersen 1999:411). This study has adopted the theory of communication approach because of some similarities in the goal of liberating an oppressed group of people. Also the research question of this study presupposes that by using its missional practices, the church has the potential to restore the dignity of children engaged in child labour. Hence this study adopts the theory of communicative action for the church to play a liberative role for the marginalised children in child labour as identified in this study. Although the context of child labour differs significantly from the South African context as discussed by Pietersen, the idea of engaging the church in liberating and transforming people's lives is the same. Pietersen (1999:421) states,

> "Religious communicative actions are intentional; they intervene in the reality and lives of people. The motivation for this interventional action by religious actors (individuals, groups and organised religion) is the mediation of the Christian tradition and its message in the contemporary praxis of the church and society. The goal of the communicative actions is transformation and emancipation-spiritually, socially and economically".

The other reason that this study adopts the theory of communicative action is because child labour, as identified in this study, is not only a theological problem but also socio-economic, socio-cultural and political. Therefore for the church to address child labour challenges successfully it needs to engage with other stakeholders or disciplines.

Firstly, on the liberative and transformational nature of action, Pietersen identified the development of liberation theology during the decades of struggle with apartheid in South

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[9]According to De Gruchy in Pietersen (1999:412) as it has developed since the sixties and seventies, practical theology, is a contextual and critical theology focusing on religious praxis. It not only describes and reflects on religious praxis theologically but also theorises on a renewal praxis that is transformative in nature in the light of the values of the reign of God.

Africa. He argues that "Central to these theological approaches are the themes of oppression, suffering, the experience of violence in these situations, the preferential option for the poor, and the struggle for liberation which should result in a situation of justice and peace" (1999: 414). The same oppression; lack of peace and social injustice occurs in the situation of children involved in child labour in Malawi. They suffer under the authority of employers and possibly parents mainly because of the socio-economic and cultural circumstances. . The approach of this theory refers to the prophetic theology, of which Pietersen (1999:414) remarks, "Prophetic tradition takes a critical line against the authorities, prophets' call for repentance, conversion and change. Prophetic theology always calls for action and it prompts that church to get involved in society for the sake of fellow humans". Additionally, Hall (2010: 38) notes, "Contemporary practical theology is notably committed to the work of justice, peace and the integrity of creation. Evidently, this is a ministry and mission of "prophetic dialogue" in which witness and word, action and preaching, need to reflect each other to be credible and effective." Hall continues that liberation theologians have played an important role in highlighting the intimate relationship between the promise of salvation and the demands of justice. Therefore the church (Livingstonia Synod) may need to adopt this prophetic role with the goal of enhancing a liberating praxis for marginalised children by establishing and building faith in Jesus Christ and justice.

Secondly, as a theological theory of religious communicative action, according to Pietersen (1999: 419),

> "The concept of communicative actions is built on Habermas' idea of the ideal speech situation. From the perspective of Jesus' communicative actions, religious communication in all its facets ought to be domination free. It should be conducted on an equal footing with the freedom of every participant to bring her/his own perspectives, interpretations, and ideas to communication on, and of, our faith."

Pieterse observes that we need to move to mutual understanding through dialogue. Therefore the church (Livingstonia Synod) may enter into dialogue with government institutions, community leaders, other opinion leaders and children's employers. Furthermore this dialogue may include other disciplines, since child labour is also a cultural, social, economic and political challenge. Each partner may have a role to play since child labour is a multifaceted problem, ranging from culture, poverty, education, ignorance and

others. There is a need for the church to listen to other groups of people and to discuss the problem of dignity with them. Such dialogue would be aimed at finding a way for both parties to liberate or transform the lives of children who may be suffering indignity through the effects of child labour practices.

Pietersen (1999:421) further observes that the goal of these actions is informed by a critical theory that strives for the emancipation of people in order that they may experience meaningful justice and peace[10]. Children working as labourers may be categorised in the group of the marginalised, voiceless and weak who need someone to speak on their behalf. What is important in understanding the theory-praxis relationship from practical theological perspective is the theological insight that the praxis of God happens by means of human speech and actions in their religious communicative actions. But it happens in a partnership between God and human beings through the work of the Holy Spirit. This partnership functions under the concept of the covenant in which God always takes the initiative. The work of the Holy Spirit is always directed towards restoring human freedom and responsibility (Pietersen 1999: 415). Since liberation is at the heart of the Christian Gospel, bearing in mind that Jesus came to set captives free (Luke 4:18), it is vital that working children be liberated from the degradation in child labour. It is only when practical theology is involved in the socio-cultural and political fields that it will contribute meaningfully to Christian praxis, because it is in the context of broader social theory practical theology demonstrates the liberating power of the Christian faith convincingly (Ackermann 1988:36). This means that the church of God at large, and the Synod of Livingstonia in particular, is called to remove economic practices that oppress children and deny them attaining their dignity as full human beings created in the image of God.

Also under the theory of religious communicative actions, Pietersen emphasizes the importance of empirical research, saying "The inductive nature of practical theology indicates that we start our research with the investigation of the contemporary context regarding the actual experience of people and the religious communicative actions with empirical research" (1999:422). Empirical investigation allows an understanding of the

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[10] Pietersen was writing in the South African context characterised by oppression, conflict, violence and liberation movements (Pietersen 1999:412). The aim was to use practical theology as a liberational and transformational strategy. In the situation of marginalised children in child labour, they also need such liberation.

complex factors that make up and determine the situation of a community and the role of the church in it. This is why this research conducted interviews and implemented a thematic data analysis. The aim was to investigate the actual situation on the ground, in order to identify how the church can be involved in restoring the dignity of children. The practical experience provided a better understanding of the practical experiences of the research subjects. The results from this empirical approach were integrated with the hermeneutical theoretical framework obtained from the literature survey. According to Pietersen (1999: 416) a hermeneutical approach in theology forges a bond that unites various disciplines in theology. It also opens a space for the field of practical theology, as practical theology works with the communication or mediating of the faith and processes of people's understanding the Gospel and coming to know God. This study also follows the four tasks of practical theology as discussed by Osmer.

1.12.2 The tasks of Practical Theology

The researcher will make use of Osmer's (2008:4) four tasks of Practical theology as a basic framework for this study. According to Osmer, these four tasks can guide our interpretation and responses to situations, in this case that of child labour. The combination of these four tasks constitutes the basic structure of practical theological interpretation (Osmer 2008:4). Osmer (2011:2) states that "these four tasks have commonly been represented for many years in the writings of various practical theologians, as well as within the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and Doctor of ministry programmes and field education seminars". These four tasks are the following.

1.12.2.1 Descriptive task

The first task of practical theological interpretation asks the question, "What is going on?" Osmer (2008:4-6) asserts that this empirical task aims at gathering information that helps the researcher discern patterns and dynamics in particular episodes, situations or contexts through informal information gathering, careful listening and looking more closely at patterns and relationships that are taken for granted. This descriptive task comprises Chapters, 2, and part of 3 and 6. Chapter 2 describes various concepts of child labour, related to the concepts of childhood as perceived in the African traditional context. This chapter distinguishes similarities and differences between child work and child labour. A part of Chapter 3 describes what is understood by child labour both internationally and in

Malawi. Child labour is known as any work done by children that is harmful to their health and denies them time for school. This chapter elaborates on the extent of child labour as it occurs commercial and subsistence agriculture and other commercial jobs that children do. In Chapter 6 presents the information gathered through individual interviews. The respondents, who are ministers, describe their understanding of child labour and its prevalence in their area. So the above information works toward formulating an idea of what is meant by child labour through, the descriptive empirical task.

1.12.2.2 Interpretative task

The second task asks the question, "Why is this going on?" The author says at this stage, the researcher needs to step back and make sense of what she/he has found. There is a further need to ask, "Why did this incident take place?" What sort of theories might help me better understand and explain the patterns and dynamics I am discovering? Osmer (2008:6) says these are the key questions of the interpretative stage of practical theological interpretation. Further, this task requires what the author calls a "sage wisdom" which is gained through years of experience and not just reading books. This interpretative task is discussed in the rest of Chapter 3, where the causes of child labour, such as poverty, cultural perceptions, ignorance of its effects and others are discussed. Furthermore, the effects of child labour were identified and discussed in terms of how they affect children physically, psychologically and emotionally to mention just a few. These effects could be interpreted as a violation of human dignity. Chapter 7 continues this interpretative task by presenting the findings of the research analytically.

1.12.2.3 Normative task

This task asks the question, "What ought to be going on?" Osmer (2008:4) explains that this task applies theological concepts to interpret particular episodes, situations or contexts and to construct ethical norms to guide our responses and learning "good practice". This question is addressed in Chapters 4 and 5. Thus Chapter 4 resorts under Osmer's second normative task of practical theological interpretations. The interpretation is based on ethical norms to reflect on and guide practice, viewing human beings as having equal moral value and dignity (Osmer 2008:131). Chapter 4 focuses on how the dignity of human being ought to be valued and protected from any violation, because human beings are created in the image of God and deserve equal respect and value, and therefore may not be used as

14

machines. Chapter 5 falls under second explanation of normative task, which Osmer (2008:131) describes as "theological interpretation, the use of theological concepts to interpret episodes, situations, and contexts, including those in which we are actors." Therefore this chapter focuses on the theological concept of a church and its missional purpose. Various conceptions of the church are discussed, such as the church as a building, as an institution, as the community of believers. Also, the concept of the church as an advocate for the marginalised is explored to identify its normal and expected roles in the community, and to show that the church has to serve or liberate people who are oppressed. In the case of this study the church has the role of speaking on behalf of the marginalised children in child labour

1.12.2.4 Pragmatic task

The final task asks the question, "How might we respond?" According to Osmer (2008:4) this task determines strategies of action that will influence situations in ways that are desirable and enter into a reflective conversation, with the responses emerging when they are enacted. This pragmatic task is addressed in the last Chapter 8, which contains the conclusion on the findings of this study and some recommendations from the empirical findings of this study. The main conclusion is that child labour does exist in Malawi and is practised mainly in commercial and subsistence farming. Also the effects of child labour constitute a violation to human dignity, according to the findings of the previous chapters. As a result of these findings several recommendations are made for the church to consider in addressing the effects of child labour. These include that the church organise seminars with chiefs, community leaders, parents and children employers, and that the church lobby with government on child labour policy issues to enhance the protection of their dignity. This will allow the church to sensitise people about the effects of child labour that affect the dignity of children.

1.13 Limitations of the research

The scope of this study was strictly limited to church praxis, on how the church view the violations of human dignity of children as labourers and how it can reflect on the phenomenon both socially and theologically to protect the dignity of children involved in child labour industry.

This research was limited to the northern region of Malawi which is the jurisdiction of C.C.A.P synod of Livingstonia. No children were involved physically in this research because the information obtained from the literature review and adult interviews were considered to be sufficient to address the question of this research.

1.14 Chapter outline

Chapter 1: Introduction of the study; background of the study, research problem, research questions, objectives of the study, purpose of the study.

Chapter 2: Conceptualisation of key terms in this study; definition of childhood in different contexts, in international organisations, child labour, and concepts of child work.

Chapter 3: Contextual analysis of the country Malawi; Location, demographic, economic, ecclesiastical and socio-cultural environment. Situational analysis of child labour in Malawi; historical background, prevalence and forms of child labour; causes, effects, responses to child labour.

Chapter 4: Conceptualisation and theological perspectives of human dignity; historical background of human dignity; religious, philosophical, legal and political frameworks; theological perspective of human dignity, biblical view of children's dignity and theological implications of effects of child labour on children's dignity.

Chapter 5: Conceptualisation and theological perspectives on the nature and task of the church; various concepts of church, biblical images and metaphors of the church; the calling of the church and its role in the community.

Chapter 6: Research methodology followed by the execution of the empirical study; an account of practical procedure undertaken before embarking on field study and during the empirical study; contextual analysis of area of field work Synod of Livingstonia; origin, location, mission and vision statements; organisational structure, partnership and its activities.

Chapter 7: Results are presented, discussed and interpreted in the light of literature consulted. The discussion focuses on the meaning and extent of child labour, child labour and human dignity and child labour and church. This considers challenges facing children in child labour in the context of the synod of Livingstonia.

16

Chapter 8: Significant points are summarised and a conclusion is drawn based on research findings. Recommendations are made and a ministry strategy is proposed.

1.15 Conclusion

The point of departure was the nature and the mission of the church as the historical background for the study. It was observed that the church has a role to play in addressing both social and spiritual challenges as it embraces its holistic mission of emulating the ministry of Jesus Christ. The discussion focused on Livingstonia Synod's structure as a pilot study area of this study. Its mission and vision statements of the Synod of Livingstonia were given, as being: "The Synod of Livingstonia exists to spread the word of God and provide holistic social services to demonstrate the love of Jesus by the empowering of the Holy Spirit in order to glorify God". The Synod of Livingstonia is inspired by a vision of changed lives and transformed communities by the power of God, which enables the Synod to embark on this mission of helping to address child labour issues.

This chapter also discussed the challenges of child labour that the country is facing. It was noted that the problem of child labour in Malawi results from poverty and many other factors. Child labour is known to be most prevalent in areas where tobacco farming takes place and in some trading centres. The effects of child labour that were identified are physical, spiritual, psychological, and sociological. These effects could be interpreted as a violation of human dignity. This is why the church has become concerned to embark on this investigation so that it can identify how it can best help in addressing the child labour challenges. The chapter further discussed the methodology of the study as an empirical sample survey using both primary and secondary data. The secondary data was collected by conducting individual interviews in the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia catchment area. This study opted for a sample of two Presbyteries in the Synod with a total of eight ministers to be interviewed.

CHAPTER 2: THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF CHILD LABOUR

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will present various definitions of childhood, as it is understood both in Africa and in the West and by international organizations and. The definitions of childhood will be related to child labour/work concepts. Such definitions of childhood, as formulated by international organizations and child welfare institutions will be identified and analysed critically, which will be brought into relation with various definitions of child labour and child work. This will afford the researcher the opportunity of relating these definitions to the African traditional way of raising children. In the course of this discussion a conclusion may be drawn on how complex child labour is and why the issue of child labour remains a challenge in Malawi and possibly Africa in general. In the final section of this chapter some of the legislation on child protection put in place by international organizations as a mechanism to ensure the welfare of children, will be highlighted.

2.2 Childhood

According to Sorin (2005:13) childhood is generally recognized as a socially constructed phenomenon. Sorin adds that childhood has been variously described chronologically as the period from birth to 6 or 7, when a child can articulate clearly; birth to when the child can reproduce; birth to when a child can work, and birth to when a child can live independently of the parents. Tucker (1977:101) defines childhood as a period when the individual learns about the total adult environment that he/she has been born into, and when he/she prepares himself/herself for his/her own place within it. Tucker further says that this learning experience varies between poor societies and developed societies. According to the UN Conventions on Rights of Children (UNCRC 1989), childhood lasts from birth to the age of 18, yet the age of Consent, the voting age, the age when a driver's license can be held and the age when compulsory schooling can be terminated vary with location, culture and dominant adult voice. In addition Khan(2010:101) argues that current notions of childhood around the world are far from uniform and are in fact informed by geographically and culturally specific circumstances; as a result there is no universal definition of childhood that can be used as the only lens through which to view child labour. Khan continues by saying

18

that the attempt to impose a globalized concept of childhood through the Western development paradigm has led to increasing cultural and economic tensions between the developing and the developed world, and has had a significant impact on the effectiveness of policies introduced to combat child labour. Therefore in this study the concept of childhood will be illustrated by first dealing with both Western and African notions of childhood.

The term childhood is closely associated with the term "child", and in this study the term child will be used in most instances. According to Schapiro (1999:716) our basic concept of a child is that of a person who in some fundamental way is not yet developed, but who is in the process of developing. Schapiro adds that is because of children's undeveloped condition that we feel we have special obligations toward them, including the duties to protect, nurture, discipline, and educate them. Then one may ask the question: During which period and to what end should we continue offering this protection and nurture? According to Gillespie (2010:21) another method of defining "child" for the purpose of child protection is to prescribe age. That is to say, the legislation outlawing child abuse will set an age and if a person is under that age then he/she is a child for these purposes, e.g. child labour, pornography, child soldiering, etc. The difficulty with this approach is deciding what the age should be. In international law, the Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that a child is a person below the age of 18. However there is no specific reason as to why the age of 18 is specified but it has been adopted internationally. In most states and in international law majority is conferred at the age of 18. In the course of this discussion the term child shall refer to any person under the age of 18.

2.2.1 African perspective on childhood

According to Kaime (2005: 73), childhood is regarded as time to grow up, to learn, to build character and to acquire the skills necessary for participation in adult society. In agreement with Kaime, Boaten (2009:8) describes childhood as a social construction, which is very relevant within the African context. Children are perceived both as biologically vulnerable beings in need of protection and nurturing and at the same time childhood is seen as a social construction. This prescribes certain social functions and relationships. Children prescribe

the roles that parents play. Fathers are the providers for the family and the mothers provide the necessary nurturing to the children.

For example, in Malawi from the onset, children adopt gendered roles; girls imitate mothers and wives in their role play and boys imitate fathers. When they are sufficiently grown, girls are assigned to carry out domestic chores such as looking after their younger brothers and sisters when the parents are away working in the fields, and boys have to look after cattle and other assignments. Among the Tumbuka tribes in Northern Malawi, when a girl child is born into the family, she is welcomed by saying"*tapokera nthombi yakutitekera maji"* which literally means" We have received a girl to draw water for us", and if it is a boy they say"*tapokera doda lakuliska viweto".* This means" We have received a cattle herder". This shows that there are certain roles set for children. In some societies in Malawi a girl child as young as five looks after her younger siblings while young boys aged 6 or 7 are entrusted with livestock management, especially herding cattle or goats on their own for long periods.

The importance of the child in traditional Africa lies in their fundamental role as future insurance for their families. In this case children are trained to perpetuate the existence of their family and cultural legacies. In addition to this Makwinja (2010: 12) argues that outside the Western world, in Africa children are often seen as an economic investment. This was the incentive to have many children and particularly in Africa a man's wealth included his children. Therefore children are expected to work as soon as they are able to contribute to family income, regardless of age.

Boaten (2009:22) notes that in Ghana, as a result of the nurture of their families, children begin to learn about moral life, participative skills, social values and the ways of the world. So childhood is a period to learn and develop skills. He further mentions as an example that in Ghana older siblings provide care for infants and preschool children when their mothers are busy in food gardens, market places or with paid work. The assertion can be made that an African child is trained to conform to the tenets of the culture. Therefore, childhood is the period during which children are trained to follow the prescribed paths set by the custodians of the culture.

In the light of the above discussion it may be asserted that a child in Africa is an adult in training and childhood is merely practice for adulthood; a time when adult skills and

20

attitudes are being developed, often through a careful process of indoctrination as children move from stage to stage, until they graduate into their roles in the workforce and social order. This means a child has to master a certain skill even at a tender age, without considering the harm that this work may cause to this child in the name of building character. For instance, among the Tumbuka tribe in Malawi it is said "*mwana kuti wakule wankhongono wakwenera kusambira kupilira*". This literally means for a child to grow into a responsible hardworking person he has to be taught endurance while he/she is still young.

Rwezaura (as quoted in Kaime 2005:76) also emphasizes the existence of a competence-based system of privileges in his study of the Kuria children in Tanzania. According to his study, children in Tanzania are assigned roles as they grow up, with increasing responsibility being assigned depending on the evidence of maturity. Rwezaura further notes that, apart from instruction in production techniques, African children are also taught good manners, and encouraged to develop a wholesome personality that is imbued with a sense of respect for older members of the community. This aspect of childhood socialization was considered of great importance by both young and old interviewees (Kaime 2005:76).

Most of the discussion so far has focused on childhood in general terms with not much attention paid to actual age. This may imply a sharp contrast with the western conceptualization of childhood which we shall discuss in detail later. The main African concept of childhood focuses on socialization. It is further observed that childhood is much shorter in Africa than its equivalent in Western Europe (Kaime 2005:73). Ngwenya (2009: 9) observes that in Zimbabwe childhood often ends well before the age of 18, irrespective of what the law says. Therefore it is important to emphasize that in traditional Africa children are perceived to be human beings in need of help and direction. It is the responsibility of the society to ensure the protection and proper socialization of children.

In the light of the above discussion about the traditional African concept of childhood, it may be asserted that in Africa childhood is all about training, hence there may be nothing wrong with involving children in various work activities. Therefore a question that this researcher may raise is; under what conditions are these children's socialization and training conducted? Is the dignity of these children protected? The socialization practice may continue to put the lives of African children at risk of ending up as child labourers who may

21

be facing various types of violation of their dignity. It is therefore imperative to consider this traditional definition of childhood seriously when trying to address child labour in Malawi and perhaps in other African countries too. This is not a mere ideology but a fact in the traditional African context. This may be one of the reasons that make child labour a very complex issue to deal with in Malawi and many other African countries that share a common ethos.

However, Ngwenya (2009:12) notes that the perception of childhood in Africa varies from community to community; for instance, in Zimbabwe children in traditional rural communities may not be treated in the same way as those in urban communities. Children from urban areas may find it easier to cope with the work than children in rural areas, because there may be fewer house chores in urban than in rural areas. Also children in rich households may be treated differently from children in poor areas. As a result, the fight against child labour in Malawi and Africa in general has become even more difficult and many children continue to suffer. The concept of childhood in the traditional African perspective is one of the key determining factors to be considered when developing strategies to address the child labour issue in Malawi and other African states.

2.2.2 The Concept of childhood in Western world

According to Makwinja (2010: 25) the term childhood for instance in the English world normally refers to anyone below the age of 18. However there are different stages of childhood, for instance babyhood, infancy, puberty and teenage, according to, and generally such name tags refer to any young persons who has yet to reach adulthood or social maturity. The stages are also demarcated by bureaucracy which prescribes for example when a child can start school or attain legal rights like voting.

However, the conceptualization of childhood varies between different countries and cultures. Makwinja(2010:25)notes further that, in some places 18 is the age at which one is considered to be legally responsible for one's acts, including criminal acts, but the age varies from one country to another; for instance in Spain, it is16, while in Norway it is 15 and14 in Germany. In modern Britain, the age of criminal responsibility is set at 10. In the same vein Smolin (2013:948) argues that the word "child" in the legal sense usually refers to a minor,

but the age of the majority varies from nation to nation and may also be acquired at an earlier age through marriage or emancipation.

Smolin added that in non-legal parlance the term child tends to connote pre-teens and early teens, rather than fifteen to seventeen years of age. This emphasizes the point that childhood is understood or measured by age. A comparison with the previous discussion on the African concept of childhood reveals a difference, because in the traditional African concept age is not the determinant consideration of childhood. It can also be seen that in the international organizations' definitions discussed in the next section, age is taken as the criterion for defining childhood. This difference looks simple but it may contribute significantly when it comes to involving traditional Africans in the fight against child labour, based on the international legislation as noted later in the chapter.

According to Bass (2004:73), apart from measuring childhood by age, the Western world also conceptualizes childhood as a distinct protected stage of life reserved for learning and play. Khan (2010: 103) observes that since economic gain is strictly and rigidly confined to the world of adults, children step out of the parameters defining "childhood " as described above, when they no longer have childhood or have been robbed of it by entering into economic activity. This may mean that regardless of age a child is not meant to do anything apart from relaxing and playing. This is contrary to African perceptions that treat childhood as a stage to learn adult skills. In the same vein Sorin (2005:13) describes, childhood as an innocent, pure time of life separate from adulthood, a carefree existence when the child is dependent upon adults to meet his needs. Children should not be involved in any kind of work apart from playing. It is apt to mention the word "kindergarten" here kindergarten is a garden of the children who are like seedlings, in a state of natural goodness, to be cared for and nurtured as they blossom into adults.

2.2.3 Definitions of childhood by international organizations

Besides the conceptions of childhood in Western and African contexts discussed above, the international community has its own conception of childhood. The 1989 Child Rights UN Convention (CRC) article 1 stipulates that a child is anyone under the age of 18 unless under the law applicable majority is attained earlier (UNICEF 2012:2 and Kaime 2005:208). In the African charter on the rights and welfare of the African child, it is article 2 that stipulates a

child to be anyone below 18 years of age (Kaime 2005:188). Additionally the International Labour Organization (ILO) defines the term child in terms of age. The 1999 Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention states that a child is any person under the age of 18(ILO 2004 and Smolin 2013: 946). In the same 1989 Charter of Child Rights article 31 further says a child has the right to relax, play and take part in wide range of cultural and artistic activities (Kaime 2005:220). It is known that according to international organizations childhood is defined by age and people under the age of 18 are usually considered to be children.

The concept of childhood as held by international organizations may seem to be in silent conflict with the African traditional conceptualization of childhood, and more in accordance with the Western world's conceptualization. According to Khan (2010:105) the Western concept of childhood has become the dominant view and this construct is being "globalized" through international agencies, media, cultural control mechanisms and even international human rights treaties, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Wyness (2013:340) argues that much has been made of Western childhood as a powerful form of cultural imperialism, which either denies the existence of other non-Western forms of childhood or defines them as inferior versions that need to be brought into line with global norms. Afua (2008:399) laments that it is the Western notions of childhood and child development underlying the Convention that led to proposals for an African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which was to address the socio-cultural circumstances specific to the region, such as the importance of children having duties. Ngwenya (2010:10) further argues that this is so due to lack of a deeper analysis as to why different societies characterize children the way they do. As a result, the use of the Western notion to describe children has led to the misrepresentation of other cultural depictions of children.

It may be difficult for a traditional African to adopt this international concept of childhood, especially when it is linked with child labour issues. This is may be why the fight against child labour through legislation remains a challenge in Malawi and other African countries. It is so because the view that childhood is a fixed notion, determined by biological and psychological facts rather than culture and society, is explicit in international children's rights legislation. In addition Khan (2010: 105) argues that while ideas and values may be imposed on a culture or society, it is unlikely that a concept born of a particular indigenous, historical, social process will be easy to change. The view of childhood that separates

24

children from adults in a rigid age hierarchy and also separates children from the production process is not always relevant to a completely different social environment like the one discussed above, in which children are required to work.

Still on how international organizations definitions of childhood conflict with African notions, Kaime (2005:92) suggests that, in advocating for the normative prescriptions of the African Children's Charter, it is critical that advocates and policymakers engage constructively with the African concept of childhood; and that they adopt its positive aspects as a platform for implementing new ideas regarding childhood. The African Children's Charter itself advocates the need for such an approach by declaring that the values of African civilization should inspire and characterize the concept of the rights and welfare of the child, and identify African values and customs as sources of inspiration alongside international law, regarding the rights and welfare of the child.

Therefore this trend in international organizations to describe childhood according to age which is in line with the Western view of childhood, may be treated as an imposed notion in other societies, especially African traditional societies which do not define child hood mainly by age (Afua 2008: 399). The definition in the United Nations Convention of Rights of a Child (UNCRC) to which most countries, including Malawi, are signatories has some limitations because it puts all children in the same category, ignoring the reality that a sixteen-year-old has different capabilities than a six-year-old. Therefore it may be asserted that chronological age alone may not sufficiently define the concept of childhood; mainly in Africa, other factors in childhood, such as competence, rationality and maturity, should be considered in the definition of a child.

It is important to categorize children according to age since younger children are more vulnerable to child labour than older children. Older children may be more capable of absconding from child abuse during child labour than younger children. However, using age to describe children may be problematic, because some children mature faster than the expected average for their age. It is not the intention of this researcher to evaluate these childhood definitions. These facts are mentioned in order to sketch the background as to why the child labour phenomenon remains a bigger problem in Malawi and other African countries than it is in the western world. Later the definitions of child labour and child work

25

in relation to the concept of childhood will be studied. It is expected that such an analysis will help with the identification of where the problem of child labour lies. This may further help in addressing the effects of child labour in African traditional practices.

Children are universally recognized as the most important assets of any nation. They play a permanent role in human resource development. Therefore according to UN Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC 1989) in a welfare state, it is the obligation of the state as stipulated in Article 2 to promote child welfare through different schemes and policies so that they will not be exposed to any sort of hazard which can damage their growth and ultimately affect the political, social as well as economic development of the society. (Kaime 2005:209 and UNICEF 2012:2). In support Kanna (2002:1) observes that children who are deprived of physical, mental, and emotional care fail to thrive, just like flowers that are neglected; they wither away and the result is stunted and warped fruits.

Even though traditional African notions of childhood revolve around socialization, states and other stakeholders have the responsibility to protect the dignity of human beings. In this thesis the focus is on children involved in child labour. We have to consider seriously the conditions under which these children are socialized. Are these conditions conducive to their health? What about their dignity as persons? Are they deprived of physical and emotional care? It is against this background that this researcher would like to explore how the Church may address the effects of child labour by focusing on the working conditions that affect children.

In the light of the above discussion on various concepts of childhood, it may be possible to determine whether child labour is intrinsically or morally bad or not. Makwinja (2010:25) argues that in general the term child is relational and implies that one person is the child of another. This in turn implies a kind of mutual support and care throughout life. From the above discussions and definitions it can be seen that children need protection and that their dignity and integrity should be promoted. Therefore this researcher is calling upon the Church to take part in this exercise of protecting children. Chapter Four presents a discussion of how the church views children theologically and its view of the term human dignity.

2.3 Child labour

Definitions of Child Labour vary mostly around its effects on the child's mental, physical moral development which is a core component of human dignity. According to Assan & Hill (2011:2) defining child labour is problematic as there is more than one definition, depending on the perception of childhood, social attitudes and national law. The term child labour is however, commonly understood in the context of exploitation, when a child is gainfully employed and works in pathetic conditions which deny him/her opportunities of development. The problem of child labour is multidimensional and it is not the result of a single isolated factor. It is associated with socio-economic challenges and cultural practices. The practice of child labour has lingered on in many countries because of the complex combination of social, cultural and economic factors involved and this has made its definition even more complex. Kanna (2002:2) observes that child labour is usually defined as participation in gainful activity by children between the ages 5 and 14 years, while Maganga (2012:5) defines child labour as any economic activity that employs a child younger than 14, any activity that exploits a child, prevents a child from attending school or negatively impacts on the health, social, cultural, psychological, moral, religious and related dimensions of a child's upbringing. In other words, George (1990:22) defines child labour as "employment of children and the extraction of their productivity for the economic gain of another person, with debilitating ramifications on the psychological and physical development of the child." This definition explains explicitly that in child labour, children are used as a means for someone else's ends. In this regard, Child labour denotes poor working conditions, and eventual negative effects working children. The term refers mainly to the exploitation of children.

As scholars have struggled to define the scope of child labour, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the UN agency responsible for child labour issues, currently divides child labour into the following three categories (1) labour performed by a child under the minimum age specified for that type of work, as defined by national legislation; (2) hazardous labour that jeopardizes the physical, mental, or moral well-being of a child, or (3) the worst forms of child labour, which include child slavery, trafficking, debt bondage, and other forms of forced labour such as the use of children for military purposes or prostitution (ILO 2004:4), while article 15 of the African Child Rights Charter defines child labour as all

27

forms of economic exploitation and any work that is likely to be hazardous or interfere with the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development (Kaime 2005:193).

Additionally, the International Programme on the Elimination of Child labour (IPEC) document (2007:7) briefly defines child labour as any economic or non-economic activity that is detrimental to health, safety and education of a child or is likely to cause harm to the morals and will affect the normal development of the child. In the same vein, the draft "Child Labour Program of Action (CLPA) for 2008-2012" defines child labour as "work that is exploitative, hazardous or inappropriate to the age of the children".

While there is no universal definition of child labour, the International Labour Organization (ILO) defines child labour as "work done by children under fifteen." Exception is made for work done by children with their parents at home in so far as help in the latter's work is concerned and the child is not deprived of the possibility of going to school. Most definitions by international organizations, non-governmental organizations, trade unions and other interested groups focus on hazardous work that is injurious to the child's physical, mental, social or moral well-being. This understanding of child labour has led to nations, organizations and faith communities becoming engaged in this fight. The dignity of the child is at stake and therefore there is a need for the Church to consider this as a challenge to the Church and its missional work.

However, there is unacceptable work for children and there is acceptable work. Unacceptable work would include that which is exploitative and hazardous to children's health and wellbeing, hence the term "child labour". The problem here is that it might not be the work itself, but the conditions of work that are unacceptable. Children need to work to survive but they must not be exploited because they are forced by a social/economic problem to seek work. Below is a discussion on the definition of child work.

2.4 Child work

Child work is understood to be work that is not exploitative and can accommodate education. Child work plays a positive role in a child's development if consistent with the child's evolving mental and physical capabilities. For this reason as observed by Byrne (1998:15), child work can be part of a child's socialization. Byrne (1998:15) continues by saying that socialization plays a vital role in shaping the child's mind; it has a bearing on the

development of the child's self-concept. In other words socialization transmits the culture of a society from the adult to child. In addition Ngwenya (2009:16) notes that child work is not a direct response to economic forces but reveals social and cultural patterns, including power relationships between parents and children. Thus culturally, children are the ones who relieve their parents of domestic work and this may be in line with the African concept of childhood, as has been observed in the above discussion. In the same vein Makwinja (2010:15) explains that this socializing work doesn't attract controversy and this work in most cases is non-economical; children do not work for monetary benefits but to help the family.

In fact child work in traditional African practices is not understood from an economic perspective but within a cultural setting where children work to grow in competence and confidence. (See the discussion on concepts of childhood in the preceding sections.) However the difficult part is working out what is acceptable, what is not harmful to children and furthermore in what conditions the work takes place. George (1990:18) states that child work becomes harmful or labour when the work is beyond the child's capacity or when he is exploited by his employer. Harmful work or labour denies workers opportunities for self-direction and control. On the other hand, culturally acceptable work such as fetching water and collecting firewood may also turn out to be harmful to children if they carry big loads of firewood on their heads or work long hours in their parents' gardens, while illegal employment may turn out to be beneficial for children's wellbeing and wholeness if working conditions are properly observed.

In other words, child work for children is helping with household chores, which starts as a playful imitation. However, work that is considered as playful imitation or considered as part of the child's socialization may be exploitative to a child. Even work in the home may involve long hours and can deprive children of education, and particularly in agriculture, family work can expose children to chemicals and other hazards (Ngwenya 2009:17). In essence, the chances of the child's dignity being exploited are very high because this work goes unregulated, probably unlike child labour in industries and commercial farms. In the case of Malawi we have district child labour inspectors who monitor work done in public, while what happens at home is invisible and suffering can go unnoticed.

Therefore both child work and child labour may be equally condemned if working conditions are the same and the dignity of the child is violated. In this case child legislation alone may not be sufficient to regulate this practice; since some violations take place in the name of child work. This is where the Church may come in considering the threat posed to the dignity of human beings. The Church has to consider how it can alleviate the suffering of these working children.

Ngwenya (2009:17) says children's work becomes harmful and unacceptable when it precludes children from going to school and when it is detrimental to the child's physical, mental and moral development. Additionally the (CLPA) explains that children's work becomes harmful "when household chores take so long those children regularly miss school or do not have time for homework." There are some children who do not have the privilege of attending school due to economic constraints; these children are the ones who face high risks of child labour.

In contrast, George (1990:16) observes that in some communities child work has helped many children to complete their schooling and has also made it possible for working children to help their siblings to complete their schooling. Child work ensures survival and to cease to work is to cease to live in this global village, where one's survival is measured in monetary terms. One can easily observe this, even in Malawi where most families survive on child work, mainly in subsistence farming. To completely eradicate this remains a challenge. However the question remains, in what conditions are children doing this beneficial work? Should we allow children to continue suffering because this work is beneficial? It is against this background that this researcher would like to explore how a church can interpret the suffering of children theologically. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4 of this research.

One may conclude by saying that children have a right to work, if work is understood as valued and a meaningful activity which gives children status within society. The right to work does not justify that they be exploited or that they work under hazardous conditions which might interfere with their development and health. The social, economic and cultural situation in most African countries and specifically Malawi may allow children to work, as explained briefly in Chapter one, and as will be detailed later in Chapter three. A shift has

taken place recently: child work is no longer seen as having a socializing or educative function, but rather an economic function. It has become a place of torture and a dehumanizing exercise for working children both as employed child labourers and domestic child workers; this may be due to ignorance about how much it affects the well-being of the children.

Some people think of child work as a form of socialization. One may wonder whether these people have ever considered the effects that are detrimental to the health and well-being of these children. How can they balance their socialization concept of childhood while at the same time upholding and protecting the dignity of human beings?

Therefore this researcher would like to challenge the Church to become involved and to address child labour issues focusing on the violation of human dignity in child labour/work. It has been noted that some interventions by governments and international organizations (ILO, IPEC) have been focusing on economy, health or education, paying little or no attention to the theological side of this phenomenon. This is why it may be considered a challenge for the church to intervene. Kanna (2002:1) observes that when a sizeable percentage of the child population gets diverted to manual labour, it naturally becomes a cause of concern to legislators, social thinkers, economists, theologians etc. Child labour is one for the most baffling conundrums facing us today. A child is very vulnerable and because his/her needs are immediate; his/her future should be considered and be seen as more important than present income. But before we look into this further, let us first consider the history of child labour legislation.

2.5 Legislation on children and child labour

Countries have laws that are made to protect its citizens and their rights and dignity. National laws are also related to international laws, so that in effect as citizens of a particular country, children are protected by national as well as international laws. During this research I will focus on child protection - a term which is used in different ways by different organizations in different situations. According to UNICEF (2004:8) and indeed in this study, the term means protection against violence, abuse and exploitation. In its simplest form, child protection addresses every child's right not to be subjected to harm. It complements other rights that include, inter alia, those that ensure that children receive that, which they need in order to survive, develop and thrive.

It has been observed by UNICEF (2004:8) that if children are not protected from abuse, exploitation, violence and neglect, they risk the following effects:

- Shortened lives,
- Poor physical and mental health,
- Educational problems (including school dropout),
- Poor parenting skills later in life,
- Homelessness, vagrancy and disappointment.

Therefore by implication successful child protection may increase the chances for children to grow up physically healthy, mentally healthy, confident and with self-respect. They will also be less likely to abuse or exploit others, including their own children. This will enhance and protect the dignity of humanity (UNICEF 2004:8). In essence failure to protect the children may undermine national development and has costs and negative effects that continue beyond childhood into the individual's adult life.

2.5.1 United Nations Convention on Rights of a Child (UNCRC)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child (UNCRC) instituted legislation in 1989regarding the protection of children from abuse, exploitation, violation and neglect. Most countries including Malawi are signatories (UNICEF 2004:8). According to Ngwenya (2009:34) the UNCRC has 54 articles and is a document that defines universal principles and norms regarding the status of children. As a human rights treaty the UNCRC covers the whole spectrum of civil, social, political, economic and cultural rights.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child advances international standards on children's rights in a number of ways. For instance its preamble reads in part; "*Recognizing* that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding" It continues: "*Recognizing* that, in all countries in the world, there are children living in exceptionally difficult conditions, and that such children need special consideration…" (Kaime 2005: 207-208). In essence this preamble calls for general protection of children from various modes of violation of their dignity.

The (UNCRC) convention rests on the four pillars of the basic rights of children, namely the right to survival, development, protection and participation. These four pillars were

emphasized again during the International Year of the Child (1977) when the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) issued a statement on the rights of the child and highlighted that:

• States shall protect children from economic exploitation and work that may interfere with education or be harmful to their health and well-being;

• States shall protect children from physical or mental harm and neglect, including sexual abuse and exploitation;

• Every child has an inherent right to life, and States shall ensure, to the maximum, child survival and development;

• The child is entitled to the highest attainable standard of health;

• Children shall have time to rest and play and shall be afforded equal opportunities for cultural and artistic activities;

• The child's best interests shall be a primary consideration (whenever one is dealing with children). The child's opinions shall be given careful consideration (Ngwenya 2009:34).

Furthermore Article 32 of the (UNCRC 1989) states that parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development (Kaime 2005:221). In addition to the UNCRC 1989, article 15 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child states; every child shall be protected from all forms of economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development (Kaime 2005:193 and UNICEF 2004:10). In agreement with the above, Article 12states that parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts (Kaime 2005:192). However though this is an African charter, this article is inconsistent with the African traditional concept of childhood and definition of child labour/work, hence creating more challenges and underlining the urgency of addressing child labour in African contexts.

Additionally, the International Labour Convention No. 138 (1973 states that, in general, persons under the age of 18 may not be employed in jobs that are dangerous to their health or development, and the International Labour Convention No. 182 (1999) is concerned with the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child

Labour(UNICEF 2004:10). All these international organizations are engaged in the similar work of serving the interest of children, however despite all these efforts it persists. Therefore it is the intention of this researcher to explore how the church may get involved in addressing the effects of child labour on children in Malawi.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter various concepts of childhood were discussed with the focus on the Western and African contexts and international organizations. It was noted that in the Western world childhood is defined in terms of age, though the exact age varies from one country to another within the Western world. It was further observed that childhood is understood as a time to play and rest. In the African perspective it is understood as time for cultural socialization, when a child is supposed to be involved in various working activities to learn future economic skills from the parents. Various organizations, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), and documents such as the United Nations Convention for Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the African Charter for Children's Rights, define childhood by age as any person under the age of 18. It was noted that the international organizations' definitions were similar to the Western conception of childhood and also defined childhood in terms of age.

Therefore, this western universalism may be identified as one of the major challenges facing Malawi and most of African countries in general when it comes to addressing child labour problems despite the ratification of International child rights conventions. It is so because African traditions define childhood as a time for learning future skills; hence in the African perspective childhood is a period for socialization when children are being prepared for adult (gender) roles. When the same work children do as a socialization exercise becomes work for monetary gain and exposes them to exploitation due to poor working conditions, it is called child labour. The similarities of these concepts make it difficult for indigenous Africans to solve the child labour problem. However, it has been noted that even child work can be harmful if children are exposed to poor working conditions that impair proper growth and good health. Therefore both child labour and child work may be considered bad if the working conditions are bad. There is a need to explore further how to protect working

children from exploitation in communities where the eradication of child labour remains a challenge due to the relativity of concepts of childhood, child work and child labour.

Due to the willingness of the international organizations and member states to protect children from various violations and abuse including child labour, several laws have been passed. The best known are the International Labour Convention No. 138 (1973), which states that, in general, persons under the age of 18 may not be employed in jobs that are dangerous to their health or development, and the International Labour Convention No. 182 (1999) concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (UNICEF 2004:10).However these laws do not have much impact on the ground when it comes to implementation, as becomes evident from the persistence of child labour in countries like Malawi, as noted in Chapter 3. Therefore as a way of complementing these legislative actions, there is a need to explore and involve other institutions, such as the Church, in addressing child labour issues. In the next chapter there will be a brief discussion of the history of child labour and then the focus will shift to the extent of child labour in Malawi.

CHAPTER 3:CHILD LABOUR IN MALAWI

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter concepts of childhood and different definitions of child work and child labour and some examples of relevant legislation were discussed. The focus in this chapter is on the extent of child labour in Malawi. Before the discussion of child labour in Malawi I will give a brief profile on the country, followed by an overview on the history of child labour as a background to the study. Aspects under consideration will include the forms of child labour, causes of child labour, effects of child labour and a critical discussion on responses to child labour practices by the Malawian government and other stakeholders.

3.2 Profile of Malawi

The following material presents the contextual background of the country understudy before actual consideration of the extent of child labour in Malawi.

3.2.1 Geography and Demography

Malawi is a land locked country bordered by Tanzania to the north, Mozambique to the east, south and southeast, and Zambia to the west. As a country, Malawi is 855 km long, with widths varying from 10km to 250km, covering a total area of 118,484km^2 of which over 24,000km^2 is fresh water (Lake Malawi). Lying between latitudes 9 and 17 degrees south of the equator, Malawi has a tropical climate. It has a total population of about 13,066,320 million people with a total of 6,849.888 for persons below 18 years who are classified as children. The northern region in which the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (C.C.A.P.) Synod of Livingstonia operates has a total population of 1,698,502 and 863,721 are children below 18 years (Malawi housing population census 2008). Females account for more than half the population. Therefore the national objective of guaranteeing human rights cannot be achieved without ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment as well as the protection of the rights of the children. Malawi is also the most densely populated country in sub-Saharan Africa.

The country is divided into three regions: Central, Southern and Northern and has 28 districts with the capital city, Lilongwe in the central Region since 1975.Predominantly the

population comprises Africans of varying ethnicity: Chewa, Yao Tumbuka, Ngoni, Nyanja, Lomwe and Tonga being among the main ethnic groupings. In addition, there are small but economically significant settler populations made up of Asians of Indian origin and some whites of European descent. The most widely spoken local languages are Chichewa, Yao and Tumbuka. However, the official language is English.

3.2.2 Economy

Malawi's economy is heavily dependent on donors and this has major implications for development and poverty reduction. However, locally the economy is heavily biased toward the agricultural sector, and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. The agricultural sector contributes 37% to Malawi's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and 84% of export earnings (Synod Strategic Plan 2008:7). Additionally, Mwangonde (2012:3) observes that Malawi's economy is dependent on agriculture which contributes about 38% in total of the Gross National Product,10% of which is tobacco. The majority of Malawians continue to live in rural areas (85%) and urbanization has so far been minimal. This is set to continue as the opportunities for non-agricultural employment remain very small, and the manufacturing sector remains undeveloped, uncompetitive and with minimal rates of growth (Synod Strategic Plan 2008:7).

3.2.3 Poverty analysis

Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 171 out of 187 countries, according to the 2011 UNDP Human Development Report (Kalinga 2012:14). Poverty is generally considered as a condition characterized by a state of serious deprivation of basic human needs and the lack of means and opportunities to fulfil such basic needs. The MPRS summarizes this condition "…as a state of continuous deprivation or a lack of the basics of life". The causes of poverty are multi-faceted and complex. Equally, it is increasing, owing to many factors. Among these, the structural adjustment process is now widely recognized to having impacted negatively on the poor, who have borne the brunt of liberalization and increasing prices. Inefficient government and minimal economic growth also exacerbate the situation, particularly with minimal opportunities for off-farm employment (Synod Strategic Plan 2008:8)

3.2.4 Religion and Ecclesia

The majority of Malawi citizens are Christians with a representation of 75%, 20% Muslims, 3% Indigenous beliefs and 2% others (Gama 2010:42). The Church or religion in Malawi plays a vital role both politically and economically. The church contributes in the sectors of education, health, agriculture and other social services. Churches operate in consortiums such as the Public Affairs Committee, (PAC), Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM), Malawi Council of Churches (MCC) and the Evangelical Association of Malawi (EAM). They also work as independent denominations/institutions such as Synods and Dioceses. The church in Malawi complements the government's efforts in providing social services under her popular commission of a holistic approach. Therefore the C.C.A.P Synod Livingstonia utilises the privilege to render such equal services to the communities' lives within its area of jurisdiction. We turn now to a brief history of child labour before we explore the child labour situation in Malawi.

3.3 Historical perspectives of child labour

Child labour has been observed more or less in all periods of time, although there were variations in the nature and dimensions of the labour depending on the existing socio-economic structure of the society. According to Kanna (2002:5) child labour has been part of the social organisations in which all members pooled their labour to produce enough for subsistence and survival. This was and is still particularly true of rural subsistence farming, where the work of the child formed part of the labour necessary for food production. Labour was also considered part of the child's socialisation, in other words, part of becoming part of community. Lai (1982:565) comments by saying that in feudal states child labour can be perceived as being very specific. Parents worked for the landlord for such low wages that it became imperative for the child to work as well. Children were considered as bonded labourers who had to work to repay the debts incurred by the parents.

Historically, in a subsistence economy children have always helped with farm work and domestic work, and this was not referred to as child labour but was a form of socialisation. Child labour was explicitly recognised in Europe during the industrial revolution in the late 1700s and 1800s when power-driven machines replaced hand labour in the production of most manufactured items. The owners of factories found a new source of labour to run their

machines and this source was children, because adult strength was no longer necessary to manage these machines and children could be hired more cheaply than adults.[11]

In 1788 more than 60% of the workers in the textile mills of England and Scotland were children. Many laws were passed to eradicate child labour but with very little success. Children working in factories were forced to do jobs with high stress levels like assembling boxes, and handling dangerous chemicals and toxins. They underwent severe physical and mental fatigue and trauma, and faced the risk of injury, disability, amputation and even death.[12] Rahikainen (2004:33) observes "that many apprentices in eighteenth-century in London fared badly, and there were even cases of parish orphans being killed or beaten to death by the people who had taken in these destitute children for correction, discipline and work".

Records show that child labour appeared in the earlier stages in agricultural societies. However, the practice became more conspicuous in the 18th century in Britain and this is when people began to be opposed to it. Boys of 10 years were employed in factories and mines, in activities deemed dangerous to children's health. By 1880 the English Education Act decreed that all children between 5 and 10 years should attend school. It was hoped that children would eventually be excluded from the work place, considered to be adult sphere (Makwinja 2010:8-9).

Tuttle (2006: 143) argues that the industry preferred children to adults because children provided cheap labour and they were submissive, uneducated and nimble. Children mainly from poor families were expected to help towards the family livelihood. Apart from wage employment children also worked on the family farm where they pulled weeds, planted seeds and harvested crops. Such economic forces and stereotyping coupled with child vulnerability became so strong that neither child labour laws nor mandatory schooling legislation were effective in stopping child labour.

Many children who worked in these factories began working before the age of seven. Britain was the first to pass laws regulating child labour; from 1802-1878 a series of laws gradually

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[11](Article on history of child labour scholastic Grolier online)
http://content.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=5428. Accessed on 25/10/2013
[12](history of child labour) http://www.buzzle.com/article/history-of-child-labor.html

shortened the working hours, improved the conditions and raised the age at which children could work. Other European countries adopted similar laws. The United States followed suit, and by 1899 a total of 28 states had passed laws regulating child labour[13].

Exploitation of children in developing countries has been reported since the 1800s. Since then many societies in developed countries have engaged seriously and systematically in eliminating child labour. The period of activism and economic progress (19th and early 20th century) saw sharp reductions in child labour in industrialised nations (Basu et al., 2003). It has been argued that the reduction was due to the shifting of child labour to the developing world which also had its own child labour problems. Indeed child labour was almost completely eliminated from the developed world while it migrated to the developing world where it found a favourable social, cultural and economic climate.

However, political awareness concerning the effects of child labour gained substantial momentum in the international community only since the 1900s, more specifically in 1999 with the adoption of the ILO Convention 182 which focuses on the worst forms of child labour(Law 2005: 7). Even with this awareness and political intervention, child labour was and is still doing business as usual, and the momentum behind the legislation seems to have waned. A case in point is the rise in incidences of child labour practices in third world countries, considering Malawi as a point of reference. This is contrary to the international community's expectations of immediate improvement. Perhaps too much attention is paid to the economic and educational explanations at the expense of other equally important factors, like cultural practices, that are contributing to the persistence of the phenomenon.

3.4 Child labour

Like many other poor African countries, Malawi has a high prevalence of child labour, as has been reported in commercial farming areas where tobacco and tea are produced, in the fishing industry along the shores of Lake Malawi and in domestic work. The age group frequently reported covers a wide range from 5 to 18-year-olds (cf. Njolomo 2013:2 & Chiwaula 2010: 1). Besides the above, according to Malawi 2007 UNHCR findings on the worst forms of child labour, Malawi is also known as a source and transit country for

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[13](history of child labour) http://content.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=5424 accessed on 23/10/2013

children trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation usually to South Africa, mostly aged between 14 and 18.Sometimes children are also trafficked for labour purposes which include cattle herding and quarrying, and these children also work alongside family members under tenancy systems[14] (UNHCR 2011 Malawi report)

The child labour issues in Malawi are closely related to the general socio-economic factors and cultural practices which are characteristic of the population and which in turn have created an environment conducive to its continued practice, mainly in the agriculture sector (Njolomo 2013:2). The economic reality is that poverty is both widespread and severe, with 40% of the population living on less than US$1 per day (MGD Report 2010). This is coupled with cultural practices that treat childhood as a socialisation period, during which children work in order to develop skills for their future survival. At the same time child labour contributes to the income of the household, especially in low income families.

Almost 3 million young people and children of Malawi are faced with a number of serious problems ranging from orphan hood, unemployment, incomplete education, violence, sexual abuse, and the threat of HIV/AIDS (Malawi country report quoted by Mkandawire 2011:3). The number of orphans is 837,300 representing 12.4% of the total number of children below the age of 18 years (Malawi Housing Census Report 2008). As a result, these children have no other option for survival apart from child labour.

The child labour survey conducted by the National Statistics Office in 2002 shows that 23.3 %(0.73million) of children aged 5-14 work. This represents 25.4 %(0.39) of boys and 21.3% (0.34) million in that age group (MCLS 2002:3). In a related development, according to a Malawi Multiple Indicator Cluster survey, 29-37 % of children aged 5-17 years were involved in child labour, 53.5% of them in agriculture[15]. In the light of such statistics, the 2012 National Conference on Child Labour in Agriculture acknowledged that child labour is a reality in Malawi and remains a social and economic problem in spite of laws, policies, strategies and efforts put in place by the Malawi government to prevent or address it. (*Malawi National Conference Policies on Child Labour in Agriculture*, 2012: 5).

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[14] This refers to a system in which farm owners loan tenants agricultural rights and deduct the debt from future sales. Families who cannot meet production quotas and are unable to repay these debts may face debt bondage.
[15] Malawi National Conference on Child labour in Agriculture, outcome document 2012:5, unpublished.

Despite the economic gains for an individual or a family, child labour is considered to be an evil practice that causes a lot of harm to children and deprives them of their full humanity. According to ILO (2004:5) child labour has been declared an illegal practice internationally for this reason. Some of the work children do was declared the worst form of labour by ILO in 1999 under Convention No. 182. We turn now to a detailed discussion of the forms of child labour described in the consulted literature, in both formal and informal sectors.

3.5 Forms of child labour

Child labour is found in several sectors including large commercial farms, smallholdings, domestic work, micro-industries and the informal sector like vending and prostitution, to mention just a few. While accurate systematic data is lacking, some work has been done indicating that child labour in Malawi is widespread and increasing. To a large extent, child labour occurs in most socio-economically marginalised community in which monitoring of labour practices is weak. Children dropping out of school have few alternatives: they are not able to develop their talents and find gainful employment. Studies indicate that child labour is much higher on the tobacco and tea estates (Eldring 2003:38).

Some forms of child labour are gendered, according to social constructed as either men's work or women's work. Therefore, the exploitation of children and that of women are intertwined. Heavy work, as occurs in large scale farming, mining and construction work, is dominated by boys; fetching water and fire wood, sweeping and house chores are for girls (Ngwenya 2009:26). This is how child work is allocated in typical Malawian traditional setup. However in some societies, due to equal gender sensitisation messages the mind-set of allocating work according to gender is changing.

3.5.1 Child labour in the large scale farm sector

Large scale farming in Malawi involves tea, cotton, tobacco, rice and sugar cane. About 5 million children are affected in some way by work on the farms. Children provide 'adjustable labour' during periods of intense farm activity such as the harvesting of tobacco, tea, coffee and cotton crops. During this period children younger than ten years of age can contribute about a third of the labour input. Many children are employed on a piece or task wage basis. Children employed in the agricultural sector are contract or casual workers and their employment contract provides no entitlement to protective clothing, benefits during sickness, holidays and vacation leave and hours of work other than specified in their

42

individual agreed contract, if they have one. In fact, most children also do not earn wages, but rather work for extra food for their households (Eldring et al. 2000:39).

Eldring et al. (2000:40) argue that it is not by accident or choice that children get involved in the production of tobacco. The system is designed so that a tenant has no choice but to involve his entire family in the production of tobacco. Indeed, tenants are recruited on the basis of whether they have a family, which they will bring to the estate to work. In this way the farmer is assured of labour by the entire family and a contribution which is higher than what can be made by a single tenant. The farmer will however, often use the argument that hiring a tenant with a family is prudent as it provides for more stability. This is how children get involved in commercial large scale farms.

To appreciate the significance of the problem of child labour and the seriousness with which it has been presented in most literature, it is important to consider the kinds of activities in which children get involved on large scale farms such as tobacco, tea estates and cotton farms. On tobacco farms children perform a number of activities some of which have been branded "hazardous" as they involve dangerous chemicals harmful to children's health. Maganga (2012:3) argues that children on tobacco farms are exposed to pesticides and other toxic chemicals and unsanitary conditions. Children are involved in fertilizer application, watering of nurseries, making ridges and also assisting in leaf plucking, that is, harvesting tobacco leaves. According to Plan Malawi Report (2009:4),children work as many as 12 hours or more for just US$ 0.17 per day. In addition Makwinja (2010:17) explains that on tobacco farms child workers are exposed to health hazards involved in the production, and are also subjected to long hours of work with little or no rest at all in order for the owner to make more money, while the children are denied time for schooling.

Just as in the tobacco industry, employers on tea estates see nothing wrong in employing children to perform tasks that are light and suitable for children and young persons. The existence of child labour in tea estates was noted in the areas Mulanje, Thyolo and Nkhatabay Districts, according to the survey conducted by Wiseman Chijere Chirwa in 2005 (Chirwa 2005:2).There are two kinds of tea farming in Malawi, the large private estates and the smallholder farms. The literature consulted for this study does not indicate the use of children in obviously hazardous conditions such as near moving machines. However, there are social risks such as the negative effects on the children's education, health, and physical

growth. Further risks relate to the long hours the children are engaged in labour (Chirwa 2005:12). Subsequently we examine types of work done in domestic sector. This is according to the literature consulted and also the researcher's own experience.

3.5.2 Child Labour in the domestic sector

Going by the societal attitudes towards child labour in the domestic sector, child labour has been accepted as a social norm or construction. This was observed in chapter 2 under African traditional conceptualisation of childhood. Children growing up on farms are inculcated into a lifestyle centred on work at an early age and simply know no other way of life, particularly if schooling is not a possibility. In some instances the use of child labour supports the reigning social and family value system; child labour is viewed as beneficial to the child, the family, and the society in general.

Society in general contributes to child labour through omission, indifference, a lack of awareness, or the acceptance of child labour as a natural and customary way of life for selfish reasons or out of ignorance(Gondwe 2012:4). However this is accepted at the expense of the general welfare of a child considering some of the poor working conditions and the nature of the work done by children. Some of the working conditions children encounters in large scale sectors are replicated in the domestic sector. These include working long hours together with parents in the gardens, carrying heavy logs. This is so because most of the parents in villages do not know how seriously this affects the well-being and future life of the child.

Children in domestic work operate as house maids, cattle herders, garden boys and security guards for a low minimum wage. Most children in domestic work are employed by the working class families who are minimum wage earners themselves. In some cases, some children from poor families, especially girls from rural areas, join richer relatives in urban areas and are used as unpaid labourers. This is seen as a beneficial to the child because she gets accommodation and food. Unpaid domestic work is seen as part of the general socialisation of children, training them to take up gender specific roles later in adult life. Also this work is seen as a child's opportunity to learn to assume responsibilities and in the process to acquire useful skills, many of which are an investment for adult life (Tsoka 2005:20).

Usually, young boys from rural areas, who drop out of school because they are unable to pay school fees, are forced to take paid work as cattle herders for middle class families in rural areas, while waiting to grow up and migrate to neighbouring cities to look for further informal employment. These young boys assume the adult responsibility of looking after a rural homestead while the owners are in urban areas. In most cases domestic work is often gendered, girls assuming the duties of women and boys, the duties of men. What takes place during domestic work is often hidden from the public. Tsoka (2005: 10) observes that domestic workers are faced with diverse working and living conditions.

Another aspect of domestic child work was noted in fishing industries. Malawi has several lakes apart from Lake Malawi, such as lakes Malombe, Chirwa, and Chiuta. According to Donda and Njaya (2012:4), it is common to see boys aged 10-11 frequenting fishing landing sites of the above mentioned lakes. They are engaged in seining operations at night. They use their own smaller beach seiners made of mosquito nets and catch small fish along the shallow waters of Lake Malawi. However the main point is to develop fishing skills. Maganga (2012:4) notes that these children are exposed to many dangers, such as becoming entangled in nets and being hurt by sharp tools, while girls are vulnerable to transactional sex at lake sites.

The existence of child labour practices in both the commercial and domestic sectors and consideration of the nature of and conditions under which such work takes place and also considering its continued existence, prompts the question as to why child labour continues to exist. It seems as if people do not consider the effects of child labour (as will be discussed later in this chapter) to be a major problem, beyond considering the benefits they get from children's work. There must be a certain force that drives this practice to continue despite its being condemned as worst forms of child labour internationally. To understand more on this let us consider the major causes of child labour.

3.6 Causes of child labour

Child labour in Malawi is the result of many factors and cultural, political, and socio-economic issues are involved. Many of the causes of child labour are related or intertwined; therefore some of the main causes of child labour in Malawi will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

3.6.1 Poverty

Poverty is the main cause of child labour. Due to economic difficulties parents are forced to send their children to work on farms to increase the family's income. The Integrated Household Survey of 2004/05 showed that 52.4% of the population lives below the poverty line. However, early this year the National Statistics Office produced different figures, showing that as of 2010 only 39% of the population is living below poverty line .The fact remains however that there is a large proportion of Malawians who live in dire poverty and who, having exhausted all other means of survival, resort to the use of child labour (Martha 2012:5).

Additionally, Nakanyane & Tshoedi (2000:10) observe that parents are unable to pay for their children's education, which has come to be considered as the substitute for child labour. Thus as long as the household income is too low to meet the basic needs, it is inconceivable that a household will support educational activities financially. Child work remains the only realistic way to survive their economic conditions. Njoloma (2012:5) agrees and emphasises that poverty and over-population have been identified as the two main causes of child labour. Poverty is undoubtedly a dominant factor in the use of child labour; families on or below the poverty line force their children into work to supplement their households' meagre income. Parents are forced to send little children into hazardous jobs for reasons of survival, even when they know it is wrong. Monetary constraints and the need for food, shelter and clothing drives their children into the trap of premature labour. When there are limited means and more mouths to feed, children are driven to take part in commercial activities and no provision is made for their developmental needs. This is the case in most Asian and African countries.

Should we want to address child labour issues in Malawi then first we need to eradicate poverty, but how realistic is this? Considering the above facts it becomes clear that the child labour fight may require a more diversified approach in-order to alleviate the suffering of children.

3.6.2 Lack of infrastructure services

Another major cause of child labour is Malawi's limited national grid of water and electricity which extends to very few rural areas, resulting in children being used to collect water and

wood from relatively distant forests, water courses and wells. Wood is also used as a source of building materials. In rural areas roads are often poor and in the rainy season they become impassable, making it very difficult for children to walk long distances to attend school, so that they often stay home and end up working to help their families (Maganga 2012:7; Mwangonde 2012:8). Such situations are conducive to child labour, which is why in most Malawian settings child labour is not considered a problem, and children suffer as a result. Yes this may not be a problem in some settings. Then one may raise a question, in which conditions are these children continuing to work? How do these working conditions affect children's dignity? Is there any other way that these conditions may be improved if we can't stop or eliminate child labour? This shows that there is a need to consider how we can address the problems of child labour, rather than only advocating its elimination.

3.6.3 HIV and AIDS

The prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Malawi has been considered of late as another reason for the continued existence of child labour. With an HIV prevalence of 12 per cent Malawi is one of the countries in the world which has been most affected. Since the epidemic affects mostly economically productive people aged 15-49, the deaths of these people mean that there are orphans and elderly people left behind who cannot support themselves. The HIV and AIDS epidemic has worsened the plight of children, and is therefore another major influence on child labour. HIV and AIDS have a direct impact on children's participation in the workforce: children enter the workforce or increase their participation to compensate for changes in household earnings or labour supply. Children orphaned as a result of HIV and AIDS are even more likely to work.

Even before one or both parents die of AIDS, the pressures on the household may result in children increasing their workload within the household or taking on work outside it. Households experiencing a member's prolonged periods of illness with AIDS and related conditions and eventual death, suffer dramatic cuts in income, severe strains on cash flow, and the likely loss of assets. To make up for these economic losses, children may be withdrawn from school and/or told to work. Alternatively, children may seek work or engage in commercial sex in order to meet their basic needs or to acquire consumer goods (Child Labour National Action Plan for Malawi 2009-2016:11). These are some of the strong driving

forces behind child labour in Malawi that one has to consider when talking about addressing or eradicating child labour.

3.6.4 Cultural and traditional beliefs

Cultural and traditional beliefs are considered to be the second most important cause of child labour after poverty. There is a strong belief that children have to work for them to be properly integrated into their rural society. According to Mwangonde (2012:7) many children of tobacco farmers are actually forced to abandon school and learn tobacco farming in order for them to become farmers as well. Makwinja (2010:19) argues that most parents' attitude towards child labour is indifferent, as they believe it provides public space for socialisation and character development. Children also feel they have an obligation to help their parents in as many ways possible. In the same vein Njoloma (2012:7) further observes that child labour may not even be recognized as such when children work as part of the family unit. This is particularly common in agriculture, where the entire family of a tenant may have to work to meet a particular quota or target set by the employer or land lord. Children may also be expected to act as unpaid domestic servants in their own homes, taking care of the family's needs such as herding cattle while both parents work. I do not know if there is any term for "child labour" in my local language, because children are allowed to work and there is no problem with that. It may even be that child labour is a foreign concept in Malawi and other African countries where child labour is also prevalent.

The Malawi Human Rights Commission studies have indicated that more girl children drop out of school than boys, as parents are seen to prefer sending boys to school, in the belief is that boys will assist parents even after marriage, whilst a girl will marry and join her husband's family (Mwangonde 2012:7). Such an understanding may further put a girl child at risk of being engaged in child labour activities. In connection with the welfare of girl children Njolomas (2012:7) notes that parents may effectively "sell" their children in order to repay debts or secure a loan. Njoloma (2012:7) adds that there are reported cases in literature of parents agreeing to have their child; especially the female children accompany another family staying in town, in exchange for some economic benefit which the town family will provide to the biological parents of the daughter. This is also true with regard to boy children, although fewer such cases are reported.

3.6.5 Inadequate information on the effects of child labour

The high illiteracy levels in rural areas and the lack of proper civic education or other channels that may help people to understand the effects of child labour on the proper growth and general welfare of children are considered another major cause of child labour. The limited knowledge of the effects of child labour prevents people from seeing it as a problem. Furthermore cultural pressures can undermine perceptions of the long term value of education for girls, as was outlined by Martha Mwangonde in her paper presented in Lilongwe at the National Conference for the Elimination of Child Labour in Agriculture in Malawi (2012: 7). Njoloma (2012:6) observes that Illiterate and ignorant parents do not understand the need for the wholesome physical, cognitive and emotional development of their child. They are themselves uneducated and unexposed, so they fail to realize the importance of education for their children. However, eliminating poverty is only the first step towards less child labour, and is not easily accomplished.

This is one of the major reasons that may have seen child labour as an on-going practice mainly in rural and among least educated people. Considering this practice and its continued effects on children, can this also be considered as a challenge to the church?

3.6.6 Inaccessibility of education

Some parents may realise that educated children can earn more at a later stage and that education is therefore more important than meagre wages at an early stage. However, in most areas where child labour is rampant, for instance on the tobacco farms, children have to travel long distances to get to school, leading to high dropout rates. The schools themselves lack basic physical facilities like classrooms and toilets and this discourages children, especially girls, from attending school. Besides these hurdles there is a lack of learning materials like text books which parents are supposed to, but cannot provide. The very limited number of secondary schools is also a disincentive to completing primary education. As most prospective employers require a Malawi School Certificate of Examination(MSCE) or secondary school leaving certificate, there is the perception of little hope for a better future(Mwangonde 2012: 7).

3.6.7 Lack of compulsory primary education

Most literature consulted reported that education can take the place of child labour, hence the introduction of free primary education. However in Malawi primary education has been free since 1994, and one would expect a significant drop in child labour cases, but child labour continues to thrive, perhaps because education is not compulsory in Malawi; parents or guardians are not under any obligation to send children to school, so that most children are free to look for jobs to support themselves (Njoloma 2012:15). The education system in Malawi, just like in most of the Sub-Saharan-African countries, is faced with many constraints. A report by the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) released in December, 2004, states that, "In the four decades since African countries started to gain independence from foreign rule, their education systems – with few exceptions – have been marked by inadequate teaching, lack of resources such as textbooks and chalkboards, and colonial curricula and modes of instruction that often impede the learning process" (Child labour National Action Plan For Malawi 2009-2016:10).

3.6.8 Weak and incomplete legislative tools

Some of the legislative tools that were intended to address child labour issues seem not to be clear and direct and some have not been finalised, leaving them ineffective in countering the problem. For instance, the enactment of the National Registration Act in November 2009 goes a long way towards providing identification of children in need. However being a new law it is yet to be seen how it will operate on the ground. The remoteness of tobacco estates from registration points, coupled with the requirement of payment of a prescribed fee for late registration of births has the potential of discouraging underprivileged tenants from registering their children.

In addition, the law recognizes marriages of young children aged 15, and according to UNICEF, 10% of girls marry even before the age of 15 (Mwangonde 2012:8).However this is in contradiction to the Malawian Employment Act 2000 that forbids employment of children below 18 years under hazardous conditions. In effect it becomes impossible for an uneducated 15 year old couple to survive in Malawi, unless they engage in child labour. Maganga (2012:7) argues that both issues are compounded by the very high number of orphaned children who are often left without proper care, since the national legal system

and the weak infrastructure can offer them very little assistance. Therefore there is a need to explore for more means besides legislation to combat the effects of child labour. These causes offer a picture of how challenging it is to eradicate child labour in Malawi, hence a need to engage the church to look into this matter seriously.

3.6.9 Lack of enforcement of child labour laws

There are some items of legislation which should be able to deal with the issue of child labour in Malawi. These are the Employment Act, the National Registration Act and others that will be discussed in detail under Response to child labour. However enforcement of these weak laws is hindered by the fact that the enforcement agencies have low levels of resources. This makes the elimination of child labour by 2016, as stipulated in the National Action Plan NAP (2009-2016), a challenge unless other approaches to this are considered.

The above discussion focused much on the discussion of the driving force (causes) for the continued existence of child labour, despite its being condemned by both international and local organisations as a bad practice. Why it is that child labour is considered a bad practice? The paragraph below will now highlight some of the major effects of child labour.

3.6.10 Tenancy system

The tenancy system is one of the most popular employment systems in the tobacco sector. Under this system a tenant farmer agrees to grow tobacco on the land provided by the estate owner and agrees to sell the tobacco to the estate owner. A tenant farmer receives seeds, tools, and food supplies from the landlord, who deducts the expenses from the sale price of the tobacco. After the harvest, the estate owner or manager grades the tobacco and determines the value of the crop produced by the tenant, from which the cost of the inputs is deducted. The tenant very often receives a compensation which is far below the price of the tobacco he produced, and which is paid to the estate owner after the auction. Under the agreement the tenant has to accept what he is offered. According to Mwangonde (2012:7) in some cases, tenants are unable to cover the debts that they have incurred with the estate owners and are forced to stay on for another season. Furthermore, although not contractually required, tenants are under severe pressure to produce, and children within the household are used to render assistance to help reach the set targets.

Mwangonde (2012:7) notes that this situation is further aggravated by the fact that there are often no schools nearby for the children to attend and, even if there are, the family is too poor to buy basic school materials like books and pencils for the children. Estates are considered private property and unless the estate owner has built a school at his own expense, the Government has no mandate to establish one on estate property. According to the Tobacco Control Commission there are over 10,000 estates in Malawi, which could mean at least 200,000 children involved in child labour without any protection. Therefore this system may create a vicious cycle of poverty because children born there will in turn bear a generation of child labourers.

3.7 Effects of child labour

According to Njoloma (2012:5) child labour has the negative impact of robbing children of their dignity. Child labour does more harm than the good that is attributed to it. It affects the whole of child being at all levels, be it spiritually or physically. This is why it has been declared the worst forms of child labour by the 1999 ILO UN Convention 182. Below are some of the effects of child labour on working children.

3.7.1 Psychological effect

Children exposed to child labour practices are not able to enjoy the nurture that is essential for their all-round development. In most cases, this leads to psychological imbalance, which is often expressed in the form of increased aggressiveness, low self-esteem and eventually reduces the child's potential to render a contribution to society when he/she become an adult(Njoloma 2012:14). Failure to achieve their full potential will lower their value in the society they enter. In this way their dignity becomes demeaned. This is owing to the many related psychological experiences that child workers encounter.

Njoloma added that many of these children become problematic citizens who engage in other forms of illicit behaviour which are detrimental to society as a whole (Njoloma 2012:14). Such behaviour causes them to lose status in the society, after which they may not be able to enjoy life as was intended by God for all human beings. Being less productive, people are less inclined to trust them with any responsibility because their dignity is questionable. Some children engaged in child labour lack real parental care, as they may

have been taken away from their families or do not have a family at all, owing to loss of both parents perhaps to HIV/Aids, as discussed earlier.

3.7.2 Sexual abuse

The dignity of working children, especially girls, may also be compromised through sexual harassment. The Plan Malawi report (2009: iii) indicates that sexual abuse is widely reported; supervisors use their power to force girls to have sex in exchange for money, food or as a punishment for late arrival at work. This act reduces the dignity of human beings to a market value and destroys the girl's self-esteem. Apart from reducing the dignity or human status of these girls into a mere sexual playmate or toy, this may also in the long run encourage them into prostitution. This also endangers their life as sexual abuse may expose them to chances of contracting contagious deadly diseases such as HIV/Aids. To reduce children into sexual tools is equally denying them their full human status.

3.7.3 Physical abuse

The most identified indignity that working children experiences is physical abuse as in most cases they are exposed to the workload that does not match with their age and strength. Children are expected to carry heavy loads of tobacco during harvesting period and work long hours of the day, sometimes without proper feeding (Makwinja2010:17). In agreement Maganga (2012:4) observes that these children, while herding cattle, face tough conditions that threaten their well-being, such as long hours of work in the bush, extreme weather, snake and insects bites and injuries from animals. Children also often work on farms and in factories under conditions where physical injuries and mutilation are caused by badly maintained machinery (Chiwaula 2012:34). Some children are beaten by their masters due to poor performance. Such children, as observed by Njoloma (2012), also experience growth deficiencies, so that many have stunted growth, are undernourished and look very unhealthy.

3.7.4 Health and diseases

Child labour also exposes children to poor *health conditions* that may increase their chances of getting infections that eventually cause diseases affecting their health status and finally shortening their life span. For instance, children involved in the fishing industry are exposed to waterborne diseases such as bilharzia and cholera, and long hours of exposure to

53

mosquito bites carry the threat of malaria (Maganga2012:4). The cattle herders may experience diseases transmitted from livestock and wild animals, such as sleeping sickness caused by tsetse flies (Chiwaula 2012:34).

Chemicals used in tobacco farms can affect their respiratory systems in cases of insufficient protective clothing. The Plan Malawi Report (2009:4) indicates that on humid days during the cultivation and harvesting of tobacco, the average field worker may be exposed to as much as 54mg of dissolved nicotine, equivalent to more than50 average cigarettes, leading to green Tobacco sickness. Additionally (Anadaudia Gastal in Sharpe et al. 2008:223) children are more liable to develop irreversible neurological complications due to their exposure to toxic lead than adults, especially when working in factories and industries. Once the health of a child is affected at a tender age the effects may remain for the rest of her/his future life.

3.7.5 Perpetual poverty

According to Assan and Hill (2011:3) child labour denies people their freedom and dignity, because children of child labourers, especially in the tenancy system, are more likely to grow up into child labourers. Therefore this system may create a vicious cycle of poverty because children born there will in turn bear a generation of child labourers, since this is the only socialisation skill that is passed on from one generation to another. The chances for these people to be used as means (machines) to the end of others will be the order of their life because they are limited and have no other options to earn a living. In other words, it becomes comparable to modernised slavery.

3.7.6 Lack of access to education

In a related development child labour denies children an opportunity to have full time quality education. Some may not even have any opportunity to attend school at all, mainly on in commercial farms where schools may be far apart. In addition Chiwaula (2012:14) observes that the long term cattle herding contracts impede schooling and cause isolation from family and community. Cattle herders are supposed to be with the flock all the time in the bush. Also after this, they cannot earn a living, because they are bereft of vocational skill to find a formal job.

Those who are able to combine school and work may not be able to concentrate fully. For example, when I was a boy my parents used to wake me and my brothers during week days, as early as 4am and go to the garden together first before school the same morning. This was happening in almost every family in our village as a way of maximising the production. By the time we got to school we would be very tired and too weak to concentrate; instead would be dozing in class. Our parents did not realise the long term negative impact on our future lives. This has caused many not to pass well or even fail the examinations until they finally drop out of school. Indeed these school drop outs find it hard to earn a living and may not be able to contribute anything to the development of their society or nation. Thus child labour also contributes to the illiteracy levels in the country.

After considering all the above effects of child labour in Malawi, while admitting that Malawian children are really suffering; the government of Malawi in collaboration with other stakeholders have put in place some mechanisms to protect the dignity of working children. These mechanisms are either focusing on eradicating child labour or mitigating the suffering of working children. The following paragraphs will critically discuss some of these responses in order to present an analysis of them.

3.8 Responses to child labour

The Malawi government instituted several measures either to minimise or to completely eradicate child labour in Malawi, after seeing that this practice was causing a lot of harm to children as observed in the above discussion. Here is a detailed critical analysis of each response in the coming paragraph.

3.8. 1 Legislative responses

Malawian national legislation, policies, strategies and programmes and actions relevant to the fight against child labour are shaped by the United Nations conventions. Malawi became a member of the International Labour Organisation in 1964 immediately after independence. According to Msukwa (2012:1) the country has to date ratified a total of 29 international labour conventions. Among these are two main conventions on child labour, namely Convention 138 Minimum age and Convention 182 (Worst Forms of Child labour) ratified in 1999 (Tsoka 2005:1). Maganga (2012:7) explains that Malawi ratified ILO convention C29 on the abolition of child labour, and the UN Convention on the Rights of a

child, (UNHCR) article 32 which protects children from economic exploitation. By virtue of being a member of Southern Africa Development Committee (SADC), Malawi is party to the SADC Code of Conduct on Child Labour and is also a signatory to the SADC charter on Fundamental Social Rights.

However, Msukwa (2012:1) observes that despite the ratification of the mentioned conventions to protect children in child labour, Malawi does not have a policy on child labour. A draft has been prepared and is due to be submitted to the office of the President and cabinet for approval. Currently there is however a national code of conduct on child labour adopted by the tripartite constituents in 2004. In the absence of policy, the code helps to fill the gap. There are also policies focusing on the welfare of children, for example the Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) policy, the Gender Policy and the Youth Policy. In support of this the IPEC Evaluation (2007:8) states that although different sources, including the Child Labour Report 2004, acknowledge the absence of specific legislation on child labour, there are various instruments and processes guiding the fight against child labour in Malawi.

As one way of aligning to these international standards, the 1994 Constitution of the Republic of Malawi, article 23 entitles a child to be protected from economic exploitation or any treatment, work or punishment that is, or is likely to be hazardous, interfere with his/her education, or harmful to his/her health or to his/her physical, mental and spiritual or social development (The Constitution of The Republic of Malawi: 1994). This is consistent with the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNHCR), according to which the article protects children from economic exploitation. However, this clause is too general to fight the exploitation of children during child labour.

In 2000 Malawi adopted the Employment Act No. 6 of 2000[16] which is also consistent with the requirements of the ILO Conventions 138 and 182 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The act sets 14 years as minimum employment age and 18 as the minimum age for hazardous labour, but the act does not elaborate on specific types of hazardous work[17],

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[16] Article 21 (1) specifies that no person under the age of fourteen shall be employed or work in any public or private agricultural, industrial or non-industrial firm or any branch thereof.
[17] Article- 22(2): the minister may, in consultation with relevant organizations of employers and employees specify by notice published in the gazette, the occupations or activities which in his opinion arel likely to have hazardous effects.

thereby leaving room for inconsistent enforcement of the law (UNIMA CSR: 2005). Therefore this leaves children involved in child labour and domestic child work not fully covered. As a result this may lead into perpetual violations of the dignity of human beings involved in child labour in the country.

Msukwa (2012:1-8) identifies some gaps that are likely to make it difficult to fully protect children involved in both child labour and child work according to this Employment Act. Msukwa (2012:1) starts by qualifying the Employment Act as the specific law developed to address child labour in Malawi. He observes however, that Section 3 of the Act defines an employee as a "person who offers his services under a contract of employment or person who performs work or services for another person for remuneration or reward..."The challenge is that Convention 138 includes work for no pay or reward, although this appears to fall outside the scope of the Act. However, many children in Malawi are involved in such work, especially in homes of parents or guardians. The act does not fully cover children doing work in domestic settings because they are not on contract or for monetary gain. This was also highlighted in the preceding chapter under the definitions of child labour and child work, where it was observed that even in domestic work children's dignity can be violated due to poor working conditions such as heavy loads, long working hours, etc. Such gaps in the legislation can mean that domestic children workers shall continue to suffer in secret. The relevance of this study emerges, as efforts by the church in addressing this challenge, taking human dignity as the point of reference.

According to Msukwa even the minimum age does not apply to work done in the homes-(section 21.1), in other words children working and helping parents or guardians with household chores are not covered by this law, hence leaving them exposed to violations of their dignity. Chirwa (2005:28) agrees, observing that the law provides legal definitions of "child" based on chronological age, but social and cultural dimensions of childhood are not included as they are conceptualised in African traditional practice (see Chapter 2), although this remains unarticulated in public debates where child labour issues are tabled.

In Malawi it is not uncommon for a person aged between 16 and 18 years to be married and even to have a child. Prohibiting the employment of such persons may be problematic indeed. In agreement Makwinja (2010:20) notes that during his study of child labour

practices in the tea sector in Malawi, researchers were surprised that even parents, who should be concerned about their children, were ready to conceal their children's involvement in any child labour practices, regardless of their age. This work may be done at the expense of the children's dignity, reflecting the ignorance on how some working conditions affect the welfare of their growing children. Neither do they realise both short and long term negative impact it may hold for the future of their children.

Further observation of this Act reveals that it does not only exclude child workers, there are even gaps with regard to those who are in employment, as Msukwa argues, in terms of section 22, which stipulates that the minimum age for employment is 18 years although for light work (section 21) it is 14 years, in line with Convention 138. However, the problem is that one of the causes of child labour is that education is free but not compulsory, and that the dropout rate even at primary school is quite high. These dropouts look for employment as there is widespread poverty with about 40% of Malawians living below the poverty line. It is further difficult to ascertain the age of employment, as in the past there was no compulsory national registration of births, and the factor was aggravated by low literacy levels. However the registration of all citizens is underway following the establishment of the National Registration Bureau under the office of the President and the Cabinet.

It has been noted that weak legislation and lack of enforcement of it is another cause of child labour in Malawi. Msukwa (2012:6) observes that Section 23 obliges every employer to keep a register of the young persons, but it is difficult to ascertain age in the absence of compulsory national registration. In addition Chirwa (2005:28) argues, given"ganyu" (the temporary piece work nature of child employment), it is easy for the employers to ignore this legislation and thus contravene the legal requirement to keep a register of child employees. Msukwa (2012:7) further argues that the general Child Labour Inspection as mandated by section 9 is an important means of enforcing labour legislation. However inspection cannot take place except with the consent of the employer or under the authority of warrant issued by a magistrate, which is a laborious process to implement. The other problem with the same act; is the low fine of K20, 000 for offenders who employ children below the required age, as stipulated in section 24 under penalties for violations of child labour provisions which are in line with child labour conventions.

Therefore Msukwa (2012:8) concludes that if applied in isolation, the Employment Act will leave glaring gaps in the protection it offers to children, against economic exploitation. Indeed, given the complex nature of the problem of child labour, it may be preferable to use diverse tools and strategies for addressing the problem as long as there is proper co-ordination of the efforts of all those concerned. For example, policies that address poverty have great impact on the reduction of child labour. The enactment of legislation on tenancy labour and human trafficking, and the adoption of child labour policies are therefore eagerly awaited. All this points to the will on the part of Government to protect the vulnerable sections of our society in general and children in particular.

In addition to the main two legislative instruments for the protection of children discussed above namely the Malawi constitution and the Employment Act, several other legislative instruments have been put in place and some of them are under review. According to the IPEC Midterm Evaluation (2007: 8) one of them is the Children and Young Person's Act, which was under review then. This is now called the Child Care, Protection and Justice Act, 2010.Msukwa (2012:8) states that this addresses a number of issues that have a bearing on child labour elimination efforts and includes issues which are not covered by the general labour legislation. However it is not the intention of this researcher to go into the details of this Act but just to highlight tools put in place by the government.

3.8.2 Policies

As stated in the above discussion Malawi does not have policy on child labour *per se*. According to Msukwa (2012:7) as we wait, Malawi is guided by the National Code of Conduct on Child Labour adopted in 2004. It is a product of the tripartite consensus and so part of soft law. As Msukwa and Maganga (2012:7) observe, the National Code of Conduct was developed with an aim of providing guiding principles to the state, employers and workers, organisations, parents and guardians as well as the community, in an attempt to combat all forms of child labour in Malawi.

One of the popular policy tools is the development of the National Action Plan (NAP) which was formulated to help with the elimination of child labour in Malawi. It is intended to provide direction for the progressive elimination of child labour from 2009 to 2016. The NAP is guided by the ILO Global Action Plan on Child Labour, and among other objectives, aims to

ensure the mainstreaming of child labour in the National Economic and Social Development Framework (CLNAPM 2009-2016:2). As a new tool to eliminate child labour, the NAP has been framed to address the various gaps and challenges identified in the fight against child labour in Malawi after the implementation of various child labour programmes and projects by the government and various stakeholders(Maganga 2012:8).

According to IPEC's Midterm Evaluation (2007;80), other policy tools put in place by government are the National Youth policy, the National HIV/AIDS Policy and the National AIDS Commission, Education policy and the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Policy .

3.8.3 Direct Action Programmes

In order to combat child labour the Malawi government has put in place direct action programmes aimed at combating child labour through prevention, withdrawal and rehabilitation of children and through the provision of alternatives for their reintegration into society. This also involves withdrawal through improving working conditions of children by removing hazards from their work or moving them to work that is light. This approach follows the methodology of the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination Child Labour (IPEC) and has been widely used by various players (CLNAM 2009-2016:12).

In accordance with the existing law, direct action programmes against child labour in Malawi have focused on the prevention of children under the age of 14 being engaged in any work or employment activities and of children between the ages of 14 and 18 being engaged or employed in hazardous conditions. The programmes have also been targeting the victims of child labour below the age of 18 through withdrawal and rehabilitation, with the aim of reintegrating the children into the community and school system. Most of these programmes have been implemented with technical and financial assistance from the ILO/IPEC (Child Labour National Action Plan for Malawi 2009-2016:12), (IPEC Midterm Evaluation 2007) and (Maganga 2012:8-12).

In my view some of these direct programmes are just a relief to those children and communities targeted. They fail to provide long term solutions to the violation of the dignity of children. In fact, most of them are donor funded projects once the funding is finished, the

project stops. It is observed that perhaps they have dwelt on the elimination of child labour without considering some of the ideologies behind conceptions of childhood. Among the African traditionalists, the culture of socialisation and the poor economy are strong drives for the continuation of child labour, though not expressed openly. It is an intrinsic belief that is probably within most people, and this has to be considered also. For more clarification on this point, see the critical evaluation of some of these programmes below. As a point in case, we need to explore how other stakeholders can help, including the mission of the church, hence the need of this research. The church may be able to bridge the gaps left by some of these direct programmes in Malawi.

3.8.4 School feeding programmes

Organizations such as the world food programme (WFP) are supporting the school-feeding programme to keep children, especially girls, in school. It was realized that most children drop out of school because of lack of food. The food is a motivator for children to go to school and complete their education. However, the school feeding programme operates in selected schools and needs to be expanded. This is still a pilot programme and a way of retaining children in school while mitigating their involvement in child labour activities.

However, this programme may not cover all areas or children involved in child labour. In fact the porridge itself is donated by world food programme, and will continue as long as the WFP can be sustained. As soon as the WFP withdraws, the serving of porridge stops immediately and those temporarily relieved children may return to the same problems, if they were at all relieved. It is further difficult to assess whether really these children are free from labour abuse by merely checking of school attendance register. These children do not stay at boarding schools; weekends are spent at homes, where their circumstances cannot be monitored. The community may not be able to sustain this programme of feeding school children at all. As much as I appreciate whatever positive gesture this programme may bring towards addressing child labour, I am still convinced that other means should also be considered.

3.8.5 Free primary education

Education is one of the most important contributors to the fight against child labour. IPEC reports that in its experience, the availability of free, quality education is one of the most

61

important ways to keep children out of the workplace and to break the vicious cycle of poverty and child labour in the long term. It is therefore necessary for a clear link between the Child Labour NAP, the policy, and primary education. One of the strategies of the NAP will be to ensure that the government identifies means of significantly improving school enrolment, attendance and the retention of children at school.

However, the introduction of free primary education has not fulfilled the intended purpose because the institution of the Free Primary Education Policy in 1994 was not supplemented by appropriate actions to improve Malawi's education system's absorptive capacity. Experience has shown that an inadequate numbers of teachers, lack of appropriate teaching and learning materials and lack of proper facilities such as water and sanitation facilities have influenced the attendance and retention of children in schools. These factors tend to force children out of school, which makes them prone to child labour. Children withdrawn or prevented from participating in child labour have in many cases found it difficult to be absorbed in existing schools. This was also noted as one of the causes of child labour.

3.8.6 Advocacy and prevention programmes

Another stream of action programmes have focused on preventing children from engaging in child labour mainly through structured advocacy. Several national and community advocacy and awareness raising campaigns have been conducted, aiming to sensitize people to the evils of employing children. The Fight Against Child Labour Programme, implemented with financial assistance from the Norwegian Government and technical assistance from UNICEF, has been instrumental in integrating child labour issues within the broader child protection framework, thus not only creating synergies and economies of scale but also enhancing the impact of the programmes on child labour and protection.

These preventive programmes have also been focusing on improving the working environment of children through the reduction of working hours and the removal of hazards from the workplaces. In collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare, the Police and the Judiciary, the Ministry of Labour does this through periodic workplace inspections and the enforcement of legislation. The Employers Consultative Association of Malawi has also

been running child labour elimination programmes in the tea sector, while the Malawi Congress of Trade Unions has also implemented advocacy programmes.

3.8.7 Institutional framework

In addition to legal frameworks and policy frameworks there is an institutional framework for partnership and intervention strategies in matters of child labour. The following are involved:

A. Government departments

The starting point is government departments, particularly labour offices, the social welfare offices, the education offices, the Department of Youth, the Department of Community Development, the police services and the magistrates' courts. The district labour offices have both legal and policy mandate to handle matters of child labour. Among others they have legal powers to inspect places of employment, to enforce employment registers and to prosecute offenders. The district labour offices also act as labour complaint centres where arbitration, counselling and other services are supposed to be provided (Chirwa 2005:33; Child Labour National Action Plan for Malawi, 2009-2016:17).

However, several limitations have been observed in relation to the capacity of government departments to handle matters of child labour in the country, hence violations of the laws continue. Some of the key issues are limited budgets that make it difficult for district labour offices to operate, inadequate facilities such as motorbikes or vehicles to facilitate inspections, maintenance of child labour registers and other records and a shortage of personnel and skills. There are not enough staff members in the key government departments to deal with child labour, and the present staff members are not trained sufficiently to perform their jobs (CLNAPM 2009-2016: 18).

b. Non-governmental Organisations

Both labour laws and policy practice provide adequate room for partnership with civil society organisations in the design and implementation of intervention strategies that address the issues of child labour in the country. A number of institutions operate programme activities that are connected either directly or indirectly to efforts addressing child labour issues. The following are the key organisations noted during this research,

Active Youth Initiative for Social Enhancement(AYISE), Churches and Relief Development (CARD), Eye of The Child (EOC), Institute for Policy Interaction (IPI) and Malawi Congress of Trade Unions (MCTU) (Chirwa 2005:34 and CLNAPM 2009-2016:19).

Some gaps have been identified in the operations of these organisations which contribute to the inability of such organisations to handle issues of child labour in Malawi effectively. As a result children still engaged in child labour continue to experience the violation of their dignity and human rights. Chirwa (2005:34) who undertook a survey in tea estates in Malawi noted the absence of village-based or community-based structures. Admittedly, these NGOs run their interventions in communities, but rather from outside, and this limits the effectiveness of their interventions. In addition Chirwa highlights that there is inadequate co-ordination and joint implementation with government departments in the interventions run by NGOs. Lack of mobility is one of the major challenges also noted in the NAP (2009-2016) as most of the NGOs do not have adequate transport facilities such as motorbikes. This makes the fight against child labour very difficult.

3.9 Conclusion

In this chapter the extent of child labour in Malawi is discussed by first highlighting the forms of child labour, both in informal and formal sectors. Domestic work and labour on large scale farms are discussed as some of the major forms of child labour. All these forms of child labour are proven to be exploitative and dangerous for children's development and health.

Major causes of child labour, the most important of which are poverty, cultural practices with childhood being regarded as a period of socialization, weak legislation, inadequate information on the effects of child labour and lack of access to education facilities. Most of the causes of child labour seem not to be easily addressed as they are socio-economically related issues, considering also the widespread poverty in Malawi. They are also linked to cultural issues that see no problem in engaging children in working as part of socialisation. More importantly, the traditional African concept of childhood regards is that this is solely a period for imparting social skills in children for their future survival. Also if we take into consideration of the high levels of ignorance on how child labour affect children's wellbeing

negatively due to illiteracy, then indeed one could say addressing causes of child labour remains a big challenge in Malawi.

Paramount to this discussion was the major effects of child labour as analysed in its forms, which indicated that child labour poses a violation to human dignity in the sense that it affects the whole well-being of a child. Children exposed to child labour practices are not able to enjoy the nurture and care that is essential for their all-round development, sexually abused, not permitted to attain education, exposed to a vicious circle of poverty, vulnerable to diseases , and exposed to long working hours. This makes them grow into irresponsible citizens who may not achieve a proper social status in the society.

This chapter also analysed legislative instruments, policies and other direct actions combating child labour in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), ILO Conventions 138 (Minimum age) and 182Worst forms of child labour, and the SADC Code of Conduct on Child Labour). It is observed that Malawi demonstrated commitment in the elimination of child labour by ratification and adoption of the ILO Conventions and the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNHCR).

Finally, for child labour problems to be addressed successfully one has to eliminate its causes, and emphasise its effects on children's well-being. The government has launched responses in the form of legal instruments and direct actions to combat child labour; however, a critical assessment and evaluation of these responses shows a lack of law enforcement and community-based support to address the causes, which leaves many children in continued suffering.

It seems as if there is no clear response to handling the issue of culture as one of the causes of child labour, or if there is any, it lacks enforcement or community-based support. It was noted further that the direct action programmes implemented either by government or NGOs to address poverty seem to be run on a pilot basis, when they are not donor funded programmes whose sustainability remains unclear. Little seems to be done on the ground in the communities in addressing the issue of ignorance on how child labour affects the well-being of children; such efforts also lack community-based support.

It is against this background that this research is proposing to engage the church to explore the possibilities of adding a voice to address child labour issues. Indeed, there is a need to establish extra strategies in order to address the effects of child labour as a complement to government's effort. This research intends to explore how the Church can reflect on these effects theologically, using human dignity as a hermeneutical concept. The aim is to relate the violations of children during child labour and reflect theologically on the value of human dignity. Therefore the following chapter will give a detailed discussion on theological discussion on human dignity.

CHAPTER 4: THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON HUMAN DIGNITY WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO CHILDREN.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a theological perspective on children's dignity. This will be helpful in identifying the violations of such dignity, if any, that may be faced by children involved in child labour. As a background to the concept of human dignity, a brief historical overview will be presented, on how the concept of human dignity developed, to highlight the Jewish-Christian view, philosophical view, and political and legal perspectives. Furthermore the biblical concepts of children's dignity will be discussed briefly. The aim of this historical overview is to identify some commonalities among the different views of human dignity in order to enhance the theological discussion on human dignity. In the final analysis this chapter will discuss and identify whether child labour violates human dignity, and whether this is a theological issue. The discussion will focus on the effects of child labour as highlighted in Chapter Three (3).

4.2 A brief historical overview of the origins of the concept of human dignity

A cursory glance at literature shows that human dignity has a broad meaning and that there is no single way of defining its origins. Since it is beyond the scope of this research to discuss in depth the origins and history of human dignity, this overview will telescope to a focus on the theological interpretation of human dignity in relation to the effects of child labour. This research will narrow the focus to the Jewish view, some philosophical views and the political and legal perspectives. This overview serves as a background to the theological perspective on human dignity.

4.2.1 Jewish view of human dignity

Tongeren (2013:152) notes that the concept of human dignity has its roots in Jewish and Christian traditions and is handed down to us. According to the Jewish concept human beings have dignity because they were endowed with dignity by an external divine entity and not because of their autonomous rational capabilities or any other faculty. In other words this divine entity is none other than God the creator. Any human being has dignity, whether he or she is Jewish or non-Jewish, whether rational or irrational, whether smart or

brain damaged, and whether he/she has a high or a low status. Dignity is defined by life, regardless of physical characteristics, mental capabilities, or racial belonging (Shultziner 2006:679). From this notion follow certain strict obligations that are independent of rational autonomy and choice, such as the general prohibition on abortion and euthanasia, to mention just two among a long list. Shultziner further notes that one obvious conclusion is that in certain cases a Jewish religious conception of human dignity might collide with liberal conceptions of human dignity. In other words he is saying though this strict obligation within a Jewish tradition may be contested in some context, this need not make Jews compromise their standard of valuing the dignity of humanity. However in my view they may still respect the views and religions of others.

Mendieta (2014: 803) argues that this notion of dignity as held in the Judeo-Christian tradition is expanded to elevate humans above all other animals, and anything that can be deemed beastly. The Judeo-Christian vertical elevation of human dignity places us above all other created creatures, as their masters and stewards. The dignity of human beings is a function of its creaturely existence as having been created by God. We are created not made. Our dignity depends on our being precisely God's elect created creatures. The sanctity of our being is the ground for our dignity, and for this reason it is something that can neither be dismissed nor taken away from us (Mendieta 2014:803). In other words the fact that God created human beings in his/her own image (Tzelem Elohim) endows every person a basic human dignity without distinction, and as long one can breathe there is a strict prohibition to hinder life because "Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind" (Gen9:6) (Shultziner 2006:673).Indeed this translates the fact that human beings deserve the same respect that one may accord to God because man has some divine inheritance from God. By implication one may say that if the concept of human dignity has some religious significance then it might also have theological implications and social application. This research aims to explore how best this concept of human dignity can be interpreted theologically, mainly with reference to children, with the further aim of exploring how a church can construct theological tools to help restore the dignity that is believed to be violated in child labour.

4.2.2 Philosophical views of human dignity

The concept of human dignity may have been rooted in Jewish, Christian and possibly other religions, as argued by Tongeren and others, but it is not limited to those theological understandings. Indeed it has been also widely debated, interpreted and applied in different social contexts; some of which are the secular philosophical perspectives of notable philosophers like Emmanuel Kant, the Chinese philosophy of Confucianism and the African philosophy of Ubuntu. This paragraph will highlight and discuss some of these philosophical views on human dignity.

4.2.2.1 Brief Kantian philosophy

The influential 18[th]century philosopher Immanuel Kant is considered by both theologians and secular scholars to be a key figure in social and political systems based on dignity. Kant defines human dignity as the inherent and equal worth of every individual (Bayefsky 2013:809),and provides an excellent description of the fundamental distinction between dignity and value. Where ends are concerned this means that the dignity of human being is priceless and have no market value (Koninck 2009: 20). Kantian dignity is also traditionally characterised in terms of autonomy; the conception of dignity most closely associated is the idea of dignity as autonomy, which implies that to treat people with dignity is to treat them as autonomous individuals able to choose their destiny (Bayefsky 2013:811).

In addition Immanuel Kant (quoted in Shell 2003: 53) discusses dignity in terms of both a kind of deserving and something deserved. This means that a human is not to be esteemed as a mere means to and end for others, or even to his/her own ends, but rather as an end in him-/herself, that is, as possessing dignity, so that the person can measure him/herself against all others of his/her kind and esteem him-/herself on an equal footing with them (Shell 2003: 58). This has the implication that all human beings are of equal value. In other words, human dignity is the dignity of a particular sort of creature, who is neither the "highest" nor the "lowest" sort of a creature one may imagine (Meilaender 2009:4).All human beings have the same value and deserve equal treatment and respect regardless of age, gender, race, colour or social status. This philosophy is all about valuing the dignity of humans and gives him/her accordant respect. In fact Kant argues for this human dignity in the context of socio-political contexts other than religious context as in the Jewish religious

traditions, but the arguments are somehow related. This indicates those human beings are considered worthy of honourable treatment, regardless the context.

4.2.2.2 Chinese philosophy

According to the popular Chinese philosophy of Confucianism the universe is organized and governed by a specific principle, called *Dao*. While Confucians use the term as signifying the organizing and governing principle it is also used in other ways. Dao has several related senses. The original sense was "way," in the sense of "path" or "road." It came to mean (2) "way," in the sense of "the right way to do something," or "the order that comes from doing things in the right way," (3) a linguistic account of a way to do something, or "to give a linguistic account," (4) a metaphysical entity responsible for the way things act (Hang 2012:67). From a Christian perspective we may consider these as attributes of the Christian God, in other words Dao may referred to as God or Supreme Being. In my own view, having such a belief means that all the activities of the faithful of this philosophy are obedient to this Dao. Even the guidelines on how to treat each other or handle the dignity of others may be governed by this power.

The paramount belief in Confucianism with regard to human beings is that a person is relational. Confucians believe that human beings are inherently social and interdependent. Confucianism presupposes a "social conception of the persons", which refers to the view that human beings are biological organisms and become persons by entering into relationship with others of our kind. Human beings are expected to be interdependent by nature, as human beings need the help of others to develop as agents. Thus for Confucians human beings are inescapably born into a web of social relationships, and can mature only within the social web. For this reason living in harmony, which involves a continuous negotiation and adjustment of interpersonal relationship for the sake of mutual enrichment, is seen as an ideal in Confucianism (Hang 2012:67). Of course, there are similar relational views of personhood in other philosophical traditions; what distinguishes the Confucian notion is the weight it places on familial relationships and on social role.

For Confucianism human dignity is a composite idea that consists in the innate potential believed to be uniquely possessed by every human being and held at the highest irreducible value. It also consists in the extent to which this potential is realized practically through

70

conscious self-cultivation. This belief further teaches that an action enhances dignity if it cultivates, practices, or exhibits one's virtues; it reduces dignity if it fails to exercise virtues or prevents anyone from cultivating or exercising virtues. Those who adopt this positive view of mankind, seeing the same value and virtues in themselves, make lifelong efforts to cultivate themselves so as to better themselves, striving to achieve the highest dignity possible for a human being. Having cultivated these virtues, they take pride in them and display an overt confidence in their daily behaviour (Zhang 2000:315).

In the same vein Wen and Akina (2012:8) comment that regardless of their theoretical differences, both the Confucian and the western traditions ascribe to a vision of natural human goodness. Confucianism promotes the duty of humans to act morally according to their consciences and to respect the human rights of others. This respect for human dignity needs to be demonstrated in moral behaviour by each individual or in communal moral action. In other words this Chinese philosophy demands high respect for human dignity at an individual level and as well as at community level. It is deeply rooted in one's conscience to attain such moral ability. One may conclude that this philosophy opts for the protection and upholding of the status of human dignity. It is related somewhat to the African communal philosophy of *Ubuntu*.

There are several moral sources of human action in the naturalistic version of the Confucian morality for human rights. The first is the conscience with which one is born and which develops from early life. It is followed by sympathy based upon conscience, which leads to natural moral sense and desires. The third is community wisdom and social convention, which differs from any transcendental theories. Finally, and of particular importance in Confucian societies, the canonical teachings of sages pass down as part of family tradition and cultural values. One of the most prominent virtues is the notion of *ai, ren*or benevolent love. These are the principles that guide this Confucian society on upholding the dignity of others (Wen and Akina 2012:9). This philosophy does not credit God directly as it does in Judeo-Christian communities; rather, their values are almost dual towards the respect of human dignity.

This is just a brief understanding of the view of human dignity in the classical Chinese philosophy. On critical analysis, this philosophy is seen to focus on the promotion, respect

71

and the value of the human person. Indeed in summary, this seems to have close links to the Kantian philosophy of apportioning equal value to all human beings.

4.2.2.3 African philosophy

From an African perspective generally the term "human dignity" is popularly defined in the philosophy of *Ubuntu* which is translated in English as humanness. The Ubuntu is Nguni word in South Africa, known as " umunthu" in Malawi, "Hunhu" in Shona Zimbabwe "utu" Swahili Tanzania. The main thought behind this Ubuntu philosophy, according to (Metz 2010:84) is to identify with each other; largely, for people to think of themselves as members of the same group; that is, to conceive of themselves as a "we", as well as for them to engage in joint projects, co-ordinating their behaviour to realize shared ends. For people to fail to identify with each other could involve outright divisions between them, i.e., in the spirit of Ubuntu people aim to understand each other, rather than thinking of themselves as an "I" in opposition to "you" or a "they".

Indeed the ideology behind the Ubuntu philosophy is similar to the Roman Catholic concept of human dignity that looks at the image of God as a community, as outlined by Pope Benedict's XVI; that "… human beings live with others, we were created together with others and only in being with others, in giving ourselves to others do we find life…" (Kirchhoffer 2009:593). Furthermore the Ubuntu communal philosophy may also have a biblical justification, depending on the context of interpretation, as it relates very well with an idea of pluralism in the deity of God. Where the pronoun "We" in (Gen 1:26) is singled out – "Let us create man in our own image" – this implies that God is a community. Therefore the fact that this community values a communal type of living might be seen as reflected in such a philosophy.

The Ubuntu philosophy believes that to exhibit solidarity with one another is for people to engage in mutual aid, to act in ways that are expected to benefit each other. For people to fail to exhibit solidarity would mean that they are indifferent to each other's flourishing, or to exhibit ill will in the form of hostility and cruelty. Such an attitude of mutuality predicts a community that promotes valuing each other's dignity. In fact, those who fail to relate properly to others are sometimes described as "unyama" in Malawi, which means animal or brute. This implies that one does not have a dignified human status but that of beasts.

Hence, all human beings have a responsibility to recognise the equal status of fellow-humans by giving them the required respect. This view is quite similar to other philosophies such as the Chinese Confucian philosophy, which strives to elevate the value of human beings.

Nicolson (2009: 383) points out that the Ubuntu philosophy extends its communal relationship to the past generation. With regard to the past, some Africans believe that one has an obligation to live harmoniously with ancestors (the so-called living dead) who have departed this world but live on in a spiritual realm that is intimately connected with ours. This type of belief enhances the unity of the community and value for each other's dignity, because committing an offence against one member of the community means also offending the spirit of those in the living dead community. As a matter of emphasis indeed, due to this belief and understanding every member of this society is quite conscious on how to treat fellow human beings lest he/she offends his/her ancestral spirits and invokes their wrath. However this philosophy has not gone without criticism; some criticise it as promoting a parasitic type of life, which in a real sense promotes laziness.

To summarise the above discussion of how the term human dignity is understood according to various philosophies, one may say that their ideologies focus on respecting and protecting a human person. They do not condone any act that may cause harm to human beings either physically, emotionally or psychologically. All these philosophies encourage people to see their own image in others, i.e. carrying the burden for one another. Such values hold that human beings are equal in status, hence have the same value, and therefore they deserve respect. One notes the similarities between the lines, on how these philosophies value the dignity of human beings, on their emphasis that all people have value and need protection, honour and respect. In Jewish and Confucian thought they also draw on divine powers – in Confucianism attributed to Dao and in Judaism to God. Ubuntu and Kantian philosophies lean toward a natural instinct to respect fellow humans and respect their dignity. Subsequently we explore how this concept is used and understood in a political context, to find whether there is continuity with the above-mentioned philosophies.

4.2.3 Political view of human dignity

The widespread use of the concept of human dignity came about mainly after the horrors of World War II, largely as a result of the enormous death toll. Particularly the Nazi's attempt to exterminate the Jewish people raised serious questions about what it means to be a human being. How could such violence be perpetrated on such a vast scale against other human beings? How could people do this to each other? And how can people prevent something similar from happening again? (Kirchhoffer 2013:49). One may argue that these questions are the ones that may have led to efforts to ensure that the concept of human dignity be acknowledged and strengthened. In agreement with Kirchhoff, Bratilovanu (2012:1) notes, the atrocities committed during this war were not seen in other crimes which have stained the history of mankind: the use of gas chambers, of crematoriums and other horrible tools from the Nazi concentration camps, mass extermination, collective executions, theft, cannibalism, sexual slavery, experiments with biological weapons. The belligerent countries emerged from the war ruined both financially and morally. The result was that it was estimated that 3% of the world population died at that time.

After these events of a severity and range unseen until that moment, the idea arose to reject everything that prejudices the quality of being human. The world began to look into how it can help to protect humanity from such atrocities. Indeed the concept of human dignity is an affirmation of the worth of every human being, that none should be subjected to cruel treatment. Shultziner and Rabinovici (2012:107) comments, we define human dignity as self-worth and offer an approach that explains violations of dignity in terms of humiliation and other threats and injuries to people's self-worth. This approach is revealed to be rich in content and capable of explaining much of the systems of protection of human rights as well as the attempts to bring back logic and consistency into the legal maintenance of human dignity. On may then say that the origin of concept of human dignity is linked to the horrors of World War II. This was a wake-up call to political leaders to consider how they should avoid violations of people's dignity. The only channel to put this into practice consistently was to make it a legal practice. This has been confirmed by its adoption by a large number of international legal instruments.

4.2.4 Legal perspective of human dignity

According to Kirchhoffer (2013:50) the concept of human dignity formed the basis of an ever-increasing number of ethical and legal instruments, amongst the most influential of which are the United Nations 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the 1984 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, Degrading Treatment or Punishment; these are all concerned with freedom, justice and peace in the world. Furthermore, they all state that the inalienable rights to which all human beings are entitled derive from the inherent dignity of the human person. The United Nations' 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women emphasises, in its preamble that all human persons are born equal in dignity, regardless of gender, and therefore all discrimination against women is a violation of this human dignity. The United Nations' 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, likewise, bases its claim that "childhood is entitled to special care and assistance" on the idea that all human beings have inherent dignity. Therefore any act that is likely to cause harm to the life of a child is violation against human dignity.

The term human dignity is considered important in those countries that have ratified the United Nations ICESCR and ICCPR (Kirchhoffer 2013:51). The 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, for example names human dignity as the first of the state's founding values. In South America, Brazil's 1998 constitution states, in Article 1, that the democratic state of Brazil is founded upon, among other things, the dignity of the human person (Kirchhoffer 2013:52).

However, Grant (2005:35) argues that although the roots of human dignity are to be found in various religious and philosophical traditions, its use in constitutional and international law is of comparatively recent origin and it remains legislatively undefined. The definitional difficulties arise because human dignity is attached to different aspects of human existence. Shultziner and Rabinovici (2012:106) adds that the lack of clear definition coupled with the increasing and sometimes excessive use of this concept has generated a number of serious problems, which have only recently become clear in empirical research and court rulings. Indeed, these problems arise owing to the variety in cultural contexts. In agreement Neal (2014:26) observes that the idea of human dignity has been referenced repeatedly by courts

in a host of recent cases spanning a range of different areas of law: the dignity of same sex couples, patients, prisoners, detainees, asylum seekers, women seeking abortions, and people wishing to end their lives. Bratilovanu (2012:2) adds that in legal doctrine, the uncertainty regarding the definition of human dignity continues, and the difficulty of definition is accepted quasi-unanimously. This alone has challenged the application of some of these aspects in different contexts from a legal perspective. For instance, some African Countries (though from undocumented sources, like Uganda) recently experienced international economic sanctions because their local high court of law ruled against the right of the dignity of same sex couples. They consider same sex marriage to be an act of indecency/indignity, hence punishable by law. In other contexts the same sex marriage is a right of human dignity, so to criminalise it means violating the dignity of others. Based on this experience one may be tempted to say that the concept of human dignity could be considered a contextual concept and not a universal one, when it comes to implementation.

In a related manner, it is further noted that the more dignity has been employed in various legal deliberations, and the more it has been used for human rights interpretations, the more fluid and contradictory its meaning and applications have become, even when applied in similar cases and contexts, such as abortion, incitement to racial hatred, obscenity and socio-economic rights (Shultziner and Rabinovici 2012: 106). Shultziner and Rabinovici (2012:106) observes further that the widening meaning of the term human dignity, its fluid applications and the lack of agreed definition have turned human dignity to a term that means everything and hence no longer means anything. Accordingly, applications of human dignity could now yield opposite or contradictory outcomes: for example, extracting rights and limiting rights; protecting individual rights against collective rights, minority rights, and indigenous rights, or vice versa. It is no wonder that the Canadian court decided to abstain from using the concept. Indeed the combination of human rights and human dignity, though difficult to distinguish, may remain a sensitive issue when it comes to application. The problem is exacerbated when there is some attachment to cultural influences. Therefore there is a need to research further how issues of human dignity can be addressed universally with less contradiction.

Apart from being attached to different aspects of human existence this term seems to be new in legal contexts. However Neal (2014:26) notes that the notion and the role of human

dignity within the law is still an under-explored topic, and there are inconsistencies regarding its interpretation and implementation. This research hopes to seek how it can interpret the concept theologically, with a view to finding a way to address and protect the dignity of children. It will still recognize and appreciate the role that any constitutional law may adopt to protect the dignity of human beings.

Nevertheless, as a way of emphasising the value of human dignity, the main base of the human rights argument in the interpretation of human dignity is the right to equality. This has taken a prominent place in the universal Declaration on Human Rights, of which the preamble refers to the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family. Furthermore Article 1 asserts that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. Similarly, Article 1 of the EU charter of Fundamental Rights declares that human dignity is inviolable (Neal 2014:26 and Jones 2012:286)). In the Republican Constitution of Malawi Chapter IV on Human Rights Article 19 under human dignity and personal freedoms (1) it reads: The dignity of all persons shall be inviolable (Constitution of the Republic of Malawi 1994: 9). In the Republic of South Africa Constitution, under the Bill of Rights Article 10 of the Rights states: "Everyone has the inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected" (Neal 2014:31). In the Constitution of Germany of the 23rd May 1949 Art1 states:"1.Human dignity is inviolable. To respect and protect it is the duty of all state authorities. 2. The German people therefore acknowledge the inviolable and inalienable human rights as the basis of every human community, of peace and of justice in the world"(Bratilovanu 2012:2). The list of examples may go on and on, this is just to confirm that human dignity appears in many constitutional documents worldwide.

Though human rights acts have been declared universally, their implementation differs from country to country and perhaps also from one context to the next. It is to be noted that the rights issue takes pains to emphasize a point on equality in the concept of human dignity, though human rights and human dignity go side by side. According to Grant (2006:25) the right to equality is an essential component of the international and domestic human rights systems. Yet, in spite of similarities in formulation of equal rights in the international legislation, national bills of rights, and anti-discrimination legislation, the meaning of equality, and how best to implement it remains highly contentious, in the sense that though

universally accepted, it is not implemented practically due to a number of facts. Some of the reasons might stem from influences of primitive cultural background and ignorance or lack of civil awareness on the value of upholding the dignity of others equally.

Shultziner, for example, adds that some have argued that the concept of "human dignity" is universal and transcends cultural diversity, and is the source of all human rights. This might be true, but the question remains, how much have we sensitised our people to the fact that the concept of "human dignity" transcends cultural diversity? The conservatives or custodians of some cultures may not accept this nor even attempt to take this seriously. A notion of universality of the concept of human dignity becomes problematic especially when it touches on the aspect of rights and culture. This can be universally claimed but may not be applied to all contexts. For example in practice; what is considered to be a right of dignity in a culture of a Western modernised world may not be the same as in a culture of a developing world, such as an African traditional context.

These are some of the challenges faced by different communities when it comes to implementation of the universal declarations made with less or no consideration of cultural influences. We are therefore challenged to consider and clarify our own understanding of the term human dignity in a specific context. This is why this research focuses on a theological interpretation of the dignity of human being: to explore and establish how it can be applied to avert indignity endured by human beings, in theological context. Bayefsky (2013: 809) observes that the concept of human dignity plays a significant role in several areas of political life. Participants in an array of social and political movements from civil rights to labour activism to gay rights have invoked dignity to support their claims.

The prominence given to human dignity in the international legal instruments, national constitutions, in some secular philosophical discourse and as discussed in some religious contexts underscore the fact that all human beings deserve equal value and respect. Indeed the dignity of human being is valuable. It further shows that the desire to protect humanity from all sorts of violations is universal. As a matter of highlighting the value of human dignity, this research has considered to explore some of the philosophical understandings of human dignity in different contexts before a theological discussion as our main focus. This

allows this research to appreciate some commonalities in the definitions of this concept of human dignity.

In summary, I would say that the concept of human dignity is a broad term that has its roots in religious, philosophical, political and legal practices. In terms of religion it seems to have strong ties with the Judeo-Christian background. The value of human dignity in this religious context is much as the same as in the philosophies of Emmanuel Kant, Confucianism and Ubuntu. They all consider the value and respect of human dignity, by enforcing practices to protect it against harm. It was further noted that the widespread use of the concept of human dignity entered the political scene because of the atrocities of the Second World War. This was later adopted into main international legal instruments and individual republican constitutions as a way of enforcing protection of the dignity of human persons. This brief historical background of the concept of human dignity prepares a discussion from a theological view of human dignity.

4.3 A theological view of human dignity

The main theological view of human dignity in this discussion derives from the ideology of equality, respect and inviolability of human beings among others. This ideology emanates from and is centred on the concept of the image of God *(Imago dei),* as the focus of reference. Due to lack of space and time this discussion will not do a systematic exegetical textual analysis, but alternative lenses for defining human dignity may be used as supplementary arguments.

According to this view, the basis of the dignity of the human person is the belief that humans are created in the image of God, according to Gen 1: 27: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." What does it entail to be created in the image of God? Does this mean that man resembles God in physical stature, character, moral behaviour and other features? Answers to these questions may help this research to establish how the church can interpret some of the violations against human beings in theological terms. The literature provides several opinions on the relationship of the image of God and human dignity. This discussion focuses on the areas of equality, freedom, rationality, respect and inviolability of all human beings regardless of age, gender, race and social status, as they owe this respect to their derivation from God's image.

4.3.1 Equality of human beings

For Meilaender (2009:6), in reference to Kierkegaard, "this equal dignity of value of the individual has relied historically not on any particular characteristics, but in the belief that every person is equidistant from eternity." In other words "Equality is in essence therefore a status that God grants people, not an inherent characteristic of the human being. Because all people are created in the image of God, all people are alike in dignity - Ps 8" (Vorster 2012:5).Contemporary German theologian, Jürgen Moltmann (1984:11) refers to the key sentence in the 1974 declaration of the Roman Synod of Bishops to the effect that the dignity of humankind has its roots in the fact that every human being is an image and reflection of God and that as a result of this, all people are equal to one another in their essence. Indeed all human beings are equal before God and they deserve equal treatment in all areas that concerns their lives. To be human is a gift entailing dignity of a person. Being a human being means one is someone, not something, one cannot be disposed of at will, since all human beings have dignity and are equal (Kirchhoffer 2009:590).

According to Vorster (2012:5) the understanding of equality in Old Testament is within the realm of justice. The basic structure of Israelite society had to be ordered in such a way that the interests of the weak were cared for. The theological implication behind this concern for the poor and weak is that inequality leads to bondage of the weak and inferior. As a matter of emphasizing this equality within the human family we also read In the New Testament, as emphasized by Apostle Paul in Galatians 3:28: "There is no Jew, nor Greek, neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, all are morally and spiritually equal before God". Indeed, to value something more than the image of God (imago dei) in how one thinks about others and oneself means working against the intention of God, who created humans in his own image. Therefore as long as humans are made in the image of God, theologically they have equal status before God and fellow humans as well.

However, they might be categorised in terms of social class, gender, age , colour, tribe or in terms of academic achievements. This does not make other fellow human beings to be higher or lower in dignity. Theologically the people in any categories remain equal and deserve equal respect and treatment because they all still reflect the image of God that was endowed upon them by God. These human beings are not just equal in dignity but also have an inviolable state, as it will be further elaborated below.

4.3.2 Inviolability of Human beings

The image of God doesn't only grant the equal dignity to all human beings, but to be cast in this image of God also means that this dignity is sacred, inviolable and has equal status with God and fellow human beings; people deserve respect and honour equal to their status by virtue of being in this image. In agreement Sr Katherine (2009:1) observes that human dignity originates from God because we are made in God's Image and likeness (Gen 1:26-27), and she adds that human life is sacred because the human person is the most central and clearest reflection of God among us. In fact the term likeness affirms the connection which generates the dignity of the human person. Humans have transcendent value that comes from God, and which is not based on human quality, legal mandate or the individual's merit or accomplishments; it is not a status that one can claim to have achieved in life by doing something unique.

In other words one's dignity and usefulness do not depend upon one's productivity or the extent of one's ability, or the degree of one's social integration (Aarflot 1988: 71); it is a natural inherent dignity that resides in relatedness to God; a person has value because she/he is valued by the Divine. Therefore no one is allowed to destroy or harm neither to cause any pain to this image of God in humanity. According to Benedict XVI (Kirchhoffer 2009:589) the protection of human dignity is the first and last fundamental right and should be the criterion that inspires and directs all efforts. This emphasises the value of the dignity of human persons. It may not be reduced to the level of market value at any cost, as has been argued by Emmanuel Kant. It was also noted that the Chinese philosophy of Confucianism believes in the innate potential uniquely possessed by every human being and held at the highest irreducible value.

Adding voice to this, Martin Luther King Jr (in Burrow 2002:231) observes that since God is the source of this dignity, it is not something that can be given or taken away. We may argue the point as to whether persons have value solely because they are valued by God, or whether they have value apart from God. By being created in the "image of God" mankind is different from all other creatures, and his resemblance to God gives him a singular value that, among other things, ensures the inviolability of every human. The most famous expression of this inviolability is the prohibition against murder as a capital crime. "Whoever sheds the blood of a man/by man shall his blood be shed; for in his image God made man"

(Gen 9:6). In addition I may say whoever causes any pain to fellow human, be it physical, emotional or psychologically, has failed to uphold the dignity of that human person and at the same time failed also to respect the image of God.

Some scholars have contrasting views on the permanence of the divine image in man, considering this dignity to be conditional. According to Kraynak (2003:85) the divine image can be compromised or partially lost, either by the whole human species or by individuals who commit immoral acts such as murder. However Tongeren (2013:158) emphasizes that the relationship between God and human beings is said to be constitutive, not added afterwards or from outside; this implies that it cannot be eliminated either. Only the Creator has the ultimate right to dispose of human life. There are no people who are not related to God. Besides, the relation concerns the whole of the human species, since it constitutes human beings as human beings, and will therefore be present in everything that makes them human. In agreement with Tongereni, I would say every person is sacred and possesses infinite worth because he/she is endowed with the love that is God, regardless of sin.

4.3.3 Rationality of human beings

Human dignity in the image of God, besides being sacred and inviolable also means that human beings have been endowed with a rational mind. Human beings have been given special attributes or capacities that if put into practice may reflect the godliness in humanity, such as being rational. In other words Benedict XVI (Kirchhoffer 2009:589) observes that to be in the image of God reflects what humans are capable of doing, or the purpose for which the humans were created. According to McKenzie (1966:385), to be made in the image of God emphasizes the spiritual qualities of humankind; this includes the physical form and its spiritual qualities. The latter entails reunion with God – in other words, human beings are able to have a constant communion or relationship with God.

While the physical aspect entails peaceful and mutually edifying co-existence with one's neighbour and the rest of creation, one has to assume personal responsibility towards being in the image of God, having had a special dignity bestowed that is to treat oneself with adorable dignity and respect. It also means depending on the next human being to respect one another's dignity mutually by protecting it from external violations and offer accorded

respect. In other words, humankind has a share in the attributes and power of the entity which it represents, namely God. One may further say mankind is a physical representative of God. Humanly speaking being a representative one must have the undoubted delegated power to act on behalf of the sender. Therefore one has to behave in a godly way to protect the dignity of others while preserving one's own dignity.

To supplement the above argument Stern (2010:166) argues "with reference to another element in the Creation narrative in Genesis, namely that Adam is said to have been created in the image of God, which implies divine-likeness and divine-like power. Thus, the phrase bestows upon Adam a singular feature of being God's symbolic presence on earth". Consequently human beings can be described as the official representative and regents of God in this world by being given the mandate to have dominion and authority.

This translate to the fact that every human being, being in this image of God, may have some attributes that relate to godliness, such as the capacity to love, the ability to reason, and being moral agents. These traits in humanity are the ones that qualify human beings to have a special dignity. Furthermore this dignity gives a clear distinction between human beings and other creatures such as animals, or makes man special and responsible. Kirchhoffer (2013:142) elaborates on this by saying that "to be created in the image of God means to have dominion over other creation; or that human beings are loved and called by God to be in communion with God; or that human beings are created with an immortal soul".

All people are persons before God and capable of acting on God's behalf and are responsible to Him and to one another. It is then the responsibility of every human being to see to it that the image of God is respected and valued, by treating fellow human beings with dignity. This could be done by protecting them from physical, psychological, emotional and moral violations of their dignity. By upholding this practice of protecting human beings we are upholding real human status which God meant to be by creating human beings in his own image. This can only be reflected in human beings by putting into practice some of the capacities and attributes that may reflect the image of God (imago dei) in humanity, as indicated in the discussion above. Subsequently we examine just two of the (many) capacities or attributes that may reflect the image of God in humanity.

4.3.4 Capacities/Attributes

These are the characteristics that give every human being a special dignity or status of being human, hence the term human dignity. By implication this may mean that failure to display these characteristics may amount to "inhumanness". These attributes help human beings to present themselves in a dignified way and at the same time help them to respect the dignity of others. Indeed this dignity is owed by the image of God and some of these attributes may as well reflect God's character.

4.3.4.1 The Capacity to Reason

The dignity of human beings created in the Image of God, implies that human beings have a capacity to reason (logos), since God is rational. This does not need any further scientific proof than observing the creation and its source. Therefore if human beings have the ability to reason they also have the capacity to distinguish between good and evil and thereby to embark on a morally appropriate course of action. Kirchhoffer (2013:220) describes a "human being as a moral being capable of choosing and acting toward a good end in a morally correct way. One may say that it is partly through reason and partly through grace that human beings are able to achieve the good ends inherent in their being created in the image of God".

Therefore it is an obligation for human beings to take responsibility to reason and to judge between wrong and right mainly in the religious context, but also in the social contexts, in-order to explore means that may help to protect the dignity of self and others. In addition Kirchhoffer (2013: 220) notes that "the use of deliberative reason aims at a moral purpose proper to the human person, making every action a genuine *actus humanus* and thus a moral act". Kirchhoffer further says "that morally correct behaviour lends itself to a positive appraisal of the actor's character. Likewise, morally wrong behaviour calls that person's character into question. Either way, both the individual and his society are engaged in an on-going process of action and interpretation that have a determinative effect on whether a person experiences his life as meaningful and himself as worthy".

Considering the above arguments, for example, it is not only unreasonable to expose working children to hazardous working conditions that may be harmful to their well-being, but it is also demeaning to their dignity. It is quite unreasonable for a human being to see

another's dignity being violated, while he/she has the ability to avoid it. People have to see the image of God in other persons. As observed also by Meilaender (2009:96) "the thought of God's presence makes a person modest in relation to another person, because the presence of God makes the two essentially equal." This means that people can develop a consciousness to value other's dignity when they are able to see their own person and others through the image of God.

The church and its people are called upon to use not only their faith but also the logos reasoning, so that they consider actions that may be relevant to the protection of this image of God in people. Indeed, it is a Christian belief that faith alone without reason lets people perish, and reason alone without faith is useless. The ability to reason empowers people with the ability to handle themselves in a dignified way as intended by God, while at the same time upholding the image of God's status. Furthermore this reasoning capacity qualifies human beings with abilities to protect and uphold the dignity of others. This can be done in different ways, either by protecting it from physical, emotional and psychological violation or by laying down religious or social practices that will ensure promotion of the human dignity of all persons. The reasoning power to uphold the dignity of oneself and others does not go alone, it is complemented by love.

4.3.4.2 The Ability to Love

One of the attributes of human dignity arising from the image of God (imago dei), is love (1 John4:8), and since God is love, there is no place for violence in the concept of human dignity, as the image of God in a human means having the ability to love. The highest vocation of every person is to love and be loved. According to Barbour (2002: 57) "love may be expressed as care toward a person in need, compassion toward a person in suffering, forgiveness toward someone who has acted harmfully, loyalty toward a friend, or joyful affection toward someone sharing an intimate relationship".

In addition Duffy & Gambatese (1999:58) observe that "human love involves our emotions, imagination and our intellect. Therefore if anything eradicates one or more of these, it eradicates human dignity; and ignoring the development and fulfilment of the capacities to imagine, feel, think and will, is a violation of our human dignity". By implication this means that any act that may expose self or fellow human beings to a situation that does not reflect

love and or may cause a person to suffer indignity violates the dignity of humanity. In the final analysis it is God who is injured by violating the dignity of any person who is created in his/her image.

In Christ we can find the ultimate reason for becoming staunch champions or builders of peace. Barbour (2002:58) argues that "love affirms the value of other persons and seeks to empower rather than to control them". Love may involve significant risk to oneself (as in genuinely altruistic self-sacrifice), or it may involve mutuality (reciprocal benefits), but these are responses to particular circumstances rather defining characteristics of love. The concept of love in Christianity and in all major world religions, is built on our more positive tendencies and tries to redirect the destructive tendencies in the context of current human life. In this case, what is the Church in Malawi doing to express its love by helping children who might be suffering by being involved in the child labour industry?

We need to consider the term love as one of the bases of our argument. We need to express our love by protecting the dignity of fellow human beings who are experiencing humiliation. We need to confront harmful practices or actions. Barbour (2009:59) also speaks of confronting harmful actions of others both in the family and in the wider society; the call to love and forgiveness must be accompanied by the call to justice. He adds that "love of neighbour is expressed not only in individual actions but in working for more just social policies and institutions". Therefore human being shave a role to play in saving the dignity of others since the paramount teaching of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, is to love your neighbour as you love yourself.

Now we have seen that the term human dignity emanates from the term image of God and its accordant implications. Therefore the ideology of interpreting human dignity in the image of God (Imago dei) comes with much responsibility. The dignity that has been given to humanity in the image of God requires respect and protection, free from any form of violations or exposure to conditions that are likely to violate this dignity. This has been also highlighted in the 1948 UN universal declarations of human rights adopted to protect the dignity of humanity from all sorts of violations.

In the words of Martin Luther King Jr, every person is somebody, not something, because every person is a child of God. As such every person ought to be treated with dignity and

respect and should respond accordingly when their dignity is threatened or undermined (Burrow 2003:231). Additionally, Vorster (2012:3) comments that "in this view, human dignity entails that human beings are entitled to being treated as worthy of respect and concern, because they stand in a special relationship to God". One may say that God implanted in human beings a sacred kernel of value, and demands that we protect human dignity in ourselves and in others; damaging human dignity may be a direct offence against God (Shultinzer 2006:667).We are God's friends and partners, creatures made by God out of earth and spirit (Gen.2:7) and given awesome responsibility in relationship to other living creatures (Bunge 2008: 319).

We have discussed and explored how the term human dignity is interpreted in general terms in relation to the image of God (imago dei). The dignity of a person is inviolable, has equal status and has some capacities and attributes that flow from the imago dei in us, but how does this relate to the dignity of children? Does this dignity apply to all human beings at all levels? For the sake of the scope of this study the succeeding paragraph focuses its discussion on why and how children deserve this equal dignity in the image of God "imago dei" in relation to child labour. Children have been singled out specifically in this case because this research aims to address violent actions against the dignity of children engaged in child labour. Therefore there is a need to reaffirm the theological status of the dignity of the image of God in children.

4.4 Dignity of children in the image of God

It is imperative to discuss the position of children in this theological perspective in order to help explore how they can be protected theologically if there might be any risk of their exposure to acts of violation, since this is the specific focus of this research. The idea of equality in this theological interpretation of the concept of human dignity as lying in people being created in the image of God (*imago dei*) is central to this study as it shows that, from a theological perspective, all human beings have equal value and status and thus deserve equal treatment.

In the language of Genesis 1:26-27,"God created man in his own image"; this claims that all human beings –regardless of gender, race, social status or age are created in the image of God. We know from a larger context that human beings do not become an "image of God"

only when they are adults; the image of God is not something that they "grow into" (Fretheim 2008:4). For example, in the view of the Psalmist there is never a time in the conception of and birth of children when the hand of God is not present: Psalm 139:13: For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb…"Full humanity presupposes the inherent divine image, and no child or any other human being is excluded; they are all equal in the image of God.

The terms "in God's image" and "the likeness of God" refer to the whole of humanity, including children. Childhood should not be distinguished from adulthood as childhood also constitutes personhood but at a different age, social status, or gender (Richards and Privett: 2009: 7). Indeed God does not distinguish between born and unborn, young and old, fit and retarded, white and black, rich and poor. All are created in the image and are equal. If a child then is also created in the image of God then this child deserves an inviolable dignity that is equal to that of any other human being.

According to Towner (2008: 321) the Hebrew Bible does not say explicitly that children are made in the image of God. In fact the term "image" alone is applied to a child only once, namely in Genesis 5:3 where it is noted that Seth was in the image and likeness of his father, Adam. Nevertheless, taking into account some of the central elements of biblical understanding of the image of God as discussed above, we must affirm that the image of God also applies to children. It is so because in all human persons we see a reflection of the One in whose image they were created. If all persons really reflect the image God, then children also bear the image of God by virtue of being in the category of persons. This covers all people, regardless of any ethnic, national, gender, age, religious, or other affiliations(Tongeren 2013:158).

Therefore, every child is created in the image of God and, as such, has special dignity and value to God and for the world. Their special dignity entitles children to treatment worthy of respect and concern, because they stand in a special relationship to God and others. Because all people are created in the image of as referred to in Psalm 8:5 "You made man a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honour", all people are alike in dignity. Every person is therefore imbued with the image and fragrance of God and it is this that bonds us together as human race. There is no person or group that has

been imbued with more or less of the image of God than any other. Therefore children should not be treated as lesser beings at any levels, be it at home or in the church or at work and politically. There is a need at all times to uphold the respect for children's dignity.

This addresses the fundamental equality of all persons, an equality bestowed by God for all time. Martin Luther King, Jr. in one of his sermons as quoted in Burrow (2002:230), said "There are no gradations in the image of God. Every man from a treble White to a bass Black is significant on God's keyboard, precisely because every man is created in the image of God…"If children are people then they deserve this honour and respect. Every human being is important and deserves respect as is stressed by Bonk (2013:2), who argues that "it is essential that we honour the image of God in the individual men and women, including children, behind the data so that they are not mere objects of our research, subjects of our religious schemes, or the raw materials of our scholarly reputations or musicological successes, but children of God". It is of great importance to note that the dignity of humanity should be seen as a gift from God (Soulen & Woodhead 2006:254), which entitles them to dignified care, honour and protection from any kind of abuse. By respecting the dignity of fellow human beings we are at the same time respecting and pleasing God, in whose image they are created.

Indeed, theologically children have equal status with the rest of human species. . In the final analysis exploring what the Bible and Christian teaching says about children will help this research to generate recommendations on how a church can help children suffering because of child labour.

4.5 The status of children within the broad Christian understanding of children

In attempt to equip the Church to address issues that affect children such as child labour and its effects we need first to understand how a Christian biblical view perceives children. Who is a child in the eyes of a Christian community? According to Burch (2013:35) "although much has been written on the oppression and subsequent liberation of specific groups such as indigenous groups, blacks and women, there has been little mention of children". This omission in most liberation theologies speaks clearly of failure to see childhood as a worthy matter for theological thought (Vivien 2011: 261). As a continuation of our theological

reflection on human dignity, we contemplate perspectives on children as found within the Christian tradition with reference to some biblical texts where necessary.

4.5.1 A gift from God

The Christian tradition considers children as the gift from God, as it uses biblical tradition as the main source of its teachings. Many passages in the Bible speak of children as gifts and blessings from God both direct and indirectly, for instance Gen 1:28: "Be fruitful and increase in number". Though children are born through the union of their parents their ultimate source is God, according to this text. They are born neither of human making nor power but by God's design, hence becoming gifts to people. The Psalmist says in Ps 127:3: "Children are a heritage from the Lord and a reward." Concurring with this, one of the major contributors in children's literature Bunge (2006: 563) argues that "children are not only gifts from God but also sources of joy that ultimately come from God and belong to God". Whether biological or adopted, children are gifts not only to parents but also to the community e.g. 1 Sam 1:11.[18] Luke 1:14,"…..He will be a joy and delight to you and many will rejoice because of his faith." Children are also described as blessings and from God. According to the Biblical scholar Maginnis (2008:27) the Israelites' proliferation is described in Exodus 1 in a way that alludes to the promises to the patriarchs and, even further back in Genesis, to the blessings conferred on humanity at the creation of the world. Exodus 1:7 states that "the Israelites were fruitful and multiplied and became numerous so that land was filled with them". Maginnis further notes that the first, third, fifth terms in this text ("fruitful", "multiply", "filled") are the very ones God uses in blessing humankind in Genesis 1:28.

According to Bunge, if children belong also to the community then since the church is a community, a Christian community has a responsibility to nurture and protect this gift from God. The church community may also enjoy the services of this gift from God. The only way the Christian community can express their gratitude to God is by taking care of their children and realising that they are also created in the image of God. Families also have obligations to thank God for this gift by taking care of these children in all ways possible. If we abuse

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[18] 1 Samuel 1:11 "And she made a vow saying Lord Almighty, if only you will look upon your servant's misery and remember me , and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life, and no razor shall ever be used on his head."

children we are inflicting pain on the One who gave us this gift, because we show lack of appreciation. In 1 Samuel1:11 we witness how Elkana pledges his appreciation to God by dedicating the life of his son to the Lord. Children are valued equally in the church as the gifts from God. It should be a concern of individuals, church or the entire community to see to it that children are well taken care of.

4.5.2 Fully human and made in the image of God

God addresses human being as complete and whole individuals from before their birth and throughout their lives. There is no time when whoever is a human being was not in the image of God. A child is not a fraction of humanity, neither a developing stage in a life cycle toward become fully human beings. Though classified in developmental stages such as babies, toddlers, infants, teenagers, youth and adults etc. all these stages refers to full human beings in the image of God. Richards and Privett (2009:7) observe that "when we look through the eyes of a child we look through the eyes of the one who is regarded as a whole person before God and not an incomplete person or a partial person, or an adult in the making". In agreement (Bunge 2006:566) argues that "although children are developing, they are at the same time whole and complete human beings made in the image of God. Thus they are worthy of human dignity and respect from the start". The basis of this claim is Gen.1:27, which states that God made humankind, male and female, in God's image. It is further noted that children, like adults, possess the fullness of humanity. Regardless of race, gender, or class they have intrinsic value. Although parents nurture them, they are not made in the image of their parents but in the image of God himself. Rothchild (2013:86) observes that "the *imago dei* endows all persons with inherent dignity and value". By seeing and understanding individual, vulnerable children as created in the image of God , we see and understand God better, and ultimately see and understand ourselves better as persons created in the image of God (Carr 2011: 419). As human beings children need the same treatment and respect as any other human being.

This theological interpretation of childhood is taken from Matt 18: 1-14 where Jesus places the child in the midst of his disciples in order to help them think about God: This action by Jesus stood in sharp contrast to the Jewish culture that treated children as people of low status. By raising the status of children Jesus was displaying the importance of the total equality of all human beings, regardless of age and social status. So the child theology

91

movements desire to pursue a greater understanding of God and his kingdom, in the protection of human dignity.

4.5.3 Orphans, neighbors, and strangers in need of justice and compassion

Biblically children are classified with the category of orphans, neighbours and strangers in need of justice and compassion. This is due mainly to the vulnerability of their status by living a dependant life. Indeed with reference to biblical teachings Christianity should consider children to be in the category of people who needs compassionate care and support. The Old Testament is largely preoccupied with "widows, orphans, and sojourners," all groups of the unprotected, to which "the poor or vulnerable" is sometimes added. This includes orphans who have no parents as advocates, widows who have no husband as an advocate, and immigrants who have no legal standing (Brueggemann 2008:411-412). This formula repeated formulaically, refers to these three categories of human persons in patriarchal society who are without a male protector (e.g., Deut.16:11-12, 14: 24:17-22)[19].Brueggemann (2008: 412) argues that "in such a society those without male protection were exceedingly vulnerable to violence and exploitation of every kind imaginable".

Our concern in this is *the orphan or vulnerable child,* the one without parental advocates who is the subject of all the worst kinds of exploitation. While we may imagine our own contemporary society to be more enlightened, it is nonetheless the case that those without adult advocacy are left like their counterparts, in the same profoundly vulnerable positions. Thus we may take "orphan" to be the "other" beyond our own children for whom we have profound obligation, an obligation that depends not simply on good intentions but also nurture in respect, dignity, and well-being.

In the same vein Devries (2001:165) explains that "children are identified as co-recipients and model entrants into the reign of God. They are receivers of God's reign primarily because, along with the poor and the oppressed, they lack social status; they bring nothing

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[19] Deut, 16:11-12" and rejoice before the Lord your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his name you, and your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, the Levites in your towns, and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows living among you. "Deut, 24:17-22." Do not deprive the alien or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this. When you are harvesting in your fields and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands .When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches again. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. That is why I command you to do so.

and simply depend on the goodness of God to uphold them". Indeed the biblical record shows a child as coming from God but not in power and glory, rather in weakness and vulnerability, needing to be received into human care and protection (Vivienne2011:265). It is imperative that children should be helped to address the things that oppress them, because they are unique in that they cannot stand up to people or issues that have caused them to be oppressed. In other words children are vulnerable, they lack physical and intellectual power and they are open to corruption and exploitation. The child sold as a slave or the child soldier or the one involved in child labour needs to be saved and protected in practical ways.

As human beings, our instincts are to care for and nurture children and we quickly become stressed by the idea of children being hurt or harmed. Above all, Vivienne (2011:260) notes that the theme of Judeo-Christian Scripture is "*God is love* "and those who seek to follow God's way should live according to the law of love and justice to all, in particular where children are concerned. Numerous biblical passages explicitly command us to help widows and orphans as they are the most vulnerable people in the society. Carr (2011:419) observes that "caring for children and others who are afflicted, including those who suffer innocently, is, in the Wesleyan view a means of grace, a means of religious experience through which we find God". She calls upon the whole Church and individuals who make up the Church to be actively involved in protecting the lives of children (Carr 2011:419). Therefore caring for the least of these-those children made vulnerable by poverty is not simply a responsibility of Christianity; it is a means of seeing and knowing the God in whose image all human beings are created.

In his interpretation of the protection of children in the Anglican Church of Australia, Duncan (2006:108) takes infant baptism as a radical statement of God's grace that encompasses us before we know and understand it. It is also an affirmation of the full and unqualified inclusion of children in the household of God and the community of the church, so that *"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow-citizens with God's people and members of God's household*" (Eph.2:19).Members of this community exercise the duty to care for each other, and members requiring care include children. The baptismal practice of appointing godparents underlines that this responsibility lies not simply with a child's own parents but with the community. The church, as the community of believers, needs to find

means to protect children suffering from any affliction such as in child labour. Duncan (2006: 112) observes that "the dignity of bodies, human bodies, must be protected. Children's bodies must also be loved as God loved us, because Christ suffered bodily on our behalf".

Vieth (2012:323) argues that child abuse in whatever form is both sin and crime, and then she calls on the global church to prevent child abuse and to care for the children. The doctrines of the Church are challenged by this new awareness of the vulnerability of children, and the church has a biblical mandate to protect children or to restore their dignity that might have been lost due to many ungodly practices.

4.5.4 Developing beings who need instruction and guidance

Childhood has generally been assumed to be the state of immaturity during which adults are to nurture, teach, and guide children, helping them to develop intellectually, morally, emotionally, and spiritually. In agreement Devries (2001:162) argues that "a child is an immature being who requires protection and nurture by the adult members of the species in order to become physically and emotionally mature". There are several biblical texts that speak about these responsibilities of adults to train their children, for instance, Proverbs 22:6 reads, "*Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it…*" and Ephesians 6:4,*"Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord...".* From the parents' standpoint, a properly disciplined child yields rest and joy. The book of Proverbs and elsewhere conveys the basic meaning of discipline as correction aimed at the avoidance of moral faults and the acquisition of moral insight(Brown 2008: 69). In a narrow sense this may refer to discipline imposed within the family unit, and in the broader sense it may be applied to a wider Christian community, since a group of Christians constitute a family of believers who are called to serve both within and outside the church. These texts are aimed at helping children to grow into responsible adults who will be able to sustain a community of care and commitment to one another.

Devries (2001:165) agrees, arguing that "Jesus identifies children as primary objects of care and service by his disciples Matt 18:5-6: "*And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me, but if anyone causes one of these little ones who believes in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in*

the depths of the sea". As vulnerable and dependent persons, children should be served with humility by anyone who is seeking to be great in the reign of God". Devries adds that "the value of the child is the value she/he will have for the eager parents who see him/her as theirs, almost as their property, and that the child has the right to sufficient protection, nurture, and education".

The child who becomes a brilliant, beautiful, or successful adult provides a profitable return on his/her parents' investment. This can only be realised once constructive guidance is given to this child. In support Brown (2008:69) observes that the conviction is that discipline, "if administered rightly, it is truly in the best interest of the child, and not just of the parents or the family. Discipline is an essential investment in the child's future; it is the means to his maturity and moral integrity". It should be emphasised that discipline does not mean punishment or exposure to harsh conditions in the guise of imparting life-skills. Such practices may turn into what child rights activists called child abuse, or what Christian ethicists call inhumane and what the Ubuntu philosophy addresses as inhumanness (unyama).

Considering the above discussion it might be asserted that as a community of believers, a Christian church has the responsibility to protect and nurture children, or to ensure that the protection, or any social training and disciplining of children take place in dignified manner – that is, in a way that glorifies God, their Creator. In trying to develop a theological framework on the church's developing tools to protect and uphold the dignity of working children, we have to look into how effects of child labour can be interpreted theologically as a violation of human dignity.

4.6 Child labour and human dignity

In Chapter 3 it was observed that child labour does have some negative effects on working children, and that these effects include physical effects, psychological effects, sexual abuse effects, lack of access to education, perpetual poverty and health-related effects. It is the intention of this research to explore how these effects impact on the dignity of children, and then to relate this violation to a theological interpretation of human dignity as the image of God, with reference to the above theological definitions of human dignity. The church

should be able to find a way to address the effects of child labour theologically, if there is any way to do so.

4.6.1 Physical effects

Physical effects as noted in Chapter 3 affect working children in the form of wounds caused either by not wearing protective attire, or because of using tools that are not proportional to their age and there is also danger of insects bites. Furthermore this physical harm includes stunted growth mainly to those children who are involved in carrying heavy loads such as bundles of green tobacco leaves during harvesting time, besides other heavy loads that may be assigned to them. This entails that these children do not attain a normal growth.

As long as this physical harm causes pain and any other related discomfort, one may see to it as physical violation. From the theological perspective one may describe this as working against the dignity of the inviolability of human person, created in the image of God. Theologically it may be considered wrong, because it denies children a dignified status to which all humans are entitled. People who are exposing children to this type of risk have failed to recognise their dignity, and failed to use their own human attributes, namely reason and love. This affects both the oppressed and the oppressor. The oppressor has failed to behave in a dignified manner while at the same failed to honour the dignity of fellow human beings.

4.6.2 Psychological effects

In a related development children involved in child labour also endure psychological torment, as they are not able to enjoy the nurture and care essential for their all-round development. Due to frustration and lack of proper care they become involved in drug abuse and other immoral behaviour. This leads to a failure to achieve their full potential in society during their childhood and this will reduce their value in their society. By mere fact that these children are denied enjoyment to nurture and care this may be considered theologically to be a violation of human dignity. The likelihood that these people may not live a productive life and therefore be accorded less social respect is another clear indicator for the violation human dignity. Their status in society will not be recognised as equal to other productive human beings, through the psychological effects of child labour. There is a need to consider how this can be addressed in a theological context.

4.6.3 Sexual abuse

One of the effects of child labour is sexual abuse, mainly of girls. This entails that the dignity of victims is totally violated through their being used as sexual playmates or toys. This act is perpetrated without children's consent, and since most of them are under-age they are defenceless. Children involved in sexual acts are used to satisfy sexual desires of their employers, which mean that their status is reduced to that of mere sexual tools. It is like devaluing the value of human beings, contrary to the understanding of the inviolability of human beings. The perpetrators of this barbaric act fail to demonstrate rational ability or love that God intended to be experienced by all people. The responsibility of human beings, apart from protecting their own dignity, includes a responsibility to uphold the dignity of others, like children.

4.6.4 Health risks

Children involved in child labour are exposed to poor health conditions that expose them to many infections that cause sicknesses. Poor health contributes towards poor growth of children, be it mentally, spiritually and physically and that may also lead to short life expectancy for these working children. These children endure these circumstances for the sake of profit for the family or for their employers. This implies that the dignity of these children has been considered less valuable than the monetary gains that people get through exploitation of children. Such damage to the dignity of humans may be considered, according to the Kantian philosophy, as inhumane. This means that a human person is not to be esteemed as a mere means to an end for others, or even to his/her own ends, but rather as an end in him-/herself. Exposing children to poor conditions without considering their health is like using them as tools or machines.

4.6.5 Perpetual poverty

As the discussion of effects of child labour indicated in Chapter 3, child labour contributes to perpetual poverty. Children engaged in child labour today will grow up training (socialising) their children to be child labourers for the next generation. This implies that a future nation will consist of child labourers with high poverty levels, and these people will be treated as machinery power by their employers. In other words, these children will be reduced to economic slavery that will deny them human dignity and respect. A human being is not replacement for a machine but a person who deserves honour and respect. Poor

communities do not enjoy a full life are often not considered important or worthy of respect. By virtue of that status they are likely to be treated as lower class people or lesser human beings, and their dignity is likely to be compromised in the process. This may also be considered a violation of the dignity of working children now and for their future life.

4.6.6 Lack of access to education

Similar to the above effect of child labour, is that children engaged in child labour do not have access to education. Those attempting to combine work and school do not perform to the expected standard because their attendance may be fragmented. Furthermore owing to hard work or long working hours they do not rest enough at night, resulting in lack of concentration during lesson time. However there is a popular saying in Malawi that says: "Education is power", or alternately, "If you educate a girl child you have educated the nation". Borrowing the latter idiom to complement the first ("education is power"), may mean that education is something valuable to attain, because it gives one power and a capacity that may help to sustain one's worthiness as a human being. Preventing children from attending school means depriving them of the opportunity to exercise their rational minds which God gave to all human beings; this amounts to violation of such children's dignity. Theologically such action must be considered as wrong, because it denying children access to education means denying their chance for a fulfilled life.

To summarise, one may say children in this case are used as a means to an end, i.e. as a means to benefit their employers, guardians or parents. However, human beings are not supposed to be esteemed merely as the means to the ends of others or even to themselves, but rather as an end in themselves, that is, as possessing a dignity, so that they can measure themselves against all others of their kind and esteem themselves on an equal footing with others, as expressed in the words of Emmanuel Kant (in Shell 2003: 58). According to Thaddeus (2012:21), dignity is widely taken to be the value that grounds the judgement that there is are moral reasons not to torture, ethnically cleanse, enslave or discriminate against others on a racial, gender or social class basis even if these actions will benefit a large part of society.

So, to reduce human beings to their market value as 'slaves', or units of work or objects of commerce (such as prostitution), child soldiers, and child labour are forbidden. It may not

acceptable on the ground that, to have dignity one needs to have value of a sort that makes one priceless, or without equivalent. Meilaender (2009:82) argues that we live a lie if we suppose that one person can be the master of another. He adds that one might object to slavery both on the ground of commission: that it violates human dignity, and on the ground of omission: that it fails to recognise the dignity of the person enslaved. So too children working under hazardous conditions are like slaves, some in their own homes. Vorster (2012:5) observes that equal dignity ought to be maintained, regardless of membership of particular groups and regardless of individual or specific differences. Failure to respect the dignity of others according to Old Testament teachings means that we are promoting injustice in our communities.

Considering the above arguments in relation to the theological interpretation of human dignity, one may conclude that the effects of child labour can be treated as a theological problem. This problem demands a theological strategy by engaging a church to come in, to address this challenge. In fact the biblical views and Christian teachings about children as discussed above have shown that children are vulnerable and need care and support from the believing community. Children are gifts from God, given to people; so by way of appreciating God's gifts we need to protect them accordingly. It has been noted further that children are developing beings that need our proper guidance in shaping their future life. Should we fail to allow them access to quality education, or turn them into perpetual child labourers we would have failed our responsibility to nurture them. Therefore the responsibility of addressing issues affecting children in child labour is a responsibility of the church too. It remains to individual Christians or believing communities to come up with a strategy to resolve this issue.

One thing that the church has to be concerned with is that child labour may be a lifetime problem to children of Malawi. One has to consider some of the major causes of child labour as discussed in Chapter 3, such as poverty, cultural practices and ignorance about the effects of child labour to children both in the long and short terms. By implication one may say if we want to abolish child labour we have to abolish its causes first. It was further established that the effects of child work are the same with child labour. Child work is the one that is legalised in homes. The concern of the church is not to eradicate child labour in Malawi, but it is concerned with the effects of child labour, bearing in mind that the conditions of work

concern both industrial child labour and domestic work. If this goes unchecked then children shall continue to suffer. Culture cannot be dealt with so easily. It is the culture that promotes the involvement of children in working, apart from economic challenges. This has been observed in Chapter 3.

Now since the church has seen that indeed children's dignity is being violated widely in this child labour, which goes against one of the Christian values, should the church allow children to continue to suffer indignity? I propose that the church should take a step forward in devising a theological approach that will help restore the lost dignity among working children. Therefore the following chapter will consider the general understanding of the church on its calling or mission work. This will help this research to strategize on how the church addresses the effects of child labour theologically using C.C.A.P Synod of Livingstonia in Malawi as a case study.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter firstly explored the historical background of the concept of human dignity, tracing its development through Jewish religion and philosophical ethics such as the work of Kant and the philosophies of Confucianism and Ubuntu. The recurring theme that emerged was that all human beings have equal dignity and deserve equal respect. It was further noted that the wide-spread practical use of the concept of human dignity took a centre stage in the political scene soon after World War II, which had caused the deaths of enormous numbers of Jews. The concept of human dignity was adopted in an attempt to avoid such atrocities in future. For this concept to be fully enforced it was interpreted legally in relation to some of the religious and philosophical teachings and implemented in various legal instruments for universal application.

Subsequently it was affirmed that human dignity is indeed a theological concept, derived from the image of God (imago dei). Every human being that is created in the image of God, including children, has equal status, is inviolable, and is a rational being. This human being has some attributes or capacities that distinguish him/her from other creatures, including the ability to reason and love. Furthermore, it was noted that according to the Bible and Christian teachings, children are gifts from God, orphans/vulnerable, developing beings that need our care and support. This is a clear motivation that one may use a theological

100

approach to protect children from any harm, since there is a theological mandate to care, give guidance and treat children as gifts from God. In fact above all it is a biblical command to do so.

Finally the effects of child labour were analysed and brought into relation with the dignity of human beings created in the image of God. It became clear that the effects of child labour constitute violations of the dignity of children, subjecting them to physical harm, psychological torment, sexual abuse, denying them access to education, exposing children to health risks and preparing children for long-term future poverty. Therefore this research recommends that the church should do something in order to help the suffering children in child labour industries.

CHAPTER 5: THE CHURCH AS AN ADVOCATE FOR THE MARGINALISED

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter we noticed how the effects of child labour violates the dignity of children. It was further suggested that the church might be in a position to address this problem. The researcher is aware that the term church is much broader and can be discussed from various angles. However, for the sake of this research and considering time and space this chapter will limit this discussion to why and how the church could be able to address the challenges posed by child labour, specifically regarding the dignity of children. Furthermore this chapter focuses on how the church can play an advocacy role to liberate the marginalised as one of its roles. It is important to consider whether the church has any role in improving the lives of the marginalised children in child labour. The chapter will give an overview of other images/models of the church. This chapter will also discuss the mission of the church as an advocate for the marginalised.

5.2 The nature of the church

The concept of the church is more complex and it is used in various ways by different people. Smit (2004:135) states that "the expression "church" can mean different things to different people and can refer to different realities".

5.2.1 Church as institution

Some conceive of a church as an institution visible in society and known by its denominational name and activities. This may be more applicable if we call it a local church or congregation. Migliore (2004:255) sheds more light on this issue, defining the church primarily in terms of divinely authorised structures, officers, procedures, and traditions. As an institution the church has a definite form of organisation. Smit (2004:139) argues that "for many people church refers primarily to these organizational, institutional structures and realities. When they hear of the church they think of their denomination, the confessional and traditional body to which they belong, and of which they carry the name, recalling primarily its visible structures, especially the rights and powers of its officers". Among the popular names of these institutions are Lutheran, Presbyterian, Catholics and Pentecostals (Van Gelder 2000:1).

As an institution the church might have a measurable capacity for the transformation of peoples' lives at community and national levels. The potential of the institutional church to have an impact on communities lies in its established structures and organised practices that can be used to penetrate communities where people are found both at community and national levels. Koopman (2005:136-137) enlarges on Dirkie Smit's four forms that constitute a church as an institution, which have relevance to different contexts with regards to the reality which the church attempts to address at a particular moment. Some of the practices are the following:

- *Worship services* are voluntary gatherings where people who have committed their lives to Christ come to attend on regular basis to listen to the word of God, that is, Christians who constitute the church. As people listen carefully to the proclaimed message they become transformed. Koopman(2005: 136) states that "those participating in worship see alternative realities that are in conflict to their prior realities of a world where injustice reigns supreme, and they are transformed to participate in the building of these alternatives realities".

- *Various practices of congregations*. By Christian practices Koopman(2004:136) refers to communal actions of Christian people overtime, to address fundamental human needs in response to and in light of God's active presence for the life of the world. Luekem and Carlson (2011:108) observe that "we have begun to offer people services outside of our church. We provide meals for a local ministry committed to serving underprivileged families; we provide a monthly brochure in our bulletin "for the sake of others", to inform our congregation of the various service opportunities available in our community". Additionally, the Anglican Bishop of the diocese of False Bay Bishop Margaret (as quoted in *The False Bay Anchor* 2014:2) stated, "I have spent a week in each of our rural Archdeaconries[20]. It was an enriching experience for me as we travelled to remote corners of our Diocese to meet with people who are often neglected. Anglicans are highly regarded throughout our Diocese and province. We need to join hands and increase moral values in our society and nurture a culture of respect based on the intrinsic worth and dignity of every person

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[20] This may refer to a congregation or a district under a Priest within a diocese. A district under the Bishop is called an Archdiocese.

being created in the image of God." The above examples are just a few of many that show how the institutional church can impact on the community through its congregational practices. The practices are always in line with the compassionate ministry of Jesus Christ.

- *Denominations and ecumenical bodies;* Koopman (2005:137)says that the ecumenical bodies can embark on the so-called priestly task of showing solidarity with the marginalized and wronged. This solidarity can manifest at different levels; it can be at political level, social, academic, and spiritual levels. By virtue of its calling the church has a mandate to address some of the social issues affecting people by exercising its prophetic role. Koopman notes further, that "this prophetic task also involves a critique of society where conditions of this good society are not met. For instance, during the struggle against the apartheid regime in South Africa churches united with institutions, organizations and ecumenical bodies to speak with one voice". Smit (2004: 131) states that "the Christian Institute was formed by Beyers Naudé and others to oppose racism in the churches. The Institute worked with Christians of all races of church and society and was the most outspoken anti-apartheid body in the country". Smit further observes, "The South African Council of Churches (SACC) published the message to the people of South Africa in 1968, condemning apartheid as a pseudo-gospel". The Synod of Livingstonia in Malawi has also been a prophetic voice in Malawi and through its work in human rights and good governance advocacy, managed to contribute to the change from a one-party system of government to multi-party democracy in 1992-94. The church also contributed to the defeat of the former president of Malawi, Dr. Bakili Muluzi,when he attempted to manipulate the constitution to allow him a third and open term of office in 2004. In 2006 the church had also successfully lobbied parliamentarians to discuss and pass the national budgets when there was a political impulse in the National Assembly. Through this work political and human rights empowerment is being achieved. The church's involvement in civic and voter education has contributed greatly to the electoral process in Malawi (Synod Strategic Plan 2008:12). The church can do more by adopting its prophetic role of being the voice of the voiceless both at denominational level and through ecumenical bodies.

Indeed the church can be in a position to meet and address some of the social challenges the communities may be going through. In the first place one has to take note, that this institution is constituted of individuals who have accepted the calling of Jesus Christ, people who have the compassionate love to serve others. These social challenges can be met successfully if the church uses its worship services well; the congregational practices are in accordance with the mission of Christ and finally if the ecumenical bodies spell out a good vision. However, sometimes the institutional churches take time to respond to issues because of the hierarchal protocols. That is why some people do not favour this mode of the church. Although it takes time to pass a decision in the institutional church due to a number of orders to consider, once the decision is passed things work for the better and effectively.

5.2.2 Church as a community (ekklesia)

The church is considered as a community of believers, people who are called to serve Christ in the community. This community is constituted by God through the works of Jesus Christ. Migliore (2004: 251) argues that "in the New Testament the church (ecclesia, "assembly" or congregation) refers to the new community of believers gathered to praise and serve God in the power of the Holy Spirit in response to the Gospel". Goheen (2011:161) argues that "the people of God, as the term is applied to the church, must be understood in terms of the Old Testament story; this is a people chosen, redeemed, bound to God in covenant, holy, with God dwelling in their midst for the sake of the nations". Goheen adds "the term ekklesia, usually translated simply "church" is perhaps the most common designation for the church in the New Testament". It indicates a similar taking up of the Old Testament vocation. In the interest of Old Testament story, God assembles his/her people on significant occasions to renew the covenant (Lev 23:2; Josh24:1ff; Ezra 10:8, 12; Joel2; 16), restoring them to the calling they had received at Sinai. So to some people the church is the people of God or community of believers. Adding voice to this definition Aarflot (1988: 12) "explains that the church is the assembly of saints in which the Gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered correctly".

Being a community of believers implies that it is the church of people and for people. The whole essence of the church may be to serve God through serving other people, besides worshipping God. The Old Testament *ekklesia* is a people constituted and gathered by God, and are called to participate in his salvific work. In other words the Hebrew word *qahal* and

105

Greek word *ekklesia* express the calling of people out of the broader community within the community into the world to become the community of God –for God's redemptive purpose for the world Goheen (2011: 161). Christians trace the beginning of the church to the calling of Abraham to embark on his journey of faith (De Gruchy 1994: 126). The image of the people of God (ekklesia) makes direct and international connections with Old Testament story. Peter uses a series of images to make this connection: "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a Holy nation, God's own people" (1 Peter 2:9). The church is pictured here as the New Testament fulfilment of Old Testament prophetic expectations regarding the people of Israel. It is formed by a common faith in the saving work of Christ by the work of God himself (Van Gelder 2011:108). The word church as it is used in the Bible has two different meanings: it means those who are called belong to God and at the same time these people are called out for service in the witnessing to the community. Bosch (2011:383) explains that "the church is understood as the people of God and, by implication, a pilgrim Church. The church as a pilgrim simply refers to the biblical term (ek-klesia, assembly, and gathering) which means "called out" of the world, and sent back into the world". To shed more light on this one may say that by virtue of accepting Christ as your Saviour and Lord that changes your status to be called a Christian. By virtue of being called Christian you automatically belong to the community of believers (called ekklesia) or God's pilgrim people. To belong to this ekklesia means you now have a mission to accomplish in this strange world for which God through Jesus has called you. Without people being called out, we cannot have a church because it is the people that constitute the church.

The invisible and ever-present God can be served by people rendering compassionate love services to others: 1 John 4:7-8: "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God." The practice of compassionate love was witnessed in Acts 2:44-45: "Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods and divided them among all, as anyone had need …" The church that claims to be the community of believers may be characterised by the act of compassionate love in service for the marginalised, needy, suffering and the sick. Mwaura (2004:110) argues, in all African Instituted Churches (AICs) the concept of the church as an assembly of believers just as in the early church is very real". There is *koinonia* expressed in terms of sharing of the same

106

faith and concern for everyone, regardless of social status. Salvation in the church is seen in this worldly perspective. The kinship ties that are central to African communal existence find expression in the AICs. The church is the community in which by faith new life, reconciliation, justification, and peace are received, lived attested and thus communicated to humanity (Aarflot 1988:34).This koinonia is modelled on the idea of communion of persons within the Trinity and is experienced horizontally as well as vertically, pointing to organic relationships, mutual participation, and the imparting of life benefits in the body of Christ (Peterson 2012:26). Indeed the essential idea of the church as a fellowship of saints is that we now experience God and each other in reconciled relationships, based on what we share in common in Christ. Most of the compassionate love ministries done by the church are characterised by the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. Jesus later commissioned his disciples to continue this work: Matt 28:18:"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy spirit...". By virtue of assembling and commissioning his disciples Jesus may have instituted a first church on earth. Therefore, one may say a church is a group of people called out (ecclesia) and sent into the world to accomplish the mission of Jesus Christ. He further promised to be with this group of believers at all times. Therefore in this perspective a church is a group of people called out of the world by accepting to go into the world to fulfil the ministry of Jesus Christ. Indeed the ministry of serving people holistically addresses both spiritual and physical challenges of human beings, to the glory of the Sender who is the Lord.

5.2.3 Missionary by nature

By its very nature the church is described as the mission. Some authors propose that the church's identity is rooted in its participation in the mission of God, defined in terms of God's own Trinitarian being i.e., God as a sending God. Since God is the missional God, the church is by nature a missional community, sent as well as gathered by God's activity(Peterson 2012:27). The concept of the church as a mission is quite popular in my area among the people who reside around the old mission stations established by the early Scottish missionaries in the Synod of Livingstonia; they call the church "mission".

The church is understood as the one that God has sent into the world to fulfil his ministry, hence it is missionary in nature. The church exists in being sent and building up itself for the sake of its mission (Bosch 2011:381). In other words, God wanted to do something, and has

chosen the church to do this work on behalf of God. The church is like the hand of God: whatever the church does, it is not for the sake of the church but the Sender who is none other than God. Additionally, Bosch argues the Church's missionary dimension evokes intentionality, that is, direct involvement in society; it actually moves beyond the walls of the church and engages in missionary points of concentration such as evangelism, and work for justice and peace. In relation to this Migliore (2004:259) argues that "the church serves God by serving the world in its struggle for emancipation, justice, and peace, and quotes the famous theologian Dietrich Bonheoffer who defined the "Church" as a community that exists for others". The Church must share in the secular problems of ordinary human life, not dominating but serving and helping. Dulles (1976:92) comments, "So it is the Church announces the coming of the kingdom not only in word, through preaching and proclamation, but more particularly in work, in her ministry of reconciliation, of binding up wounds, of suffering service, of healing….. And as the Lord was the man for others, so must the church be the community for others."

5.2.4 Building

Some people limit their understanding of the church as a place of worship in form of a building (temple) where people come on designated days for worship such as Saturdays (Adventists) and Sundays (for others). In the Old Testament times, the temple and the tabernacle before were the places where God had chosen to dwell in the midst of his people. Alston (2002:50) stated, we use the word church, for example to refer to the church building. We say to a friend, "I will meet you at the church". Alston further argues that in a real, if limited sense the church is a building. Although one may refer to the church as a building, arguably, the building may not necessarily be a church but is a place where Christians gather for worship. Alston (2002:50) observed that the building is where the church meets and often the building plays a part in what the church does. Therefore for him the church is not a building but the building accommodates the works of the church. However the church building may also be part of the evangelism strategy, in the sense that some people find themselves reminded of God by virtue of seeing the church building with religious symbols. It may be their given opportunity to reflect on their spiritual life.

5.2.5 Sacrament

In a contemporary ecclesiology a church is also understood as a sacrament, sign and instrument. The theology behind this understanding of the image of the church emphasizes the point or symbol of the unity of the church among people, and also communion with God. In this view the church is also seen as the universal sacrament of salvation. Ratzinger (1991:75) describes that "the church is Eucharist, and this implies that the church has her source in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ". Bosch (2011:383) added that this image of the church might be understood much better in Catholicism and Protestantism. As a point of emphasis, Gassman (1986:2) argues that "the church is a "sacrament" not in itself but by its relationship with Christ. "Sacrament" is interpreted by "sign" and "instrument" as a means of communion with God and the unity of all humankind". Gassman continues to say that for a closer understanding of what it means for the church to be a kind of sacrament; reference must be made to the total context in which the term is being used. This means that there is a specific time when this can be applied as a church model. The church operates as a model of sacrament and salvation in its worship, witness and service, as a sign of the continued presence of the grace of God in Jesus Christ (Migliore 2004: 258). Regardless of the various visions of the church, the point of concurrence is that it is God's chosen instrument by which Christ, through the Holy Spirit, and it reconciles people to God through faith. Formal repentance and faith instructions normally take place in the church. Important in this model is the communion between God and people, as well as unity among believers. The real presence of Christ is felt in the Church, as attested by Dulles (1976: 63): "If Christ is the sacrament of God, the Church is for us the sacrament of Christ; she represents him, in the full and ancient meaning of the term, she really makes him present. She not only carries on his work, but she is his very continuation, in a sense far more real than that in which it can be said that any human institution is its founder's continuation."

In conclusion, all functions of the church described above depict a broader scope of what it means to be a church. The configurations include the church as a building, an institution, an event, a sacrament, a mission and a community of believers, all of which reflect on some reality of the church and all may be considered appropriate in a particular context. In other words these models help to influence life in one way or another (August 2003:29). However, referring to the topic of this study child labour as a challenge to Synod of Livingstonia, two

aspects become pertinent to this study. These are the visions of the church as the community of believers and the church as an institution, as detailed below.

5.3 Images and models of the church

The nature of the church is basically expressed best through various biblical images, models and metaphors that emerge from its specific missional role. The Bible uses vivid images and analogies to stimulate the imagination and the heart as well as the mind, which through their evocative power and can shape us in ways far exceeding the powers of abstract conceptual thought. "Images have power to communicate a vision, call us to reflection, awaken our imagination, and inspire us to action" (Goheen 2011:155). Images or models may be used to reflect on a particular ministry that the church would like to fulfil. By merely reflecting on the wording such a concept describes particular ministry or activity. The phrase or metaphor, image or model expresses what the church is expected to do.

5.3.1 The body of Christ

The church as "the body of Christ" refers to the people who are saved by the grace of Jesus. The Bible offers various texts that speak about the church as the body of Christ, all referring to unity in diversity. Hence, 1 Cor 12:27:"Now you are the body of Christ and members individually"; Ephesians 5:23: "For the husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and he is the saviour of the body". The analogy of the body expresses Paul's desire to establish a proper relationship between believers. There is single body but it consists of many members, whose functions vary substantially. Though people may look or perform differently in the way they serve Christ, this does not make them either superior or lesser, because they are all striving toward the development of the same body. The church is the body of Christ , because once brought into existence through fellowship of the faith professed in baptism, it is perfected through communion in the same Eucharist which unites Christians in contact with the risen of body of Jesus, drawing those who believe in Him into his own body (Rom 12; and Ephesians 4) (Hughes and Bennet 1998:82).

Smith (1996:263) notes that the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians stress the absolute dependence of the church upon Christ for everything. However, the focus in this metaphor is about unity of people. Once people are united not only will the work of the Lord progress well but the unity of the entire world will also be realised.

5.3.2 The household of the Lord

Basically this metaphor touches the element of human relationships of all people because we live as a family. This is derived from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians 2:19:"Now, therefore you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God". And 1 Timothy 3: 15: "But if I am delayed, I write so that you may know you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth". The word house is used to refer to the family of God. According to Martin (1996:123), "we all exist as part of the earthly family; even social outcasts once had human parents and we are related to our fellows since there is one God, the Creator who claims the allegiance of his creature as potential sons and daughters". In view of this description of the family, this understanding may help to reduce hatred, oppression and any related violence. This is so because each one of us will be treating each other as a brother or a sister, rather than focusing on our colour, social class or religion.

At its best the church reflects all that is noblest and most worthy in human family life; that is, the concern towards the needs of others, mutual love and above all the sense of belonging to a social unit in which we find acceptance without pretence (Martin 1996:124). The impact of the church in our communities would be felt to be genuine, should acts of love and mutual caring be put into practice. There are more blessings available for those who are members of this household than for those who are outside. The blessing provides living hope of "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you"(1Peter 1:4),so those who are in this family, besides enjoying life on earth, will also inherit the kingdom of God.

5.3.3 The salt of the earth

Jesus taught us of about "salt of the earth" as one of the many biblical images of that day, as in Mat 5: 13: "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt loses its flavour, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men." As a community of believers the church can be likened to salt, acting as a changing agent of the particular society. Once salt has been added to food, we cannot separate it from the food, but the salt would have seasoned the food. So also, the church, while it can be distinct from the world by nature of its calling, cannot be separated from the world. The mission of the church is to be in the world and for the world. Boff (1989: 190) emphasizes

111

that the mission of the church is ultimately linked with mankind and its history. In other words, a church should be a changing agent for the betterment of its people. This can also be used to help children suffering in child labour, by offering them an alternative to change their oppressive lives.

5.4 Mission of the church

Considering the four above models of the church and others that might be known but are not discussed here, each implies a specific perspective on the understanding of mission. This implies that the church, by virtue of its genesis is already in a mission work. Bosch (2011:381) argues it has become impossible to talk about the church without at the same time referring to mission. I agree with Bosch who added that one can no longer talk about church and mission, but only about the mission of the church. As agreed by Newbeing (1994:16) there has been a long tradition of mission of the church primarily as obedience to a command. Newbeing says that mission begins with a kind of explosion of joy. The news that the rejected and crucified Jesus is alive cannot possibly be suppressed, it must be told. Indeed for the Church to engage in mission work is obedience to a command. Bosch (2011:399) observes that our mission has no life of its own; only in the hands of the sending God can it truly be called mission, not least since the missionary initiative comes from God alone. "Mission is, primarily and ultimately, the work of the Triune God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, for the sake of the world, a ministry in which the Church is called to participate". Bosch (2011:402) notes further that mission has its origin in the heart of God, the fountain of sending love. Schroeder and Bevans (1992:19) locate Christian witness in the Father who testified to Christ his beloved Son, sent visibly into the world. He bore witness to Him on the cross and by raising Him from dead through the Holy Spirit. So Christ received the fullness of the Holy Spirit to be in the world, Himself the divine fullness for the human family. Clearly the Church is commissioned or mandated to fulfil God's command. However the Church may not be very sure of how to obey this command of mission work.

Migliore (2004:266) explains that the missionary activity of the Church should be understood as participation in the mission of Jesus Christ. During his earthly life this was theologically interpreted as a threefold ministry: priestly office, prophetic voice and kingship. As a priest , Jesus Christ is the Mediator , the One who in his ministry, cross, and

resurrection brings God's forgiveness and new life to the world and renders to God the obedience that is God's due. In agreement, Bevans and Schroeder (2004: 394) comment,

> "Mission to the world points to the fact that the church is only the church as it is called to continue Jesus' mission of preaching, serving and witnessing to God's reign in new times and places (Mt 28: 18-20; Mk 16: 15-16;Lk 24: 44-47; Acts 1: 8). Mission has a basic threefold structure of word (kerygma), action (diakonia) and being (witnessing or maturea). Thus mission shares and continues the threefold foci of Christ as prophet, Priest, and servant-king".

As a prophet, Jesus Christ instructs and guides believers in the will of God and exposes the idolatry, injustice and violence that rule in all domains of human life. As king Jesus Christ protects and defends the people of God and claims their obedience and service. Additionally, the ministry of the church delivers service to God and people in subordination to Jesus Christ. It is the ministry to God in which people are served, and ministry to people in which God is served (Alston 2000:107). The church symbolizes values of the kingdom of God: freedom, equality, justice, peace, hope and participation. The church is called to announce in word and deed the Christ event with which God broke into history to begin a new time, a reign under God which includes every creature. It is the time when those who mourn shall be comforted, those who are confined shall be freed, and when the poor shall receive good news (Lk 4:18-19: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed…..").

Some people interpret this threefold office of Jesus Christ as a holistic ministry or mission that addresses both spiritual and social challenges of humanity. The mission is seen as participation in the scheme of God, and God is seen to work not only by and through the church, but in dealing with the whole of human kind, the whole creation. For the church to embark on a successful mission work it has to follow the ministry of Jesus Christ as reflected in Matt 28: 18-20,[21] namely ministry that is simultaneously spiritual and social. The following paragraph will highlight what appear to be the missional practices of the Church.

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[21] Matt 28:18-20. Then Jesus said "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

5.4.1 Prophetic voice

To say the church is essentially missionary is to say that her central function is prophecy. In other words, to be a church is to be a prophet. Before we look into how the church can play its prophetic role in the society let us consider the meaning of the word, prophet. (This does not propose to present a detailed Biblical discussion on various interpretations of prophecy but an overview for the church's ministry.) The ministry of the church is prophetic action. Alston (2000:127) states, "The action of the word or deed that is based on insights into the meaning of events, relationships, and social systems, in the light of their positive and negative relationship to what God has done and is doing to renovate the fallen world." The prophet in the Old Testament was not only a seer, who could predict the future, but also a theologian of history, who interpreted the meaning of historical events, relationships and systems, both of Israel's history and that of the contemporary world, in the light of their relationship to the purposes of God.

Amaladoss (1994:64) argues, prophecy is a common term both in popular language and in theology. Popularly a prophet is someone who foretells what is going to happen. Prophets have a particular function of being bearers of God's word in a particular historical situation in the Old Testament. While the pre-exilic prophets called people to conversion and foretold the coming destruction unless people turned to the God of covenant, the post-exilic prophets offer an eschatological message of hope based on God's promises. Amaladoss argues that Jesus was also seen as a prophet, but also a master who taught. In theological traditions Christ is acclaimed as prophet, priest, and king. Therefore the church may continue the prophetic role of Christ, in proclaiming the Gospel. Christians may practice the prophetic priesthood of Christ.

So according to Amaladoss, a prophet is one who is called and sent. A prophet calls people not only to conversion by turning away from sin, but also to doing justice, liberating the captive, feeding the hungry. Indeed then a church is called and sent to fulfil this prophetic role. Aarflot (1994) adds that the church is called to place itself beside the weak and persecuted, to be the voice of the voiceless among the poor and exploited and to transcend the borders that divide people, be they borders of political, ideological or economic nature or barriers related to race, belief, or social status. Aarflot's position pertains to this research in his saying that all human beings share responsibility for opposing harmful actions and

resisting attempts to violate the dignity of God's creation. Amos 5:24: "But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream"; and Isa 1:17: "Learn to do right, seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow". Basically this injustice takes both personal and structural (institutional) forms.

For the church to be successful in challenging both personal and structural injustices it has to speak in a language of biblical protest: "Woe to those to talk about justice but who in practice seek only their own right and their own privileges". "Woe to the rich nations that continually celebrate freedom and love, but by their policies makes the developing countries' peoples poorer and less free"(Androussa 1994:35). However the basic incentive for this Christian concern for the dignity of other people is the love for one's neighbour as the Bible commands us explicitly, as those faithful to the covenant that God has established with his people. Lev 19:18: "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord."

5.4.2 Diaconal service

The church is called to serve and provide the physical needs of the people with whom God has entrusted it. The early church was challenged to live a faith accompanied with visible works of faith; James 2:18:"But someone will say, 'You have faith; I have deeds', Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do." Apart from preaching the Gospel of hope and being an advocate of social justice the church has to show its love to its people by way of service (diakonia). Diakonia is the church's ministry about the application of the Gospel. Alston (2000:109) states,

> "The church does not proclaim the gospel in a vacuum, just as it does not live in a vacuum, but in relation to the particular human realities, needs, questions, problems, and possibilities of the world in which it lives. This ministry rests upon the conviction that God is a living God, whose love for people is particular and contemporary and whose will is to encounter people where they really are and what they are and where they may reached and addressed".

Myers (2003:127) identifies one of the key roles of the church as transformational development, as that of servant and source of encouragement of what God intends and what God offers, not a commander or judge. As such the church may be regarded as the church for others journeying with the poor, the marginalized, suffering, and oppressed through and in their circumstances. In other words, as Bowers (2005:57) observes, as the

church we are called to facilitate the reconstitution of broken people and communities. This implies an attitude of respect and dignity towards the people with whom we are journeying in relationship – one which calls the body of Christ to reach out to every form of need in the world, becoming slaves as our King did in order to embody God's great love and compassion for God's world. Additionally, Aarflot (1988:84) argues, the term diakonia may be taken to mean the total commitment for the whole life in the discipleship under Christ.

From the biblical background it is indeed an obligation of the church and its members to seek the well-being of others by addressing their physical needs. This was demonstrated in the ministry of Jesus Christ who healed the sick and fed the hungry. The Greek word diakonia can be translated as service, ministry. Christ as the King came to serve, and not to be served; Mk 10:45: "For the Son of man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many", heralded a new upside down kingdom order, which sees the church as a servant of its community, the embodiment of the true diakonia. However, the Bible does stipulate a systematic way on how to carry out diaconal services, but the church may be free to structure its diaconal commitment in different ways in response to the actual challenges, time and needs that present themselves in different generations (Aarflot 1988:86). However the needs of other people, especially those who are poor and exploited, are to be considered before one's own requirements. The love of one's neighbour should be the driving force for this ministry.

5.4.3 Preaching and teaching

The primary mission of the church is disciple-making through preaching and teaching the word of God to the whole world. Bevans and Schroeder (2004: 357-358) note:

> "Proclamation is the act of communicating the gospel about Jesus and the gospel of Jesus. It tells the story of Jesus, his life, ministry, death and resurrection, and it introduces this man whose life and person were so transparent of God. But proclamation also tells of the gospel of Jesus how his parables called his disciples to be forgiving, how his miracles called them to be agents of healing and wholeness , how his inclusive lifestyle called them to be inclusive".

The content of this ministry is the good news that "God" the creator and Lord of the universe, has personally intervened in human history and has done so supremely through the person and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth who is in the Lord of history, the Liberator(Osmer 2005: 223). Additionally, Dulles (1976:76) says that "the mission of the

116

church is to proclaim what it has heard, believed, and been commissioned to proclaim". In the views of Dulles the preaching of the Gospel is related to salvation, because it summons men to put their faith in Jesus as Saviour. It announces the day of salvation that is at hand for believers. The preaching of the church as it is done all over ushers in the saving presence of God. A church has a responsibility to provide pastoral care to the afflicted ones such as the sick, the bereaved, the lonely and the elderly. The main purpose of preaching is to make known of the good news of Jesus Christ through which salvation can be appropriated. As a result of preaching many will be drawn into this community of faith, love and obedience. Preaching is usually done from the pulpit, street preaching, and massive evangelism gatherings where evangelists focus on calling people to repentance. Through preaching the church may have access to articulating what is wrong and why it is wrong. The message may condemn sin, political injustices, calling for salvation of the marginalised. The preached Gospel should be holistic; it does not single out spiritual or physical needs. Any Gospel that preaches one-side, whether spiritually or physically, is narrow, impotent and disobedient (Myers 2003:212).

Christianity is a teaching religion. Jesus Christ, the Founder, was known as Rabbi, a Jewish teacher of the law. His followers were known as disciples under a master teacher. Later Jesus sent the disciples into the world to make disciples of all nations and teach them all the things Jesus had taught (Mt28:20). The early church was known to embrace the teaching of the new believer in faith (Acts 2:42). "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers." Paul advises the young church ministers (pastors) Timothy and Titus to make teaching their primary task in the church (Tim 4:6, 6:2; Tit 2:1,7-8). The investigation of the early church indicates the basic elements of discipleship as teaching and preaching. Myers (2003: 46) observes that the church is trying to explicate the Gospel by explaining what it means and showing how it makes itself intelligible to people. Teaching should lead people from where they are through a process of learning to a new place where God wants them to be. Teaching in the church life includes Bible study, Sunday schools, lay leadership trainings, biblical expository messages and moral teaching. Even early missionaries combined preaching and teaching methods in an attempt to reach out to communities, with holistic messages. Apart from teaching how to read and write missionaries taught people good manners, how to take care

of other people's property and various empowerment skills (August 2005:270). The church is commissioned by its Lord Jesus Christ to embark on teaching programmes, and this should not be limited to spiritual teachings, but includes the right interpretation of Scriptures, socio-economic, human dignity, and political questions that will help them to find solutions through Scripture. Hendriks (2004:33) states, "church theology is about transformative action; instead of focusing only on Scripture and tradition with the intention of making systematic comprehensive interpretations , missional praxis theology does theology by first focusing on local and particular issues with the purpose of doing something about the reality and problems that confront that community, as well as society". Additionally, Bevans and Schroeder (2004:70) not, that "the church's mission is the proclamation, service and witness to the fullness of humanity". This mission is in accordance with the ministry of Jesus Christ who came to seek and to save what was lost (Luke 19: 10). So the church, as it is called and commissioned into the world, has been mandated to accomplish the ministry of Jesus Christ. The emphasis of the church should not only on itself and its community, but its scope should be extended to include the rest of the world.

5.5 Advocacy and the marginalized

The nature and the mission of the church as described entails that the church may be in a position to play various roles in addressing issues affecting humanity. One of the church's responsibilities appears to be advocating for the marginalised. Joanna, et al, (2010:872) defines *marginalised* as to make somebody feel as if they are insignificant and incapable of influencing decisions or events, or to put somebody in a position in which they have no power. Sakenfield et al (2008:795) defines it as people whom a given society devalues or fears because of their difference, most often in terms of ethnicity, race, gender, religion, economic status, occupation or gender. Marginalisation results when the dominant culture pushes others to the margins, outside the centres of power and resources, where they have no voice or means to change their situation. Mills, et al (1990:700) defines the marginalised in the category of the poor. A wide variety of words in the Old Testament delineate the experience of poverty in ancient Israel. These terms contain range of negative social and psychological implications, such as humiliation, oppression, vulnerability and helplessness. From the earliest period of tribal confederacy, Israel and the surrounding nations followed certain humanitarian laws and customs aimed at protecting persons who lacked

118

independent means of survival. This diverse group included widows, orphans, lepers, slaves, hired servants, visiting strangers and others. The above explanations give a picture of what it means to belong to a marginalised group. In the biblical sense poor denotes the dominated, oppressed, humiliated, instrumentalised in terms of a practical relationship, amounting to sin (Dussel 1994:146). The constitutive act of the "poor" in the Bible is not only lacking goods, but being dominated by sinners. In other words the poor are all those who have to endure acts of violence and injustice without being able to defend themselves (Moltmann 1993:78). The opposite of the poor in the Old Testament is the man of violence who oppresses the poor, forces them into poverty and enriches himself at their expense. Thus the repeated word *poor* in the Bible refer to the marginalised in the social world. In this case the immediate context of the poor or marginalised is children suffering from the effects of child labour. In light of the findings of the effects of child labour in Chapter 3, children involved in child labour are likely to fall under the category of the marginalised. They are weak, vulnerable; they do not have a voice to claim their freedom. The socio-economic situation has forced them into this predicament. (This will be detailed later in the chapter.)

Joanna et al (2010:3) "advocate" means to support something publicly, or a person who supports or speaks in favour of somebody a public plan or action. Another definition is somebody who defends someone in court (lawyer). Sakenfield et al (2008: 58) translates advocate (parakletos) variously counsellor in the New Testament, where it appears only in Johannine literature; it is the name of the Holy Spirit whom the father will send to the disciples to be represent Jesus in the world after his return to the father. Mills et al (1990:13) says advocate/paraclete is a Greek term meaning advocate, helper, or counsellor, comforter, and supporter. In biblical terms advocate refers to Jesus: 1John2:1:"My little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Also in the Bible *advocate* refers to the Holy Spirit as a helper: John 14:16:"And I will pray the father, and he will give you another helper, that he may abide with you". It is clear that the church is called to play the role of advocate/helper by speaking or acting in favour of the marginalised, poor or the oppressed - as Jesus also played an advocacy role of helping the church to be redeemed, and as also the Holy Spirit continues to help the church grow. Indeed this model empowers the church to address the needs of the oppressed.

119

Indeed a true church that reflects the ministry of Jesus Christ has to do its missional work in consonance with the tenets of Jesus himself which later also characterised the ministry of the apostles. Throughout his ministry Jesus was considered to be a liberator, healer, comforter, provider to mention a few of his roles. Therefore a church that is founded in the ministry of Jesus Christ is called to render the same services, and to advocate for the marginalized, the ones involved in child labour. Let us first look into how the Bible considered the marginalised.

5.5.1 Advocacy and the marginalized in the Bible[22]

The marginalised were identified in both the Old and New Testaments' stories.

5.5.1.1 Old Testament

Although the Bible does not offer any clear-cut definition of the marginalised, it does classify the marginalised in society as the poor, the oppressed, orphans, widows, strangers, slaves, and in some extreme cases women and children (Prabhu 1991:152). The Bible stories abound with prophets advocating for fair treatment or freedom for these socially marginalised groups. This was done either by condemning the oppressive social political systems of the time or by claiming their equal status as human beings, regardless of natural social distinctions among them; Amos 5:11: "Therefore, because you tread down the poor and take grain taxes from him, though you have built houses of hewn stone yet you shall not dwell in them. You have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink wine from them." This is how the prophets were advocating for the rights of the poor by condemning social injustices of that time. This was done in fulfilment of the mission of God, the Sender of these prophets. The delivery of the Israelites from the hands of the Pharaoh of Egypt was also one instance of delivery of the marginalized from oppression. Clifford and Richard (2002:346) note that in the tenth plague, Yahweh was victorious taking Pharaoh's first-born, which in that culture was the ultimate homage to a deity. Having acquired the Hebrews as his people, Yahweh brings them out of Pharaoh's territory, into his own Mount Sinai. Indeed for the marginalised to be liberated there must always be a third person to advocate for their welfare. In this view the church could be the advocate of the today's marginalised or oppressed group.

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[22] Note that this paragraph will not engage in detailed exegesis but will just do biblical story references in relation to the subtopic under discussion.

120

The Bible classifies four levels of maintaining protection of the welfare of the marginalised, namely during the nomadic and semi-nomadic mode of life of the Israelites, during the economic development of the monarchy, at the time of Jesus and finally in the time of the apostles. According to Vorster (2004:165), the early Israel community in the Old Testament times largely enjoyed a good standard of living. The nomadic and semi-nomadic mode of life of the Israelite tribes prior to conquest knew no sharp distinction between the rich and the poor. Members of the tribe had more or less equal rights and status as the defenders of the community; yet, exploitation of the poor or any exposure of a fellow member was strictly prohibited. Certain measures, principles and ordinances were put in place, for example the spirit of alms-giving to the poor: (Dt 15:7) "If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any gates of your land which the Lord you God is giving you, you shall not harden your hearts nor shut your hand from your poor brother;" another example is the protection of the hired labour: (Dt 24:14-15)"You shall not oppress the hired labour who is poor and needy, whether one of your brethren or one of your aliens who is in your land within your gates ...". Similarly laws were made to protect the widows and the fatherless: (Ex 22:22-23):"You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. If you afflict them in any-way and they cry at all to me, I will surely hear their cry." This practice was laid down by God in order to advocate for minimising the suffering of the poor by making sure that the rich are able to recognise the dignity of the poor. The case of widows and children was similar, because being their position made them vulnerable to all kinds' abuse. God's foreseeing this and hence providing rules to avoid it was clearly done with the intention of protecting the marginalised in that social setup.

The semi nomadic life was followed by the period of settlement now called the monarchical period of Israel. During this period clear distinctions emerged between the poor and the rich. The fact that landowners who alone had civil rights also functioned as judges worsened the position of the poor, who suffered severely. As isolated individuals, they were defenceless and became a minority group in the society (Vorster: 2004:166). Then now we see prophets entering the scene in their advocacy role, speaking on behalf of the marginalised – in this case the widows and the children.

The prophets aligned themselves in solidarity with the oppressed who could not speak for themselves. Even if they try to talk no-one could have listened to them being people of less

121

importance in society. For example Isa 10:1-2 we read: "Woe to those who decree unrighteous decree, who write misfortune, which they have prescribed, to rob the needy of justice, and to take what is right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey and that they may rob the fatherless….;" and Amos 4:1: "Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountains of Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to your husbands, bring wine, let us drink!" Other references are Isa 3:14-15; Amos 5:12, Ps 82:3-4, all expressing God's displeasure when people of the same dignity exploiting each other for the sake of riches and wealth. God will always use people to claim on behalf of other people's status in society.

5.5.1.2 New Testament

In the New Testament period during the time of Jesus Christ God showed compassion for the marginalised through the ministry of Jesus, as indicated in Luke 4:18, where he declared the purpose of his ministry, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to preach to the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed." Lewis (2007:108) argues that the Bible is at heart a text that favours all marginalized people, whether poor, or female, or black, or disabled or deaf. All the beneficiaries of saving acts of God in history are the poor and powerless. Those who were side-lined by virtue of their religious status such as women, children, sinners, and Gentiles would have considered Jesus their advocate. Without the coming of Jesus some of these people could not have been considered eligible to participate in temple worship at that time. This act alone by Jesus during his ministry indicated his compassion for the plight of minorities. Prior (1995:164), states that Jesus' concern was for the less-regarded groups, such as tax collectors, women, children, the sick and Samaritans. Jesus exercised the act of advocating for the marginalised by calling tax collectors, the most despised ones into his ministry, for example Zacchaeus.

His welcoming women among the first group of his disciples were a great relief to all women. Luke 8:1-3 reads: "Now it came to pass afterward, that he went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, and a certain woman who had been healed of evils spirits and infirmities— Mary Magdalene, out of her had come seven demons, and Joana the wife of Chuza, Herold's

steward and Susanna and many others who provided for him from their substance….". By virtue of including these women in his entourage Jesus demonstrated his solidarity with the oppressed minority group.

In the same order Jesus also spoke about the position of children in a context that might not have regarded them socially. He grants them the same dignity he would to anyone else: Luke 18:15-16: "Let the little ones come to me..."; soon afterwards many children were being brought to Jesus, not only for blessings but also for healing prayers, for example a daughter of Jairus who was raised from the dead (Matt 9:18-26), and a boy who was suffering from epilepsy (Mark 9:14-29). All this was the impact of the advocacy role Jesus assumed in fulfilling the will of God, to liberate the marginalised that were too weak to claim their dignity (Vorster 2004: 167).

In the New Testament this tradition continued throughout the apostolic period to the early church, when the emphasis shifted to the priority of unity. Paul spoke strongly against any form of social distinction between the rich and the poor or any other distinguishing marks of rank in the Christian community: Gal 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, nor male nor female, for you are all one in Christ." The same message was sent to the Colossians (Col 3:11), that they should not tolerate division among themselves since they are one in Christ and therefore have equal status. Paul knew that once unity is attained in Christ there would be no divisions based on social status. Lötter (2008:145) observes that in his letter James speaks to the rich on behalf of the poor, against a tendency to oppress the poor because they are weak. These marginalised ones did not have a status to pour out their cry and anger; only James could do that. James 5:1ff: "Come now, you rich, weep and howl your miseries that are coming upon you…your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth-eaten".

In summary, one could say that the Old and New Testaments report the same experience of division of social classes that put the weak, poor, women, children, sinners, orphans, and many more at the periphery of the society. This classification lead them into miserable suffering that had to draw the attention of God. God sent prophets, Jesus and finally the apostles to advocate for the welfare of the marginalised. In fact today God is sending the church into the world to advocate for the welfare of the oppressed. I therefore propose that

this biblical standard be adopted by the church today to be relevant to communities it serves. Hence we discuss how a church can become an advocate for todays marginalised.

5.5.2 Advocacy for the marginalized by the church

The church is called to be in solidarity with the oppressed, the poor and the marginalised by advocating for their equal status in the community. Understanding the role of the church with regard to the marginalised depends on how one perceives when and how the church started and why it exists in the community. Jesus Christ called his disciples and commissioned them to go into the world to continue his ministry and promised to be with them (Matt 28:16). This church was called and instituted to continue with the ministry that Jesus Christ came to fulfil. What characterised the ministry of Jesus Christ is found in Luke 4:18 where he declared the purpose of his ministry: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to preach to the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed." The ministry of Jesus Christ was characterised by his solidarity with the oppressed, outcasts, poor, sinners, sick and the hungry. He demonstrated his compassionate ministry to the poor and sinners in many ways as a set standard for his disciples. Therefore the church which Jesus instituted is responsible for liberating the marginalised by both socio-economic and spiritual challenges. Boesak (1984:80) states**, "**For the churches this liberation involves joining the struggle against political oppression and economic exploitation; against racism and all forms of destruction of human-being ness wherever it may occur on the continent." For the church to fulfil the ministry of Christ successfully it has to understand itself as a church constituted of people of God called to serve people in a holistic way. In other words, being for others is being with, from, and for others as a fundamental spirituality (Walton 1994:245).

Only once the church has realised its holistic ministry, can advocate for issues affecting the poor and marginalised within the community. According to Boff (1989:181) following the life of Jesus implies sharing the twofold fidelity that characterises the entire life of Christ, consisting of loyalty toward God, who wills the liberation of children of God, together with that of all creation and loyalty to human beings. Indeed especially to the most loved by God, the marginalised and the sinful, the humiliated and the oppressed. Walton (1994:237) argues that the church is a community qualified by the biblical narratives in its attention to

124

the transcendent God and its orientation to the poor, the marginalised, the weak, and the suffering. Indeed loyalty to God is a prerequisite action for the church taxed with ministerial services to the community. Furthermore the love we claim to have for God as Christians has to be accompanied by the love for the people who are suffering. 1John 4:20 reads, "If someone says, 'I love God' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?" For the church to show its compassionate love to the poor is one way of fulfilling Scripture.

According to Walton (2004:244) "the relationship of the church to the world is not governed by its relation to the state or society in a general sense, but by its understanding of the mission of Jesus to the marginal as a dynamic of the coming reign of God". In the same vein Boff (1989:180) argues, "God seeks to inaugurate the reign in this world, beginning with those who thirst for justice: the poor and their allies. The reign is built by opposing the structures and behaviour of this world, and in this conflict God, who hears the cry of the poor, takes sides with the oppressed". Boesak (1984: 78) comments,

> "God took sides for the oppressed people, against the power and military might of the Pharaoh. God shared the coalition of an oppressed people; a slave people became the people of God. It was the exodus that gave Israel the certainty that this God is one who uprightly defends the poor, who serves the children of those in need, who liberates the oppressed but crushes the oppressor."

Therefore God is perceived as Liberator, Hope, Future, Justice and Communion. It is God who sends religious men and women forth to serve the poor and thereby help them build the kingdom in this world; therefore the oppressed themselves look at the church as their liberator, hope and their justice. So if the church does not venture into this mission of helping the marginalised, where would their hope be? As people of God, the church is called to advocate for the welfare of the marginalized as it was in the ministry of Jesus.

Therefore the church can take a role of opposing or condemning the oppressive structures that may have caused untold suffering to the marginalised. Where there is oppression it is often the social systems that do not favour the welfare of the weak, hence exposing them to more risks. For the church to challenge personal and structural injustices successfully it has to speak in the way of the biblical protest, as observed by Androussa (1994:35):

> "Woe to those to talk about justice but who in practice seek only their own right and their own privileges. Woe to the rich nations that continually celebrate freedom and love, but by their policies makes the developing countries poorer and less free."

However the basic incentive for Christian concern for the dignity of others is the love for one's neighbour, which the Bible demands explicitly from faithfulness to the covenant that God has established with his people. Lev 19:18: "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord." The church may therefore oppose systems that are violent to people, as was done during the time of the prophet Amos (Amos 2:6-7): "Thus says the Lord: for three transgressions of Israel and for four, I will not turn away its punishment because they sell the righteous for silver and the poor for a pair of shoes". The church may consider emulating the role of the prophets throughout biblical history to speak on behalf of the voiceless. However, the church may consider an appropriate contextual approach, using the standard set by prophets. The case of child labour in Malawi presents violation of the dignity of working children, so for the church to oppose this may be considered adopting an advocacy role. Details about child labour and the church will be discussed in the next paragraph.

5.6 Church and child labour

The church can play a role in liberating children from the violations of their dignity during child labour, as its outward mission, purpose and relationship to the world. The church can claim that title only when it exists for those in need. The church must share in the secular problems of ordinary human life, not dominating, but helping and serving. The church should not be concentrating only on preaching and dispensation of sacraments but also on reaching out with a helping hand. Christ is present among the poor, the marginalised, the sick; and the church is the people of God, free enough to enter into solidarity with the poor (Dulles 1991:94-95). In other words, the church is called and empowered to share the suffering of all, offering advocacy and care for the poor, the needy and the marginalised. This involves a critical analysis and exposure of the unjust structures and working towards their transformation. Indeed the church may be considered right to take part in restoring the dignity of children for the following reasons.

In the first place, children involved in child labour can be categorised as a marginalised group in the discussion of advocacy and the marginalized in the above paragraph, because of the nature of the working conditions and the effects of child labour on children. Some of the effects of child labour to children as indicated in Chapter 3 are physical harm, psychological torture, and sexual abuse, lack of access to education, perpetual poverty and exposure to health risks. These effects result from exposure to hazardous work, long hours, working without protective clothing, carrying heavy loads, having no time for school and working without payment. These working conditions are not limited to paid jobs only but also in domestic chores. All these effects appear to be violations to human dignity. This assertion was made after critical analysis of the effects of child labour in relation to the theological concepts of human dignity in Chapter 4 of this study. It is asserted theologically that children involved in child labour might be robbed of their dignity as intended by God the Creator. The working children do not have any freedom, and are not treated as human beings. It is considered to be the role of the church to restore the lost dignity by advocating for children's liberation from this bondage or slavery.

Secondly, although, the working children do undergo difficult times they may not be able to stop working or escape this predicament. Most of the working children are not in child labour practice by choice or by will, but because some driving forces (usually socio-economic structures) force them into these displeasing conditions. There are many causes of child labour mentioned in Chapter 3, but paramount to these are socio-economic problems, poverty and socio-cultural practices. Some children are entered into child labour as members of a whole family working as tenants[23] or as individuals owing to orphan hood or lack of alternative skills to get a better job. Therefore this implies that as long as there is poverty we shall continue to have child labourers, working under the same conditions, children continuing to be robbed of their dignity. It is therefore against this background that this study proposes that the church consider its liberating role for the marginalised.

Another driving force mentioned is socio-cultural practice. Culturally in typical African traditional practices children are allowed to work. This was established both in Chapter 2

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[23] This is a system whereby an employer gives a farmer a loan in the form of agricultural inputs and agrees to pay back with an interest after selling the harvests. So the farmer can maximise the profit by engaging the children. As a result, these children do not go to school; they just work the whole time.

(under the discussion of childhood concepts) and in Chapter 3 (under causes of child labour). In most cases children are allowed to work under the socialisation[24] practices, which have changed over time from real socialisation to economic gains. As a result there is little or no concern about the working conditions of the children. Another cultural aspect noted was the practice of distributing work according to gender roles, in which girls are limited to drawing of water and fetching firewood and boys herd the cattle, do heavy work like carrying loads, etc. This promotes child labour because every parent has to make sure that his/her children are equipped with a specific traditional cultural skill – in the case of girls, so that they should not be a disgrace when they are married and the husband discovers and complains that his wife is lazy and cannot perform certain house chores in the right way. Similarly, when boys are married they have to prove to their spouses that they are hard-working. It might be very difficult or may take time to convince the custodians of culture to stop their children from the socialisation process of working. This is one of the many reasons why this study is proposing for the intervention of the church, with specific attention to the violation of human dignity.

Finally, in a related development touched upon in Chapter 4 (under the discussion of the biblical and Christian view on the status of children), it was noted that children belong to a vulnerable group. The Bible and Christian teachings consider children, like orphans, neighbours and strangers, as deserving justice and compassion. In addition children are considered to be developing beings that need instruction and guidance. This confirms that children are vulnerable and too weak to protect themselves and voice their right to a dignified life. Therefore there is a need to support, give guidance and protect them. Surely this support might come from parents in narrow sense, and church community in broader context. Finally Chapter 4 recommended that a church can take a responsibility to address issues of violation of the dignity of children in child labour after the concept was found to be theologically comprehensible.

It is against this background, after considering the multifaceted causes and effects of child labour that this research is proposing that the church should consider an advocacy role to

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[24]This is the practice whereby children are trained to develop survival skills for their future vocation. Since most of the Africans live in rural areas as subsistence farmers, they always have to expose their children to what they do for a living.

help with the restoration of the dignity of children. Furthermore as the church enters into a special ministry this research proposes this church model of "*church as an advocate*" for the marginalised as one of the emerging church models.

5.4 Advocacy for the marginalized in the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia

Based on the discussion above, it is asserted that the church of C.C.A.P Synod of Livingstonia may be able to address the issues affecting the children in child labour. I would like to recommend to the church of CCAP Synod of Livingstonia in Malawi that it has a mandate to advocate for the marginalized. This emerges from the background that any church founded on the ministry of Jesus Christ, adopts some of the roles of Jesus during his earthly ministry. Even during biblical times we have seen prophets advocating for the welfare of poor or marginalised who could not talk for themselves. According to Aarflot (1994) the church is called to side with the weak and persecuted, to be the voice of the voiceless among the poor and exploited and to transcend the borders that separate people, be the borders of political, ideological or economic nature or related to race, belief, or social status.

Aarflot argues that all human beings share the responsibility for opposing such actions and resisting attempts to violate the dignity of God's creation: Amos 5:24 says, "But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream" and Isa 1:17: "Learn to do right, seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow". Basically, this injustice takes both personal and structural (institutional) forms, both of which should be the concern of the church. Indeed, borrowing the ideas of these prophets will justify the church of CCAP Synod of Livingstonia to engage itself in this mission.

Chapter 4 of this research noted that effects of child labour are likely to comprise violation of human dignity. Children enter into child labour under pressure of socio-economic systems and some traditional cultural practices, thereby becoming members of a marginalised group; hence the need for an advocate, which should be Livingstonia Synod. The Synod of Livingstonia can draw on the advantage of its existing structures, as identified in Chapter 6, from prayer house, congregation, presbytery and synod levels. These structures may help the synod to penetrate communities, in addition to some of the Synod departments that are working in communities within the synod's jurisdiction. In order to identify how best the Synod can address the child labour issues, an empirical survey was conducted in the C.C.A.P

Synod of Livingstonia, with the aim of seeking the opinion of the Synod on the prevalence of child labour and the role the synod can play in addressing resultant child labour issues. The survey was done by conducting individual interviews with a sample of a few ministers in two piloted presbyteries, namely Jombo and Rumphi. For the details of this discussion see the next chapter.

5.6 Conclusion

The church that is founded on the ministry of Jesus Christ is called to serve people by addressing both their Spiritual and physical needs. After a critical analytical discussion on the nature of the church, including the church as a building, an institution, a community of believers and a sacrament, the church was considered to be a community of believers (ekklesia). The church is called out of the world into the world to serve God and the people of God. This church has its origins from the Old Testament practices, with the story of Abraham, to the early church of the New Testament. This church can better serve its communities by using its institutional worshiping services, congregational practices and denominational and ecumenical bodies to have a national influence, while the local congregations may have a direct impact the immediate community.

It was also mentioned that the nature of the church can best be expressed to people visually by using the imagery or metaphorical languages, for example, the body of Christ, the house of the Lord, the people of God and the salt of the earth. Any church image or metaphor used may be attached to a specific ministry. For example the "body of Christ" may be considered if we want to teach about the unity of people of different races or social status etc. Three main mission areas of the church were identified, namely its prophetic voice that can speak on behalf of the weak and marginalised; preaching and teaching: the church can preach the word of salvation and hope and teach good morals: and diaconal services: the church can provide physical services to the needy. These practices were deduced from the threefold ministry of Jesus Christ, as prophet, priest and servant King.

This study asserts that the church can consider taking an advocacy role in trying to liberate the marginalised groups in societies, because the act of advocacy is a biblical heritage from the Old and New Testaments. In Old Testament times it was the prophets and God who were advocating for the poor and the oppressed, and in New Testament it was Jesus Christ

130

who advocated for the marginalised of that time. Therefore the present church can emulate the biblical figures in practicing the advocacy role in trying to liberate children in child labour. These are the children who might have lost their dignity due to the effects of child labour. However, it was proposed further in this study that an empirical survey be conducted in the synod to seek the opinion of the synod ministers and identify the role of the church in this phenomenon.

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is to explain the methods and the research design that was used to collect data and how this data was analysed during this research project. This will further discuss how the report of this research has been written. This research was conducted in the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia in Malawi. A brief historical background of Livingstonia Synod and its mission work in Malawi was discussed. It was considered important to present this background since it was the case study for the topic understudy.

6.2 Research methodology

This research adopted a qualitative exploratory method, as explained in Babbie and Mouton (2010:105), entailing exploration in the attempt to develop an initial, rough understanding of some phenomenon, in this case, child labour in Malawi. The main concern of the qualitative method is to understand the social action in terms of its specific context (idiographic) rather than attempting to generalize to some theoretical population (Babbie and Mouton 2010:270).This method gave an opportunity for this research to have an insider perspective of the phenomenon undertaken by having an in-depth description, understanding and insight into life world of participants (Mouton 2001:150). Therefore, in order for this qualitative method to succeed in trying to answer the above research question, this research adopted the following research design.

6.3 Instruments used to collect data

This researcher used the following methods:

6.3.1 Literature review

First a preliminary review of literature relevant to the topic was conducted. There are two ways of looking at the literature review: either as a study on its own which some call a "literature study", or as the first phase of an empirical study (Mouton 2001:86). The latter was adopted in this case. This method helped this research to learn from what other scholars have written in relation to this topic; how they have theorised on effects of child labour and what they have found empirically. Furthermore this literature review also helped

to identify the gaps in the existing literature that made this research relevant. Babbie and Mouton (2001:5) observe that the combination of the primary data through interviews and a literature review can be integrated into coherent and systematic knowledge. The literature findings were compared with primary data collected through interviews, and this has enabled this research to generate some recommendations on how the church can respond to the effects of child labour.

6.3.2 Individual interviews

Secondly, the study conducted individual interviews as described by Rubin and Rubin (1995:31) in which "the active participation of the interviewer and the importance of giving the interviewees a voice are essential." Interviews may be the best approach if the study is "largely exploratory, involving, say the examination of feelings or attitudes of people. The use of interviews also allows the researcher to probe for more detailed responses where the respondent is asked to clarify what they have said" (Gary 2009:370). Adres (2012:70) adds that "there is low bias in face-to-face interview method. It also allows more control of the response than telephone." However, face-to-face interviews have some disadvantages, such as the high cost of conducting this exercise, it is time-consuming, and also some by people may be hesitant to respond to some to some questions(Adres 2012:71).

This research used a guide questionnaire, translated into the local language Tumbuka to allow free expression on the side of the respondents. According to De Vos, et al. (2011:186) a questionnaire is "a document containing questions and or other types of items designed to solicit information appropriate for analysis". In addition Babbie& Mouton (2001:233) say the typical "questionnaire will probably contain as many statements as questions, especially if the researcher is interested in determining the extent to which respondents hold a particular attitude or perspective." In this case the basic objective of this questionnaire was to obtain facts and opinions about child dignity violations in child labour and how the C.C.A.P Livingstonia Synod interprets this in order to address this challenge.

All the proceedings of the interview were recorded after the permission was granted by the respondent. Field notes also were taken alongside the recording interview. Respondents were briefed at the beginning of the interview about the motive of this study and were

asked to give their honest opinions. Respondents signed a consent document before the beginning of any interview.

6.4 Population and sample

6.4.1 Population

This research targeted the ordained ministers in the C.C.A.P Synod Livingstonia within its jurisdiction in the northern part of Malawi. This population was restricted to ten (10) ministers representing ten (10) congregations out of twenty (20) ministers from the two (2) presbyteries and five (5) ministers from each presbytery within the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia's jurisdiction namely; Jombo and Rumphi. These presbyteries were chosen considering the fact that they are located in tobacco growing areas where child labour prevalence is deemed to be very high. There are many denominations and churches operating in the same area but these churches were not involved in this exercise.

6.4.2 Brief historical background of Livingstonia Synod.

6.4.2.1 Location and origin

The C.C.A.P Synod of Livingstonia is located in the northern part of Malawi. Its history dates back to 1875 when it was founded by the early Scottish missionaries under the leadership of Dr. Robert Laws (Zgambo 2011:33). It is a Presbyterian denomination under the name C.C.A.P., meaning Church of Central African Presbyterian. It is named Livingstonia Synod in memory of Dr David Livingstone, a Scottish missionary and a medical doctor who pioneered mission work in Malawi around 1800 and died in 1873. Since then the C.C.A.P Synod of Livingstonia has grown into 25 Presbyteries, five hundred and fifty (550) primary schools, one (1) teacher training college and one (1) University and twenty (20) other departments(Strategic Plan 2008:4). Currently the synod of Livingstonia has about two hundred (200) ordained serving ministers with about one million and two hundred memberships (1, 200, 000).

6.4.2.2 Mission and Vision statements of Livingstonia Synod

*"*The Synod of Livingstonia exists to spread the word of God and provide holistic social services to demonstrate the love of Jesus by the empowering of the Holy Spirit in order to glorify God".

The vision is

"Synod of Livingstonia is inspired by a vision of changed lives and transformed communities by the power of God" (Strategic Plan 2008:4).

The core values are:

1. Christian love, unity and peace: We shall love God, ourselves and others seeking to maintain unity and live at peace with all and everyone as far as it depends on us.

2.Equality of all human beings and respect for others: By respecting contributions made by Christians, communities, partners and staff we ensure that human dignity is upheld at all times.

3. Nurturing of new life in Christ: We shall invest in people to see them grow to maturity in their faith through effective discipleship.

4. Accountability and transparency: We shall be accountable to those we serve and those that support us through timely reporting, receiving and giving feedback on regular basis in order to improve our work and relationships.

5. Integrity: Our Christian commitment goes beyond the word we speak to demonstrating firmness of character; honesty; trustworthiness as a mark of the inner person.

6. Participation, partnerships and collaboration: All members will be involved in ministry and we shall work with other churches, faith organisations and stakeholders that share our values and beliefs in order to enhance our work.

7. Quality and Excellence: In order to reflect the image of our God of excellence, it is imperative that our own work should be marked by quality and excellence.

All the activities or mission work of the Synod of Livingstonia are guided by these mission and vision statements. Livingstonia Synod strives to identify itself with the seven core values in all its services. It serves people who are in the church and outside by addressing their spiritual and social needs. The Synod emulates the ministry of Jesus Christ as a standard to preach the Gospel in a holistic manner.

6.4.2.3 Organisational structure of the Synod

The Synod of Livingstonia is a Presbyterian church that embraces the Presbyterian system of church governance, led by an ordained minister and governed by both male and female ruling elders. Ministers and ruling elders govern the church under the three main legally established courts; mentioned according to their hierarchy, these are kirks session[25], presbytery committee and synod assembly. The Organisational structure of the Synod of Livingstonia starts from prayer house, congregation, presbytery and then Synod. Several prayer houses, approximately five or six depending on the population or geographical set up, constitute a congregation. This congregation is led by an ordained parish minister. The congregation is governed by a Kirk session chaired by the moderator (parish minister). Major decisions of the congregation are made during the monthly Kirk session meetings. A minimum of four congregations or more constitute a presbytery under the leadership of the elected presbytery moderator and the presbytery clerk. These presbyteries constitute a Synod; the synod of Livingstonia has twenty-five (25) presbyteries in total. At synod level we have a secretariat under the leadership of the elected moderator, who assumes the role of spiritual father for a term of two years. The general secretary is responsible for all the administrative work for a term of four years (4). However, most of the ground work is done in presbyteries through congregations where people are found. The synod assembly meets once every two years. Items (overtures) and issues from congregations through the presbytery form the agenda of the synod for policy resolutions. This is why this research had targeted the presbyteries because it is where decisions are passed by the synod biannual meetings.

6.4.2.4 Partnerships and activities

The Synod of Livingstonia fosters partnerships with other institutions and churches in and outside Malawi. The Synod's holistic ministries are implemented through its departments which have separate mission and vision statements (Strategic Plan 2008:5). The services done by these departments range from spiritual growth by Mission and Evangelism Departments, quality education by the Education Department, health services by the Health

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[25] This is a main session meeting at congregational level chaired by the ordained ministers known as moderators, and all church elders are members of this body. Decisions and resolutions are done here; it meets once every month or more often, as necessary.

Department through hospitals, agriculture, relief aids, water and sanitation services by the Development Department, HIV/AIDS by Livingstonia Synod Aids Programme(LISAP Department), human rights and good governance issues by the Church and Society Department, Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Sunday school departments deal with issues that affect children and finally youth, men and women activities are co-ordinated specifically by Youth, Men's, and Women's Guilds Departments respectively. Each department works under a duly appointed board of governance comprising diverse professionals, in order to achieve quality service delivery (Strategic Plan 2008:14)

In summary, the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia has a long history that dates back as far as 1875. Since then the church has established various ministries that are implemented through various departments. The Synod of Livingstonia is committed to realizing its mission statement of providing services in a holistic manner. This does not need to be overemphasized here as it has been already explained by a number of synod departments. The Synod of Livingstonia has the welfare of children at heart. It has been witnessed by its establishment of departments that care for children's programmes, namely the Sunday school, early childhood development (ECD) and youth departments. As these departments interact with children they were identified as focus points concerning child labour, as presenting one of the challenges to the church. I have no doubt that this project will have a measurable impact in the communities where child labour prevails.

6.4.3 Sampling techniques

This research adopted the *simple random sampling* method. According to Schofield (2006:30) simple random sampling means that every element in the population of interest has an equal and independent chance of being chosen. Schofield elaborates, "'Simple' does not mean that the random sampling is easier to carry out than other methods, but that steps are taken to ensure that nothing influences selection each time a choice is made, other than chance." Kumar (2005:169) notes that "equal" implies that the probability of selection of each element in the population is the same; that is, the choice of an element in the sample is not influenced by other considerations such as personal preference. Therefore every element (minister) in these presbyteries can be picked as an individual respondent and no any bias will be entertained.

To avoid bias this research used a fishbowl draw method. According to Kumar this method is where all elements are given a number on a separate sheet and put in a box. The researcher picks them one by one without looking at them until the number of papers picked is equal to the sample size chosen (Kumar 2005:171).Johnson and Christensen (2008:225) liken it with the "hat method" where you put a slip of paper for each individual in the population, and place all the slips in the hat. Make sure you use standard-sized slips of papers so that they will all be the same shape, size, and weight. After covering the hat and shaking it vigorously select one slip after another until you reach the number of required sample. In this case it was ten (10) out of twenty (20) ministers in these two presbyteries. This is how these ten ministers were selected to be part of this interview.

6.4.4 Unit of analysis

This research sampled ten (10) ordained ministers out of twenty (20) ministers from two presbyteries, Jombo and Rumphi as respondents to this research. However during the actual interview only eight ministers were interviewed. The other two could not attend because of bereavements and financial constraints made it impossible to return. . The criteria for the inclusion of the ministers were:

- They are key informants of the governing system of the church in the Presbyterian set-up.

- Ministers have undergone a theological training that may help them to relate well with the topic under study.

- Ordained ministers are called teaching elders who teach and help the church to interpret Scriptures systematically and they can influence decisions when it comes to policy formulation in the church. This is also in view of Czaja &Blair (2005:14) and Blair et al. (2014:26) who comment that when studying groups we must decide who in the set-up or organization is the most knowledgeable individual and can provide accurate information.

The other reason why a small unit was considered was in the consideration of time limits and lack of resources to reach all ministers in the synod of Livingstonia. A small unit made it much easier for this research to analyse the data accurately in order to achieve the objects of the research. Schofield (1996:25) observes that the aims of sampling are to save time and

effort, but also to obtain consistent and unbiased estimates of the population status in terms of whatever is being researched. However, the process of selecting a sample from the total population has advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are that it saves time as well as financial and human resources. However the disadvantage is that the research need not find the information about the population's characteristics of interest but only estimates. Hence, there is the possibility of an error in one's estimation (Kumar 2005:164). In consideration of this observation by Kumar this research does not claim that its findings are final, but it can still be considered valid since this is the first research of its kind to be done in the synod. Furthermore it involved trained ministers; even if replicated on a larger scale the probability of having different results is minimal. However, this research recommends that, should funds permit others should conduct a similar research on a larger scale. This will help to validate or to review these findings.

6.5. Pilot study

Prior to this interview a pilot study was conducted in order to help the researcher to determine whether the relevant data could be obtained from the respondents (de Vos, 2011:394). However instead of interviewing three (3) ministers from Ekwendeni presbytery as planned this interview was conducted among three (3) student ministers at Ekwendeni College of Theology. The changes were made because of constraints of budget and time, and the college was conveniently within the home of the researcher. These are ministers with congregational experience who were attending college for supplementary courses. During these pilot study interviews it was discovered that some respondents could hardly find a difference between Questions number 3&4. These were: 3. Do you think child labour does children any harm, if yes How? and 4 Do you think child labour in a way harms a child's human dignity? How? However the questions were left unchanged, in anticipation that some could easily see the difference. Those who could not see the difference were aided by follow-up questions or by paraphrasing the question. These responses delivered real information.

6.6 Data analysis

According to Lichtman (2010:188) "data analysis is about the process and interpretation of the data collected." In other words qualitative data analysis is essentially about detection, and the tasks of defining, categorising, theorising, explaining, exploring and mapping are

139

fundamental to the analysis's role. In other words Ritchie and spencer (2002:309) observed that qualitative data analysis is essentially about detection, and the tasks, of defining, categorising, theorising, explaining, exploring and mapping are fundamental to the analysis's role. The purpose of data analysis is thus to reduce data collected to an intelligible and interpretable form, so that the relations of the research problems can be studied and tested, and conclusion drawn. Therefore the whole purpose of every research is to achieve results and this can only be achieved by adopting a suitable data interpretation method. Narrative data analysis has no standard set of procedures compared to some forms of qualitative analysis. It has three major components to follow; *telling:* this is the time when the interviewee   attends to all important issues relating to the topic, using open ended questions while recording; secondly *transcribing*: this is the level where interpretative categories emerge, ambiguities in language are heard on the tape, and oral recorded. The way the story is told provides clues about meaning which will be arranged according to concepts or themes; and thirdly *analysing*: though this stage (difficult to distinguish from transcribing) we arrange and rearrange the interview text in light of our discoveries in a process of testing and clarifying and deepening our understanding of what is happening in the discourse (Riessman 2002:246). Now as we prepare for the research report there is much more explicit reliance on preferred concepts and theories related to the research question (Riessman 2002:246-256). In consideration of the mentioned procedures this research adopted a thematic data analysis method. Thematic analysis "identifies and describes implicit and explicit ideas within the data, that is, themes" (Guest, MacQueen and Namey, 2012:10). The analysis employed five steps to analyse this data as detailed in Chapter 7.

6.7 Ethics of the research

The researcher took consideration of ethical issues in the process of research to ensure that the study is conducted in a manner that people's rights, dignity and integrity are safeguarded. In the first place ethical clearance was obtained from the Stellenbosch University Ethics Committee before the researcher proceeded with the empirical research (see attachment B). Secondly a letter of permission from the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia was granted to authorise the researcher to conduct interviews with its ministers within the synod's catchment area (see attachment C).Also, an informed consent form was completed

and signed by individual participating ministers prior to the interview sessions (see attachment D). All respondents of this study were informed about the goals, the benefits, were assured of their protection and the confidentiality of this study. Furthermore they were told that they will be served with a copy of the results of this research. Kumar(2005:212) observes that "it is important before collecting information to consider the relevance and usefulness of the research you are undertaking and be able to convince others of this also, mainly the respondents." Although this research is focusing on children affairs, children were not involved in this exercise, with an ethical aim of avoiding unintentional harm and misconception.

6.8 Limitation of the study

The scope of this study was strictly limited to church praxis on how the church views the violation of human dignity, and how the church can reflect both socially and theologically on these violations, in order to equip the church to restore the dignity of children involved in child labour industry. This research study was limited to the jurisdiction of C.C.A.P Synod of Livingstonia, of which it investigated two (2) presbyteries as a sample, due to limited resources and time.

The sample of this research seems small if compared to the total population of ministers in the synod, perhaps calling into question the representativeness of the sample. However the researcher could interact with trained ministers, which means the outcome will reflect the whole Synod's jurisdiction. Also this research recognises that the child is a focal person in this research, although no children were physically involved in this research. This was so because the information to be obtained from literature review and adult interviews were considered more appropriate to address the objectives of this research sufficiently.

6.9 Conclusion

Finally, the church may be able to address the research question of this study: what could be the role of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia in restoring human dignity in the context of child labour? The qualitative exploratory methodology adopted used an empirical survey research design. A literature review and individual interviews were the two instruments used for data collection. Published and unpublished articles, books and internet sites were the sources of this literature review. The individual interviews were conducted with a sampled population of eight ordained ministers from two presbyteries, Jombo and Rumphi Presbyteries in the

Synod of Livingstonia Malawi. The interviewing was preceded by a pilot study conducted at Ekwendeni Theological College. Three ordained ministers with congregational experience were interviewed. The questions were verified and finally qualified for field work.

A thematic data analysis method was employed to prepare the collected data for interpretation. It was during this time of analysis that possible answers to the study's research question were formulated. Three major themes that corresponded with the research objectives, research questions and interview questions were identified, namely: the meaning and extent of child labour, child labour and human dignity and church and child labour. Several emerging themes were further identified each giving specific answers to specific research sub-questions that finally appeared to be the results of the research.

Permission from the Stellenbosch University Ethical Clearance Committee was obtained before the commencement of the interviews. Furthermore, a letter from Synod of Livingstonia to authorised the researcher to conduct interviews with ministers in this synod. Each respondent (in this case ministers engaged in this individual interview) signed a consent form before the interview. Some of the notable limitations of the study were the size of the sampled unit, and absence of the voice of women and children.

CHAPTER 7: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results obtained from the interviews conducted with the ministers of Jombo and Rumphi Presbyteries in the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia in Malawi. Eight ordained ministers, whose ages ranged from 37 to 50 and with congregational experience of between 5 and 25 years, were interviewed. Only male ministers were interviewed because there are no female ministers in the area where the interviews took place. Each respondent was asked eight (8) similar questions in the same sequence. The interviews were recorded and transcribed into English text in preparation for data analysis. The aim of this interview was to determine the perception of the ministers about child labour issues by the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia to identify whether the Synod can have a role to play

7.2 Presentation of results

Eight (8) structured interviews were conducted and recorded in the Tumbuka language in Jombo and Rumphi Presbyteries. This was later translated into English by my office secretary. The interviews were translated to English during transcription. The analysis reported here was done using the English text transcripts where the researcher sought to identify the themes emerging from all the interviewee responses. The analysis adopted five steps as described below:

Step 1: Establishing the analytic objectives

Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012:22) suggest that establishing the objective/s of the analysis is the first step to having an "effective analysis plan". The researcher examined the study aims and the research questions and sub-questions to meet the purpose implied by each aim and research question, as shown in Table A.

Table A. Analytic objectives

No.	By Study Aim	By Research Question	By Research sub-questions
1	Identification of meaning/definition of child labour	Identification of human dignity restorative role for the church	Identification of meaning Exploring magnitude
2	Exploring magnitude Exploring effects of child labour		Exploring understanding Identification of meaning Exploring relatedness
3	Identifying relationship between child labour and human dignity		Explanation Exploring role Exploring relatedness
4	Theological understanding of child labour as violation of human dignity The response of the church		Exploring Interpretation Explanation

Step 2: Clustering the Text

The researcher asked eight (8) questions, structured as the same number of questions to all in the same sequence. In order to facilitate the identification of themes and the codes of the same question, the responses were rearranged into clusters. This research came up with four clusters:

1. Discussing what is meant by child labour in the Malawian context;
2. Exploring the extent and effects of child labour;
3. Discussing how exploitation of children in child labour can be defined in relation to human dignity;
4. Contributing towards a theological construction in response to child labour violation of human dignity for the church and academy.

Step 3: Structural coding

The researcher used structural coding for two reasons. According to Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012:55) "structural coding is used to identify the structure imposed on a qualitative data set by the research questions and the study design. This is most clearly seen

when a structured interview is used in consistent way". All the interviews were structured. Secondly, the researcher wanted to identify themes that linked with the interview questions. As a result, the 'interview questions' informed the identification of the themes and the codes significantly. This relationship is shown on the examples in the following Table B.

Table B. Examples of themes and codes derived from the interview question

Interview Question	Theme	Code/s
1a. What do you know about child labour?	Understanding of child labour	Und_CL
1b. What do you know about child labour?	Defining child labour	Def_CL
Follow up question, what age of children are you referring to?	Defining a child	Def_Child
2. Do you think child labour exists in your community?	Child labour prevalence	Pre_CL
3. Do you think child labour does children any harm,	Child labour effects	Eff_CL
If yes, How?	Explanation of effects	Eff_CL
4a. Do you think child labour in way harms a child's human dignity?	Child labour effects on human dignity	Rel_CL_HD
4b. Do you think child labour in way harms a child's human dignity?	Child labour effects on human dignity	Eff_CL_HD
How?	Explanation of relationship	Exp_Eff_CL and HD

The print-out of the 'Themes by Interview Questions" was used to generate Step 4.

Step 4: Reading the text and coding

Each cluster of interview responses from the eight respondents by interview question were re-arranged again into a tabular format with three columns. The text was inserted in the middle column. The left column was designated for the identified 'theme' while the right column was for the corresponding code/s. Using a print-out and pen, segments of text were

145

underlined and the appropriate theme was written in the left column and the code was inserted in the right column. See Table C.

Study Aim: To discuss what is meant by child labour in Malawian context

Sub-question: What is child labour and what is the extent, if any, of this practice in Malawi?

Question: *What do you know about child labour?*

Theme	Text	Code/s
Meaning of child labour	*Respondent One (MRU)* What I know about child labour is using a child to do job that…..is beyond her/his age….In addition to this, it is evil because children do not have much time for school. *Follow up question, what age of children are you referring to?* *Respondent One (MRU)* Mean children who are may be 10 years and below. Yaa	Mean. CL Ch-pera CL Eff – CL Def – CL
Extend of child Labour	*Respondent Two (BRU)* Yes, what I know is some people do hire children to do jobs for them and pay them and that type of work is done in many places in towns where children sale food items. But at the end they get little money. Some are used in farming activities in my village where I come from. *Follow-up when you say children how do you define a child what age range? Respondent Two (BRU)* Those who are not yet mature for employment may below14- 15 years.	Prev_ CL Type_W.CL Def – CL

Table C. Codes: CL= child labour, Eff= effects, Def. =definition, Mea=meaning, Prev=prevalence, ch-perc.CL= child labour perception and Type-w-CL=type of work/child labour.

Step 5: Discovering emerging themes

Ryan and Bernard (2003) suggest some tips which assist in discovering emerging themes. Out of the seven suggested tips, I chose three which are:

i.   Repetition;

ii.   Metaphors and analogies;

iii. Constant comparisons/Similarities and differences;

The analytic objectives specified in step 1 and the results from step 3 provided constant reference points for Step 5 to guide the 'refinement of the themes.'

The table below shows the main emerging themes for each study aim, which are also linked closely to the research sub-questions, as presented in Table. D.

146

Table D. Emerging themes

Issue	Emerging themes

Meaning and prevalence of Child Labour in Malawi	1.Meaning of child labour
	a. Child labour meaning
	    (i) age inappropriate work
	    (ii)children doing paid job
	    (iii)children engaged in hazardous work
	b. interpretation of child labour
	    (i)hurting God
	    (ii)violence to children
	    (iii) evil
	    (iv)bad
	c. Meaning of child
	    (i) 15 years and younger
	    (ii)teenage
	d. Metaphors used for a child
	    (i) gift
	    (ii) image of God
	e. Perceived causes of child labour
	    (i) family poverty
	    (ii)HIV/AIDS
	f. Child labour effects
	    (i) Physical effects
	        (a)stunted growth/body growth
	        (b)looking older than the peers
	        (c) fatigue always tired
	    (ii)Behavioural effects
	        (a)early marriage
	        (b) continuous engaging in hazardous work
	        (c)school church drop out
	    (iii) Emotional effects
	        (a)Feeling rejection
	        (b) Feeling depressed
	    (iv) Spiritual effects
	        (a)No spiritual growth
	        (b) No funeral rites
	        (c) No bereavement support
	    (vi) Educational effects
	        (a)No education
	        (b)School dropping out
	2.Extent of child labour
	    (a)Child labour prevalence
	        (i) Confirmed exists in7 out of 8 interviews
	    (b) Child labour magnitude

	(i)Conditions of work
	  (a) heavy workload
	  (b)hazardous environment
	  (c)long hours
	  (d) none payment
	  (e) no protective clothing
	  (f) no formal contracts
	(ii) Types of work
	  (a)Predominantly tobacco farming
	  (b)Selling food stuffs in public places
	  (c) luring customers at bus ranks
	  (d) Charcoal burning/preparation.

Child Labour and Human Dignity	(a)Meaning of human dignity
	  (i)Preserving God by caring children
	  (ii) Putting value on people's children
	  (iii) allowing children to get education
	(b)Perceived violence on human dignity
	  (i)Disgrace the image of God
	  (ii)no freedom to stop working
	  (iii) Denial of education
	  (iv) Denial of child right protection
	(c)Child labour human dignity relationship
	  (i) working conditions not fit for human beings
	  (ii)absence of child-adult relationship boundary
	  (iii)Parental child relationship shift to employer and employee relationship.
	  (iv)No church attendance no church support funeral services.

The Church and Child Labour	(a) Justification church response
	  (i)Preserving the image of God
	  (ii)teaching about God
	  (iii)Teaching morals
	(b)Addressing violence
	  (i)Physical abuse
	  (ii)emotional abuse
	  (iii)Sexual abuse
	(c) Strategy for response
	  (i) Borrow government strategy
	  (ii)Awareness campaigns
	  (iii) Addressing causes
	  (iv) Working with other NGO's
	  (v) Targeting chiefs, parents, children, schools
	  (vi) Developing long and short terms measures.

In summary, after going through all the necessary steps for thematic analysis several themes emerged. These were identified against each aim of this study in relation to the sub-questions of the main research question. The themes helped the researcher to make interpretations and sound recommendations to answer the research question.

7.3 Discussion of results and interpretation

The findings are presented in three (3) major categories, which are closely associated with the three (3) sub-questions because the steps which were followed during the thematic analysis were intended to produce concise findings. Thus under each category heading, the emerging themes are presented with corresponding detailed information from the interview. (See figure A. below)
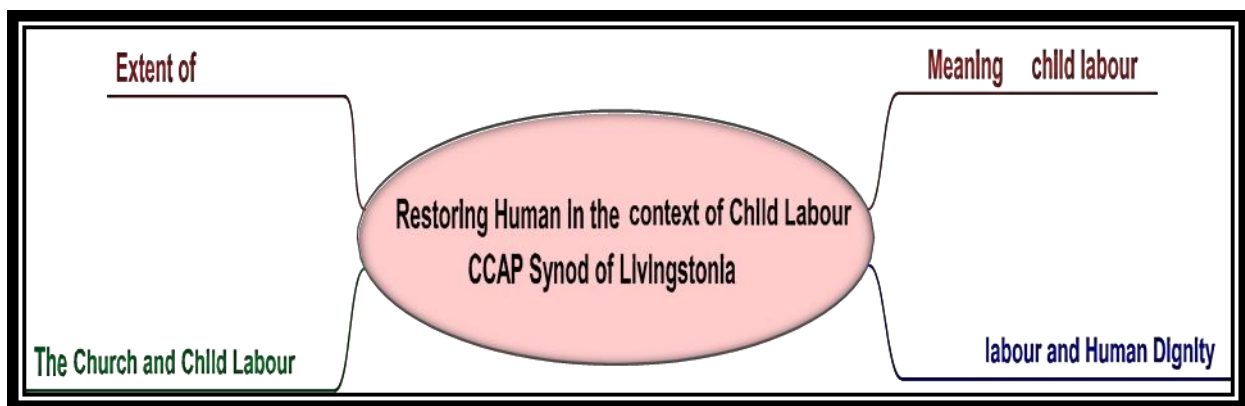
Figure A. Describing three main themes; (red) Meaning of child labour and extent,(blue) Labour and (green) human dignity and church and child labour. The middle one is the research question.

7.3.1 Meaning of child labour and extent of child labour

The first sub-research question is: "What is child labour and what is its extent if any in Malawi?" During the individual interviews respondents replied by either definition or interpretation. However this question was addressing two related themes, hence it is divided into two sections: (see Fig B)

(a) Meaning of child labour and; (b) the extent of child labour.

7.3.1.1 Meaning of Child Labour

The outcome of the interview indicated that child labour has no single clear-cut definition as it is interpreted or understood from different perspectives. For example, some ministers described child labour in terms of the effects that working children experience such as:

149

(i) Physical effects such as stunted body growth, looking older than their peers, and fatigue (i.e. always getting tired); (ii) Behavioural effects e.g. early marriage, continuous engagement in hazardous work, school or church drop-out rate; (iii) Emotional effects, displayed in feeling of rejection, feeling of depression, and spiritual effects, which are noticeable in (a) little or no spiritual growth; (b) absence of funeral rites(c) no bereavement support; and (iv) Educational effects: no education, and irregularity in school attendance. Additionally, for some ministers, any work involving children of fifteen (15) years and below or any other teenager, to be child labour. It was further noted that any other work done by children for money was considered to be child labour. The common recurring phenomenological themes in this discussion are children, hazardous work, and money.

In the light of the above presentation on the meaning of child labour, one might aver that child labour becomes child labour when children are engaged in any work that is hazardous to their general welfare. This affects their well-being physically, emotionally, psychologically, academically, and spiritually. In fact, one of the interviewed ministers emphasized his point by saying, "Children engage in work(s) that do not match up with their age" and thus it becomes hazardous. Another respondent indicated that children involved in child labour experience rejection, thereby being affected psychologically as well. Another respondent said that child labour is a social evil because such children are not accorded the opportunity to go to school.

According to Assan & Hill (2011:2), defining child labour is problematic as there are various definitions, depending on the perception of childhood, social attitudes, and national law. The term "child labour" is however, commonly understood in the context of exploitation, when a child (i.e. a minor) is employed and works in pathetic conditions which deny him/her opportunities for further development in life. Kanna (2002:2) observes that child labour is usually defined as participation in gainful activity by children between the ages of five (5) and fourteen (14) years, while Maganga (2012:5) defines child labour as any economic activity that employs a child younger than 14, any activity that exploits a child, prevents a child from attending school or negatively impacts on the health, social, cultural, psychological, moral, religious and related dimensions of a child's upbringing. The inference is that child labour has to do with involving children in work/activities that violates their dignity.

To summarize this discussion one may say that child labour is any work in which working conditions are poor and hazardous. This may include unpaid work (domestic work), as long as the conditions are unfavourable to the welfare of the child. This has been confirmed both by the interview findings and the literature consulted.

7.3.1.2 The Extent of Child Labour

This main theme was divided into other two emerging themes that show the prevalence and magnitude of child labour. Under this theme, the extent of child labour is described in two categories: form of work done by children, and form of working conditions in which this work is carried out.

7.3.1.3 Prevalence and Magnitude of Child Labour

Results indicated the prevalence of child labour in the areas under study. Seven out of the eight respondents (88% of the total respondents) confirmed that child labour exist in their areas. The magnitude of child labour was described in the form of poor working conditions such as heavy workloads, hazardous environments, non-payment of remuneration, no protective clothing, and the absence of formal contracts. Additionally, tobacco farming, charcoal burning, luring customers for buses and taxi businesses, older children taking care of their younger siblings, were identified as types of work making use of child labour.

The research found that the prevalence of child labour is high in tobacco growing areas. Malawi is an agro-based country and since child labour is prevalent in tobacco growing areas, and there is a possibility that child labour prevails in all farming areas. Furthermore, buses, taxis and any other public transport operators normally compete for customers in towns and semi-urban settings, and employ the services of children. Children were found selling their wares at bars and restaurants in town. This indicates that child labour occurs not only in villages and rural farms areas but also in towns. This is in accordance with the findings of the 2012 National Conference on Child Labour in Agriculture which acknowledged that child labour in Malawi is a reality and remains a social and economic problem in spite of laws, policies, strategies and efforts of the Malawi government to prevent or address it (*Malawi National Conference policies on Child Labour in Agriculture*, 2012:5).

The child labour survey conducted by the National Statistics Office in 2002 also revealed that 23.3 % (0.73million) of the children aged 5-14 work. This represents 25.4 % (0.39) of boys and 21.3% (0.34) million girls in that age group (MCLS 2002:3).To a large extent, child labour occurs in most socio-economically marginalized communities in which monitoring of labour practices is weak. Children dropping out of school have few options and alternatives: they are unable to develop their talents and find gainful employment. Studies indicate that child labour is much higher on the tobacco and tea estates (Eldring et al. 2000:38).

In this discussion it was further identified that the magnitude of child labour is defined in terms of working conditions. One notable challenge is the matter of contracts, because bus owners or taxi operators as well as owners of tobacco estates do not have any formal contract with the children who are involved in such trades. The absence of these signed contracts clearly testifies that the rest of the working conditions may contain abuse. In the perception of one of the interviewed ministers, "child labour is child abuse and it has to be condemned." He further noted that what children are doing is nothing but "hard labour" under terrible conditions. The children work without protective clothing, thereby putting their lives at risk. The most highly identified indignity that working children experience is physical abuse, as they are exposed in most cases to the workload that does not match up with their age and strength. Children carry heavy loads of tobacco during harvesting period and work long hours during the day, sometimes without proper feeding (Makwinja2010:17).Additionally, some children are even beaten by their masters for poor performance. Such children, as observed by Njoloma (2012), also experience growth deficiency. Most of these children have stunted growth, become lean, and look very unhealthy. Indeed child labour exposes children to poor working conditions and its attendant negative consequences appear to be a reality in Malawi.
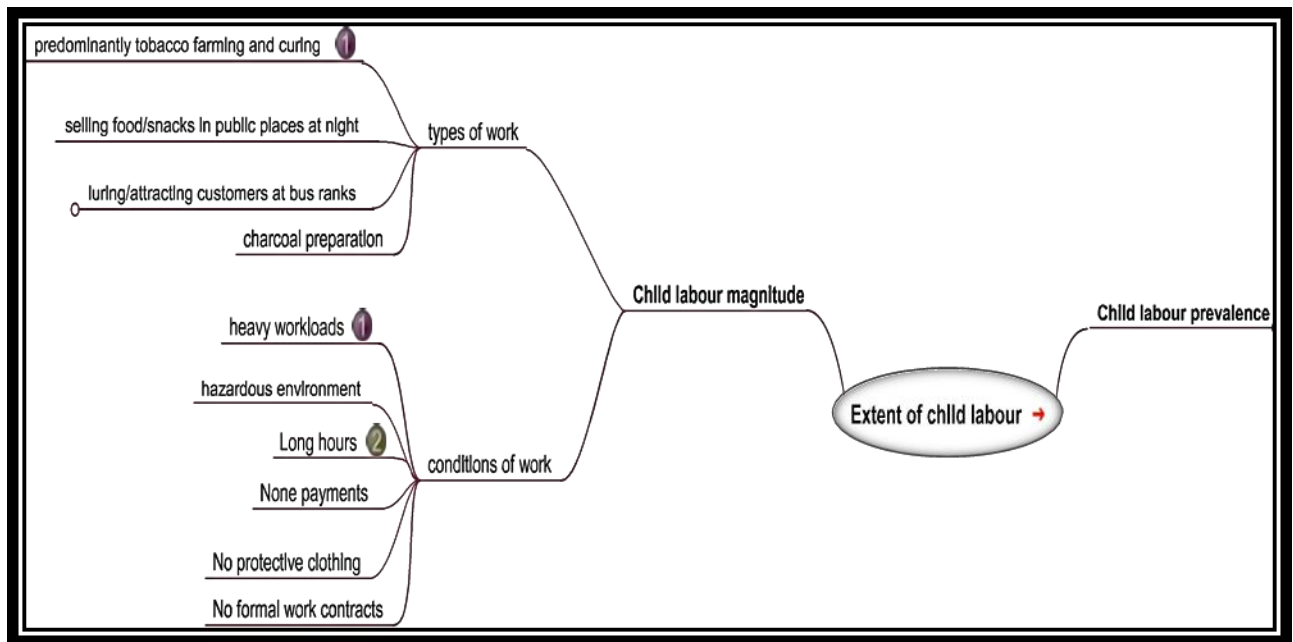
Figure B. Representing emerging themes of child labour and extent.

7.3.2 Child Labour and Human Dignity

Respondents were asked to propose their own theological understanding of human dignity regarding child labour. The individual interviews attempted to address the second sub-question of this study: "Theologically, what is understood by the term "human dignity" and how does it pertain to child labour practices in Malawi?" Answers to this question were grouped into three themes as indicated below.

7.3.2.1 Meaning of "Human Dignity"

The theological understanding of human dignity is discussed through the emerging themes below.

7.3.2.2 Perceived violations of human dignity

The findings of this interview revealed that indeed child labour violates the dignity of human beings, specifically children. However, these results did not deliver a definition of dignity in the form of fixed formulations, but in form of actions or practice. Then the term "human dignity" was defined in terms of interpreting certain practices against children (figure C below). According to the emerging themes, human dignity was described in the form of perceived violations of children in child labour. Examples of the harm done to children included a disgrace to the image of God, denial of child rights protection, denial of education, and no freedom to stop working when tired. It was further identified that human

153

dignity can also be preserved by carrying certain actions, such as preserving the sanctity of God through caring for children, putting value on people's children, and allowing children to get education.

7.3.2.3 Relationship between human dignity and child labour

Further results indicated that apart from child labour affecting the dignity of children, the scenario also affects dignity of human social relationships. Working conditions unfit for children, such as absence of the child-adult relationship boundary, parental-child relationship, shift to employer and employee relationship, lack of church attendance and lack of church support during bereavement are considered to be violations of human dignity. Parents who engage children in child labour at certain points treat their children as employees, either by maximizing their hours of work or by overloading them. They reprimand their children too harshly when something goes wrong. In such situations, children also reach a point where they see their parents as bosses that do not tolerate any mistake. Consequently, children may start to live with a sense of fear and hate. This is not done formally but happens involuntarily; it is happening in some families. It is a violation of dignity of both parents and children. By virtue of failing in their parental role parents are denying their children dignity (Prov. 22:6)[26].Furthermore, absence of the adult-child relationship boundary is another new insight which emerged from this research. If children can do what their parents can do and vice versa, this may result in many lapses. Such lapses may put the children at risk, for instance, the risk of sexual abuse. Mutual respect will be compromised; children may assume a multiple adult roles before they are adults. This also constitutes violation of human dignity.

In view of the above findings, child labour may be considered as a violation to human dignity. Earlier in the study under the definition of child labour it was noted that children are gifts from God. In the same discussion of child labour, children were qualified as the image of God. Additionally in the interpretation of the effects, child labour was considered as hurting God. One of the perceived violent acts to children is to deny them education which is synonymous with violating their dignity. One minister lamented, saying, "We deny (the children) value by denying them education." In the same interview, another person put his own concern on the issue this way, "If we value children, then we need to allow them to

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[26] Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

154

attend education." To deny someone value is to deny him/her a godly status which comes from God.

Indeed children deserve protection because they have a dignity that they derive from God the Creator. In the language of Genesis 1:26-27,"God created man in his own image" and this suggests that all human beings –regardless of gender, race, social status or age are created in the image of God. We know from a larger context that human beings do not become an "image of God" only when they are adults, the image of God is not something that they "grow into." It is something that begins from conception (Fretheim 2008:4). For example in the view of the Psalmist there is never a time from the conception and birth of children when the hand of God is not present. Psalms 139:13 says, "For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb…" In fact, full humanity presupposes the inherent divine image, and no child or any other human being is excluded – they are all equal in the light of the inherent image of God. Indeed children have a dignity and they deserve protection which should be free from violation.

Protection of children is also in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child advanced in international standards on children's rights in a number of ways. For instance, its preamble reads in part, "*Recognizing* that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding." It continues: "*Recognizing* that, in all countries in the world, there are children living in exceptionally difficult conditions, and that such children need special consideration" (Kaime 2005: 207-208). Furthermore, Article 32 of the (UNCRC 1989) states that parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development (Kaime 2005:221).

In summary, the findings of these interviews alongside the confirming data from the literature sourced indicate that child labour is indeed a violation to human dignity. The violation is witnessed when children are engaged in work that denies them freedom, and child rights. The work affect the parent-child relationship, and removes adult-child

relationship boundaries. Furthermore, it denies children to grow spiritually, and this later denies children a dignified burial rite. Child labourers are likely to socialize their families into perpetual labourers.
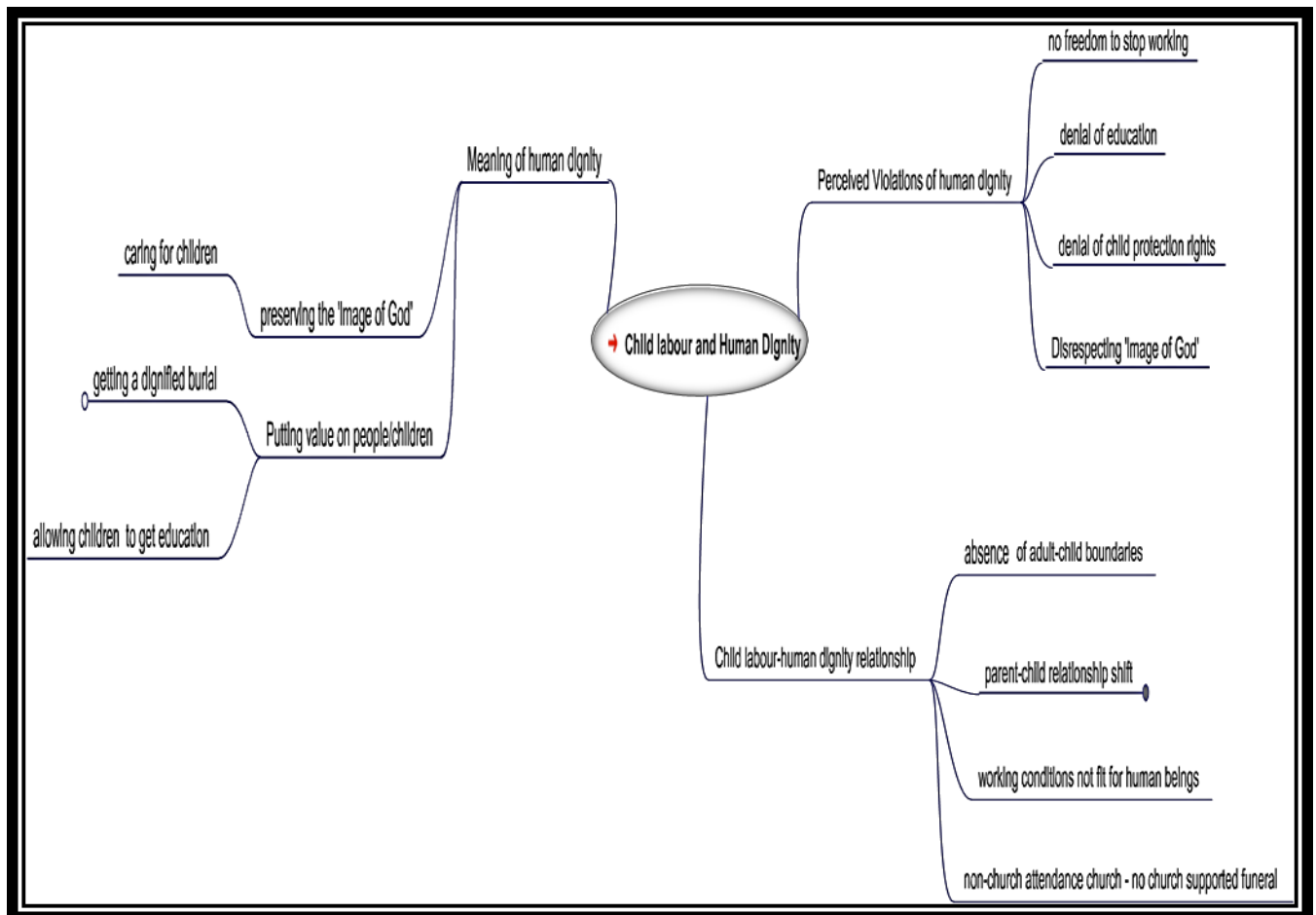
Figure C. Depicting emerging themes of child labour and human dignity.

7.3.3 The Church and Child Labour

The findings of this study are answers to this sub-research question, "Why and how could the church be active in protecting the human dignity of children in Malawi?" The findings arising from the individual interviews were put into three emerging themes: Justification church response, addressing violence, and strategy response. These themes are discussed in a summarized paragraph: (Refer to Figure D.)

The results indicated that the church has a role to play in addressing the violation of human dignity that occurs in child labour. Under the emerging theme, "justification of church

response" three reasons were given. It was highlighted that the church has the responsibility to preserve the image of God that might have been lost in child labour, teaching about God, and teaching morals. There are clear indications that in child labour the image of God and related morals could become lost. However, the church is believed to have a capacity to restore this. In fact one minister said, "The Bible commands us to take care of these children;" "because", he added, "child labour is causing harm to children." Furthermore, under the emerging theme of "addressing violence", it was also noted that the church has a responsibility to address physical abuse, emotional abuse and sexual abuse. These are some forms of the violence that children engaged in child labour experience.

7.3.3.1 Strategy response

Additionally, the church was urged to borrow government strategy and awareness campaigns as tools for a strategic response by the church to child labour. Partnership with current programmes run by other bodies in various communities could be one of the strategies identified. The church should be strategic by targeting chiefs traditional authorities (T/A), parents, office bearers and the children themselves. These should be able to carry this message to communities about the dangers of child labour. Long term and short response may be one of the strategic approaches the church should consider.

In view of the above findings the church may be considered to have a responsibility to address the issues of child labour. This is in accordance with the ministry of Jesus Christ, the founder and head of the church. The church was called and instituted to continue with the ministry that Jesus Christ came to fulfil. What characterized the ministry of Jesus Christ is found in Luke 4:18 where he declared the purpose of his ministry, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to preach to the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed." In most cases the ministry of Jesus Christ was characterized by his solidarity with the oppressed, outcasts, poor, sinners, sick and the hungry. In fact he demonstrated his compassionate ministry to the poor and sinners in many ways as a set standard for his disciples.

Therefore, the church has the responsibility today of addressing both social and spiritual challenges their communities are facing in this context. According to Walton (2004:244) the

relationship of the church to the world is not governed by its relation to the state or society in a general sense, but by its understanding of the mission of Jesus to the marginal, as a dynamic of the coming reign of God. Even the Scripture condemns faith without works. James 2: 17; 2:26 declares, "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, it is dead, for as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. Furthermore, the love we claim to have for God as Christians has to be accompanied by the love for the people who are suffering." 1 John 4:20 says that, "If someone says, 'I love God' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?" For the church to show its compassionate love to the poor is one way of fulfilling the Scripture.

To summarize this discussion, the church has the mandate to preserve the image of God in children that might have been lost through child labour. The church has to respond to the multiple forms of violence children are experiencing in child labour. Following the footsteps of the ministry of Jesus Christ, the founder of the church, will most likely succeed in this ministry.
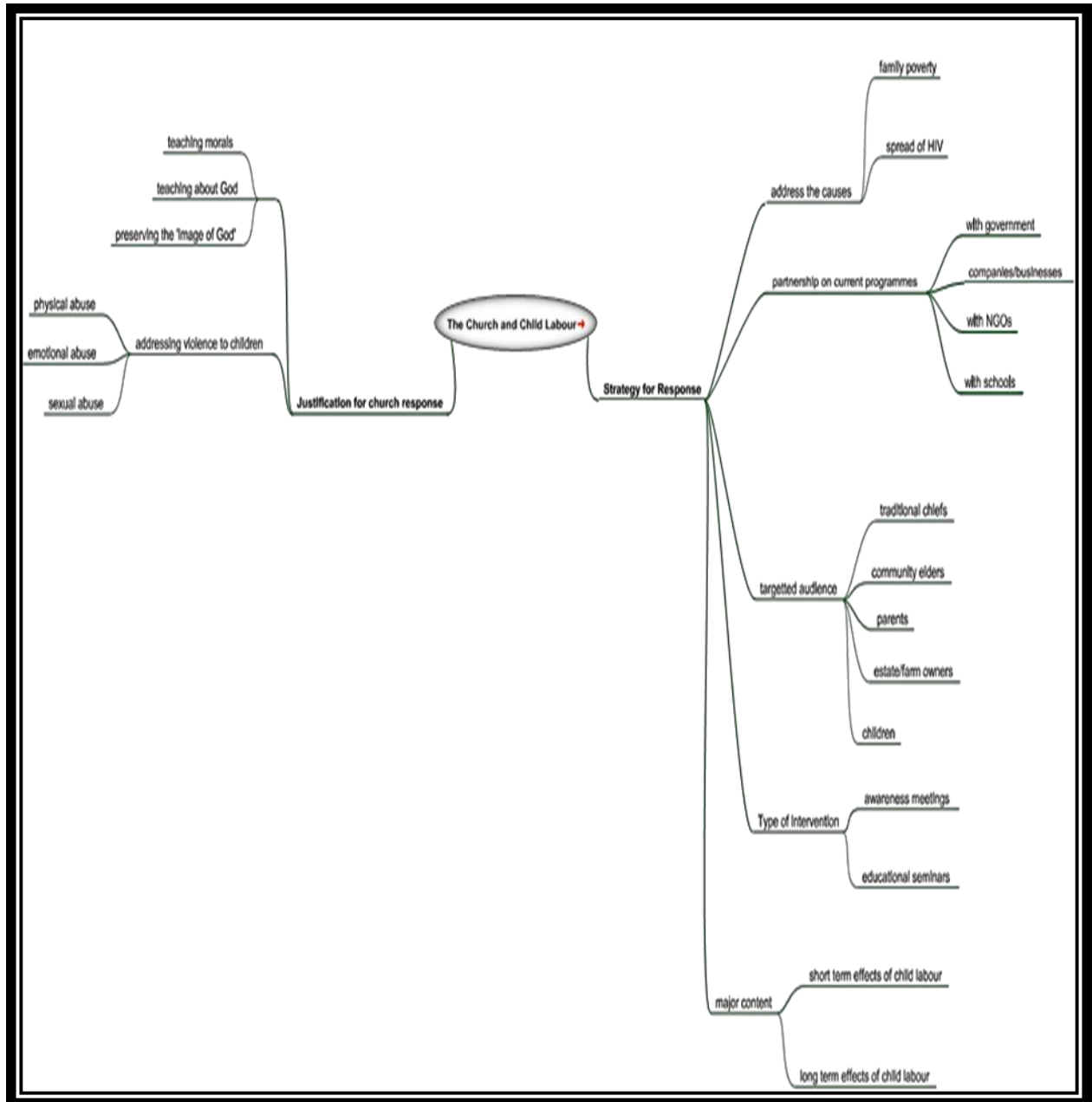
Figure D. Depicting emerging themes of child labour and church

7.4 Limitations of the study

As any empirical study, this one also encountered some limitations. One is that in the population sample, two voices are missing; the voice of children and that of women. Children were not engaged due to ethical issues, and women were excluded because in the area where the interviews took place there is no female minister. Aside from this, the sample of two presbyteries from a total of twenty two presbyteries may not have reflected

159

the true picture of life on the ground. However, since the respondents who were interviewed are trained ministers the results may hold true even with a larger sample. The other limitation is the influence of bias. It was a one-man project; the researcher is the interviewer, the analyst as well as the reporter. However, despite these limitations the researcher is convinced that all research protocols (procedures) were followed and these results are true reflection of the respondents' views.

7.5 Conclusion to the chapter

In concluding this chapter, based on the presented findings of this study corroborated by facts gathered from the literature consulted, it can be said there is high prevalence of child labour in Malawi. Child labour has been described as any work done by children under poor or hazardous conditions. This includes both works done for money and in homes (domestic), as long as the working conditions are poor. The results indicated that child labour occurs predominantly in tobacco growing areas. Since Malawi is an agro-based economy this may further suggest that child labour exists in all areas of the country.

It was further discovered that the ministers of the synod of Livingstonia are aware of the effects of child labour. They were able to identify the relationship between child labour and human dignity. A summary was drawn that showed that child labour violates the dignity of children which is the image of God. Through child labour, children are abused in many ways: physically, socially, emotionally, educationally and spiritually. The relationship between parents and children is affected too as roles change from parent-child to employer-employee relationships.

Furthermore, it was discovered that the church has the responsibility of teaching moral life, teaching about God, and to preserve God's intrinsic image in humans by preserving the dignity of children. The Church can better fulfil this mission by adopting the ministry of Jesus as a role model – a ministry that was characterized by compassionate love to all, including the children, the oppressed and other socially destitute. Furthermore, the church can adopt the government strategy profitably in addressing issues of child labour. This can be achieved by targeting opinion leaders in the community and also parents. Therefore, I propose that these findings be considered for action if the church is really concerned with the welfare of human beings, particularly the children in the context of this study.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Introduction

As a conclusion to this study, this ultimate chapter attempts to answer the main research question, which centres on what the role of the Synod of Livingstonia could be in restoring human dignity in the context of child labour. Answering this question demands a critical discussion on how the church can serve as an agent of such restoration. There will also be a review of previous chapters and the findings of the interviews, which indicated causes, effects and strategic solutions to child labour problems. This includes what the government and other stakeholders are doing to address this challenge. Finally, this chapter will offer some recommendations on how to solve child labour challenges. The suggestions may be empowering to both the local and national church participating in this ministry. This chapter will further suggest some areas to be considered should there be a need to conduct a similar study.

8.2 Summary of findings based on field study

The findings revealed three main themes during thematic data analysis. These themes are also the stimuli for answers to the three sub-questions of this research and address the objectives of this study. The final interpretation of the data was based on theory and literature consulted during this study. The three questions and objectives of the study were the following:;

1. What is child labour and what is the extent, if any, of this practice in Malawi?

2. What is understood by the term human dignity from a theological perspective and how does this pertain to child labour practices in Malawi?

3. Why and how could the church be an active agent in protecting the human dignity of children in child labour in Malawi?

Aims of this study:

1. To discuss what is meant by child labour in Malawian context;

2. To explore extent and effects of child labour;

3. To discuss how exploitation of children in child labour can be defined in relation to human dignity;

4. To contribute towards a theological construction in response to child labour violation of human dignity for the church and academy.

8.2.1 Meaning and extent of child labour

The data presented in Chapter 7 shows that most ministers are knowledgeable about child labour. However, child labour is defined in many different ways. Some understood child labour as any work given to children which does not match their age. Some defined it in terms of a definition of childhood, as any work given to children below fifteen years or teenagers in general. Still others described it in terms of causes, such as family poverty and orphan hood due the plight of HIV/Aids. Child labour was also defined in terms of effects; any work that affects the general welfare of the child, such as denial for schooling, sexual abuse, affecting physical bodily growth, spiritual torture, was qualified as child labour. Therefore child labour appears to be any work given to children which is not appropriate to their age and at the same affects their general welfare.

In terms of prevalence, the results show that child labour occurs predominantly on tobacco farms; there are also children engaged in charcoal burning, selling various items in public places and being employed as bus or taxi touts at bus stations. Paramount to child labour prevalence was the poor working conditions to which the working children are exposed. Most of the child labourers if not all do not sign any formal contract for their jobs. In the absence of the signed contract children encounter various forms of abuse in the course of their work. They are exposed to long working hours, hazardous work, carrying heavy loads, non-payment and no time to rest. These are the definitive experiences of child labour.

8.2.2 Child labour and human dignity

Child labour was considered to be a violation to human dignity because of the nature its effects. Such effects were analysed in relation to the harm they cause to children as human beings, and included physical, psychological, spiritual, and sociological harm. If child labour is causes discomfort to children by affecting them in any of these ways, child labour may be called a violation to human dignity. It was further noted that theologically the dignity of human beings is derived from the image of God. All human beings, also children, are created in the image of God. This entails that one is somebody, not something, and therefore one

deserves equal respect and value. This respect and equal treatment is missing in child labourers' working conditions, which is why it is labelled a violation to human dignity.

8.2.3 Church and child labour

The Church has a role to play in child labour in order to protect the dignity of working children. The findings indicated that the effects of child labour on children could be interpreted as a violation to the dignity of children. Therefore, the church's involvement in addressing child labour and the associated effects and causes is of paramount importance. The findings indicated three justified responses to child labour by the church: preserving the image of God that might have been lost during child labour; teaching about God's relationship to human beings and teaching about good morals. It was further noted that the church has the responsibility to handle the violence, such as sexual abuse, emotional abuse and physical abuse that children faced in child labour. The findings also indicated the strategic response that the church could adopt in addressing human dignity violations in child labour: the church may consider addressing its causes (for example family poverty and HIV/AIDS), partnering with current programmes done by other bodies (like none governmental organizations NGO's, schools or government), the church may target a certain audience(such as traditional chiefs, community leaders, parents, estate owners and children) to train or sensitize them about the dangers of child labour; and finally, the church may also consider how to provide both long and short term solutions to the problem. Currently the results indicated that the Synod of Livingstonia is doing nothing in terms of child labour intervention and the synod has no any strategy in place. This may simply be due to the fact that the Synod had never considered child labour problems as a church's challenge.

8.3 Conclusions

In this paragraph the researcher summarizes this study, covering material from the literature consulted and integrated with the findings resulting from the empirical research. The aim is to provide an answer to the main research question of the study by answering the sub-questions of this study.

1.   *What is child labour and what is the extent, if any, of this practice in Malawi?*

163

This question was phrased in two parts, the first pertaining to the definition of child labour while the second part refers to the prevalence of child labour. We start with the first part of this question.

Based on the literature consulted, child labour was defined as:

- Any work done by children that is detrimental to the welfare of children;
- Any work done by children below the age of 14 and hazardous work done by those below the age of 18;
- Any work which is inappropriate to the age of a child, characterized by heavy loads, etc.;
- Unacceptable working conditions, like long hours of working without time to rest.

Literature consulted indicated that there is child work and child labour and sometimes it becomes a problem to distinguish the two. Child work is the one that is accepted and considered to be part of socialization, while child labour is any paid job done by children. It was discovered that even in child work some children are given the work that does not match their age; in paid child labour children are given light work appropriate to their age, then it becomes debatable whether this is still child labour. In the case of poor working conditions that affect children adversely, it can be concluded that child labour is best defined as any work done by children that is detrimental to their welfare. This definition covers both child work and child labour: when the working conditions are poor, it is no longer socialization but child abuse.

- In terms of prevalence of child labour, this was discussed in terms of work done by children;
- Child labour was known to be prevalent in both commercial and subsistence farming, mainly in tobacco and tea estates and cotton farms;
- Especially boys are also engaged in cattle herding jobs while girls take care of children at home;
- Most of the children are used as street vendors;
- Children are tasked with taking care of younger siblings while parents are away for other duties;

164

- Children are tasked withdrawing water and fetching fire wood;

- Some children are used as bus and taxi touts;

- There was also child labour in fishing industries along Lake Malawi and other small lakes like Chirwa and Malombe.

Child labour was found to be prevalent in these sectors, predominantly on tobacco farms in rural areas where poverty levels are believed to be very high. These areas are rarely visited by the district child labour inspectors due to inadequate funding from the central government. Their work was extended to including the household work. In view of the above work done by children, it can be concluded that child labour exists in Malawi. The extent of child labour was also identified in terms of its causes:

- Poverty was one of the identified causes of child labour;

- Cultural practices that condone the work of children under socialization were also identified as a cause of child labour;

- Ignorance on the effects of child labour on the children's health was one of the causes of child labour to continue; people do not realize both long and short term effects of child labour;

- Although primary education is free, lack of compulsory education was identified as one of the causes of child labour;

- There is a lack of enforcement of child labour laws.

These were some of the main causes of child labour that were identified, however the main problem was poverty, which could be the most challenging to eradicate. The other related problem could also be the cultural aspect, which allows children to work as part of their socialization. Regarding the extent of child labour several measures were put in place by government to address child labour problems, namely:

- The government has put in place some legislative tools to help combat child labour. In the first place the government shows its commitment to the international legislation. Malawi has ratified about 29 International labour conventions, including two main Conventions on child labour, namely Convention 138 minimum age and 182(Worst forms of child labour). Malawi also ratified ILO Convention C29 on the abolition of child labour and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UHHCR),

article 32 which protects children from economic exploitation. However Malawi has no policy on child labour, but is following a national code of conduct adopted in 2004, pending parliamentary approval.

- Locally, Malawian Employment Act No 6 of 2000 was adopted, which sets 14 years as the minimum employment age and 18 as the minimum age for hazardous labour. However the act does not elaborate on specific types of hazardous work, which has left children at risk.

- Government has established the position of the district child labour inspectors, to inspect farms and other places.

- The government has implemented some direct programs to avert child labour challenges: free primary education, and school feeding programs to attract children to attend school.

- Government and other non-governmental organizations do conduct advocacy child labour prevention programs and similar activities.

These programmes were implemented by government as responses to the need for protecting children involved in child labour practices. This might be another indicator that child labour exists in Malawi and that it is known to be harmful. Although the government is doing all it can to combat child labour, the practices continue to exist in Malawi. Therefore the need arises for other stakeholders, including the church, to contribute their quota towards the eradication of child labour in Malawi. It is against this background that the current study seeks to explore how the church can partner with government in the fight against the child labour menace in Malawi.

2. What is understood by the term human dignity from a theological perspective and how does this pertain to child labour practices in Malawi?

From a theological perspective human dignity refers to the image of God. All human beings are created in the image of God and are equal before God; therefore they deserve equal treatment because they have a dignity bestowed by God. Also children are created in this Image of God.

- Those in the image of God have equal value and should not be equated to any market value, to be sold or used for monetary benefit;

166

- Those created in the image of God have the capacity to reason that will help them to protect their dignity and the dignity of their fellow human beings;
- They have the capacity to love and to be loved;
- Human beings created in the image of God deserve freedom and peace and respect for their rights.

Those in the image of God deserve freedom and peaceful living like any other human beings. So to deprive human beings of any of the rights mentioned above amounts to the violation of their dignity, which is against the will of God. Failure to protect and value the dignity of others may also be considered a failure to exercise one's own dignity given by God, because it encroaches on the dignity to behave humanely in relating with other human beings. In the light of this explanation, the effects of child labour discussed below were interpreted critically as a violation to human dignity. This is why child labour has been related with human dignity. Here are some of the effects:

- Physical effects; stunted bodily growth, wounds caused by sharp tools, fatigue due to carrying heavy loads, looking much older than the normal age;
- Psychological torture; due to frustration they end up succumbing to drugs and other immoral behavior; they fail to achieve their full potential life in society during childhood and this will affect their adult life so that they will not have equal due respect in the society. They will be considered as people of less value because most of them will not be productive in life;
- Sexual abuse; they are used as sexual playmate or toys, since in most cases such practices occur without children's consent;
- Perpetual poverty; children growing up in child labour will not develop any competent survival skill to find better jobs for a living. As a result their children too will in most cases end up as child labourers. This may result into a nation of unskilled labour force creating a vicious circle of poverty.

Each one of the above-mentioned effects of child labour were analysed and found to be causing a life of discomfort for the working children. Causing an uncomfortable life to children can be interpreted as a violation of human dignity. Children are deprived of enjoying the freedom intended for all human beings; the equal value of humanity appears

167

not to be honoured in this sense. In view of this discussion child labour may be considered a theological challenge. As such the church has to find solutions to address this challenge.

3. *Why and how could the church be an active agent in protecting the human dignity of children in child labour in Malawi?*

The reason why the church could be an agent in protecting the human dignity arises from the nature of its calling. The nature and mission of the church is to preach holistic salvation, to ensure that people are saved spiritually and have eschatological hope. The church also has to make sure that these people are also saved physically. Children in child labour need physical salvation by protecting their dignity. Therefore the church has a calling to help restore the dignity of children violated by child labour. The second part of the question was how the church can address the child labour challenge. The church has to focus on the causes and effects of child labour because these allow it to prevail and to violate children respectively. Most of the causes are socio-economic and socio-cultural structures and the effects result into violation of human dignity. Below are some of the methods proposed.

- The church has to consider its role as an advocate for the welfare of the marginalized, the poor, the vulnerable, and the widows. The church could adopt its preaching and teaching methods;
- The church may consider how the Old Testament prophets used to address the life of the oppressed, the needy, the vulnerable;
- The church may emulate the life of Jesus Christ during his earthly ministry as a standard to help the marginalized children.

In summary, the findings indicate that child labour is any work done by children which is detrimental to their general welfare. Child labour practices are found mainly on farms and mostly in poor communities. The main cause of child labour is poverty and other related socio-economic conditions and cultural practices. Child labour effects constitute a violation of human dignity because it inflicts physical, psychological, sociological and spiritual harm to children. The violation of human dignity has been considered to be in terms of the theological interpretation of human beings as created in the image of God.

In the light of the above violations of children's dignity in child labour, it is considered inevitable for the church to take part in addressing child labour violations. The church's concern should be how to protect the dignity of children who are the image of God. Therefore the church has to teach about the value of human beings and good morals. Teaching of good morals may be considered important mostly because it was noted in the literature that some cultural practices allow children to work. In most cases, the work given to children is gender based – for example to fetch water, firewood and do domestic chores is reserved for a girl child, while herding cattle or carrying loads is done by a boy child. This is the most valuable part of having children in the family in some Malawian cultures. For children to work appears to be a norm under the process of socialization; however it seems as if no-one cares about the working conditions.

The other reason why moral teaching is needed is the prevalence of poverty. Poverty is one of the causes of child labour that makes the eradication of child labour difficult in Malawi, considering the poverty levels. Therefore to end the continuous suffering of children the alternative option is to engage the church in teaching good morals to all parties concerned with child labour. This moral teaching may persuade those exploiting children to realise how the effects of child labour damage the welfare of children. This may help to reduce the engagement of children in child labour practices, as parents and employers come to realize how to protect the dignity of others.

Furthermore several strategies have been proposed from the findings, for the church to consider when addressing human dignity violations in child labour. These include engaging specific audiences, like traditional leaders who are the custodians of culture, to partner with other programmes conducted by government to help to reduce poverty levels and to consider both long and short term solutions to child labour. There may be a great potential and opportunity for the Synod of Livingstonia to have an impact in addressing child labour violations because the synod has established existing structures that can be used as a vehicle to reach the community. The structures are prayer houses, congregations and presbyteries; furthermore the synod has a Youth Department that deals with youth and children programmes.

In spite of the great potential, opportunities and well-established structures of the Synod of Livingstonia, it has never dealt with child labour issues before, and it lacks necessary tools to deal with violations arising from child labour. The church needs to be empowered and trained in how to engage the mentioned audience (chiefs, parents, estate owners, and schools) on how to handle child labour violations. There is also need for a paradigm shift in the understanding and propagation of the Gospel. The church should not dichotomize its salvation message between the physical and spiritual, but must bring the whole Gospel to the whole human being and the community, as formulated in the synod's mission statement that reads, *"*The Synod of Livingstonia exists to spread the word of God and provide holistic social services to demonstrate the love of Jesus by the empowering of the Holy Spirit in order to glorify God". The church has the role to restore or protect the dignity of children who might be suffering indignity in child labour.

8.4 Recommendations

In the light of violations of children's dignity in child labour and the role of the church, the researcher recommends the four following strategic responses based on the findings of the research:

8.4.1 Proactive programmes

- Through the interdenominational church organizations such Public Affairs Committee (PAC), Malawi Council of Churches (MCC), and Association of Christian Education (ACEM), Christian Health Association of Malawi (CHAM) the synod may lobby the government to increase funding to finance the offices of child labour district inspectors, so that they can monitor child labour activities in the country, as this will help to enhance protection against further use of children on farms. In addition, churches may lobby with the government to pass the child labour policy, which could enhance the protection of children. Together these ecumenical bodies may publish articles orienting the nation about how effects of child labour violates the dignity of children both on long and short terms, as many people seem ignorant about these effects.
- Synod may consider lobbying with the government to discover sustainable means to reduce family poverty levels in the country, since poverty is one of the major causes

of child labour. It was also observed that one of the effects of child labour is perpetual poverty; it follows that if child labour is not controlled, Malawi will remain a perpetually poor country, composed of mostly unskilled labour due to the prevalence of child labour. Also the church may take advantage of the cordial working relationship that exists between churches and government in Malawi to strengthen their appeal.

- Synod may consider initiating programs to reduce household poverty using the local resources or by engaging interested church partners to support this program, targeting the lowest income families and child-headed families that are emerging in Malawi due to HIV/AIDS, as many children are found in child labour practice due to poverty and child labour becomes the last option for their survival.

- Synod may lobby the government to make the current free primary education compulsory, so that parents are persuaded to send their children to school. It was indicated in the discussion that lack of access to education is one of the results of child labour. Therefore should free primary education in the country be made a compulsory parents will be encouraged to send their children to school. Education is important, as it is popularly known as the best tool for the transformation of the nation. Education may help to equip children with technical skills that enable them to contribute more to the economic growth of the country than what they can do through child labour practices. Besides, education may help people to broaden their reasoning ability so that they can easily determine that overworking children at a tender age has negative effects on the general welfare.

- Estate owners are to be oriented about how to respect the value of human dignity rather than focusing on the profit they make out of it. These discussions could help the employers to review the way they treat working children, even changing the habit of employing children under poor working conditions. Meetings may be organized regularly by engaging health workers and other professionals related to early childhood development programs. These professionals might help to enlighten estate owners better on favorable conditions for the general growth of a child in relation to the effects of child labour.

8.4.2 Cultural shifts

- The synod may conduct awareness meetings with specific audiences of opinion leaders, such as traditional chiefs and community leaders. These leaders are the custodians of the culture of the society. One of the causes of child labour identified was cultural perceptions of training children for future survival skills. It is imperative to engage these people in a discussion that will help them to identify how the effects of child labour could cause harm to children, though culturally acceptable. It is anticipated that once these leaders are mindful of this damage, they will be in a better position to support the church's programs, which can help to sensitize their subjects on the dangers of exposing children to poor working conditions.

- Parents need to be oriented on the dangers of both short and long term effects of child labour to their children. Most of the parents seem ignorant about these effects, as was also indicated in the list of causes of child labour. Parents may want to know that if they deny their child access to education today they are preparing their child to be a perpetually poor person who may not be accorded respect in the society because of his lowly status. In addition, parents may need to know that once they enter their children into work their relationship shifts from a parent-child relationship to an employer-employee relationship. This becomes a problem in the family.

- Children need to be oriented on the value of education, rather than rushing for quick money in child labour. Children can also be sensitized on the dangers of early marriages. Early marriages can deprive them of an opportunity to further education that may give them better job prospects and an honorable status in their community.

8.4.3 Theological shifts

- The synod may re-orient its ministers about the theological implications of the effects of child labour on the dignity of children. This can be done through refresher courses for serving ministers in congregations. This can also be integrated in the seminary school to equip ministers before they graduate. The emphasis could be on the value of a human being as an image of God who deserves equal worthy treatment. As human beings created in the image of God we have to realize that we are stewards of God's creation, which includes fellow-humans, in this case, children.

172

Human beings should know that in whatever they are doing they are accountable to God. Then they have the responsibility to improve or protect the dignity of children.

- In turn these ministers will teach their congregants about how child labour affects children's dignity. Ministers can organize congregational seminars and orient their congregants, who may then continue sensitizing their neighbors in their communities.

8.4.4 Pastoral care

- Ministers could continue sensitizing people when conducting their pastoral work in their communities about the dangers of exposing children to hazardous work.

- This pastoral work can be ministered to working children as some cannot be taken out of this child labour practice without offering them alternative action. They may need prayers, moral support and regularly encouragement.

- The synod of Livingstonia owns a local radio station which can be used to broadcast a specific program carrying pastoral messages related to the effects of child labour.

  8.4.1 Missional strategy

  - The Synod has to develop a missional action plan considering child labour as one of its mission area. The church may deliberately make policies with theological influence on the grassroots on daily basis. For example preaching against the evil of effects of child labour.

8.5 Suggestions for further studies

Further in-depth research in the synod can be conducted on a larger scale because this study was somewhat limited in that respect. The researcher suggests that further research may include the following:

- Members of church; women, men and children, to seek their opinion;
- Employers of children, mainly tobacco estate owners;
- The children that are involved in child labour practices;
- Opinion leaders, traditional leaders (custodians of culture);
- Ministry of labour officials;
- Health workers.

- Youth workers/advisors may also be included to take part in this exercise.

8.6 Delimitation of the studies

The researcher lacked written material covering the relationship between church and child labour from a theological point of view. In fact, this study was the first of its kind in the Synod of Livingstonia, perhaps in Malawi. The absence of relevant documentation may have caused deficient or unconvincing argumentation in this study. The sources used mainly were articles referring to children in general, so the researcher had to interpret this in line with the topic understudy. Related sources on child labour were presentations written by government officials and some were unpublished. This is why the researcher decided to combine literature sources with a small sample of empirical interviews, in an exercise which was not adequately funded. The aim of this empirical work was mainly to evaluate and compare the results with the little information found in literature, to render the emerging recommendations representative and feasible. However this study is just a stepping stone for future research.

8.7 Contribution to knowledge

In the first place the findings of this study will be used as guiding material for the ministers and the entire synod, if the Synod would like to address the violations of child labour in its catchment area. At the moment the Synod has no any document pertaining to child labour because it has never dealt with this issue. This document may also serve for the Synod to develop an interest in children's ministry. Secondly, academics may use these study findings as resource material. Finally, future researchers in the synod and any other researcher's may use this as reference material for future studies which might cover the gaps left by this study.

8.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, the chapter highlighted the three main themes identified during the data analysis of the individual interviews conducted with ministers in the Synod of Livingstonia. Firstly, *the meaning and extent of child labour*:, after a critical analysis of the definitions given of child labour, it was noted that child labour is any work given to children that is harmful to their welfare. Secondly, *child labour and human dignity*: it was observed that child labour may be likened to violations of human dignity because of the effects they have

on the welfare of children. Finally, *church and child labour*: according to the discussion, the church may be able to address child labour issues because the church is concerned with the dignity of children. Several measures were proposed on how to address this problem, such as awareness messages, organizing workshops with chiefs, parents and estate owners.

This chapter further discussed the summary of this study in an attempt to answer the research question of the study. In that discussion child labour was noted to be prevalent in Malawi and in most cases children are found working on farms, at markets and at the lake. The working children are exposed to poor working conditions that have effects which constitute violation to human dignity. Child labour causes were identified as poverty, cultural practices, ignorance of the effects of child labour on children, and others factors. It was further noted that the government had some legal instruments and direct approach programmes in response to child labour problems. Despite these legislative measures child labour still prevails in the country, an indicator that more needs to be done. Finally suggestions were made on how the church could help in addressing this child labour challenge, by adopting an advocacy role to help the suffering children.

This chapter also offered some recommendations for the church to consider in addressing child labour. These include conducting meetings with local leaders, parents, estate owners, and the church was recommended to work with the government. This study lacked written literature about child labour mainly from the church side; however the information from the interviews conducted was able to serve the purpose. It was also discussed that this research will contribute to the body of knowledge by serving as resource material for future researchers.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

CHURCH OF CENTRAL AFRICA PRESBYTERIAN
SYNOD OF LIVINGSTONIA

Tel : 01 311 344
Fax: 01 311 111
Email: secretariat@ccapsolinia.org

Synod Office
Boardman Road
P.O Box 112
Mzuzu
MALAWI

Ref.:

30ᵗʰ June, 2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I write to certify that Rev John J. Gondwe is a bona fide employee of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia. He is currently studying for his Masters Degree at University of Stellenbosch (student I.D. 16607961). He is doing research on "A Theological investigation into Malawian child labour: a challenge to CCAP Synod of Livingstonia," as a prerequisite for his Masters Degree programme.

The CCAP Synod of Livingstonia has granted him permission to do interviews that will help in his research work.

We therefore request all whom Rev J. Gondwe will contact, to assist him accordingly.

Signed:

Rev Joseph P.V. Mwale
DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY
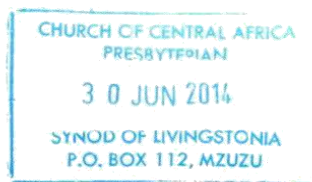
CHURCH OF CENTRAL AFRICA
PRESBYTERIAN

3 0 JUN 2014

SYNOD OF LIVINGSTONIA
P.O. BOX 112, MZUZU

Appendix 2

Approval Notice
New Application

14-May-2014
GONDWE, John

Proposal #: DESC/Gondwe/May2014/15
Title: A Theological investigation into Malawian child labour: a challenge to C.C.A.P. Synod of Livinstonia.

Dear Rev John GONDWE,

Your **New Application** received on **08-May-2014**, was reviewed
Please note the following information about your approved research proposal:

Proposal Approval Period: **13-May-2014 -12-May-2015**

General comments:
The researcher is reminded to submit copies of institutional permission letters to the DESC as soon as it is obtained.

Please take note of the general Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

Please remember to use your **proposal number** (**DESC/Gondwe/May2014/15**) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research proposal.

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.

Also 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).

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki and the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

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

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:
Interview guide
Informed consent form
Research proposal
DESC application

Sincerely,

Clarissa GRAHAM

177

Appendix 3

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MINISTERS.

INSTRUCTION: The following questionnaire is intended for use as a self-administer interview for the C.C.A.P. Synod of Livingstonia in Malawi. For each question, the participants are expected to respond orally while I record their responses on the columns provided for each question.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION.

(1) Name of the Church:

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(2) Age of the Pastor: ....

(3) Working Experience of the Pastor: ....

(4) Sex: ....

(5) Qualification of the Pastor: ....

(6) Province: ....

SECTION B. STRUCTURAL QUESTION GUIDE FOR THIS RESEARCH.

The first part is to assess the interviewee's knowledge of child labour

1. What do you know about child labour?

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2. Do you think child labour exists in your community? If yes, explain.

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3. Do you think child labour does children any harm, if yes

how?...

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178

Appendix 4

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Part two is to find out what the interviewee thinks could be the position of the church.

4. Do you think child labour in any way harms a child's human dignity? How?

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5. As a church minister, how do /can you give a theological view on the acceptability or not of child labour?

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6. Do you see child labour as challenge to a church at all? Depending on your answer, please explain why or why not?

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7. What should the church do if you think child labour is a problem and the church does nothing or enough in your opinion?

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8. What other information do you have on child labour?

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Appendix 5

9.   RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving 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 at Stellenbosch University.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to _____ Me _____
by _John Gondwe_ in _Tumbuka_ [1] and I am in command of this language or 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 to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Rev Stalin Mchulu   16   -07 - 2014
Signature of participant   **Date**

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to
_____ and/or   [his/her]
representative _____. *[He*/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English.

A. Gondwe   16/07-2014
Signature of Investigator   **Date**

_____
[1] The language in which the information was presented

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