

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES**

**ETHICAL ISSUES ON WITCHCRAFT ACCUSATIONS IN NEO-PROPHETIC
MINISTRIES OF EMPOWERMENT CITY CHAPEL AND LIBERATION CITY
CHAPEL**

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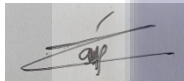
DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is the result of research undertaken by me (Albert Anneh) under the supervision of Dr. Harry Agbanu and Dr. Godson Ahortor towards the award of Master of Philosophy, Religions at the Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana-Legon.



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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wife, Brenda Anneh, thank you for everything you do for me. I also want to dedicate this work to my parents, Mr and Mrs Anneh, thank you for taking care of my sister and I and, fighting to see us rise.

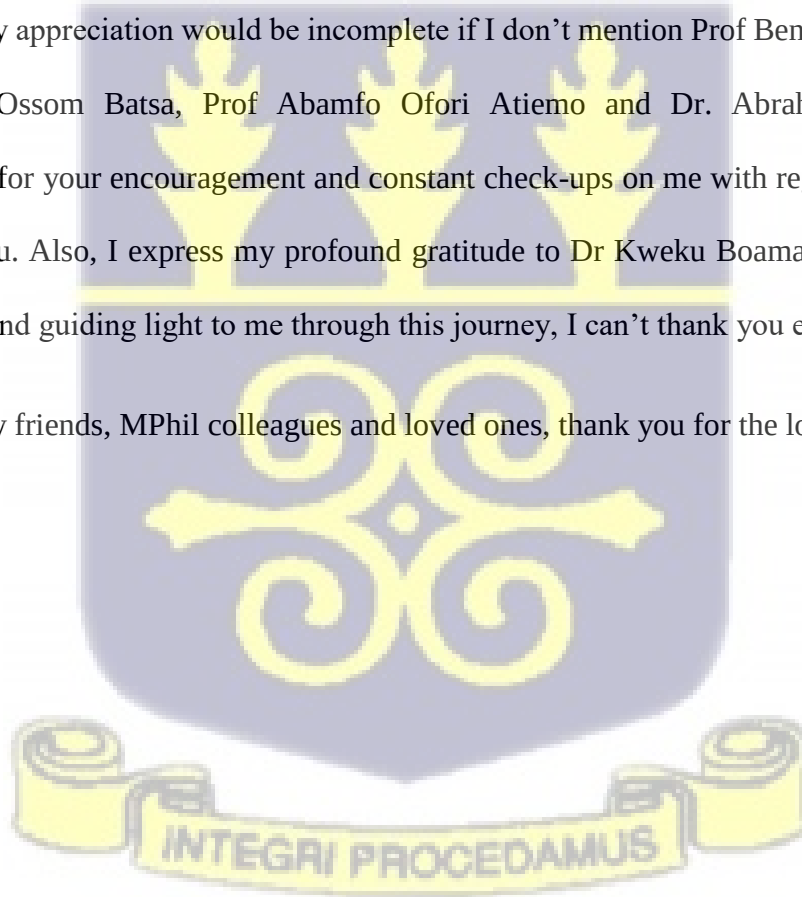


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To God be the glory for the strength, wisdom and how far he has brought me. I acknowledge that it is not by might nor by power but by the Spirit of the Lord throughout this challenging MPhil journey.

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ABSTRACT

The Neo-Prophetic Movement has garnered considerable attention for revitalising Ghanaian Christianity and fostering a perceived spiritual awakening. However, it has also raised significant ethical concerns, particularly regarding the practice of witchcraft accusations within these ministries. Such accusations are deeply intertwined with cultural beliefs and religious practices which, when integrated with neo-prophetic doctrines, reinforce the perception of witchcraft as a tangible threat warranting direct spiritual confrontation. These accusations are associated with severe psychological and emotional impact on those accused, often leading to family discord, social stigma, and reputational harm. This study examines the ethical issues associated with witchcraft accusations in neo-prophetic ministries. It employs a qualitative methodology, grounded in Alfred Schutz's phenomenology and a case study approach, to gather data from both primary interviews and secondary sources. The human rights framework provides the theoretical foundation for the analysis, with a thematic approach guiding interpretation.

The study finds that witchcraft accusations are frequently accompanied by social ostracism, psychological trauma, and the defamation of character. These accusations, shaped by a fusion of cultural and religious beliefs, perpetuate the view of witchcraft as a pervasive spiritual threat. The findings also reveal a lack of ethical training among leaders and a tendency to prioritize public condemnation over reconciliation and care. Furthermore, accusations often conflict with human rights principles, particularly the right to dignity and privacy. To address these challenges, the study highlights the need for discreet handling of revelations, structured ethical training, reconciliation-focused pastoral care, community education, and stronger engagement with human rights frameworks.

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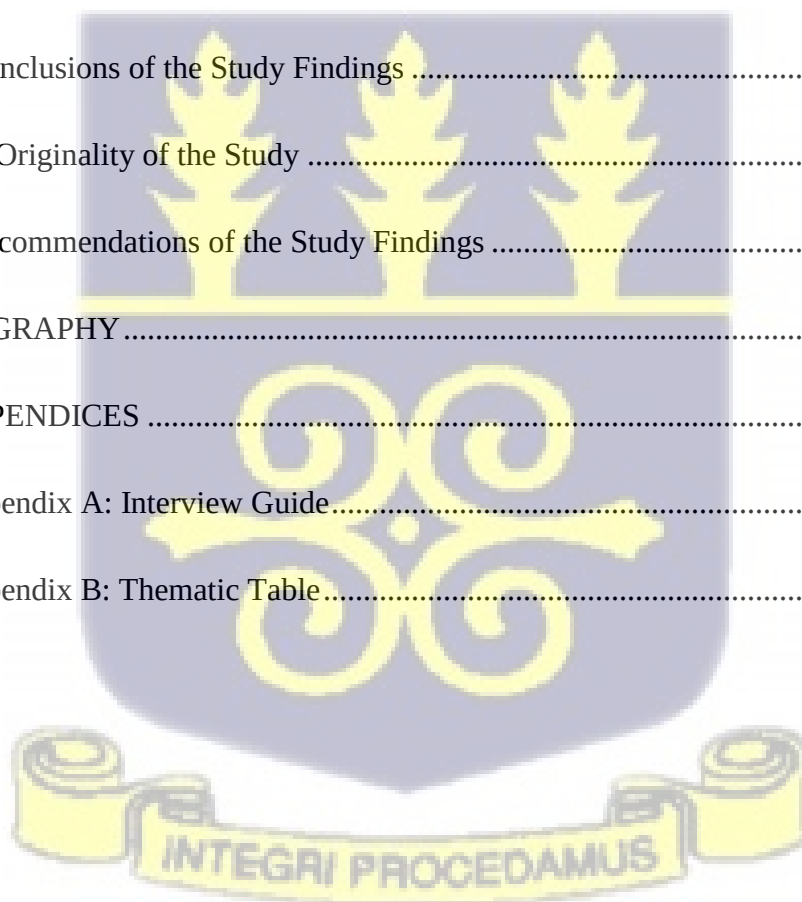
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Various scholars have attempted to describe the phenomenon of witchcraft. Stephen Nyoka Nyaga has described witchcraft as the ability of someone or a group of individuals to inflict harm on others by the use of supernatural powers.¹ Abraham Akrong, on the other hand, described it as a type of evil that negatively "affects the fulfilment of human life."² Timothy Stabell has observed that "witchcraft continues to be a topic that stirs passions and fears in many places around the world."³ Stabell's observation of the phenomenon provides a clear picture of how Africans perceive it. Stephen Ellis and Gerrie ter Haar argue that belief in witchcraft is ubiquitous across Africa and forms a common feature of many spiritual traditions. Ter Haar further emphasizes its widespread and enduring presence on the continent^{4,5} Hugo F. Hinfelaar, concurring with the above, argues that the belief cuts across all social lines and is no longer reserved for the village or the uneducated. He argues that this notion is held by people of diverse education and religious affiliation in the urban as well as the rural areas.⁶ In this regard, one could argue that witchcraft is a religio-cultural phenomenon in Africa.

¹ Nyaga et al., "Impact of Witchcraft Beliefs," 258.

² Akrong, "Phenomenology of Witchcraft," 60.

³ Stabell, "Modernity of Witchcraft," 462.

⁴ Ellis and ter Haar, *Worlds of Power*, 29.

⁵ Ter Haar, "Introduction," 3.

⁶ Hinfelaar, "History of the Catholic Church in Zambia", 229.

The African indigenous cosmology demonstrates a linkage between the material and spiritual worlds. This cosmic worldview suggests that there are spiritual reasons for all everyday happenings.⁷ In many African cosmological understandings, there is little or no dichotomy between the ideas of spell casting, sorcery, magic and curses and the concept of witches or witchcraft.⁸ Mirjam Mencej postulates that witchcraft is perceived as "the anti-social crime par excellence" since it is directed against others.⁹ Robert Magoola, on the other hand, stated that most people believe that witchcraft goes against the principle of life preservation, which is at the core of African cosmogony. In this regard, the fight against witchcraft becomes a noble and moral cause for all those affected by it.¹⁰ Thus, due to this perception, people who are accused of witchcraft are often treated with the greatest cruelty, with some forced to flee their homes.¹¹ There is a negative impact on family relationships and also other networks of social relations due to witchcraft accusations.¹² Elom Dovlo posits that "although the belief in witchcraft is part of traditional religious belief, Islam and Christianity in their development have accepted the worldview that supports the belief system by providing preventive and curative measures against witchcraft attacks and by neutralising supposed witches."¹³

Asamoah-Gyadu thus asserts that the emergence and popularity of neo-Pentecostal ministries in Africa has reinforced the belief in witchcraft and validated its practice of witch-hunting in most parts of Africa. He argues that this is because these neo-Pentecostals

⁷ Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*, 151.

⁸ Quarmyne, "Witchcraft," 480.

⁹ Mencej, "Origins of Witchcraft Accusations," 115.

¹⁰ Magoola, "Engaging Witchcraft Accusations," 100.

¹¹ Gchiko and Kagema, "Impact of Magic and Witchcraft," 12.

¹² Akrong, "A Phenomenology of Witchcraft in Ghana," 58.

¹³ Dovlo, "Witchcraft in Contemporary Ghana," 70.

instill in their members the idea of a God who has met all their needs in regard to health and wealth through Christ and that any negative occurrences are a result of bewitchment.¹⁴

In neo-Prophetic ministries, witchcraft is not merely an idea being promoted; individuals are openly accused during prophetic services of being witches or wizards. These accusations raise moral and ethical issues with regard to the human rights and dignity of the persons accused and the threats to their lives after such accusations. There are also issues of emotional and psychological trauma that some of these accused individuals might go through. In this regard, this thesis seeks to investigate from an ethical perspective witchcraft accusation among neo-Prophetic ministries in Ghana.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The emergence of the neo-Prophetic movement, which falls under the broader Pentecostal movement, has presented various challenges. Notable among them are witchcraft accusations. In most of these ministries, women, especially old women, children and the poor, are the targets of these accusations. These groups constitute the vulnerable in the society. The prophets or leaders of these ministries usually accuse their victims either in the private or public sphere. The accusations are sometimes made in the presence or absence of their victims. Such accusations have led to broken homes, and sometimes, to the death of the accused. Furthermore, there have been questions raised on ethics and rights regarding such accusations. In this regard, this thesis investigates the ethical implications of such accusations within the neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana.

¹⁴ Asamoah-Gyadu, "Witchcraft Accusations and Christianity," 25.

1.3 Research Objectives

The main objectives of the study are as follows.

1. To investigate witchcraft accusations within the neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana.
2. To examine the ethical concerns raised about witchcraft accusations within the neo-Prophetic ministries in Ghana.
3. To recommend ways of how these ethical concerns can be addressed within the space of neo-Prophetic ministries in Ghana.

1.4 Research Questions

The study attempts to answer the following question;

1. How are witchcraft accusations done within the neo-Prophetic ministries in Ghana?
2. What are the ethical concerns raised about witchcraft accusations within the neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana?
3. How can neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana function within their space without creating ethical problems by accusing people of being witches or wizards?

1.5 Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design, which is particularly suited for exploring the lived experiences of individuals within their social and cultural contexts. The phenomenological approach was employed in order to capture the perspectives of participants in their own voices, providing insight into how witchcraft accusations are perceived and experienced within neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana. Fieldwork was

conducted in the natural settings of participants, specifically at their residences and places of worship, to ensure that the accounts reflected authentic interactions and real-life contexts.

Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data came from semi-structured, face-to-face interviews, while secondary data was drawn from published and unpublished works on witchcraft and neo-prophetic practices. For the primary interviews, two neo-prophetic ministries, Liberation City Church (led by Prophet Emmanuel Owusu Peprah) and Empowerment City Chapel (led by Apostle Isaac Chartey), were purposively selected. These churches were chosen because of their visibility and influence in their respective communities, as well as their active involvement in prophetic practices where accusations of witchcraft are often made. Their inclusion, therefore, offers insight into patterns that may be observed more broadly within neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana, even if not exhaustively representative of all such churches.

Within each church, four members were selected for interviews, bringing the total number of participants to eight church members in addition to the two leaders. This makes ten respondents in total. However, since the focus is on church members' perspectives, the analysis considers primarily the eight members while drawing on the leaders' views for context. The members were selected through purposive sampling to capture a range of experiences and backgrounds. An equal number of men and women were included, ensuring gender balance, and the group represented different social positions- four were employed, two were students, and two were unemployed. While the sample size is modest, it is consistent with phenomenological research, which emphasizes depth of understanding

over numerical representation. The respondents are not statistically representative of all congregants but provide indicative insights into the dynamics within these churches.

For data analysis, the thematic approach was used to identify recurring patterns and significant themes within the interviews. This allowed the study to draw out the ethical, social, and cultural issues linked to witchcraft accusations in a coherent and systematic manner. To maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms were assigned to all participants whose statements are cited.

1.6 Literature Review

The reviewed literature engages three central themes: the theology of neo-prophetic ministries, the relationship between Pentecostalism and witchcraft accusations, and the intersection of religion with human rights concerns. Existing studies provide valuable insights into the growth of neo-prophetic movements in Africa, their theological orientation, and the ways in which Pentecostal and charismatic traditions interpret witchcraft. Scholarship has also examined the human rights implications of harmful religious practices, particularly where accusations lead to stigma or abuse. However, much of this work treats these themes in isolation, focusing either on theology, witchcraft, or human rights, without adequately exploring how they intersect in the lived experiences of congregants within neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana. What remains underdeveloped is an integrated analysis that situates witchcraft accusations within the theological frameworks of neo-prophetism while also interrogating their ethical and human rights implications. This study addresses that gap by examining how witchcraft accusations are constructed, experienced, and managed within neo-prophetic contexts, and by assessing the extent to which these practices align with or undermine fundamental human rights principles.

1.6.1 Theology of Neo-Prophetic Ministries

Neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana have emerged as a dominant force within contemporary Pentecostalism, characterized by their emphasis on prophecy, spiritual warfare, and prosperity theology. These ministries often blend biblical narratives with indigenous cosmologies, creating a theological framework that interprets misfortune through the lens of spiritual causality, particularly witchcraft, ancestral curses, and demonic influence¹⁵. The prophetic figure becomes central, not only as a spiritual guide but as a mediator between divine revelation and everyday life, reinforcing a theology of immediacy and intervention.

This theological orientation has profound implications for how adherents perceive morality, justice, and social relationships. The dualistic worldview promoted by neo-prophetic leaders often constructs a binary between good and evil, saved and possessed, blessed and cursed. Such dichotomies can lead to exclusionary practices, especially when individuals are labelled as spiritually dangerous or morally deviant¹⁶. The theological language used in sermons and deliverance rituals frequently legitimizes these labels, embedding them within a broader narrative of divine warfare.

Despite the growing influence of neo-prophetic ministries, scholarly engagement with their theological underpinnings remains largely descriptive. Existing studies tend to document practices and beliefs without critically interrogating their doctrinal coherence or ethical consequences. There is limited exploration of how neo-prophetic theology reconfigures

¹⁵ Anderson, "Ghana's Neo-Prophetic Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity," 20.

¹⁶ Kgatle, "Propagating the Fear of Witchcraft," 135.

traditional African religious epistemologies or how it negotiates tensions between biblical orthodoxy and cultural syncretism.¹⁷ Moreover, the moral reasoning embedded in prophetic discourse, especially in relation to accusations of witchcraft—has not been adequately theorized.

This study addresses these gaps by examining how neo-prophetic theology informs moral judgments and human rights perceptions. It seeks to understand the theological logic that underpins accusations of witchcraft and the ethical frameworks that justify spiritual interventions. By analysing sermons, testimonies, and deliverance practices, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how theology shapes social behavior and moral accountability within neo-prophetic contexts.

1.6.2 Culture/Religion/Pentecostalism and Witchcraft Accusation

Witchcraft accusations in Ghana are deeply embedded in cultural narratives that associate misfortune with malevolent spiritual forces. These accusations often arise in contexts of illness, death, or economic hardship, serving as explanatory frameworks for otherwise inexplicable events¹⁸. Pentecostal and neo-prophetic ministries have capitalized on these narratives, offering spiritual diagnoses and deliverance rituals that reaffirm the existence of witches and demons. The result is a religious discourse that both reflects and amplifies cultural anxieties about spiritual contamination.

Pentecostal responses to witchcraft are typically framed as acts of spiritual liberation, yet they often involve coercive practices such as public exorcisms, forced confessions, and

¹⁷ Tweneboah, “Pentecostalism, Witchdemonic Accusations,” 380.

¹⁸ Igwe, *The Witch Is Not a Witch*, 45.

social ostracism¹⁹. These practices are justified through theological claims about divine authority and prophetic insight, creating a moral economy where accusations are seen as necessary for communal purification. The accused, often women, children, or the elderly, are subjected to symbolic violence that is legitimized by religious rhetoric²⁰. This raises critical questions about the ethical boundaries of religious intervention.

While anthropological and theological studies have explored the prevalence of witchcraft beliefs, few have examined the ideological functions of Pentecostal discourse. Tweneboah argues that prophetic narratives serve not only spiritual but political purposes, reinforcing hierarchies of power and moral authority. Similarly, Kgatle highlights how fear-based preaching perpetuates cycles of accusation and exclusion. However, the moral reasoning of accusers, particularly how they reconcile their actions with religious teachings, remains underexplored.

This study seeks to fill that gap by analysing the ethical logic behind witchcraft accusations within neo-prophetic ministries. It examines how cultural beliefs and religious doctrines intersect to produce moral judgments, and how these judgments are communicated, justified, and enacted. By focusing on the accusers' perspectives, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the moral and theological dynamics that sustain witchcraft accusations in Ghanaian Pentecostalism.

¹⁹ Tweneboah, "Pentecostalism, Witchdemonic Accusations," 380.

²⁰ Kgatle, "Propagating the Fear of Witchcraft," 135.

1.6.3 Religion and Human Right Issues

The relationship between religion and human rights in Ghana is complex and often contradictory. On one hand, religious institutions advocate for dignity, compassion, and justice; on the other, they may perpetuate practices that violate basic human rights, particularly in cases involving witchcraft accusations²¹. Neo-prophetic ministries, with their emphasis on spiritual warfare and deliverance, have been implicated in acts of public shaming, forced exorcism, and social exclusion. These actions, though framed as spiritual interventions, raise serious ethical and legal concerns.

Human rights organisations have documented numerous cases where individuals accused of witchcraft suffer physical abuse, psychological trauma, and displacement²². Yet religious leaders often defend these practices as necessary for spiritual cleansing and communal protection. The theological justification for such actions is rarely challenged within the church, creating a moral blind spot where religious conviction overrides ethical accountability. This tension between spiritual authority and human rights norms is a critical area of inquiry.

Existing literature tends to focus on institutional responses to human rights violations, such as church policies or advocacy efforts. However, there is limited analysis of how individual believers, especially accusers, understand and negotiate human rights principles within their religious worldview^{23, 24}. The ethical reasoning that underpins accusations of witchcraft, and the theological narratives that support them, remain largely unexamined.

²¹ Jibril et al., “Life after Accusation,” 60.

²² Mbaku, “International Human Rights Law,” 5.

²³ Williams, *Christian Personalism and Human Rights*, 45.

²⁴ Fortman, “Religion and Human Rights,” 7.

This gap is particularly significant given the role of religion in shaping moral consciousness and social behavior.

This study contributes to the discourse by exploring how neo-prophetic theology influences ethical reasoning and human rights perceptions among accusers. It interrogates the theological narratives that justify exclusionary practices and examines how religious actors reconcile their faith with broader human rights frameworks. By foregrounding the voices of accusers, the study offers a critical lens on the moral and theological dimensions of human rights violations within neo-prophetic contexts.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

1.7.1 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and John Locke's Human Rights Theory

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, is a foundational document in international human rights law. It outlines thirty articles that affirm the inherent dignity and equal rights of all individuals, regardless of race, gender, nationality, or other status. The UDHR has been instrumental in shaping global human rights norms and has influenced numerous international treaties and national constitutions.²⁵ Its principles emphasize freedom, justice, and peace, advocating for rights such as freedom from discrimination, the right to education, and the right to a fair trial.²⁶

²⁵ McNeilly, "If Only for a Day': The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Anniversary Commemoration and International Human Rights Law," 3.

²⁶ United Nations. *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)*, 3.

The UDHR's significance lies in its universal applicability and its role in fostering international cooperation to protect human rights. Despite its non-binding nature, it serves as a moral and legal benchmark, inspiring advocacy and legal frameworks worldwide. However, challenges remain in its implementation, as cultural and political differences sometimes hinder its full realisation.²⁷

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights serves as a universal benchmark for all nations and peoples, aiming to ensure that every person and every part of society, by consistently remembering the Declaration, works through education and teaching to foster respect for these rights and freedoms. Through gradual steps at both national and international levels, it seeks to achieve widespread and meaningful recognition and adherence to these principles, both within the populations of Member States and in the territories they govern.²⁸

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) aligns with John Locke's human rights theory in its advocacy for the inherent dignity and equality of individuals. Locke's emphasis on natural rights- life, liberty, and property- forms a philosophical foundation reflected in the UDHR's provisions, such as the right to life, liberty, and security of person (Article 3) and the right to own property (Article 17).²⁹

John Locke Developed the John Locke's Theory of Human Rights that every human being has certain rights that derive from their own nature and not from their government or its

²⁷ McNeilly, "'If Only for a Day': The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Anniversary Commemoration and International Human Rights Law," 3.

²⁸ United Nations. *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)*, 3.

²⁹ Ibid.

laws. The legitimacy of government, in fact, rested on the respect that it afforded these natural rights.³⁶ This gives rise to the four types of rights;

- i. Natural Rights - human beings are born with some inherent rights.
- ii. Moral Rights - rights that relate to equitable and fair legal standards.
- iii. Fundamental Rights -
the most fundamental and crucial rights for the enjoyment of humanity.
- iv. Legal Rights - rights that are outlined by law.

Where one's rights and freedom end, another person's own starts. So then, the accusations are human rights issues that ought to be critically looked at and interrogated.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and John Locke's Human Rights Theory share foundational principles that emphasize the inherent dignity and equality of all individuals. Locke's theory, articulated in his 1690 *Two Treatises of Government*, posits that individuals possess natural rights—life, liberty, and property—that are inalienable and must be protected by governments.³⁰ These ideas significantly influenced the development of modern human rights frameworks, including the UDHR, which enshrines similar principles in its articles, such as the right to life (Article 3) and the right to own property (Article 17).³¹

Both Locke's theory and the UDHR advocate for the protection of individual freedoms and the establishment of governance systems that uphold these rights. Locke's concept of the social contract, where governments derive legitimacy from their ability to protect natural

³⁰ Przetacznik, "Individual Human Rights in John Locke's *Two Treatises*," 200.

³¹ United Nations. *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)*, 6.

rights, resonates with the UDHR's emphasis on justice and equality as prerequisites for peace and freedom.³² However, while Locke's theory was limited in its scope, primarily addressing the rights of European men, the UDHR expands these principles to a universal scale, affirming the rights of all individuals regardless of race, gender, or nationality.

Employing the concepts from John Locke's human rights theory and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in the context of witchcraft accusations emphasizes the need to uphold the inherent dignity and rights of individuals within communities. Locke's principles of inalienable rights, such as life and liberty, along with the UDHR's advocacy for freedom from discrimination and the right to a fair trial (Articles 3 and 7 respectively), can challenge the unjust treatment and ostracism faced by accused individuals.³³ These frameworks are applied in this study to emphasize the implications of witchcraft accusations on safeguarding human rights against cultural practices that perpetuate fear, suspicion, and social fragmentation. It highlights the potential for these universal principles to foster justice and equity, promoting societal harmony and accountability in addressing witchcraft accusations.

In this study, John Locke's Human Rights Theory and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) are not only outlined as background but are actively applied as analytical tools. The frameworks are used in Chapter Four to assess the ethical implications of witchcraft accusations within the selected neo-prophetic ministries, particularly in relation to the rights to dignity, privacy, and life. By comparing the practices of public shaming,

³² Przetacznik, "Individual Human Rights in John Locke's *Two Treatises*," 200.

³³Ibid.

defamation, and mishandling of sensitive information against the standards of Locke's inalienable rights and the UDHR's universal principles, the study demonstrates where these ministries fall short of upholding human rights. In Chapter Five, the same frameworks inform the recommendations, ensuring that proposed pastoral care, reconciliation, and community education strategies align with respect for human dignity and justice.

1.8 Scope of Study

The study focuses specifically on the ethical issues surrounding witchcraft accusations within neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana. While witchcraft-related accusations can be found in the broader Christian community and among Pentecostal and prophetic movements worldwide, Ghana provides a particularly relevant context because of the enduring influence of witchcraft beliefs in everyday life³⁴. Neo-prophetic churches in Ghana are especially known for their strong emphasis on spiritual warfare, prophecy, and deliverance practices, which frequently intersect with witchcraft accusations³⁵.

Within this Ghanaian landscape, two ministries, Liberation City Chapel and Empowerment City Chapel, were selected as case studies. These churches are representative of the neo-prophetic strand of Christianity that has become highly visible and influential in urban Ghana, especially among populations seeking spiritual explanations for social and personal challenges³⁶. They were also chosen because of their active engagement in prophetic revelations and deliverance practices, which are central to the dynamics of witchcraft accusations. Focusing on these ministries therefore makes it possible to examine the ethical

³⁴ Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism*, 75.

³⁵ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 120.

³⁶ Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*, 50.

challenges of witchcraft accusations within a concrete setting while generating insights that speak to broader neo-prophetic practices in Ghana.

1.9 Delimitation of the Study

This study is delimited in several ways. First, it focuses only on two neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana- Liberation City Chapel and Empowerment City Chapel, although witchcraft accusations may be found in other Pentecostal or charismatic churches within Ghana and across Africa. Second, the study concentrates specifically on the ethical issues associated with witchcraft accusations, rather than providing a comprehensive theological or biblical validation of witchcraft beliefs. Third, the participants are limited to selected leaders and members of the two churches; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana. Finally, while the study engages human rights theory as its analytical framework, it does not attempt a detailed legal analysis of Ghanaian constitutional law or international human rights treaties.

1.10 Organisation of the Study

This study is divided into five main chapters. The first chapter deals with the introductory issues, which include the background of the study, statement of research problem, research methodology, theoretical framework, research questions and objectives, as well as literature review. The second chapter focuses on the /witchcraft accusation phenomenon, grounding it within the African and the Churches' understanding of it. This chapter further focuses on the ethical and moral challenges of these accusations. It critically examines issues of morality, ethics, and human rights. The third chapter presents the phenomenon under study from the perspective of the leaders of Liberation City Church and

Empowerment City Chapel. The fourth chapter then engages the data using the human rights theory. The final chapter is a summary, conclusion and recommendations.

1.11 Significance of the Study

This study contributes significantly to the listed factors below.

1. This study gives an insight into the ethical issues that arise with witchcraft accusations within the church.
2. It helps present the church the opportunity to ascertain the problems of witchcraft accusations and provides recommendations on how to handle the subject matter and find appropriate responses to the phenomenon.
3. The study adds to the body of scholarly knowledge and may serve as a good source of credible reference for further studies in the field.

1.12 Conclusion

In conclusion, Chapter One has established the background, problem statement, objectives, research questions, methodology, and theoretical framework of this study. It has further situated the research within the broader discourse on neo-prophetic ministries and the ethical concerns surrounding witchcraft accusations. Having justified the relevance of this research and defined its scope, the study now turns in Chapter Two to an exploration of witchcraft in Ghanaian society, grounding the phenomenon within its cultural and religious contexts.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CONCEPT OF WITCHCRAFT IN GHANAIAAN SOCIETY

2.1 Introduction

Perceptions of witchcraft and witches have been a vital part of many societies, with Ghana being no exception. This chapter first explores the lifestyles of witches in Ghanaian society by examining beliefs, cultural practices, and societal attitudes toward this phenomenon. Secondly, this chapter explores the meaning and expertise of witchcraft within the context of the indigenous Ghanaian way of life by inspecting its historical roots, cultural importance, and function within the lives of Ghanaian humans. The belief in witchcraft in the Ghanaian society is encouraged by knowledge that shapes how Ghanaians view this phenomenon. Also, this chapter explores the underlying understanding that fuels the Ghanaian angle of witchcraft and examines its cultural, religious, and historical dimensions. Ghanaian society is rich in cultural ideals and practices that contribute to the understanding of witchcraft. Traditional folklore, oral traditions, and indigenous religious structures have considerably shaped this expertise. Witchcraft activities in Ghanaian society are often attributed to diverse events believed to be prompted by supernatural powers. Again, this chapter explores occasions that are usually related to witchcraft activities in Ghana, analysing the cultural, social, and historical contexts in which these attributions occur. In Ghanaian society, the identity of witches is a complex procedure involving various strategies rooted in cultural, religious, and traditional ideals. Above all, this chapter explores the exclusive ways in which witches are recognised in Ghana by inspecting the practices, signs, symptoms, and rituals related to witch identification. The

remedy of accused witches in Ghanaian society has been marked by the use of numerous practices, ranging from social ostracism to physical abuse and even acts of violence. The text provides empirical examples of how accused witches have been handled in unique areas of Ghana, highlighting the bad results of societal ideals and cultural practices.

2.2 Witchcraft in Ghana

Ghanaian society holds a deep-rooted notion of witchcraft. This notion is deeply ingrained within the cultural fabric and transcends socioeconomic and academic backgrounds. The perception of witchcraft is not always limited to rural regions but extends to urban groups as well. This belief manifests itself in various paperwork, from conventional folklore to current religious practices. The belief in witchcraft in Ghana can be traced back to pre-colonial instances, while indigenous non-secular beliefs and practices were popular. Traditional religious structures, together with Akan, Ewe, and Ga, have integrated the ideas of witchcraft and witches into their cosmologies. These beliefs have been further reinforced by oral traditions, proverbs, and folktales, which depict the existence of witches and their supernatural powers. The belief in witchcraft has had a profound impact on Ghanaian society. Accusations of witchcraft can result in intense social stigma and ostracisation of people suspected of being witches. Sometimes, these accusations resulted in violence, witch trials, and even killings. This societal concern and suspicion surrounding witchcraft have fuelled the perpetuation of these beliefs across generations. Ghana is a deeply spiritual country with Christianity and Islam as its dominant religion. Interestingly, these religious traditions have also incorporated beliefs into witchcraft and witches. While some Christian denominations actively denounce witchcraft as a form of evil, others have adopted an extra-syncretic technique that blends traditional beliefs with Christianity. This syncretism

allowed the coexistence of witchcraft beliefs in spiritual practices. The Ghanaian government took steps to address problems associated with witchcraft accusations. In 2017, the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection set up a shelter for alleged witches in the northern region, offering a haven for those accused of witchcraft. This initiative acknowledges the life of witchcraft-related troubles and aims to guard the rights of people tormented by such accusations.

Witchcraft in Ghana is deeply rooted in indigenous spiritual systems. The belief in witchcraft predates the arrival of colonial powers and has been an indispensable part of Ghanaian tradition for hundreds of years. Indigenous ethnic corporations, along with Akan, Ewe, and Ga, have particular interpretations and conceptualisations of witchcraft that have been passed down through generations. In the indigenous Ghanaian way of life, witchcraft is perceived as a supernatural phenomenon that involves people possessing mystical powers to control spiritual forces and damage others. Witchcraft is frequently visible as poor pressure that disrupts the concord within groups and can cause misfortune, illness, and even loss of life. The belief in witchcraft stems from the understanding that individuals can faucet supernatural powers and use them for precise or malevolent purposes. Witchcraft in the Ghanaian subculture enlarged beyond the individual level and embodied wider social dynamics. Belief in witchcraft serves as a mechanism for explaining unexplained occurrences and misfortune within communities. It can also act as a social management mechanism, influencing behaviour and fostering a sense of responsibility within the community. Fear of witchcraft can discourage people from engaging in dangerous moves and promote social cohesion. Traditional healers, called "witch medical doctors" or "herbalists," play a significant role in indigenous Ghanaian culture. These

healers possess specialized information on the religious forces and herbal treatments that they use to counteract the results of witchcraft and repair stability inside individuals and groups. Indigenous recovery practices frequently include rituals, services, and spiritual consultations to diagnose and address problems associated with witchcraft. The perception of witchcraft maintains its persistence in current Ghanaian society, regardless of the influence of modernisation and Western cultural influences. Many Ghanaians, even individuals who perceive themselves as Christians or Muslims, maintain a belief in witchcraft and often combine conventional ideals into their spiritual practices. This syncretism displays the adaptability and resilience of indigenous cultural beliefs in the face of external impact.

Cultural narratives depict witches as people possessing supernatural powers and tasty in malevolent moves, which enhances Ghanaians' beliefs in witchcraft.³⁷ The historical context of Ghana, along with its pre-colonial spiritual systems and conventional non-secular practices, has contributed to witchcraft expertise. Indigenous ethnic companies, together with the Akan, Ewe, and Ga, have precise interpretations of witchcraft and have passed them through generations. This historic continuity provides a foundation for the perception of witchcraft and shapes how Ghanaians perceive and interpret their manifestations.³⁸ Religion performs an essential function in shaping Ghanaian witchcraft information. Ghana has religiously large Christian and Islam as the dominant faith. In some Christian denominations, witchcraft is visible as an evil force related to Satan, promoting a poor belief in witchcraft among their followers. Conversely, some syncretic religious

³⁷ Owusu-Ansah, "Role of Circle Women," 3.

³⁸ Gyekye, *African Cultural Values*, 45.

practices blend traditional beliefs with Christianity, taking into consideration the greater nuanced knowledge of witchcraft that contains both indigenous and Christian elements.³⁹ Fear and rationalisation of misfortune contribute to Ghanaian expertise in witchcraft. Witchcraft is regularly associated with unexpected illnesses, injuries, or different calamities within communities. The notion of witchcraft explains these activities, attributing them to the actions of malevolent individuals with supernatural powers. This know-how fuels the concern and suspicion surrounding witchcraft and impacts how Ghanaians understand their lifestyles.⁴⁰ The broader societal context further shapes the Ghanaian knowledge of witchcraft. Accusations of witchcraft and the resulting social stigma have profound consequences on individuals. The fear of being categorized as a witch or being tormented by witchcraft shapes the collective notion and reinforces beliefs in life. This societal impact perpetuates witchcraft information and its perceived impact on both individuals and communities.

One of the activities often attributed to witchcraft in Ghana is the incidence of unexplained illness and death. When individuals fall sick or die for an obvious reason, it is frequently believed to be the end result of witchcraft. Ghanaians attribute these events to the malevolent actions of witches who are thought to have the capacity to damage others via supernatural means.⁴¹ Misfortunes and calamities, including injuries, financial losses, and natural disasters, are frequently associated with witchcraft activities in Ghanaian society. When people or communities experience unexpected hardships or face giant setbacks, these activities are attributed to witches' movements. The prevalence of such misfortune

³⁹ Meyer, “If You Are a Devil,” 120.

⁴⁰ Geschiere, *The Modernity of Witchcraft*, 55.

⁴¹ Owusu-Ansah, “Role of Circle Women,” 4.

reinforces the notion of witchcraft and gas suspicions within a community.⁴² In some cases, witchcraft is believed to be responsible for relationship problems and marital dissatisfaction. When couples experience difficulties, conflicts, or a breakdown in their relationships, this may be attributed to the impact of witchcraft. These attributions arise from the belief that witches can control feelings and sow discord within households and intimate relationships.⁴³ In an agrarian society, including Ghana, crop failures and livestock deaths have significant economic implications. When farmers face unexpected crop losses or the death of their farm animals, they may be frequently associated to witchcraft activities. These occasions are considered intentional acts of sabotage by using witches to cause damage and disrupt the livelihoods of individuals and communities.⁴⁴ Various unusual and supernatural occurrences have been attributed to witchcraft. These can include unusual sightings, unexplained noise, mysterious gadgets, or paranormal phenomena. Ghanaians often partner these events with witches or their attempts to talk about or exert their impact inside the bodily world.⁴⁵ One commonplace approach for identifying witches in Ghana is through accusations and testimonies. Accusations may stem from folks who claim to have witnessed skilled supernatural occurrences or damage due to a witch. Testimonies are regularly given by those who believe they have been victims of witchcraft or who have found suspicious conduct in people suspected of being witches.⁴⁶ Divination and non-secular consultations are broadly used to identify witches in Ghanaian society. Traditional healers, referred to as

⁴² Gyekye, *African Cultural Values*, 7.

⁴³ Geschiere, *The Modernity of Witchcraft*, 9.

⁴⁴ Owusu-Ansah, "Role of Circle Women," 4.

⁴⁵ Gyekye, *African Cultural Values*, 18.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

"witch medical doctors" or "herbalists," use various divinatory techniques to determine the presence of witchcraft or the identity of witches. This may also involve the use of gadgets along with shells, bones, or cards or the interpretation of goals and visions.⁴⁷ Ordeals and rituals were used to become aware of witches in a few instances. These rituals often contain bodily ordeals that consist of the accused being subjected to painful exams, trials with the aid of fire, or immersion in water. It is believed that the outcome of these rituals can screen the guilt or innocence of the accused, primarily based on the perception that witches are unable to face the physical or spiritual needs of the ordeal.⁴⁸ Confession plays a significant role in identifying witches in Ghanaian society. Suspected individuals can be subjected to severe thinking, pressure, or even torture, which can extract confessions. Additionally, the identity of accomplices or individuals who are believed to collaborate with witches can contribute to the identity system. These accomplices are visible as helping and abetting witches in malevolent activities.⁴⁹ Individuals' behaviours and moves are often scrutinized as potential signs of witchcraft. Unusual behaviour, eccentricities, isolation, or strange physical features can be interpreted as signs of witchcraft. Moreover, the social stigma surrounding certain people, including elderly girls and marginalized individuals, can contribute to their identification as witches based on societal stereotypes.⁵⁰

2.2.1 The ordeal of Accused Witches

Accused witches frequently face social ostracism and stigmatisation within their communities. They may be excluded from social sports, denied access to communal assets,

⁴⁷ Owusu-Ansah, "Role of Circle Women," 4.

⁴⁸ Geschiere, *Modernity of Witchcraft*, 47.

⁴⁹ Owusu-Ansah, "Role of Circle Women," 9.

⁵⁰ Gyekye, *African Cultural Values*, 25.

or forced to stay in isolation. In severe cases, accused witches are banished from their villages and pressured to are seeking for refuge in so-known as "witch camps".⁵¹ These camps are transient settlements in which accused witches seek protection from the societal hostility they encounter. Accused witches in Ghanaian society are subjected to physical abuse and torture. Examples include times when accused witches had been crushed, whipped, or subjected to numerous kinds of corporal punishment in an attempt to extract confessions or force them to leave their groups.⁵² Such acts of violence perpetuate the cycle of abuse and marginalize those accused of witchcraft. Accused witches are frequently subjected to pressured cleansing rituals and exorcism in an attempt to rid them of their alleged witchcraft. These rituals can involve bodily ordeals, which include immersion in water or painful treatment, as well as the recitation of prayers or incantations.⁵³ The intention is to do away with the perceived influence of witchcraft and repair the accused individuals to their "normal" nation. Accused witches in Ghana have sought refuge in witch camps, which might have been temporary settlements installed to shield the ones accused of witchcraft from damage. The camps offer refuge, albeit under hard conditions, to people accused of witchcraft who are unable to find help from their groups. Examples include the Gambaga and Gnani witch camps in the Northern Region of Ghana.⁵⁴

Beliefs about witchcraft and witches continue to be deeply entrenched in Ghanaian society. Despite improvements in schooling and modernisation, these ideals persist throughout numerous social strata. Historical, cultural, and religious factors have all contributed to the

⁵¹ Apt and Grieco, "Witchcraft and the Elderly," 260.

⁵² Adinkrah, "Witchcraft Accusations and Female Homicide," 330.

⁵³ Apt and Grieco, "Witchcraft and the Elderly," 259

⁵⁴ Adinkrah, "Witchcraft Accusations and Female Homicide," 351.

ongoing perception of witchcraft. Acknowledging and expertise in these ideals are essential for promoting social concord, addressing the plight of those accused of witchcraft, and fostering a more inclusive and tolerant Ghana society. For indigenous Ghanaians, witchcraft has a multifaceted meaning, encompassing non-secular, social, and cultural dimensions. It serves as a framework for expertise in the supernatural and explains misfortune inside groups. Belief in witchcraft affects social dynamics, shapes ethical behaviour, and is intertwined with traditional restoration practices.

Despite the conversion of the sociocultural landscape, the significance of witchcraft remains deeply ingrained inside the cloth of the indigenous Ghanaian tradition, reflecting the iconic connection between spirituality, identity, and network. The Ghanaian belief in witchcraft is formed by using a combination of cultural beliefs, historical context, spiritual impact, worry, and societal elements. Indigenous cultural practices, historical continuity, religious teachings, and the translation of misfortune contribute to witchcraft in Ghanaian society. Understanding these underlying elements is important for comprehending the notion of the machine surrounding witchcraft in Ghana and its effect on people and groups. In a nutshell, this section has touched on the concept of witchcraft in the Ghanaian society.

2.3 Witchcraft and African Traditional Religion (ATR)

A significant point of contention between Christianity and traditional African religious practices is the concept of witchcraft. The contention lies in the fact that African Traditional Religion views witchcraft as a complex reality with both positive and negative aspects, while Christianity, particularly Pentecostal and evangelical forms, regards it solely as evil and demonic. In many African societies, witchcraft is deeply intertwined with cultural

understandings of illness, misfortune, and social harmony.⁵⁵ Luka discusses how African Traditional Religion (ATR) views witchcraft as a part of everyday life, where spiritual forces can be both beneficial and harmful. However, from a Christian perspective, particularly in Pentecostal and evangelical circles, all forms of witchcraft are seen as negative, aligning with demonic forces.⁵⁶

Kananoja and Hokkanen argue that Christianity, especially in its African expressions, struggles to reconcile the reality of witchcraft with its theological foundations. They explain that while the Bible contains passages that reference the existence of spirits and magical practices (e.g., Exodus 22:18, 1 Samuel 28), the interpretation and application of these texts have often been misrepresented, leading to practices that sometimes support violent actions against individuals accused of witchcraft.⁵⁷ Sanou calls for a more nuanced understanding of the African context in Christian theology to better address these issues without perpetuating harm.⁵⁸

2.4 The Concept of “Bayie”

Ghanaian society holds a deep-rooted believe in the existence of witchcraft. This notion is deeply ingrained within the cultural fabric and transcends socioeconomic and academic backgrounds. The perception of witchcraft is not always limited to rural regions but extends to urban groups as well. This belief manifests itself in various paperwork, from conventional folklore to current religious practices. The belief in witchcraft in Ghana can

⁵⁵ Luka, “Spiritual Warfare in Africa,” 1.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Kananoja and Hokkanen, “Christianity, Witchcraft, Magic, and Healing,” 429.

⁵⁸ Sanou, “Witchcraft Accusations,” 41.

be traced back to pre-colonial instances, while indigenous non-secular beliefs and practices were popular.⁵⁹ Traditional religious structures, together with Akan, Ewe, and Ga, have integrated the ideas of witchcraft and witches into their cosmologies. These beliefs have been further reinforced by oral traditions, proverbs, and folktales, which depict the existence of witches and their supernatural powers. The belief in witchcraft has had a profound impact on Ghanaian society.

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⁵⁹ Owusu, "Witchcraft Imputations," 115.

⁶⁰ Abukari, *Gendered Injustice?*, 1.

"witch medical doctors" or "herbalists," play a significant role in indigenous Ghanaian culture. These healers possess specialized information on the religious forces and herbal treatments that they use to counteract the results of witchcraft and repair stability inside individuals and groups. Indigenous recovery practices frequently include rituals, services, and spiritual consultations to diagnose and address problems associated with witchcraft. The perception of witchcraft maintains its persistence in current Ghanaian society regardless of the influence of modernisation and Western cultural influences. Many Ghanaians, even individuals who perceive themselves as Christians or Muslims, maintain a belief in witchcraft and often combine conventional ideals into their spiritual practices. This syncretism displays the adaptability and resilience of indigenous cultural beliefs in the face of external impact.

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⁶¹ Owusu-Ansah, "Role of Circle Women," 4.

⁶² Gyekye, *African Cultural Values*, 45.

promoting a poor belief in witchcraft among their fans. Conversely, some syncretic religious practices blend traditional beliefs with Christianity, taking into consideration the greater nuanced knowledge of witchcraft that contains both indigenous and Christian elements.⁶³ Fear and rationalisation of misfortune contribute to Ghanaian expertise in witchcraft. Witchcraft is regularly associated with unexpected illnesses, injuries, or different calamities within communities. The notion of witchcraft explains these activities, attributing them to the actions of malevolent individuals with supernatural powers. This know-how fuels the concern and suspicion surrounding witchcraft and impacts how Ghanaians understand their lifestyles.⁶⁴ The broader societal context further shapes the Ghanaian knowledge of witchcraft. Accusations of witchcraft and the resulting social stigma have profound consequences on individuals. The fear of being categorized as a witch or being tormented by witchcraft shapes the collective notion and reinforces beliefs in life. This societal impact perpetuates witchcraft information and its perceived impact on both individuals and communities.

In Akan society, the term “bayie” denotes the conviction in witchcraft or other paranormal abilities that can be used for either good or bad. Mostly found in Ghana and the Ivory Coast, the Akan people have a sophisticated view of “bayie” that is distinct from Western ideas of witchcraft.⁶⁵ For example, a person who employs “bayie” to heal the ill or keep their community safe is honored as a spiritual leader in Akan culture. A traditional healer, for instance, is seen as a strong and smart person who can identify therapeutic plants by using

⁶³ Meyer, “If You Are a Devil,” 120.

⁶⁴ Geschiere, *Modernity of Witchcraft*, 47.

⁶⁵ Opokuwaa, *Quest for Spiritual Transformation*, 58.

“bayie” to communicate with the spirits of the forest.⁶⁶ On the opposite side, someone who use “bayie” to hurt or deceive people for their own benefit is shunned and feared. A wicked witch, for instance, would be someone who used “bayie” to inflict disease or bad luck on an adversary or rival.⁶⁷

The Akan conception of “bayie” is closely related to their conception of the cosmos and the interdependence of all things. According to popular belief, “bayie” can be utilized to uphold justice, punish wrongdoing, and preserve harmony and balance in the world. For instance, rather than using violence or legal action to settle disagreements, some Akan communities adopt “bayie”, a spiritual method of conflict resolution.⁶⁸ “Bayie” has frequently been misinterpreted and distorted by foreigners despite its significance in Akan culture. The old Akan beliefs have been suppressed due to colonialism and Christianity, and “bayie” has been vilified as "black magic" or "witchcraft." During the colonial era, for instance, Akan spiritual leaders who utilized “bayie” were hunted and stigmatized as "witches" by British conquerors.⁶⁹

Nonetheless, there has been a rise of interest in Akan spirituality and culture in recent years, and initiatives have been undertaken to redefine and reclaim “bayie” in a positive way. For instance, some contemporary Akan spiritual leaders are promoting a more positive perception of Akan spirituality by utilising social media to inform people about the real significance and meaning of “bayie”. Accusations of witchcraft can result in intense social

⁶⁶ Gyekye, *African Cultural Values*, 45.

⁶⁷ Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 120.

⁶⁸ Wiredu, *Cultural Universals and Particulars*, 78.

⁶⁹ Asante, *History of Africa*, 53.

stigma and ostracisation of people suspected of being witches. Sometimes, these accusations resulted in violence, witch trials, and even killings.

Stereotypes and misconceptions surround the concept of "bayie" in contemporary African societies. Due to its frequent association with "witchcraft" or "black magic," "bayie" is widely misinterpreted and condemned. Nevertheless, attempts are being undertaken to rejuvenate and reframe the meaning of this age-old spiritual framework, which is still essential to traditional traditions. The idea that "bayie" is connected to wicked or malicious activities is one of the most common misconceptions about it. This false belief originates from Christian and colonial influences that denigrated African spiritual traditions. But in actuality, "bayie" is a complicated idea with many facets that includes both good and bad elements. As well as being used for damage and manipulation, this spiritual force can also be used for community development, healing, and protection. The idea that "bayie" are backward or superstitious is another misconception. This idea ignores the depth and complexity of African spiritual systems, which have been developed over many years. A complex and contextualized ritual, "bayie" is ingrained in African customs and civilisations.

Furthermore, stigmatisation and gender stereotypes are reinforced by the frequent association of "bayie" with women. This gendered misperception ignores the fact that "bayie" is a spiritual ability that all sexes are capable of using. In spite of these false beliefs, "bayie" is still very popular in modern African countries. Many Africans are rediscovering and reframing "bayie" as a source of cultural pride and identity, particularly the younger generation. Modern healing modalities including herbalism and spiritual therapy are adapting and incorporating "bayie".

To further encourage awareness, education, and rebranding of “bayie”, digital platforms and social media are also being used. By using these resources, African spiritual leaders and practitioners are dispelling myths, promoting the benefits of “bayie”, and sharing their knowledge. To sum up, the notion of “bayie” in African civilisations is intricate and multidimensional. There is a need to correct misunderstandings, advance comprehension, and resurrect the relevance of “bayie”. We may strive toward a more inclusive and accurate understanding of “bayie” by having candid conversations, elevating African voices, and encouraging cultural renewal. In the end, this will help us comprehend African cultures and traditions more deeply and help us recognise the diversity and depth of African spiritual systems.

2.4.1 The Stool as A Source of ‘Witchcraft.’

During a durbar, a notable Ghanaian chief openly described himself as “bayifo”, attributing this unique status to the spiritual power invested in him through the stool he occupies⁷⁰. He shared that, with this role, he is endowed with a heightened sense of perception, deep knowledge, and a formidable spiritual authority. As an Akan, deeply rooted in the cultural meanings of this term, he may understand “bayifo” in a way that transcends its conventional association with "witchcraft" or "witch." Instead, his perspective might draw on a more nuanced interpretation—linking it to the term “bayie”, which translates to "you have come well," suggesting that he views this title as signifying an honorable spiritual empowerment rather than malevolent intent.

⁷⁰ TikTok. “TikTok - Make Your Day.” TikTok. Accessed August 28, 2025. <https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMA2jG37V/>

This interpretation could reflect a return to historical views of “bayifo”, who were once celebrated within the community as gifted individuals with rare abilities. These individuals were not feared or shunned but rather appreciated for their healing powers, insights, and premonitions, all of which served a protective or benevolent role within society. In this sense, the chief’s identification as a “bayifo” may be less about supernatural threat and more about embracing a revered spiritual role that emphasizes wisdom, foresight, and healing—a legacy that has deep cultural roots in Akan history.

2.5 The Social Impact of Witchcraft Accusations in Christian Communities

The social implications of Christianity's stance on witchcraft are significant.⁷¹ Examine the rise in witchcraft accusations in African communities and the role that Christian churches play in either mitigating or exacerbating these accusations. Their research shows that while some churches offer protection and deliverance to those accused of witchcraft, others fuel suspicion and fear by emphasising spiritual warfare and the power of evil spirits. This has led to a troubling rise in witchcraft-related violence in certain areas, particularly against women, children, and the elderly.

In contrast, some Christian organisations have begun to work towards addressing the harmful effects of witchcraft accusations. Briggs and Whittaker, and White explore the efforts of church-led initiatives to protect vulnerable individuals accused of witchcraft, particularly in regions where traditional practices of dealing with suspected witches, such as banishment or even execution, are still prevalent.⁷² Sanou argues that churches have a

⁷¹ Asamoah-Gyadu, “Witchcraft Accusations and Christianity,” 25.

⁷² Briggs and Whittaker, “Protecting Children from Faith-Based Abuse,” 2160.

moral responsibility to offer a message of reconciliation and healing rather than condemnation, emphasising the Christian values of compassion and justice.⁷³

2.6 The Murder of Konjit Duut

In 2023, Konjit Duut, a 60-year-old woman, was killed by beating after being accused of witchcraft in Bunbuna, located within the Yunyoo/Nasuani district of Ghana's North East Region. Family members reported that some community members had summoned her after one person claimed he had seen her in a dream attempting to harm him.⁷⁴

According to her family, Konjit was attacked while on her way to inform relatives in a neighbouring village about the accusation against her. This incident occurred shortly after the Parliament of Ghana passed the Criminal Offences Amendment Bill, 2022, which makes it a crime to accuse someone of witchcraft, on July 27, 2023. It also followed a similar case in June, which nearly ignited tribal conflict in the district.

In an interview with JoyNews, Jacob Kauk, Konjit's brother, stated that the family demanded the arrest and prosecution of those responsible. He also mentioned that they would not proceed with her burial until their demands were met. Although the Police confirmed the incident, they did not disclose further details.

The community chief condemned the attack and assured that the law would be upheld. Accusations of witchcraft and related violence are still common in the North East Region, where many women remain separated from their families due to such accusations.⁷⁵

⁷³ Sanou, "Witchcraft Accusations," 41.

⁷⁴ Tanko, "Woman, 60, Accused of Witchcraft." <https://www.myjoyonline.com/woman-60-accused-of-witchcraft-beaten-to-death-at-bunbuna/>

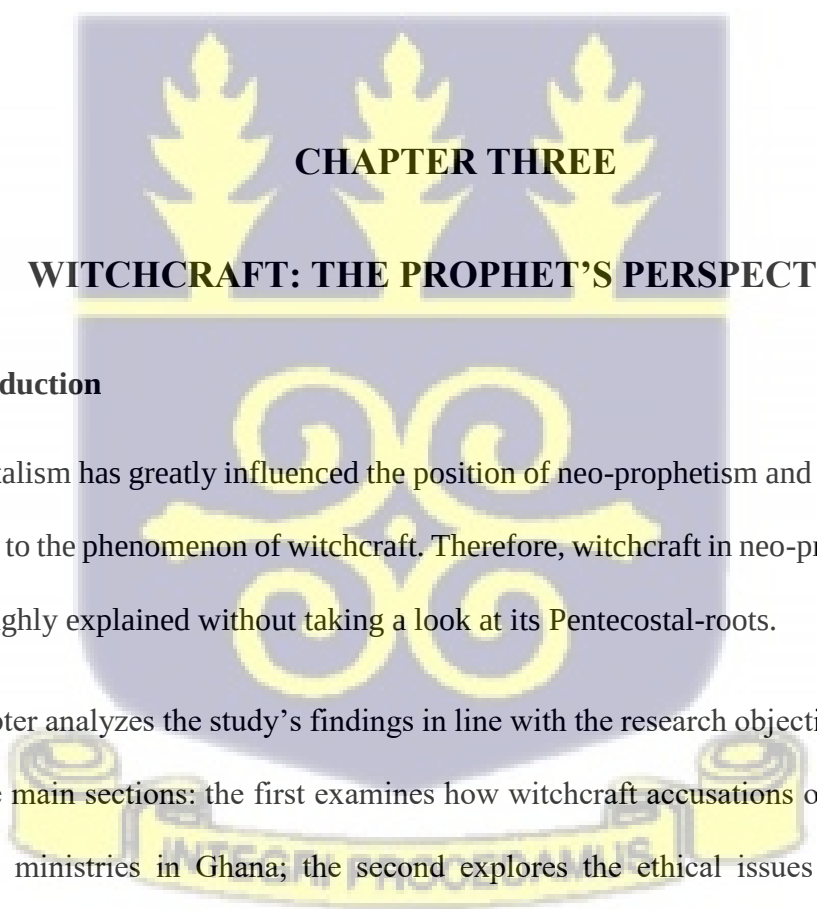
⁷⁵ Igwe, *The Witch Is Not a Witch*, 45.

2.6 Conclusion

Although witchcraft is not exclusive to Africa, it is a particularly sensitive issue because it is deeply rooted in people's worldviews. Any solution that focuses solely on socio-economic factors without addressing the cosmological perspective of people may not fully eliminate witchcraft accusations prevalent in many societies today. Therefore, the church's role is crucial in both challenging the worldview that sustains belief in witchcraft and shaping African attitudes towards those who are confessed, suspected, and accused of witchcraft. In general, churches have either outrightly denied the existence of witchcraft or taken extreme measures, often engaging in questionable acts under the guise of casting out demons.

In conclusion, witchcraft in Ghana remains a deeply embedded religio-cultural phenomenon that shapes social relations and influences Christian responses. While indigenous cosmologies continue to sustain these beliefs, the Christian faith, particularly Pentecostal and neo-prophetic expressions, has intensified debates around witchcraft and accusations. This chapter has shown how cultural, historical, and theological perspectives inform understandings of witchcraft and has highlighted the social consequences of accusations. The next chapter considers how prophets and neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana interpret witchcraft and respond to it within their theological frameworks.



The background of the page features a large, faint watermark of the University of Ghana crest. The crest is a shield with a purple field. The upper portion of the shield contains three golden palm trees. The lower portion contains a golden stylized symbol resembling a cross or a four-lobed flower. Below the shield is a golden scroll with text that is partially obscured but appears to read 'UNIVERSITY OF GHANA'.

CHAPTER THREE

WITCHCRAFT: THE PROPHET'S PERSPECTIVE

3.1 Introduction

Pentecostalism has greatly influenced the position of neo-prophetism and their world-view as related to the phenomenon of witchcraft. Therefore, witchcraft in neo-prophetism cannot be thoroughly explained without taking a look at its Pentecostal-roots.

This chapter analyzes the study's findings in line with the research objectives. It is divided into three main sections: the first examines how witchcraft accusations occur within neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana; the second explores the ethical issues raised by these accusations; and the third discusses possible ways of addressing these ethical concerns

within neo-prophetic practice. The following section presents an analysis of the first objectives.

3.2 The Christian Position on the Subject of Witchcraft

The Christian position on witchcraft has shifted over time, from the traditional view that justified harsh punishments such as burning, hanging, banishment, or imprisonment (as seen in the Salem witch trials), to the more recent perspective, influenced by missionaries, that treats witchcraft as either a myth or non-existent. For example, Merz corroborates this by asserting that missionaries have typically responded to witchcraft beliefs by either rejecting their existence or labeling them as evil.⁷⁶ Contemporary cultural anthropology reveals that, particularly within Pentecostalism, these beliefs are often associated with the devil, forming part of a moral dualism. Despite this demonisation, belief in so-called "good witchcraft" persists, although it is stigmatized and largely ignored within church settings.⁷⁷

It should thus be noted that there are disparate positions on the concept of witchcraft even in modern Christian dispensations.

African forms of Christianity have long been shaped not only by biblical concepts of Satan, demons, and evil spirits, but also by traditional beliefs about the origins and causes of evil, including witchcraft.⁷⁸ Mainstream churches worldwide have consistently held that practices involving calling on various spirits (other than God) or the dead, whether directly or indirectly, for personal gain are incompatible with the Christian faith and fall under

⁷⁶ Merz, "I Am a Witch in the Holy Spirit," 205.

⁷⁷ Merz, "I Am a Witch in the Holy Spirit," 210.

⁷⁸ Asamoah-Gyadu, "Witchcraft Accusations and Christianity in Africa," 25.

idolatry. A Christian cannot invoke a spiritual power separate from their faith in the one true God without engaging in idolatry.⁷⁹

According to Kroesbergen-Kamps, while few studies explicitly place witchcraft research within the ontological turn, recent scholarship has begun to take witchcraft more seriously. He asserts that one way to approach this is by recognising the harm experienced by those who fear witchcraft, a reality often ignored by both scholars and African governments.⁸⁰ Many states still enforce colonial-era laws that criminalize witchcraft practices, accusations of witchcraft, and traditional methods of addressing it. He further argues that for state institutions, the harm felt by those who believe they are victims of witchcraft is invisible, leaving them without protection or justice.⁸¹ Similarly, Christian mission churches have long denied the existence of witchcraft, which, he contends, is a factor in the rising popularity of Pentecostal churches in Africa. These churches, in contrast, acknowledge evil spiritual forces and offer both protection and restoration.

However, Sanou emphasizes that some Christians' views on witchcraft and witchcraft accusations can inadvertently elevate the belief in the power of witchcraft over God's power, and in doing so, they also promote the broader principles of African Traditional Religion (ATR).⁸² African Independent Churches (AIC) and Charismatic Movements emphasize the African traditional worldview in their handling of witchcraft. The AIC's believes that there is witchcraft but the blood of Jesus has overcome them.⁸³ It has been

⁷⁹ Udelhoven, "Seeing Witchcraft," 130.

⁸⁰ Kroesbergen-Kamps, "Witchcraft after Modernity," 865.

⁸¹ ter Haar, *Imagining Evil*, 3.

⁸² Sanou, "Witchcraft Accusations," 35.

⁸³ Asamoah-Gyadu, "Witchcraft Accusations," 25.

noted that, in many instances, the authority of preachers and pastoral caregivers is judged by their ability to identify and fend off demons, which are thought to be sent by witches. Certain biblical passages, such as Micah 5:11, Acts 8:2-5, and Revelation 9:20-21, are sometimes cited to justify the physical elimination of individuals accused of witchcraft.⁸⁴ Moreover, some preachers not only affirm the existence of witchcraft but also argue that its power can be harnessed for good, suggesting that it should not be condemned as entirely evil.⁸⁵

Wyk notes that the early church relied on Exodus 22:18 and Deuteronomy 18:10 to support its stance against witchcraft. However, a closer analysis reveals that these texts have often been mistranslated or taken out of context. In both passages, the verb *kisheph* refers to "practicing magical arts," while the phrase *'ishshaba'alath-'obh* in 1 Samuel 28:7 refers to "a woman with a familiar spirit" or one who practices necromancy.⁸⁶ According to Olusakin, the church must acknowledge the African concept of witchcraft in biblical terms, especially as exegetes, theologians, and missiologists interpret texts that are often cited to justify the death penalty for witches.⁸⁷ In the New Testament, there appears to be no direct reference to witchcraft, but many churches, especially Pentecostal ones, have based their theology against witches on the concepts of demonic possession and exorcism. Unfortunately, some untrained pastors, lacking a clear understanding of the original



⁸⁴ Baloyi, "Christian Church's Response," 6.

⁸⁵ Dovlo, "Witchcraft in Contemporary Ghana," 75.

⁸⁶ Van Wyk, "African Witchcraft," 1205.

⁸⁷ Olusakin, "Attitude Towards Witchcraft," 122.

meanings of biblical texts, have merged the Christian idea of demon possession with traditional beliefs in witchcraft, resulting in what has been termed "witch demonology".⁸⁸

3.3 Theological Perspectives on Witchcraft in Christianity

The relationship between Christianity and witchcraft has long been fraught with tension. Historically, Christian responses to witchcraft have ranged from outright denial of its existence to demonisation.⁸⁹ Highlights that early Christian missionaries often sought to either discredit or demonise witchcraft, treating it as inherently evil and incompatible with Christian teachings. This reflects a broader theological stance that positions witchcraft within the realm of idolatry and spiritual conflict, as evidenced in the long-standing association between witchcraft and demonic forces.

Gershman, in his study on African Christianity, points out that the condemnation of witchcraft is not universal across all Christian traditions. African Independent Churches (AIC) and Pentecostal movements, in particular, have integrated traditional worldviews into their approach to witchcraft.⁹⁰ While these churches condemn the practice of witchcraft, they also acknowledge its reality and actively engage in spiritual warfare against it. Ngutu and Onyinah explain that in many African Pentecostal settings, the ability of church leaders to identify and combat witchcraft through prayer and deliverance is seen as a mark of their spiritual authority.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Onongha, "Missiological Response," 3.

⁸⁹ Hayes, "Christian Responses," 340.

⁹⁰ Gershman, "Witchcraft Beliefs," 1.

⁹¹ Ngutu, *Witchcraft in Ghana*, 45.

3.4 Pentecostalism and the Demonisation of Witchcraft

Pentecostalism has been at the forefront of addressing witchcraft in African contexts, where belief in spiritual forces remains strong. Biri and Manyonganise contend that although Pentecostals assert that they have made "a complete break from the past," new developments indicate that belief in witches and witchcraft remains deeply rooted within Pentecostal communities.⁹²

Onyinah emphasizes that Pentecostal churches have embraced the concept of demonic possession and exorcism as a key aspect of their theology, which directly influences how they approach witchcraft. Onyinah's research shows that for Pentecostals, witchcraft is not merely a cultural or superstitious belief but a manifestation of evil spiritual forces that need to be confronted through prayer and deliverance.⁹³

According to Adogame, this demonisation of witchcraft is part of a broader Pentecostal worldview that divides the world into a moral dualism of good and evil, where witchcraft is aligned with the forces of darkness.⁹⁴ Note that this framework has led to the stigmatisation of individuals accused of practicing witchcraft, as well as the emergence of "witch-hunting" practices within some Christian communities.⁹⁵ Despite this, beliefs in the possibility of "good witchcraft" – where certain forms of spiritual manipulation are



⁹² Biri and Manyonganise, "Back to Sender," 50.

⁹³ Opoku, "Deliverance as a Way of Confronting Witchcraft in Modern Africa: Ghana as a Case History," 110.

⁹⁴ Adogame, "African New Religious Movements in Diaspora," 435.

⁹⁵ Owusu, "The Superstition That Maims the Vulnerable," 260.

considered benign or protective – persist in some regions, though they are largely ignored or condemned by churches.⁹⁶

3.4.1 Empowerment City Chapel

3.4.1.1 Background

Empowerment City Chapel originated as a prayer fellowship known as "Love Jesus Christian Fellowship," founded by a minister who felt a strong call to gather Christians for prayer and spiritual growth. The minister emphasized the importance of seeking God's face and utilising the prophetic grace in their lives. The transition to Empowerment City Chapel was inspired by a revelation from God, specifically through the scripture Isaiah 62:12, which speaks of God's holy people and emphasizes themes of redemption and being a "sought-out" city. This scripture provided the foundation for the ministry's vision and mission.

The prayer fellowship commenced around 2011, shortly after the founder completed his national service in 2010. With the blessing of his spiritual father, who was then an associate pastor, they launched the prayer fellowship, initially without an official name. Prior outreach initiatives began as early as 2004, focusing on ministering to rural communities through the gospel, medical care, and support for orphans. Eventually, the prayer fellowship evolved into a full-fledged ministry, becoming Empowerment City Chapel, with a mission to empower and redeem people through faith and community support.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Gershman, "Witchcraft Beliefs Around the World," 5.

⁹⁷ Apostle Isaac Nartey Chartey, interviewed by researcher, June 25, 2023 at ECC at 10:00am.

3.4.1.2 Belief Systems or Doctrines and Rituals

- The Ten Pillars of Empowerment City Chapel
- The Truth which is the word of God is our guide and Jesus our lord and personal savior, and the Holy Spirit our comforter.
- The raising of a new generation, determined to draw boundary line between normal Christianity and holy ghost fire brand Christianity
- We are determined to snatch many, if possible all from hell into the kingdom of his beloved son, Jesus Christ. That is the kingdom of life.
- Being Childlike in our faith
- Arriving safely in heaven is our agenda
- Bringing unity into the body of Christ. Building the youth in the fear of God, and empowering men and women to fulfill their purpose via Christ and the prophetic mandate
- Destroying the denominational curtain that divide us
- Perfecting holiness is our ultimate goal before the coming of our lord Jesus Christ

3.4.2 Liberation City Church

3.4.2.1 Background

Liberation City Church started as a prayer and prophetic fellowship known as Liberation City Fellowship in March 2018 at Social Welfare, Accra Madina. They later moved to Madina Rawlings Circle to establish their base. The fellowship became a full-fledged church in 2021. This led to the change to its current name. Although Neo Prophetic,

Liberation City Church sometimes describes itself as a "Neo Prophetic Church with very strong inclinations to Neo Pentecostalism".⁹⁸

3.4.2.2 Belief System

According to the pastor, the Constitution of Liberation City Church is founded on essential tenets that guide their faith and practice. They believe in the Bible as the inspired Word of God, affirm the existence of one true God in three persons, and recognise humanity's depraved nature, which highlights our need for salvation through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Our faith journey involves repentance, justification, and sanctification, with baptism and the Lord's Supper serving as vital sacraments. We embrace the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit, believe in divine healing, and practice generosity through tithes and offerings. Lastly, we hold fast to the hope of Christ's second coming and the promise of eternal life, shaping our community's mission to share His love and truth with the world.

3.4.3 The Beliefs and Practices of the Church ECC and LCC

3.4.3.1 Rituals & Practices Explanations

3.4.3.1.1 Prayer

The denomination holds firmly to the ritual of prayer as a sacred command to every believer. Prayer is considered a vital practice that strengthens the connection between the individual and the divine. It serves as a means of seeking guidance, expressing gratitude, and presenting supplications to God. Believers are encouraged to engage in both personal and communal prayer, upholding it as a foundational aspect of their spiritual discipline.

⁹⁸ Prophet Emmanuel Owusu Peprah, interviewed by researcher, July 10, 2023 at LCC at 10:00am.

3.4.3.1.2 Akwankyere (Prophetic Directions)

The denomination demonstrates its faith and trust in God by adhering to divine directions received through prophets. Akwankyere, or prophetic guidance, is regarded as a direct communication from God to His people. These instructions may pertain to personal lives, church affairs, or broader spiritual matters. Members believe that obeying such revelations aligns them with God's will and ensures divine blessings.

3.4.3.1.3 Signs and Tokens

The denomination also holds the belief that every event carries symbolic meaning. Signs and tokens are seen as divine methods of communication, conveying messages or warnings from the spiritual realm. These symbols may appear in dreams, visions, or everyday occurrences, and believers are encouraged to discern their meanings through prayer and spiritual insight.

3.4.3.1.4 Fasting

The ritual of fasting is strongly encouraged within the denomination. Believers engage in fasting to discipline their physical bodies and sharpen their spiritual sensitivity. Through this practice, they seek deeper communion with God, purification from worldly distractions, and strength to overcome spiritual battles. Fasting is often accompanied by intense prayer and meditation on Scripture.

3.4.3.1.5 Communion

The denomination practices communion in the form of bread sharing, following the biblical example set by Jesus Christ. This sacred rite symbolizes the believers' participation in the body of Christ and serves as a remembrance of His sacrifice. Additionally, the gathering

of saints, as instructed by the apostles, reinforces fellowship, unity, and collective worship among members.

3.4.3.1.6 Deliverance

The denomination performs exorcisms based on the biblical belief in the existence of spirits that seek to influence or inhabit individuals. Deliverance ministries are conducted to free people from demonic oppression, relying on the authority of Jesus' name and the power of prayer. This practice underscores the belief in spiritual warfare and the triumph of divine power over evil forces.

3.4.4 Comparing of ECC and LCC

3.4.4.1 The Truth: The Word of God and Jesus Christ versus The Bible

Both ECC and LCC uphold Scripture as the supreme guide for faith. ECC, however, emphasizes Jesus Christ as the living Word alongside the Bible, presenting truth as both relational (knowing Christ personally) and doctrinal (Scripture). LCC, in contrast, stresses the Bible's inerrancy and sufficiency as the sole source of divine truth. Thus, while ECC blends Scripture with Christ's revelation, LCC prioritizes the written Word as the ultimate authority.

3.4.4.2 The Moving of a New Generation versus The One True God

ECC focuses on empowering a new generation of believers by engaging youth, adapting worship to cultural shifts, and emphasising innovation while remaining biblical. LCC, however, grounds its theology in the sovereignty and uniqueness of God as the unchanging foundation of Christian life. Both affirm God's centrality, but ECC highlights missional

relevance for the future, whereas LCC stresses doctrinal stability rooted in God's eternal nature.

3.4.4.3 Determination to Snatch Many from Hell Fire versus Man's Depraved Nature

Both ECC and LCC agree that salvation is necessary, but their approaches differ. ECC frames salvation as an urgent rescue mission, fueling evangelism and discipleship to prevent people from eternal judgment. LCC, on the other hand, begins with the doctrine of humanity's fallen nature and original sin, teaching that salvation addresses this depravity through divine intervention. ECC emphasizes action, saving souls immediately, while LCC emphasizes theology, explaining why salvation is needed.

3.4.4.4 Christ-like is Our Hallmark versus The Saviour

ECC defines Christian maturity as Christlikeness—imitating Jesus in humility, service, and love. Discipleship is seen as transformation into the image of Christ. LCC, while also affirming the example of Christ, highlights His role as the atoning Saviour, whose death and resurrection secure redemption. Thus, ECC stresses following Christ's example, while LCC emphasizes being saved by Christ's sacrifice.

3.4.4.5 Arriving Safely in Heaven versus Repentance, Justification, and Sanctification

Both ECC and LCC see salvation as leading to eternal life, but their emphases differ. ECC stresses perseverance in faith as assurance of arriving safely in heaven. LCC, however, presents salvation as a process involving repentance, justification, and sanctification. In short, ECC focuses on the destination (heaven), while LCC details the journey (steps of salvation).

3.4.4.6 Bringing Unity into the Body of Christ versus The Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper

ECC prioritizes breaking denominational barriers and promoting unity among Christians beyond ritual practices. LCC, by contrast, emphasizes the sacraments, baptism and communion, as ordained by Christ and central to fellowship in the church. While ECC stresses unity as a spiritual and ecumenical goal, LCC upholds sacramental practice as a means of reinforcing unity in Christ.

3.4.4.7 Destroying the Denominational Curtain versus Baptism, Gifts, and Fruits of the Holy Spirit

Both ECC and LCC affirm the work of the Holy Spirit, but with different emphases. ECC seeks to dismantle denominational divisions and promote one unified body of Christ across traditions. LCC highlights the Spirit's empowerment through baptism in the Spirit, spiritual gifts, and the fruits of holiness. ECC's focus is structural unity of the Church, while LCC emphasizes experiential spirituality through the Spirit's presence.

3.4.4.8 Standing Together as One Voice to God versus Divine Healing

ECC emphasizes the power of corporate worship, where united voices in prayer and praise release spiritual breakthrough. LCC emphasizes divine healing as a present-day miracle, manifesting God's power over sickness. Both stress the supernatural, but ECC highlights communal prayer as the key force, while LCC underscores individual healing as a sign of God's intervention.

3.4.4.9 One Body in Christ versus The Use of Religious Tangibilities

Both ECC and LCC recognise unity in the body of Christ. ECC emphasizes spiritual unity across diverse backgrounds, celebrating believers' oneness in faith. LCC, however, incorporates tangible elements such as anointing oil, prayer cloths, and holy water as visible signs of God's power. ECC highlights invisible spiritual unity, whereas LCC blends unity with physical instruments of devotion.

3.4.4.10 Perfecting Holiness versus Tithes and Offerings

ECC teaches progressive sanctification, urging believers to pursue holiness as a lifelong journey of obedience and purity. LCC, meanwhile, underscores financial stewardship, where tithes and offerings are seen as essential acts of worship and kingdom investment. ECC focuses on inner transformation, while LCC emphasizes outward expressions of faithfulness through giving.

In conclusion, while both denominations share core Christian beliefs, their emphases differ in that, the Empowerment City Chapel leans toward unity, discipleship, and active mission, whereas the Liberation City Church prioritizes doctrinal precision, sacraments, and charismatic expressions.

3.5 Witchcraft Accusations in Neo-prophetic Ministries in Ghana

3.5.1 Definition and Existence of Witchcraft

The study sought to explore participants' understanding of witchcraft and its existence within neo-prophetic ministries to understand the dynamics of these beliefs in Ghana. Across the interviews, participants of this study consistently described witchcraft as the use of mystic forces or evil powers to harm others, manipulate events, or cause suffering. This

perception of witchcraft as inherently harmful aligns with the broader societal understanding in Ghana. In neo-prophetic ministries, witchcraft is not an abstract or distant idea but an immediate and tangible spiritual threat to individuals and communities. For many, witchcraft connotes a spiritual attack, often initiated by individuals who wield dark powers to disrupt the lives of others. This understanding is deeply rooted in the intersection of cultural beliefs and Christian religious teachings, which emphasise witchcraft as a manifestation of evil forces working against God's will.

The belief in the existence of witchcraft in neo-prophetic communities is a continuation of traditional Ghanaian perspectives on the supernatural. In traditional Ghanaian culture, witchcraft is invoked as an explanation for various personal and communal challenges, ranging from health crises to economic setbacks. For instance, one participant explained, "When someone's business fails unexpectedly, or a person suddenly falls ill, the first thought is often witchcraft. This is what we've been taught, and many of us believe."⁹⁹

Such beliefs echo the sentiments of many within the neo-prophetic ministries, where witches are perceived as individuals actively working to obstruct progress and cause harm. In African societies, as noted by Onyinah, witchcraft is frequently blamed for a wide range of misfortunes, including financial difficulties, family disputes, and illness.¹⁰⁰ This cultural framing of witchcraft as a destructive force has been adapted and reinforced within the teachings of neo-prophetic ministries.

⁹⁹ Akua Donkor, interview by Albert Anneh, February 15, 2023 at LCC at 10:00am.

¹⁰⁰ Opoku Onyinah, *Akan Witchcraft and the Concept of Exorcism in the Church of Pentecost*, 47.

In these ministries, cultural beliefs about witchcraft merge with religious interpretations that depict it as an embodiment of the spiritual warfare between good and evil. Prophets within neo-prophetic churches often use biblical scriptures to validate the existence of witchcraft, drawing parallels between the struggles faced by individuals today and the spiritual battles described in the Bible. One prophet remarked during a church service: “The Bible is clear. We do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against principalities, powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places. Witchcraft is one of those powers.”¹⁰¹

This blending of cultural and religious narratives about witchcraft solidifies its place in the worldview of many Ghanaian Christians. It is seen as a biblical and contemporary reality, creating a solid framework for explaining adversity and suffering. The qualitative data from interviews also revealed that many participants used personal experiences to support their belief in the existence of witchcraft. For example, one interviewee recounted: “I remember a time when my mother became very ill. The doctors couldn’t figure out what was wrong, and that’s when the prophet told us that a witch was behind her sickness.”¹⁰²

Such testimonies are common in neo-prophetic circles, where personal and communal experiences with misfortune seem to be influenced by witches. These stories, coupled with the authority of religious figures and texts, create a compelling narrative that reinforces the belief in witchcraft as a natural and immediate threat to individuals’ well-being. Additionally, many participants expressed that witchcraft is central to their understanding of misfortune and adversity. When confronted with challenges that appear

¹⁰¹ Salifu Ayew, interview by Albert Anneh, February 15, 2023, at LCC at 10:00am.

¹⁰² Akua Donkor, 2024, interview by Albert Anneh, February 15, 2023 at LCC 10:50am.

inexplicable or persistent, witchcraft often becomes the default explanation. One participant explained: “When you try everything and nothing seems to work, you have to think about witchcraft. Maybe someone is using evil powers to block your progress.”¹⁰³

This view illustrates how deeply ingrained the belief in witchcraft is within these communities, where it serves as a framework for understanding both personal struggles and more significant societal issues. The belief that witches use their powers to manipulate situations and bring harm has become a core aspect of the neo-prophetic worldview, influencing how individuals interpret their circumstances and respond to challenges. The existence of witchcraft is not merely a theoretical construct for believers; it is a perceived lived reality that must be confronted through spiritual means. In neo-prophetic ministries, prophets often claim to possess the divine ability to detect witches and their activities. As one prophet explained: “God gives us the eyes to see into the spirit realm. We can see who is behind the suffering, who is using witchcraft to bring harm.”¹⁰⁴

This prophetic ability to reveal hidden spiritual forces further strengthens the belief in witchcraft within these communities, as congregants rely on their spiritual leaders to identify and counteract the work of witches.

The widespread belief in witchcraft within neo-prophetic ministries is linked to the broader cultural context in which these ministries operate. In Ghanaian society, witchcraft is a permeating and powerful force, capable of influencing nearly every aspect of life. From family conflicts to economic hardship, witchcraft is invoked as an explanation for

¹⁰³ Salifu Ayew, 2024, interview by Albert Anneh, February 15, 2023 at LCC at 10:00am

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Prophet 3, interview by Albert Anneh, February 15, 2023, at ECC at 10:00am

misfortune. As Onyinah notes, the belief in witchcraft serves as a way of making sense of suffering in a world where the causes of adversity are often hidden or unclear.¹⁰⁵

This cultural understanding of witchcraft as a pervasive and destructive force has been absorbed into the theology of neo-prophetic ministries, where it is presented as part of the ongoing spiritual battle between good and evil. The belief in the existence of witchcraft is deeply rooted in both the cultural and religious fabric of neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana. Indeed, witchcraft is a tangible and immediate threat, capable of causing illness, financial ruin, and other forms of suffering. The belief is reinforced through personal experiences, scriptural references, and the teachings of prophets who claim to be able to detect and combat witches. This widespread acceptance of witchcraft as a critical framework for understanding adversity highlights its significance in shaping the worldview of congregants in neo-prophetic ministries.

The fusion of traditional Ghanaian views on witchcraft with Christian teachings creates a powerful narrative that influences how individuals interpret their circumstances and respond to challenges, making witchcraft an integral part of their spiritual and social understanding.

3.5.2 Forms of Witchcraft and Accusations

In the context of neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana, participants in this study expressed a belief in a wide range of witchcraft practices, each operating at different hierarchies within the spiritual realm. This diversity in understanding suggests that witchcraft, in their view,

¹⁰⁵ Opoku Onyinah, *Akan Witchcraft and the Concept of Exorcism in the Church of Pentecost*, 57.

manifests in multiple forms and with varying degrees of potency. The belief in different types of witchcraft reveals the participants' perception of a complex spiritual landscape, where individuals are constantly engaged in spiritual warfare against dark forces that oppose divine will and disrupt their lives. This understanding aligns with broader neo-prophetic teachings, which often frame witchcraft as part of a more significant battle between good and evil.

The participants categorised witchcraft into several distinct types, with the most commonly mentioned forms being spiritual manipulation and causing physical ailments. Spiritual manipulation involves the use of supernatural powers to influence or control the thoughts, behaviours, and decisions of others. One interviewee explained: "There are people who can use spiritual powers to make others do things against their will, and they do this through witchcraft. It's a way of controlling others, and it's dangerous."¹⁰⁶

This form of witchcraft is seen as an insidious threat, as it targets the mind and free will of individuals, leaving them vulnerable to manipulation by malevolent spiritual forces. The second common type of witchcraft identified by participants is the causing of physical ailments. In this case, health problems, sudden illnesses, and even accidents are attributed to the actions of witches, who are believed to have the power to inflict harm on others through spiritual means. One participant recounted a personal experience: "My sister fell ill suddenly, and no one knew what was wrong with her. We took her to different doctors,

¹⁰⁶ Kwame Kubolor, interview by Albert Anneh, March 13, 2023 at ECC at 10:00am

but they couldn't find anything. Then the prophet told us it was witchcraft, that someone was using evil powers to make her sick.”¹⁰⁷

This attribution of health issues to witchcraft reflects a broader cultural belief in Ghana that misfortune and illness are often the result of spiritual interference rather than purely natural causes. The belief in these various forms of witchcraft is grounded in the idea of spiritual warfare, a concept that is central to the teachings of neo-prophetic ministries. These ministries often emphasise that life is a constant struggle between good and evil forces, with witches being agents of the latter. Participants frequently mentioned that they felt they were engaged in a battle against dark powers that sought to undermine their progress, health, and well-being. As one interviewee stated: “We are always fighting against witches. They don't want us to succeed, so they attack us differently—through sickness, failure, and confusion.”¹⁰⁸

This constant sense of spiritual opposition reinforces the need for vigilance and the reliance on spiritual tools such as prayer, fasting, and deliverance to protect oneself from harm. Onyinah¹⁰⁹ highlights that the categorisation of witchcraft into different types is not unique to neo-prophetic ministries but is a common feature of many African traditional religions. In these belief systems, witches possess varying degrees of power, with some being more dangerous and malevolent than others.

This hierarchical understanding of witchcraft allows believers to frame their experiences of misfortune and adversity within a structured spiritual narrative, where different forms

¹⁰⁷ Salifu Ayew, 2024, interview by Albert Anneh, February 15, 2023 at LCC at 10:00am

¹⁰⁸ Kwabena Kwabena, interview by Albert Anneh, June 3rd, 2023 at ECC at 10:00am

¹⁰⁹ Opoku Onyinah, *Akan Witchcraft and the Concept of Exorcism in the Church of Pentecost*, 47.

of witchcraft require different responses. In the context of neo-prophetic ministries, these responses typically involve intensive prayer sessions, deliverance rituals, and prophetic interventions to neutralise the influence of witches. The types of witchcraft identified by participants also reflect a broader belief in the levels of potency associated with different forms of spiritual attack. Some participants spoke of witchcraft as a multi-layered phenomenon, where witches operate at varying levels of power. One participant described this hierarchy: “There are small witches, and then there are big witches. The small witches might only be able to cause small problems, but the big witches can eradicate your life. You have to be careful of all of them.”¹¹⁰

This hierarchical view of witchcraft suggests that some witches have more powerful spiritual abilities than others, making them more dangerous and challenging to combat. Evans-Pritchard¹¹¹ also notes the widespread belief in the varying potency of witches across many African cultures, where specific individuals are seen as possessing extraordinary spiritual abilities that enable them to cause more significant harm.

The accusations of witchcraft within neo-prophetic ministries often follow the identification of these different types and levels of spiritual attacks. Prophets frequently serve as intermediaries between the spiritual and physical worlds, claiming to have divine insight into the activities of witches. According to one participant: “The prophet told me that my neighbour was behind my problems, that she was using witchcraft to stop me from

¹¹⁰ Helena Asante, interview by Albert Anneh, April 17, 2023, at ECC at 10:00am

¹¹¹ Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles*, 112.

getting a job. I never suspected her, but after the prophet revealed it, I began seeing things differently.”¹¹²

This highlights the role of prophets in identifying witches and assigning blame for the misfortunes experienced by their congregants. The Human Rights Theory (which holds that every individual possesses inherent, inalienable rights such as dignity, freedom, and equality, that must be respected and protected by all societies and institutions), which underpins this study, raises critical concerns about the ethical implications of these accusations. Public accusations of witchcraft often result in social ostracism and psychological harm, as individuals who are identified as witches are frequently stigmatised and isolated from their communities. This is particularly problematic in cases where the accusations are based on spiritual claims that cannot be substantiated by evidence. As Ghanaea argues, the practice of labelling individuals as witches violates their fundamental rights to dignity and protection from defamation.¹¹³ The study’s findings suggest that accusations of witchcraft within neo-prophetic ministries are not only a spiritual issue but also a social and ethical one, with far-reaching consequences for the accused.

In response to these spiritual threats, neo-prophetic ministries often emphasise the need for a watchful spiritual defence, which includes prayer, fasting, and deliverance. Participants emphasized the importance of being vigilant against witches and the need to engage in spiritual practices to protect themselves from harm continually. One participant explained:

¹¹² Akua Donkor, interview by Albert Anneh, February 15, 2023, at LCC at 12:00pm

¹¹³ Ghanaea, “Religion, Equality, and Non-Discrimination,” 96.

“You must stay prayerful because the witches always seek ways to attack you. If you don’t pray, you allow them to harm you.”¹¹⁴

This reliance on spiritual practices reflects the belief that witchcraft can only be countered through divine intervention and that human efforts alone are insufficient to combat these powerful spiritual forces. The categorisation of witchcraft into various types and levels within neo-prophetic ministries highlights the complexity of the spiritual landscape perceived by participants. It reveals a worldview in which individuals are constantly at risk of spiritual attack, requiring constant vigilance and engagement in religious practices to safeguard their lives.

These beliefs are deeply intertwined with cultural narratives about witchcraft and are reinforced by religious teachings that frame witchcraft as a manifestation of evil forces opposing God’s will. As Mgbako and Glee¹¹⁵ note, the belief in witchcraft serves as both a spiritual explanation for misfortune and a mechanism for social regulation, where accusations of witchcraft are used to address interpersonal conflicts and explain adversity.

3.6 Researcher Positionality

As the researcher, I acknowledge that my positionality inevitably shaped aspects of this study. Being a Ghanaian Christian familiar with the practices of neo-prophetic churches, I approached the field with both insider knowledge and critical distance. This insider perspective enabled me to understand the cultural and theological nuances of witchcraft accusations, but it also presented the risk of bias in interpreting participants’ narratives. To

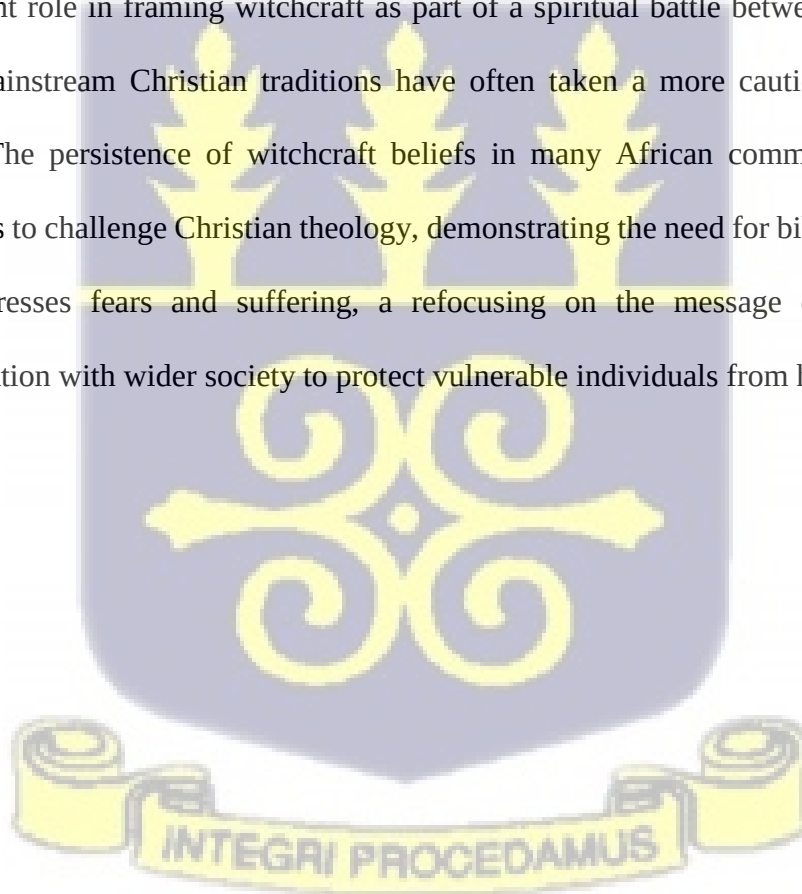
¹¹⁴ Akosua Gyebie-Donkor, interview by Albert Anneh, March 21, 2023, at LCC at 12:00pm.

¹¹⁵ Mgbako and Glenn, "Witchcraft Accusations and Human Rights," 389.

minimise this, I relied on systematic coding, thematic analysis, and frequent consultation with my supervisors to ensure that interpretations were grounded in the data rather than personal assumptions. By making my standpoint explicit, I aim to promote transparency and reflexivity, recognising that the findings are a co-construction between the participants' lived experiences and my interpretive lens.

3.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, contemporary Christian responses to witchcraft are deeply shaped by theological, cultural, and social factors. Pentecostalism, in particular, has played a significant role in framing witchcraft as part of a spiritual battle between good and evil, while mainstream Christian traditions have often taken a more cautious or dismissive stance. The persistence of witchcraft beliefs in many African communities, however, continues to challenge Christian theology, demonstrating the need for biblical engagement that addresses fears and suffering, a refocusing on the message of salvation, and collaboration with wider society to protect vulnerable individuals from harm.



CHAPTER FOUR

ETHICAL ISSUES OF WITCHCRAFT ACCUSATIONS IN NEO- PROPHETIC MINISTRIES

4.1 Introduction

Witchcraft accusations and their connection to human rights remain a major concern in Ghana's neo-prophetic ministries, as religious practices rooted in cultural beliefs often come into tension with human rights principles. Firstly, these accusations are delivered through prophetic statements, where individuals are either explicitly or implicitly identified as being involved in witchcraft. This chapter presents the results and discusses the study based on the research objectives in three sections. The chapter presents the results and discussions from the UDHR and John Locke's Human Rights Theory perspective to interrogate how these practices intersect with individual rights to dignity, privacy, and freedom from discrimination. The first section of the chapter analyses the dynamics of witchcraft accusations in the context of neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana. The second and third sections of the chapter present the analysis of the results based on ethical concerns about witchcraft and accusations within the neo-prophetic ministries, as well as ways of addressing ethical concerns in neo-prophetic ministries regarding witchcraft accusations. The following section presents an analysis of the first objectives.

4.2.3 Public Accusation and their Impacts

Public accusations of witchcraft within neo-prophetic ministries often occur during church services, where prophets may either directly identify individuals or, more commonly, describe them in ways that allow the congregation to identify those accused. These

prophetic declarations are typically presented as divine revelations, giving them an authoritative weight that resonates deeply within the spiritual community. For instance, a participant recounted an instance when a prophet linked a woman's ongoing health problems to witchcraft. Although the prophet did not explicitly name the supposed witch, his detailed description enabled congregation members to deduce the person in context. This indirect approach to naming often creates a highly charged atmosphere in the church, as members become acutely aware of the possibility of being implicated in accusations of witchcraft, which is considered a severe spiritual offence.

This practice of making public accusations, whether directly or through implication, significantly affects the victim and the broader church community. It as a result amplifies the social and emotional burden on those accused, who may face stigmatisation, social exclusion, and psychological distress. The insinuation that one might be involved in witchcraft, even without being directly named, can damage reputations, disrupt family and social relationships, and instill a pervasive fear of being marginalised or targeted further. Furthermore, this practice reinforces a worldview deeply embedded in spiritual conflict within the congregation, where individuals are either aligned with divine forces or as instruments of evil. This dichotomous thinking exacerbates divisions within the community, advancing a culture of suspicion and distrust where members become hesitant to engage with those indirectly accused. As a result, integrating witchcraft accusations into the spiritual and social life of neo-prophetic churches not only impacts those directly involved but also shapes the communal atmosphere, influencing the overall unity and trust within the church.

The investigation into how prophets identify and accuse individuals of witchcraft has highlighted the deep spiritual significance and social impact these accusations have within the church community. However, while these revelations seem divinely inspired and intended to address perceived spiritual threats, they raise substantial ethical issues worth examination.

4.3 Ethical Concerns and Witchcraft Accusations in Neo-Prophetic Ministries in Ghana

This section analyses the ethical implications of such accusations, focusing on the potential harm to those accused, the responsibilities of church leaders, and the broader impact on the community's moral fabric. The section addresses these ethical considerations and explains neo-prophetic ministries' challenges and responsibilities in navigating the complex intersection of spiritual practice and ethical conduct. It presents ethical concerns regarding privacy and, public shaming, and the handling of sensitive information.

4.3.1 Privacy and Public Shaming

Regarding the ethical concerns in neo-prophetic ministry and witchcraft accusations nexus, the analysis unveiled significant issues relating to the breach of privacy that often accompanies prophetic revelations, particularly those involving allegations of witchcraft. Although some prophets refrain from explicitly naming individuals when making these revelations, they frequently provide enough descriptive details that enable the congregation to deduce the identity of the accused. While avoiding confrontation, this indirect approach still compromises the individuals' privacy. In many cases, descriptions by key informants participants' lived experiences these descriptions are sufficiently specific, such as mentioning unique characteristics, familial ties, or personal circumstances, that the identity

of the person accused of witchcraft becomes apparent to others within the community. This practice exposes the accused to public scrutiny and infringes on their right to privacy – an evident neglect of fundamental human right in these spiritual situations.

The implications of these privacy breaches extend far beyond the immediate setting of the church service. Thus, once a person is indirectly identified as a witch or as someone associated with witchcraft, they often face significant social and emotional consequences. The act of being publicly associated with witchcraft can lead to severe social ostracisation, where the accused may be shunned or avoided by other members of the community. This social exclusion can disrupt familial bonds and create divisions within families, as relatives may feel compelled to distance themselves from the accused to avoid sharing in the stigma or because they genuinely believe in the veracity of the prophetic revelation. This dynamic of public shaming and social ostracisation underlines the decisive role that neo-prophetic ministries play in shaping community relations. It highlights prophetic practices' profound impact on individuals' social standing and emotional well-being.

Moreover, the practice of indirectly identifying individuals as witches raises more profound ethical questions about the responsibility of prophets and church leaders in safeguarding the dignity and rights of their congregants. By providing detailed descriptions that lead to public shaming, prophets effectively wield a significant amount of social power, influencing not only the spiritual lives of their followers but also their social dynamics and reputations. The prophets must exercise this power with great caution and sensitivity to avoid causing undue harm. Failing to protect individuals' privacy and prevent public shaming can lead to psychological trauma, damage to personal and professional relationships, and a pervasive atmosphere of fear and mistrust within the community. As

such, neo-prophetic ministries must carefully consider the ethical implications of their practices and seek ways to uphold the privacy and dignity of all individuals, aligning their spiritual objectives with a commitment to human rights and moral integrity.

4.3.2 Handling of Sensitive Information

The handling of sensitive information, particularly regarding prophetic revelations about witchcraft, is a primary ethical concern highlighted by interviewees, who emphasise the importance of care and discretion. Participants suggested that it is essential that such prophetic revelations regarding witchcraft accusations are approached with a heightened sense of responsibility to protect the emotional well-being and dignity of those involved. The exercise of caution in prophetic revelation is crucial because the public disclosure of these revelations can have profound psychological impacts, potentially leading to fear, anxiety, and social division within the congregation. Not everyone in the church community possesses the emotional resilience required to cope with such intense and personal spiritual revelations, which can result in feelings of shame, guilt, or distress.

Furthermore, the public airing of these sensitive issues can create unnecessary conflicts within the congregation and the broader community, as it can stigmatise individuals and families, leading to social ostracisation and strained relationships. Therefore, there is a strong call for prophetic messages to be delivered in a manner that is considerate of the personal and social ramifications, ensuring that the focus remains on healing and reconciliation rather than condemnation and division.

4.3.3 Defamation and Psychological Impact

In the collected interviews, the theme of defamation and its psychological impacts is a significant concern, as prophetic declarations often label individuals as practitioners of witchcraft. Such labels can irreparably harm reputations, leading to severe emotional and psychological distress. For instance, one interviewee recounted a scenario where a prophet was sued for perceived defamation. He said; “A prophet was sued by a social media influencer who goes by the name Shugatiti because she claimed that the prophet had said during a preaching that anybody who comes to her restaurant will get demons.”¹¹⁶¹¹⁷

The above shows how prophetic messages can transcend spiritual guidance, impacting the accused’s economic stability and public image, thereby initiating legal battles over defamation and character assassination. The emotional toll and psychological damage from these accusations are profound. Also, the allegations of witchcraft, significantly when made publicly, pitches individuals against their communities and families, leading to isolation and mental health struggles. An interviewee highlighted the gravity of such public disclosures, noting that they can lead to “emotional trauma to her,” referring to the influencer impacted by the prophecy. As a result, informants opposed delivering such prophecies, suggesting a more cautious approach. He suggested that, “He would have done it better without pointing a name, particularly to the restaurant’s brand name; he would



¹¹⁶ Celestina Naa-Ayorkor Ocloo, interview by Albert Anneh, June 21, 2024 at LCC at 12:00pm.

¹¹⁷ Vim Buzz, “Shugatiti is a Demon; Anyone Who Eats from Her Restaurant Will Be Possessed” – Prophet Sued by Shugatiti for Calling Her Witch”. <https://web.facebook.com/watch/?v=256889060121580>

have said something around this area or that area. If you do this, be careful. If you go there, just be careful where you buy food.”¹¹⁸

Moreover, these narratives highlight prophetic practice’s ethical and legal implications in modern society, where the spiritual leadership and personal privacy interface is increasingly scrutinised. The interviews call for re-evaluating how prophecies, particularly concerning witchcraft, are communicated, advocating for a balance that respects congregants and the general public’s dignity and legal boundaries. For instance, an informant advised a more discrete and sensitive approach by submitting that. “I think there should be an opportunity for people to have one-on-one counselling for those willing to be free of such a spirit.”¹¹⁹

This perspective shows a need for a framework within the neo-prophetic ministries to prevent harm and ensure that spiritual interventions do not infringe on individual rights or lead to social stigmatisation and psychological effects. After interrogating the witchcraft accusations and ethical concerns nexus in the neo-prophetic community in Ghana, the analysis suggests that the challenges affect the leadership and congregations as well as the general public. As such, these accusations raise moral dilemmas and generate fear, stigmatisation and social discord. That notwithstanding, it is apparent that sustained efforts at addressing such ethical concerns are vital for fostering trust, accountability, and spiritual growth in the Ghanaian neo-prophetic community. Consequently, the following section

¹¹⁸ Sistofe Dziedzorm, interview by Albert Anneh, April 12, 2023 at ECC at 12:00pm.

¹¹⁹ Abba Mansah, interview by Albert Anneh, June 21, 2023 at LCC at 12:00pm.

presents the approaches to resolving ethical issues, providing a transparent and morally grounded practice to guide prophecy.

4.4 Addressing Ethical Concerns within Neo-Prophetic Ministries in Ghana: Interview Participants' Views

Ethical concerns within Ghana's neo-prophetic ministries reflect the tension between their growing influence in society and recurring challenges of accountability, transparency, and the fair treatment of vulnerable individuals. While these ministries play a significant role in shaping religious life, their practices often raise questions about alignment with ethical and spiritual principles. The presence of such challenges highlights the need to examine how leadership structures, congregational practices, and communal expectations shape ministry conduct. This section, from interviewee participant's views, therefore analyzes the practical dimensions of these issues, showing how they affect both the credibility of the ministries and their capacity to foster trust and positive transformation within Ghanaian society.

4.4.1 Adopting Private Approaches

The analysis of the interview transcripts showed that handling sensitive prophetic revelations, especially in public witchcraft accusations, has significant ethical challenges, as submitted by most interviewees. The analysis showed that participants overwhelmingly expressed concerns regarding the consequences of public pronouncement of witchcraft accusations during church services that relay information to the entire congregation. Participants suggested fostering ethical approaches in handling these matters in private so that the prophet could address the individual concerned directly away from the public purview. Adopting private approaches to witchcraft accusations protects the privacy and

dignity of those involved, ensuring that delicate information does not escalate into unnecessary social stigma and conflict. An interviewee pointed out the potential harm of public disclosures, stating that, “I think the best way is that when you feel something is not right with someone as a man of God, you should approach the person one-on-one instead of being on air and announcing it to everyone.”¹²⁰

The use of private approaches to prophetic revelations instead of public accusation is in synch with the principles of pastoral care, which emphasise discretion and the protection of individuals’ lives, advocating for stepping respectfully and compassionately into another’s narrative world.¹²¹

Moreover, the effective handling of sensitive information regarding witchcraft accusations through private approaches safeguards the dignity of the accused and maintains social harmony with the congregation. Conversely, public proclamation of witchcraft tends to culminate in social repercussions, including ostracisation and breakdown of personal relationships. Also, the covert identification of individuals during public services creates an intense atmosphere dominated by fear and suspicion – where congregants become vulnerable to being accused themselves. By contrast, a private approach allows the issue to be addressed in a more controlled and supportive environment, focusing on healing and resolution rather than public condemnation. This method also helps prevent the spread of rumours. It ensures that necessary interventions can be made with the individual’s consent

¹²⁰ Akosua Gyebie-Donkor, interview by Albert Anneh, March 21, 2023, at LCC at 12:00pm.

¹²¹ Doebling, *Practice of Pastoral Care*, 23.

and cooperation, fostering a more compassionate and ethically responsible church community.

4.4.2 Fostering Ethical Training and Guidelines

The analysis also showed that the study participants raised the need for ethical guidelines and training for church leaders, particularly prophets, in the neo-prophetic ministry. The interviews uncovered a formal training gap offered to prophets in the neo-prophetic ministries, leading to undesired consequences, including harm to congregants. Consequently, there was a stronger call amongst participants to introduce and implement structured ethical guidelines to regulate prophetic revelations, particularly concerning witchcraft accusations. Additionally, such guidelines should incorporate protocols for verifying the information received through prophecy to safeguard individuals' privacy, especially victims of witchcraft accusations. The ability to verify prophetic declarations through verification protocols will ensure that prophetic messages are done in a manner that minimises harm. In support of fostering ethical training and guidelines, a participant submitted that, "The manner in which prophets address witchcraft accusations is very important, and if not managed properly, can create fear and panic. Therefore the prophets would need to handled such delicate prophetic ministrations in a rather discrete and private manner."¹²²



¹²² Salifu Ayew, interview by Albert Anneh, February 15, 2023 at LCC at 12:00pm.

The above quote succinctly sums up the importance of the content of a message and the mode of communication, showing the need for training that focuses on the ethical implementation of prophetic practices.

The practical design and implementation of ethical training programmes would imbibe church leaders with the skills and spirit to handle their congregations' complex spiritual and social dynamics. Such training would emphasise the importance of discretion, the plausible psychological impact of public accusations, and the broader social consequences, especially in instances where revelations and prophetic declarations are mishandled. By adhering to ethical guidelines, prophets can avoid actions that might lead to defamation, emotional distress, or social discord, fostering a more supportive and harmonious church environment. Additionally, these guidelines would help protect the church from legal repercussions, as was evident in cases where public prophecies led to lawsuits due to defamation and economic harm. Ethical training and clear guidelines would provide a framework for responsible leadership within neo-prophetic ministries, ensuring that spiritual practices align with the principles of justice, respect, and care for all individuals involved.

4.4.3 Promoting Reconciliation and Pastoral Care

The interviews also highlight the need for a shift in focus within neo-prophetic ministries toward practices that emphasise reconciliation and pastoral care over condemnation. Accusations of witchcraft, whether direct or indirect, can cause deep rifts within families and communities, leading to long-lasting psychological and social harm. Participants in the study suggest that instead of focusing solely on identifying and condemning those believed to be involved in witchcraft, church leaders should prioritise healing and reconciliation.

This approach would include counselling and support to both the accused and the accuser, helping restore relationships and promote understanding. One interviewee emphasised the importance of counselling, and stating, “there should be an opportunity for people to have one-on-one counselling for those willing to be free of such spirit.”¹²³

This recommendation reflects the need for a more compassionate approach to address the underlying issues without causing additional harm. Promoting a culture of forgiveness and understanding, neo-prophetic ministries can reduce the negative consequences of witchcraft accusations and promote a more inclusive and supportive church community. This approach aligns with the broader Christian principles of love, compassion, and redemption, which call for believers to support one another in overcoming spiritual challenges rather than tearing each other down. Reconciliation-focused practices also help mitigate the social fragmentation resulting from public accusations, allowing the church to function as a place of healing and unity.

Moreover, by offering pastoral care that is sensitive to the emotional and psychological needs of congregants, church leaders can help individuals cope with the fear and anxiety that often accompany accusations of witchcraft. This shift toward reconciliation and care represents a crucial step in addressing the ethical concerns these practices raise, ensuring that the church’s spiritual mission is achieved and honouring the dignity and humanity of all its members.

¹²³ Akosua Gyebie-Donkor, interview by Albert Anneh, March 21, 2023, at LCC at 12:00pm.

4.4.4 Community Education

Community education also emerged as an important recommendation, unveiling the need to raise awareness among congregants about the ethical implications of witchcraft accusations and the importance of handling such matters with care. Many participants emphasised that the lack of understanding of the social and psychological consequences of witchcraft accusations contributes to the harm they cause. One Interview remarked that witchcraft is often treated as an automatic label for evil without considering the impact on those accused, noting;

“Witchcraft is the cause of every evil act. Witchcraft is a demonic act. Anything that has to do with Satanism.”¹²⁴

This narrow perception leads to public accusations that can stigmatise individuals and disrupt their social and psychological lives. As such, educating the congregation about these unwanted consequences ensures a measured, respectful approach to dealing with witchcraft allegations. Participants also stressed that community education should teach congregants the importance of privacy and discretion in handling sensitive prophecies. Public accusations can create deep divisions within families and communities, as reflected in one interviewee’s observations: “Prophets should communicate witchcraft prophecies with much wisdom... Otherwise, when they communicate it straightforward to members, it creates a lot of problems, including conflicts.”¹²⁵

The above statement illustrates the need for prophets to approach witchcraft accusations in a way that avoids public humiliation and instead focuses on resolving issues privately.

¹²⁴ Interview with Prophet’s Member, interview by Albert Anneh, February 19, 2023, at LCC at 12:00pm.

¹²⁵ Interview with Prophet’s Member 3, interview by Albert Anneh, April 19, 2023, at ECC at 12:00pm.

Another interviewee added that addressing witchcraft openly often intensifies existing tensions in families: “Most times these kinds of witchcraft exposes... are often having such divisions already following it.”¹²⁶

By educating the community about the value of discretion, churches can help reduce unnecessary conflict and foster a more compassionate environment. Community education initiatives could take many forms, such as workshops, seminars, and ongoing teaching that emphasise the ethical considerations involved in prophetic practices. These programmes would encourage congregants to approach witchcraft accusations with empathy and caution while holding their leaders accountable to ensure prophecies align with the church’s love, respect, and justice values. One interviewee pointed out that; “The presentation also matters, and prophets need to be careful to avoid “shaming” individuals or “causing emotional trauma” by mishandling sensitive revelations.”¹²⁷

Community education can be crucial in reducing stigma and creating a more supportive church environment by dispelling myths about witchcraft and promoting a culture of ethical responsibility. Through these efforts, congregations can better navigate the challenges of witchcraft accusations, leading to a more inclusive and harmonious church community.

4.5 Witchcraft Accusations in Neo-Prophetic Ministries

Within the neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana, witchcraft accusations often manifest during public service. That is, prophets who receive divine revelations may accuse individuals of being possessed and practising witchcraft either by directly naming them or by providing

¹²⁶ Interview with the Prophet, interview by Albert Anneh, April 14, 2023, at LCC at 11:00am.

¹²⁷ Interview with the Prophet, interview by Albert Anneh, April 14, 2023, at LCC at 12:00pm.

sufficient details to allow congregants to infer the identity of the alleged witch. One interviewee recounted that a prophet indicated that a woman's health issues were caused by witchcraft by describing the alleged witch without explicitly naming her. "The prophet didn't mention the person's name, but usually what the prophet did is try to describe the person, and per description, the person could identify who the prophet was talking about."¹²⁸ Indirect accusations reflect a common strategy employed in neo-prophetic ministries, where prophets aim to reveal spiritual threats while avoiding confrontations that could lead to legal or social repercussions.

The integration of witchcraft accusations into the fabric of neo-prophetic ministry space has deep cultural and religious roots. Witchcraft poses a significant spiritual threat, often blamed for personal and family fortunes, illness, or community discord. Extant studies, including Omenyo and Atiemo explain that orthodox belief influences neo-prophetic movements in Ghana in the existence of evil forces, which aligns with the ministries' emphasis on identifying and combating witchcraft.¹²⁹ These traditional beliefs are woven into the religious doctrine, often leading congregants to accept accusations as spiritual truths rather than mere conjectures. Similarly, Onyinah demonstrated support for this observation by unveiling the deep-necked cultural entanglement between traditional beliefs in witchcraft and contemporary Christian practices.¹³⁰ Consequently, the neo-prophetic ministries leverage these longstanding cultural fears about witchcraft, merging with

¹²⁸ Interview with Apostle Member 3, interview by Albert Anneh, April 19, 2023, at LCC at 8:00pm.

¹²⁹ Omenyo and Atiemo, "Claiming Religious Space," 55.

¹³⁰ Onyinah, *Akan Witchcraft*, 45.

Christian doctrines to engineer a framework where spiritual warfare becomes central to religious life.

The convergence of cultural fears with Christian doctrines partly accounts for the appeal of neo-prophetics in Ghana. Besides Evans-Pritchard¹³¹ in the study of Azande, Evans-Pritchard observed that the belief in witchcraft offers an explanatory prowess for misfortune, much like the role it plays within these modern churches. Contextually, witchcraft is not just a spiritual issue but a social one, with accusations having real-world consequences for individuals and congregants for individuals' reputations, social standing and emotional well-being. That notwithstanding, the public nature of these accusations usually aggravates their adverse effects, culminating in social exclusion, psychological trauma and damage to reputations. Particularly relating to social exclusion, one participant shared the story of a woman who was indirectly accused of witchcraft and faced significant social exclusion as a result. She remarked that; "Everyone in the church knew who the prophet was talking about. She stopped attending church, and even her family started distancing themselves from her."¹³²

The results and discussions on witchcraft accusations in the neo-prophetic ministry in Ghana have varied implications for the victims, the accused and the entire neo-prophetic ministry. The nature of implications transcends the theological, ethical and social spaces and directly impacts the religious settings. Specifically, witchcraft accusations in the neo-prophetic ministry lead to the erosion of trust and social cohesion within the congregation.

¹³¹Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft*, Oracles, 45.

¹³² Interview with Prophet's Member, interview by Albert Anneh, February 19, 2023, at LCC at 9:00am.

That is, the fear of being accused of witchcraft creates a suspicious space where congregants are wary of one another. The development of distrust among church members destabilises the principles of community unity and mutual support, which is supposed to be the foundation of the church and Christianity. Impliedly, when members are fearful and consider each other as a potential witchcraft owing to the possibility of being implicated in witchcraft, it breaks the unity and solidarity of the congregation.

About the erosion of social cohesion within the church communities arising out of witchcraft accusations, a participant mentioned that. “People don’t trust each other anymore. They are always afraid that they might be the next ones to be accused.”¹³³

In addition to its impact on social cohesion, witchcraft accusations also have a gendered implication and social marginalisation which disproportionately target women. The gendered pattern of accusations aligns with the dominant social trends in Africa, especially within the Ghanaian neo-prophetic space where women are unnecessarily accused of witchcraft, particularly those who are older, marginalised or deviate from established social norms and roles¹³⁴. As such, the continuation and institutionalisation of witchcraft accusations within the neo-prophetic ministry against women exacerbates the patriarchal structures, alters global attempts at promoting balanced gender relations, and limits women’s agency. The dominant patriarchal dominance emanating out of the gendered pattern – unfavourably accusations of women of witchcraft may contribute to damaging consequences, including unstable family life and economic instability. As such, for the

¹³³ Interview with Apostle’s Member, interview by Albert Anneh, March 17, 2023, at LCC at 8:00pm.

¹³⁴ Mgbako and Glenn, “Witchcraft Accusations,” 392.

growth of the neo-prophetic ministries and the establishment of legitimacy, there is an urgent need to address these gendered dynamics and integrate more equitable practices into their spiritual and social frameworks.

The findings indicate that witchcraft accusations play a role in reinforcing the power and authority of prophets within neo-prophetic ministries. By positioning themselves as divinely inspired intermediaries who can identify and combat spiritual threats, prophets solidify their influence over congregants. This dynamic can have a double-edged effect: while it strengthens the prophet's control over the congregation, it simultaneously creates an environment where members feel powerless and vulnerable to accusations. These ministries' commercial and spiritual power often relies on maintaining a hierarchical structure in which the prophet holds unquestioned authority.¹³⁵

Witchcraft accusations, framed as divine revelations, further entrench this hierarchy. However, this reliance on prophetic authority can also create ethical dilemmas. When congregants perceive accusations as arbitrary or politically motivated within the church community, they may lead to dissatisfaction among members. Over time, aggrieved congregants perceiving such practices as exploitative or unjust could undermine the foundation of the prophet's spiritual and moral authority.

The findings also have implications for church growth and external perception. Witchcraft accusations within neo-prophetic ministries, particularly when they are made publicly and without due process, may hinder the long-term development of these churches. As

¹³⁵Marthoz and Saunders, "Religion and the Human Rights Movement," 19.

congregants experience or witness the harm caused by these practices, including social ostracism and psychological trauma, the appeal of the ministry could diminish. Moreover, as neo-prophetic ministries become more visible both within Ghana and internationally, their association with witchcraft accusations could damage their external reputation, especially in contexts that prioritise human rights and ethical integrity in religious practices.

The challenge for these ministries lies in balancing their emphasis on spiritual warfare and prophetic authority with the need to protect their members' human rights and well-being. Failure to address the harmful consequences of witchcraft accusations could lead to diminished trust, both within their communities and in the broader public. Additionally, as international human rights bodies and advocacy groups increase their focus on issues of religious freedom, privacy, and discrimination, neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana may face more significant external pressure to reform their practices and align more closely with global human rights norms.

4.5.1 Ethics and Witchcraft Accusations Nexus in Neo-Prophetic Ministries in Ghana

The study's second objective sought to interrogate the ethical concerns and witchcraft accusations in the neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana. Issues of witchcraft accusations in neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana offer a major ethical conundrum from the perspective of human rights theorists. The public nature of these prophetic revelations exposes individuals to public scrutiny and social condemnation. As a result, significant international statuses such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)¹³⁶ reiterate the importance of

¹³⁶ United Nations, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)*, 6.

privacy, dignity, and protection from defamation. However, religious practices such as the witchcraft accusations by the neo-prophetic community compromise the rights¹³⁷. As such, this chapter examines the ethical concerns related to witchcraft accusations, emphasising how these allegations interface with privacy, the management of sensitive information during accusations, and how the claims lead to defamation and psychological impacts. The chapter discusses these themes and examines the implications for neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana.

4.5.1.1 Privacy and Public Shaming

The analysis showed that privacy and the risk of public shaming are at the centre of ethical issues within the neo-prophetic ministries. It was evident that prophets make such accusations of witchcraft during church services by indirect references or open declarations that allow congregants to identify the accused. Such public disclosure and witchcraft accusations expose the victims to social judgment and rejection, with no room for self-defence. Feedback from a participant highlighted the instances where, despite the lack of open mentioning of names, participants could infer the person being discussed: “The prophet did not mention the name, but he described the person so specifically that everyone in the church knew who it was.”¹³⁸

The point stated above indicate indirect allegations invariably infringe on individuals’ privacy and expose them to humiliation within the church community. Additionally, the

¹³⁷ Samantha, *Witchcraft Accusations and Persecutions as a Mechanism for the Marginalisation of Women*, 104.

¹³⁸ Justina Amponsah, interview by Albert Anneh, March 13, 2023, at LCC at 1:00pm.

results from the human rights perspective, the practice of witchcraft accusations is a clear violation of Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that; “No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his/her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attack upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.”¹³⁹

In such practices of publicly accusing others of witches, those accused are exposed to social stigma, isolation and social harm. Also, from the analysis of the qualitative discussions, a key informant highlighted her lived experience as a victim of direct accusation in the church and how it affected her psychology and social relations. She indicated that; “After the accusation, people in the church avoided me, even though I had done nothing wrong and knew within me that I was never possessed. It was like I had become a different person in the eyes of the congregants.”¹⁴⁰

The above quote shows the trauma of being accused, detailing the severity and profoundness of such accusations likely to affect the accused’s reputation, emotional well-being and relationship within the community. It is, therefore, not surprising that extant literature articulates the cultural context in which witchcraft accusations occur.

Notably, studies such as Onyinah opines that the emergence of traditional beliefs in witchcraft with Christian doctrine by the neo-prophetic offers a viable avenue for institutionalising accusations as part of spiritual warfare.¹⁴¹ The practice of combining

¹³⁹ United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 4.

¹⁴⁰ Interview with a Congregant, interview by Albert Anneh, April 23, 2023, at ECC at 1:00pm.

¹⁴¹ Opoku, “Akan Witchcraft and the Concept of Exorcism in the Church of Pentecost”, 77.

beliefs suggests that witchcraft accusation is a necessary warfare strategy for the protection of the church community despite its clear violation of individual rights. Exposing individuals publicly creates an atmosphere of fear within the church, where congregants become suspicious of one another. As one participant noted: “No one trusts anyone anymore. We all try to stay away from trouble because you never know whether you’ll be the next accused.”¹⁴²

The uncertainty regarding witchcraft accusations weakens the social cohesion of the congregation, which traditionally relies on trust, support, and community values. The implications of the findings are noteworthy within the neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana. The public declaration and accusation of witchcraft affect the ethical foundation of the church as a haven and space for spiritual support. Additionally, the widespread fear of public accusations culminates in an environment where members are suspicious, thereby affecting the ability of the church to promote meaningful spiritual growth.

To maintain their role as ethical and spiritual leaders, prophets in these ministries must reconsider the methods used to address witchcraft accusations, shifting from public exposure to more private, dignified approaches that uphold individual rights.

4.5.1.2 Management of Sensitive Information

The handling of sensitive information in neo-prophetic ministries raises another critical ethical concern. Under such circumstances, the prophets often claim to receive divine revelations about congregants’ involvement in witchcraft. However, the public

¹⁴² Akua Donkor, interview by Albert Anneh, February 15, 2023, at LCC at 1:00pm.

communication of these revelations without discretion or confidentiality is highly problematic. Sensitive information is frequently disclosed during sermons or church gatherings, leaving the accused vulnerable to both social and emotional harm¹⁴³. One interviewee highlighted this problem: “The prophet said during a sermon that certain members of the congregation were involved in witchcraft, and though he didn’t name names, everyone knew whom he meant.”¹⁴⁴

This public dissemination of sensitive information violates ethical obligations to protect the privacy and dignity of the accused. From a human rights perspective, improperly handling sensitive information by publicly disclosing revelations without regard for the accused’s well-being violates Article 12 of the UDHR, which guarantees the right to privacy¹⁴⁵. Neo-prophetic ministries fail to safeguard their congregants’ fundamental human rights. Prophets’ failure to exercise discretion exacerbates the emotional harm inflicted on the accused, contributing to social alienation and psychological trauma. In one Interview, a participant noted: “When the prophet said someone was under demonic influence, it was as if that person’s whole life became exposed. People stopped talking to them, and even family members distanced themselves.”¹⁴⁶

This lack of decorum in handling sensitive information affects individuals’ personal and social lives. The literature supports this critique, emphasising the manipulative potential of revelations in neo-prophetic ministries.

¹⁴³ Audette, “Confidentiality in the Church: What the Pastor Knows and Tells,” 80.

¹⁴⁴ Salifu Ayew, interview by Albert Anneh, February 15, 2023, at LCC at 1:00pm.

¹⁴⁵ UN General Assembly, “Universal declaration of human rights,” 14.

¹⁴⁶ Akosua Gyebie-Donkor, interview by Albert Anneh, March 21, 2023, at ECC at 11:00am.

Anderson argues prophetic leaders often use sensitive information to assert their authority over the congregation, generating fear and reliance on the prophet's spiritual power. However, this dynamic creates a significant power imbalance, where the accused have little recourse to challenge the validity of the accusations. The use of revelations to control congregants undermines prophetic leaders' ethical and spiritual responsibilities, as it prioritises their authority over the protection of individual rights. The unchecked power wielded by prophets through these revelations leads to the exploitation of vulnerable individuals, further damaging the integrity of the ministries.¹⁴⁷

The implications of mishandling sensitive information are far-reaching. Neo-prophetic ministries risk losing their ethical legitimacy as they fail to protect the privacy and dignity of their congregants. In addition, the indiscriminate disclosure of sensitive information weakens trust within the congregation, as individuals become wary of being the next to be exposed. As one interviewee remarked: "There's no way to defend yourself when the prophet says you're involved in witchcraft. Once it's said, people believe it without question."¹⁴⁸

This lack of due process erodes the sense of justice within the church and contributes to a climate of fear and control rather than one of faith and compassion. To address these concerns, prophets in the neo-prophetic ministries must implement ethical guidelines for handling sensitive information. Prophets must exercise greater discretion in revealing private spiritual matters and ensure their revelations do not violate human rights. This shift

¹⁴⁷ Anderson "Ghana's Neo-Prophetic Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity: Future Prospects," 3.

¹⁴⁸ Akosua Gyebie-Donkor, interview by Albert Anneh, March 21, 2023, at LCC at 8:00am.

would promote a more compassionate, just, and ethical environment within these ministries, fostering trust and support among congregants.

4.5.1.3 Defamation and Psychological Impact

Witchcraft accusations within neo-prophetic ministries are not only socially damaging but also have profound psychological effects on the accused. Being labelled a witch carries a deep stigma in Ghanaian society, and the emotional toll on individuals can be severe. In neo-prophetic ministries, prophets are believed to have divine insight and significant influence over their congregations. Their accusations of witchcraft often create social isolation and lead to long-term emotional distress for the individuals accused.

From the transcripts, numerous examples highlight the psychological impact of such accusations. One interviewee expressed their feelings of rejection after an accusation; “After I was accused, it felt like everyone turned against me. Even people I thought were my friends stopped talking to me. I became very anxious and started avoiding people altogether.”¹⁴⁹

This emotional isolation can lead to anxiety, depression, and lasting trauma, as those accused are ostracised without any recourse to clear their name ⁹⁰. The observed psychological impact aligns with the observations made by Onyinah, who asserts that witchcraft accusations in Ghanaian Christian communities, while spiritually motivated, often inflict severe emotional and social harm on individuals. Witchcraft accusations in Ghanaian society are confined to cultural and religious practices.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Interview with Prophets Member, interview by Albert Anneh, March 10, 2023, at LCC at 9:00am.

¹⁵⁰ Opoku, *Akan Witchcraft and the Concept of Exorcism in the Church of Pentecost*, 11.

As Evans-Pritchard demonstrated in his seminal work on witchcraft among the Azande, accusations often serve as a form of social control, targeting individuals who challenge or deviate from community norms. In the neo-prophetic context, these accusations similarly reinforce the power of the prophet while marginalising those seen as threats to the social and spiritual order.¹⁵¹ Mgbako and Glee emphasise that such accusations are used to consolidate power and maintain social hierarchies within religious communities, where prophets utilise their authority to control congregants' behaviour and beliefs.¹⁵²

Based on the study's overarching theory - human rights perspective, these accusations' psychological and social consequences are evident and destructive. Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹⁵³ (UDHR) protects individuals from attacks on their honour and reputation. That notwithstanding, witchcraft accusations within neo-prophetic ministries violate this protection. The emotional harm caused by these accusations is not temporary; it creates lasting effects on individuals' mental health and social standing¹⁵⁴. One interviewee expressed the permanent stigma attached to being labelled a witch; "Once you've been accused, there's no going back. No one believes you even if you try to explain yourself."¹⁵⁵

The lack of recourse to challenge or rectify the accusations intensifies the psychological distress experienced by the accused. The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and

¹⁵¹ Evans-Pritchard, "Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande," 54.

¹⁵² Mgbako et. al., "Witchcraft accusations and human rights: Case studies from Malawi," 389.

¹⁵³ United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 6.

¹⁵⁴ Yakubu et. al., "An Exploratory Study of the Mental Health and Emotional Challenges of Women inside Ghanaian Witches' Camps," 23.

¹⁵⁵ Interview with Prophet Member, interview by Albert Anneh, February 13, 2023, at ECC at 8:00am.

Cultural Rights¹⁵⁶ (ICESCR) also emphasises the right to mental health and well-being. This right is extinguished when individuals are subject to public shame and isolation from unfounded accusations. The implications for neo-prophetic ministries are clear: if unchecked, these practices will continue to harm individuals and disrupt community cohesion. Defamation through witchcraft accusations damages the reputations of those accused and compromises the ethical foundations of the ministry. The long-term emotional impact of these accusations weakens the church's ability to function as a place of spiritual refuge and support, instead transforming it into a space of fear and suspicion. Neo-prophetic ministries must implement transparent processes for handling accusations, ensuring that allegations are based on credible evidence, not just spiritual claims.

4.5.1.4 Psychological Trauma and Social Alienation

The psychological trauma inflicted by witchcraft accusations extends beyond the initial public shaming. In the interviews, several participants expressed how the social isolation that followed these accusations worsened their emotional state. One interviewee explained: “After the accusation, people in my community stopped inviting me to events. It was as if I had a disease, and they were afraid of catching it. I began to feel like I didn't belong anywhere.”¹⁵⁷

The emotional toll of being ostracised from one's community can be devastating, leaving the accused without a support system and exacerbating feelings of loneliness and

¹⁵⁶ Langlois, “ICESCR,” 419.

¹⁵⁷ Interview with Apostle's Member, interview by Albert Anneh, March 17, 2023, at ECC at 8:00am.

hopelessness. Evans-Pritchard elaborates on this aspect of witchcraft accusations by noting that in many African societies, such accusations serve to maintain social order by isolating those who are seen as disruptive or deviant. This mechanism of social exclusion is equally present in neo-prophetic ministries, where accusations of witchcraft not only damage individuals' reputations but also strip them of their social networks.¹⁵⁸ The community's rejection of the accused creates an insurmountable barrier to reintegration, leaving them socially and emotionally isolated. Onyinah further highlights how, in the Ghanaian context, individuals accused of witchcraft may be denied primary forms of communal support, such as access to social gatherings or family functions, effectively cutting them off from the very networks that provide emotional and material security.¹⁵⁹

The long-term psychological trauma associated with these accusations also impacts the well-being of entire families. In one Interview, a participant shared how their family was affected after their mother was accused of witchcraft recounts that: "After accusations against my mother, people in the community treated our family differently. Even though she was the only person accused, it was evident that the accusation affected the entire family."¹⁶⁰

This generational stigma often leads to a cycle of social alienation, where the children of those accused inherit the social consequences of the accusations. Mgbako and Glee¹⁶¹ reiterate this point, noting that witchcraft accusations frequently lead to the long-term

¹⁵⁸ Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande*, 19.

¹⁵⁹ Opoku, "Akan Witchcraft and the Concept of Exorcism in the Church of Pentecost." 1-33.

¹⁶⁰ Delali Gbemu, interview by Albert Anneh, April 2, 2023, at ECC at 8:00am.

¹⁶¹ Mgbako and Glenn, "Witchcraft Accusations and Human Rights: Case Studies from Malawi," 43.

marginalisation of entire families, not just individuals, thus perpetuating cycles of exclusion and trauma.

4.5.1.5 Defamation and Lack of Recourse

In addition to the psychological toll, witchcraft accusations in neo-prophetic ministries are a form of defamation that damages individuals' reputations without any opportunity for recourse. In many cases, those accused of witchcraft have no formal mechanism to challenge the accusations. This lack of due process further exacerbates the harm inflicted on the accused, who are left vulnerable to social exclusion and permanent damage to their reputation. One participant reflected on the hopelessness of the situation: "Once the prophet says you're a witch, that's it. People believe it without question, and you can't do anything to clear your name."¹⁶²

The authority that prophets hold within neo-prophetic ministries amplifies the issue of defamation without recourse.¹⁶³ As Onyinah discussed, prophets are considered to be divinely inspired figures whose words possess the power of spiritual truth. As such, accusations of witchcraft made by prophets are rarely questioned by congregants, leaving the accused with little chance to defend themselves. The lack of a formal system for verifying accusations or providing an avenue for appeal leaves the accused in permanent defamation.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Interview with Prophet's Member, interview by Albert Anneh, March 10, 2023, at LCC at 8:00am.

¹⁶³ Yendork, "The Impacts of Teachings of a Neo-Prophetic Church on Adolescents," 486.

¹⁶⁴ Opoku, *Akan Witchcraft and the Concept of Exorcism in The Church of Pentecost*, " 13.

The defamation and lack of recourse are explainable by the human rights theory. From a human rights standpoint, the lack of recourse for those accused of witchcraft is a violation of their right to a fair and just process, as outlined in Article 10 of the UDHR, which guarantees the right to a fair hearing.¹⁶⁵ Without the ability to challenge the accusations against them, individuals are left in perpetual defamation, with no means of restoring their reputation or social standing. This violation of human rights not only affects the accused but also undermines the ethical legitimacy of neo-prophetic ministries, which prioritise prophetic authority over the rights and dignity of their congregants.

The implications of these findings for neo-prophetic ministries are far-reaching. First, the unchecked authority of prophets, combined with the lack of formal mechanisms for addressing accusations, risks damaging the very foundation of these ministries. While the role of the prophet is central to the spiritual life of neo-prophetic churches, the power to accuse individuals of witchcraft without evidence or due process raises serious ethical concerns.

The implications of these findings for neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana are profound and multifaceted. The unchecked authority granted to prophets, particularly in their ability to make witchcraft accusations without due process, poses significant risks to the ethical and spiritual foundation of these ministries. As Onyinah explains, the convergence of traditional Ghanaian beliefs in witchcraft with Christian prophetic practices has created an environment where prophets hold immense power over congregants' lives.¹⁶⁶ This power,

¹⁶⁵ United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 3.

¹⁶⁶ Opoku, "Akan Witchcraft and the Concept of Exorcism in the Church of Pentecost," 36.

however, often goes unregulated, allowing prophets to accuse individuals without evidence, leading to social and emotional harm. Evans-Pritchard¹⁶⁷ emphasised how witchcraft accusations serve as mechanisms of social control, further complicating the role of neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana.

When prophets misuse their authority, it not only undermines the dignity of individuals but also threatens the overall integrity of the church. Ghanaea¹⁶⁸ asserts that when religious leaders fail to recognise the human rights implications of their actions, it reinforces the marginalisation and dehumanisation of the accused. Furthermore, Banda¹⁶⁹ argues that such unchecked authority can erode the church's legitimacy in the eyes of both congregants and the broader community. As a result, congregants lose faith in the prophet and the church as a whole, which is to serve as a source of spiritual support and refuge.

To combat these ethical concerns, neo-prophetic ministries must prioritise transparency and accountability in their handling of witchcraft accusations. As Fortman¹⁷⁰ suggests, establishing formal procedures for investigating and verifying accusations is essential to maintaining the church's ethical integrity. Such reforms would allow for a more just process, where accusations are substantiated by credible evidence rather than prophetic declarations alone. Furthermore, providing psychological support for the accused is critical, as the emotional toll of these accusations can be devastating. Ghanaea calls for



¹⁶⁷ Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande*, 26.

¹⁶⁸ Ghanaea, "Religion, Equality, and Non-Discrimination," 95

¹⁶⁹ Banda, "Propagating Afro-Pessimism? The Power of Neo-Pentecostal Prophetic Objects on Human Agency and Transcendence in Africa," 6

¹⁷⁰ Fortman, *Religion and Human Rights: A Dialectical Relationship*, 3.

religious institutions to engage with human rights frameworks, advocating for protecting personal dignity and mental well-being.¹⁷¹

Similarly, Jean-Paul and Saunders highlight that the long-term psychological effects of being falsely accused can extend beyond the individual, affecting entire families and communities.¹⁷² In line with the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR),¹⁷³ it is also necessary to ensure that individuals can challenge accusations against them, thereby protecting their right to mental health and dignity. Without these reforms, neo-prophetic ministries risk perpetuating cycles of emotional harm, social exclusion, and defamation, ultimately weakening both their spiritual mission and their ethical standing within the community.

4.5.2 Towards an Ethical Witchcraft Accusations

The use of conscious efforts at addressing ethical concerns in the neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana is central to maintaining their spiritual legitimacy and moral responsibilities. Despite being influential in Ghana, these ministries face unending ethical challenges, particularly regarding witchcraft accusations demanding comprehensive solutions. Unsurprisingly, the neo-prophetic ministries sit at the centre of spiritual guidance and social regulation through their prophetic practices. However, these practices violate human rights, harm individuals, and fracture community cohesion. As outlined by Evans-Pritchard¹⁷⁴, witchcraft accusations provide an avenue of social control, a persisting topic

¹⁷¹ Ghanaea, "Religion, Equality, and Non-Discrimination," 108

¹⁷² Marthoz and Saunders, "Religion and the Human Rights Movement," 3

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande*, 19

in the neo-prophetic ministry. Consequently, the study's third objective sought to interrogate and propose ways to address ethical concerns within the space of neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana. The chapter, therefore, explores approaches in detail, drawing on the human rights framework to offer approaches addressing ethical concerns within neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana.

4.5.2.1 Private Declaration of Witchcraft

A recurring ethical issue throughout the study's engagement with participants is the public declaration of witchcraft in the neo-prophetic ministries. The consistent open revelation of sensitive information during church services, mainly without significant evidence, can lead to social ostracisation, psychological harm and broken relationships, where friends and close relatives distance themselves from the accused. Relatedly, many participants echoed the need for private handling of such accusations. For instance, a participant noted that: "I think the best way is that when you feel something is not right with someone as a man of God, it is better you approach the person one-on-one...instead of being on air and announcing it to everyone."¹⁷⁵

Sentiments such as the above reflect the importance of ethically protecting individuals from public shame while addressing their spiritual concerns respectfully and compassionately. The private approach protects individuals from problems that stem from open accusations while addressing their spiritual matters respectfully and compassionately. The literature also supports private accusations. Onyinah observed that the allegations of

¹⁷⁵ Akosua Gyebie-Donkor, interview by Albert Anneh, March 21, 2023, at LCC at 8:00am.

witchcraft in Ghana alienate the accused from society – a dominant scenario mirrored in neo-prophetic ministries, especially following open claims in public.¹⁷⁶ Similarly, Evans-Pritchard contends that public witchcraft accusations lead to permanent social stigmatisation. As a result, adopting private approaches attenuates the social and psychological harm caused by such allegations, fostering a sense of dignity and respect among congregants.¹⁷⁷

In furtherance, practising private approaches fosters a more supportive church environment. Thus, when prophetic decisions are private, church leaders can address the issue in a controlled setting, focusing on the healing, resolution and saving souls rather than public condemnation. The private approaches also allow individuals to respond to accusations devoid of the public gallery, pressure, and attendant scrutiny. This was submitted by a respondent when he indicated that; “When handled privately, these matters don’t escalate into unnecessary conflicts or divide *families* and communities.”¹⁷⁸

The importance of privately handling witchcraft accusations corroborates extant studies such as Owusu and Ashfoth, arguing that privately handling sensitive information prevents the spread of rumours, reduces conflicts, and promotes reconciliation.¹⁷⁹⁻¹⁸⁰ The private handling of information also has a theoretical basis. Theoretically, a private approach aligns with the broader ethical principles of Christian pastoral care grounded in compassion, reconciliation, and protecting individuals from unnecessary harm. That is reflected in

¹⁷⁶ Opoku, *Akan Witchcraft and the Concept of Exorcism in the Church of Pentecost*, 2.

¹⁷⁷ Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande*, 9.

¹⁷⁸ Akosua Gyebie-Donkor, interview by Albert Anneh, March 21, 2023, at ECC at 8:00am.

¹⁷⁹ Owusu, “Witchcraft Accusations and the Tort of Defamation in Anglophone Africa,” 37.

¹⁸⁰ Ashforth, “Witchcraft, Justice, and Human Rights in Africa: Cases from Malawi,” 8.

Ghanea's¹⁸¹ discussions of religious leader's role in safeguarding individuals' dignity, arguing that leaders should protect the privacy and dignity of their members. Neo-prophetic leaders, therefore, must take responsibility for ensuring that their practices do not expose individuals to public shame or social exclusion, mainly when dealing with sensitive spiritual matters like witchcraft accusations.

4.5.2.2 Provision of Ethical Training and Guidelines

In addition, another emerging ethical issue identified concerns the need to provide formal ethical training for church leaders in neo-prophetic ministries. Many of the study participants reiterated that prophets and other church leaders lack adequate ethical guidelines or training to handle the complexities of the prophetic revelations and witchcraft accusations as a participant remarked: "The presentation also matters.....you can still warn the person you feel is afflicted in a certain order that will not cause such panic"¹⁸²

The above quote shows the importance of decent prophetic communication, the mode, and the need for ethical training to ensure prophetic revelations are responsibly handled. Ethical training equips prophets with the knowledge and skills to balance spiritual guidance and social responsibility. Banda¹⁸³ argues that religious leaders must be trained to recognise the human rights implications of their practices and to avoid actions that could cause harm to individuals or communities. Ethical guidelines should provide clear protocols for verifying the accuracy of prophetic revelations, safeguarding individuals' privacy, and ensuring that

¹⁸¹ Ghanea, "Religion, Equality, and Non-Discrimination," 10.

¹⁸² Salifu Ayew, interview by Albert Anneh, February 15, 2023, at ECC at 5:00pm.

¹⁸³ Collum, "Propagating Afro-Pessimism? The Power of Neo-Pentecostal Prophetic Objects on Human Agency and Transcendence in Africa," 6.

the communication of spiritual messages is done with care and discretion. Evans-Pritchard¹⁸⁴ highlights the importance of leaders exercising caution when dealing with accusations of witchcraft, as public accusations can have unintended social consequences, including the fracturing of community bonds.

Also, implementing structured ethical guidelines can help neo-prophetic ministries align their spiritual practices with broader justice, fairness, and accountability principles. Fotman¹⁸⁵ emphasises the need for transparency and accountability in religious institutions, particularly when handling sensitive information like witchcraft accusations. By establishing formal procedures for investigating claims and verifying prophetic revelations, neo-prophetic ministries can create a more just and responsible framework for addressing spiritual concerns. Such guidelines protect individuals from unnecessary harm and strengthen the church's ethical integrity.

Moreover, fostering ethical training and guidelines can help restore trust within the congregation. Training church leaders to handle sensitive information responsibly safeguards the dignity and privacy of congregants. One interviewee noted: "People don't trust each other anymore because they fear being accused. But if there were clear guidelines, it would make people feel safe in the church."¹⁸⁶

By promoting ethical training and guidelines, neo-prophetic ministries can rebuild trust within their congregations and foster a more supportive and compassionate community. For example, training programmes that emphasise humility, respect, and proper

¹⁸⁴ Evans-Pritchard, "Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande," 19.

¹⁸⁵ Fortman, "Religion and Human Rights: A Dialectical Relationship," 20.

¹⁸⁶ Akua Donkor, interview by Albert Anneh, February 15, 2023, at LCC at 5:00pm.

interpretation of prophetic roles can help mitigate harmful behaviours¹⁸⁷ and rebuild congregational confidence to ensure leaders are equipped to navigate challenges responsibly while also prioritising the well-being and development of their members¹⁸⁸

4.5.2.3 Promoting Reconciliation and Pastoral Care

Promoting reconciliation and pastoral care is a crucial strategy for addressing the ethical concerns associated with witchcraft accusations in neo-prophetic ministries. Witchcraft accusations often lead to divisions within families and communities, resulting in social isolation and emotional trauma for the accused. These accusations, typically public and lacking substantiation, exacerbate the damage inflicted on individuals and disrupt the cohesion within congregations. Several participants in the study highlighted the need for church leaders to prioritize healing and reconciliation over condemnation, as one interviewee suggested: “There should be an opportunity for people to have one-on-one counselling for those willing to be free of such a spirit.”¹⁸⁹

This statement reflects the importance of adopting a more compassionate pastoral approach, one that seeks to address the emotional and spiritual well-being of both the accused and the accuser. The role of pastoral care is foundational to Christian ministry, particularly when individuals are vulnerable or experiencing emotional distress. Pastoral care is not just about spiritual guidance but also about offering emotional support and

¹⁸⁷ Kaunda, “Cleaning up the Church”: African Neo-Pentecostalism, Language Ideology, and State Regulation of Religious Freedom,” 6.

¹⁸⁸ Yendork. “The Impacts of Teachings of a Neo-Prophetic Church on Adolescents’ Well-Being and Character Development,” 4.

¹⁸⁹ Ministry Brands. Pastoral Care and Counselling: Importance, Benefits and Challenges. Available at [https://www.ministrybrands.com/#8203::contentReference\[oaicite:0\]{index=0}](https://www.ministrybrands.com/#8203::contentReference[oaicite:0]{index=0})

ensuring that individuals feel valued, even in times of crisis^{190,191}. Ghanaea argues that church leaders have an ethical responsibility to provide emotional and spiritual support to individuals who are accused of witchcraft. By providing such support, leaders can help individuals navigate the psychological and social challenges that come with being accused. Witchcraft accusations often create fear, shame, and alienation, making the role of the pastor even more critical in ensuring that the accused feels protected and cared for within the church community.¹⁹²

Pastoral care that emphasizes reconciliation offers an alternative to the more destructive paths of public condemnation and exclusion. One of the recurring themes from the interview data was the belief that counselling and support should be extended to both the accused and the accuser. In many instances, those making the accusations are also deeply affected by the experience, often acting out of fear or misunderstanding. By offering pastoral support to both parties, neo-prophetic ministries can foster an atmosphere of understanding and healing within their congregations. As one interviewee stated: When people can talk through these things in private, it leads to more understanding and less conflict within the church”¹⁹³

This sentiment underscores the potential for reconciliation-focused pastoral care to prevent the escalation of conflict and to restore unity within the church community. The concept

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Higginbotham, “Crisis Pastoral Counselling,” 14.

¹⁹² Ghanaea, “Religion, Equality, and Non-Discrimination,” 17.

¹⁹³ Akosua Gyebie-Donkor, interview by Albert Anneh, March 21, 2023, at ECC at 7:00pm.

of reconciliation within the Christian tradition is deeply rooted in the broader principles of forgiveness, compassion, and redemption. Rather than perpetuating division, reconciliation seeks to rebuild relationships, restore trust, and promote a sense of community. Mgbako and Glee emphasize the role of religious leaders in fostering an environment of healing, particularly when individuals have been wronged or marginalized. In the context of witchcraft accusations, this involves recognising the humanity and dignity of the accused, offering them a path toward restoration rather than condemnation. By adopting reconciliation-focused practices, neo-prophetic ministries can align their actions with these core Christian values, helping to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all members of the congregation.

Furthermore, promoting reconciliation and pastoral care can also mitigate the long-term social and emotional damage caused by witchcraft accusations. Accusations often lead to social ostracism, with individuals being cut off from their communities and families due to the stigma associated with being labelled a witch. Ghanaea¹⁹⁴ notes that religious leaders play a pivotal role in helping to restore the social fabric after such accusations. When church leaders actively work to promote reconciliation, they can help to heal the divisions created by these accusations and reduce the isolation experienced by the accused.

This can involve mediating conversations between the accused and their accusers, facilitating forgiveness, and helping to rebuild trust within families and communities. The idea of reconciliation is also crucial in addressing the psychological trauma that often accompanies witchcraft accusations. For many individuals, being accused of witchcraft is

¹⁹⁴ Ghanaea, “Religion, Equality, and Non-Discrimination,” 8.

not only a social burden but also an emotional and psychological one. Accusations can lead to feelings of guilt, shame, and despair, particularly when the accused is innocent. Reconciliation-focused pastoral care can offer individuals a path toward emotional healing, as they are given the opportunity to reconcile with their accusers and restore their standing within the community. As one participant mentioned: The church should be a place of healing, not a place where people are cast out. We need to focus more on bringing people back together, not driving them apart”¹⁹⁵

This perspective reflects the belief that pastoral care should focus on building bridges rather than burning them. In addition to its emotional and social benefits, reconciliation-focused pastoral care can also have a profound spiritual impact. Many neo-prophetic ministries emphasise spiritual warfare, where congregants are taught to see witchcraft as part of a larger battle between good and evil. However, this focus on spiritual conflict can sometimes lead to a culture of fear and suspicion, where individuals are quick to label others as witches and to distance themselves from those they perceive as threats. Reconciliation offers an alternative to this mind-set, encouraging congregants to see each other not as enemies but as fellow believers who are in need of support and healing. As Jean-Paul and Saunders¹⁹⁶ suggest, reconciliation practices can help to transform relationships, allowing individuals to move beyond fear and suspicion and toward mutual respect and understanding.



¹⁹⁵ Helena Asante, interview by Albert Anneh, April 17, 2023, at LCC at 5:00pm.

¹⁹⁶ Marthoz and Saunders, “Religion and the Human Rights Movement,” 13.

Ultimately, promoting reconciliation and pastoral care within neo-prophetic ministries requires a shift in focus from condemnation to healing. Church leaders must be willing to invest time and resources into providing emotional and spiritual support to all members of their congregations, particularly those who have been accused of witchcraft. This may involve offering one-on-one counselling, facilitating conversations between the accused and their accusers, and creating spaces where individuals can seek forgiveness and redemption. By prioritising reconciliation over condemnation, neo-prophetic ministries can help to rebuild trust within their congregations and promote a more inclusive and supportive church environment.

In conclusion, reconciliation and pastoral care are essential strategies for addressing the ethical concerns associated with witchcraft accusations in neo-prophetic ministries. By offering counselling and support to both the accused and the accuser, church leaders can foster understanding, prevent conflict, and promote healing within their congregations. Reconciliation aligns with the broader Christian principles of forgiveness, compassion, and redemption, helping to create a more inclusive and supportive church environment. By prioritising these practices, neo-prophetic ministries can not only address the social and emotional harm caused by witchcraft accusations but also uphold their spiritual mission of fostering love and unity within the body of Christ.

4.5.2.4 Community Education

Community education is a critical component of addressing ethical concerns within neo-prophetic ministries. The interviews revealed that many congregants have a limited understanding of the moral implications of witchcraft accusations and the potential harm

they can cause. One interviewee stated: Witchcraft is the cause of every evil act. Witchcraft is a demonic act. Anything that has to do with Satanism.”¹⁹⁷

This perception reflects a narrow understanding of witchcraft that often leads to public accusations and social stigmatisation. Educating the congregation about the ethical and social consequences of witchcraft accusations can help foster a more informed and compassionate approach to handling such matters. Community education initiatives can take many forms, including workshops, seminars, and ongoing teachings that emphasise the ethical responsibilities of church leaders and congregants. Banda highlights the role of religious leaders in educating their congregations about the ethical implications of their actions, arguing that religious institutions must promote awareness and understanding of human rights and moral principles. By educating congregants about the importance of privacy, discretion, and compassion in handling witchcraft accusations, neo-prophetic ministries can help reduce the harm caused by public accusations and foster a more supportive church environment.

Moreover, community education can help dispel myths and misconceptions about witchcraft, reducing the stigma associated with being accused. One interviewee explained: “Prophets should communicate witchcraft prophecies with much wisdom... Otherwise, when they communicate it straightforwardly to members, it creates many problems, including conflicts.”¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ Interview with Prophet’s Member, interview by Albert Anneh, March 10, 2023, at LCC at 10:00am.

¹⁹⁸ Interview with Prophet’s Member 3, interview by Albert Anneh, April 19, 2023, at LCC at 10:00am.

By educating congregants about the potential harm caused by public accusations, neo-prophetic ministries can encourage a more thoughtful and measured approach to addressing spiritual concerns. Jean-Paul and Saunders argue that religious leaders are responsible for challenging harmful beliefs and practices within their congregations, promoting a more ethical and compassionate approach to spiritual leadership.¹⁹⁹

Through these community education initiatives, neo-prophetic ministries can better navigate the ethical challenges of witchcraft accusations, fostering a more inclusive and supportive church community. Educating congregants about the broader social and psychological consequences of witchcraft accusations can help reduce unnecessary conflict and promote healing within the church. Fortman²⁰⁰ emphasises that community education is essential for fostering a culture of ethical responsibility within religious institutions, ensuring that their practices align with broader principles of justice, compassion, and human rights.

4.5.3 CONCLUSION

Addressing ethical concerns within neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana requires a comprehensive approach that includes adopting private approaches to handling sensitive revelations, fostering ethical training and guidelines for church leaders, promoting reconciliation and pastoral care, and enhancing community education. Each of these strategies plays a crucial role in creating a more ethical and compassionate church environment where the dignity and well-being of all congregants are protected. By

¹⁹⁹ Marthoz and Saunders, “Religion and the Human Rights Movement,” 3.

²⁰⁰ Fortman, *Religion and Human Rights: A Dialectical Relationship*, 21.

prioritising the privacy of individuals, implementing structured ethical guidelines, and promoting reconciliation, neo-prophetic ministries can navigate the complex ethical challenges associated with witchcraft accusations while fostering a more inclusive and supportive church community. These initiatives will help ensure that the ministries' spiritual practices align with broader ethical frameworks and human rights principles, ultimately strengthening their spiritual mission and ethical integrity.

Through continued engagement with these ethical concerns, neo-prophetic ministries can evolve to meet the needs of their congregations while upholding the highest standards of compassion, justice, and human dignity. As these ministries continue to grow in influence, it is imperative that they remain committed to fostering a church environment that respects individual rights, promotes reconciliation, and encourages ethical leadership.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations drawn from the research on witchcraft accusations within neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana. Based on the study objectives, this chapter summarizes the key findings, presents the conclusions, highlights the study's contribution to knowledge, and offers actionable recommendations. The study focuses on investigating the nature of witchcraft accusations, the ethical concerns arising from these accusations, and ways of addressing these concerns within the neo-prophetic community. Proceeding from the Human Rights Theory perspective, this study explores how such accusations intersect with the individual rights of the accused and their social impact on communities.

5.2 Summary of Major Findings

The results of this study illuminate the complex dynamics surrounding witchcraft accusations in neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana. The following section presents a summary of the findings corresponding to the study's research objectives.

5.2.1 Findings on Accusations in Neo-Prophetic Ministries in Ghana

The study suggests that witchcraft accusations in neo-prophetic ministries are intertwined with cultural beliefs and religious practices. Many participants described witchcraft as a nasty force that causes illness, misfortune, and disruption within communities. The

integration of these traditional beliefs with neo-prophetic doctrines reinforces the view that witchcraft is a real threat which must be confronted through spiritual warfare. As a result, prophets often make public accusations against individuals, identifying them as witches either explicitly or implicitly. These accusations, frequently delivered during church services, reinforce the prophet's authority while fostering fear and distrust within the congregation.

5.2.2 Findings of Ethical Concerns Raised Regarding Witchcraft Accusations

Regarding ethical concerns and the witchcraft accusations, the study identified several ethical concerns related to witchcraft accusations in neo-prophetic ministries. Public accusations of witchcraft often result in social ostracism, psychological harm, and defamation of character. Participants shared stories of individuals being stigmatised, isolated, and emotionally traumatised after being accused of witchcraft during church services. These practices raise significant human rights issues, violating individuals' rights to privacy, dignity, and protection from defamation. The study also found that the lack of ethical guidelines and training for prophets contributes to the careless handling of sensitive information, leading to unnecessary harm.

5.2.3 Findings on Ways to Address Ethical Concerns within Neo-Prophetic Ministries

Participants recommended several strategies for addressing the ethical concerns related to witchcraft accusations. These included adopting private approaches to prophetic revelations, providing ethical training and guidelines for church leaders, promoting reconciliation and pastoral care, and implementing community education programmes. By handling sensitive revelations in private, prophets could protect individuals' dignity and

prevent unnecessary social conflict. Ethical training would equip prophets with the knowledge to handle spiritual matters responsibly, while reconciliation efforts would foster healing and unity within communities.

5.3 Conclusions of the Study Findings

The study makes the following conclusions based on the study analysis and the outcome of the results and discussions, which align with the research objective and theoretical underpinnings. The study's findings lead to several important conclusions. Firstly, it became evident that witchcraft accusations are a central feature of neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana, rooted in both traditional beliefs and Christian doctrines. These accusations serve as a means of spiritual warfare but also function as mechanisms of social control within congregations. The convergence of cultural and religious perspectives on witchcraft perpetuates these practices despite their harmful consequences.

Secondly, the open nature of accusations of witchcraft in neo-prophetic ministries raises serious ethical concerns. These accusations violate individuals' rights to privacy, dignity, and protection from defamation. The psychological and social consequences of these accusations are severe, often leading to social exclusion, emotional trauma, and lasting damage to individuals' reputations. The lack of formal ethical guidelines for handling witchcraft accusations exacerbates these problems. Lastly, the ethical challenges associated with witchcraft accusations require a comprehensive approach, including private handling of sensitive revelations, ethical training for prophets, pastoral care, and community education. These strategies can help protect individuals from harm, foster reconciliation

within congregations, and align neo-prophetic practices with broader ethical principles and human rights standards.

5.4 Originality of the Study

This study makes an original contribution to scholarship by integrating ethical analysis with human rights theory in the examination of witchcraft accusations within neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana. While earlier works have largely focused on the theological, cultural, or sociological dimensions of witchcraft beliefs, this research uniquely situates the phenomenon within Locke's Human Rights Theory and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, thereby offering a normative framework for evaluating the ethical implications of such accusations. In addition, the comparative case study of two urban neo-prophetic churches- Empowerment City Chapel and Liberation City Chapel; provides fresh insights into how different ministries interpret and enact witchcraft accusations. The findings highlight not only the psychosocial and spiritual consequences for the accused but also the institutional gaps in ethical training and pastoral care. By bringing these strands together, the study advances a new perspective that bridges religion, ethics, and human rights in the Ghanaian neo-prophetic context.

5.5 Recommendations of the Study Findings

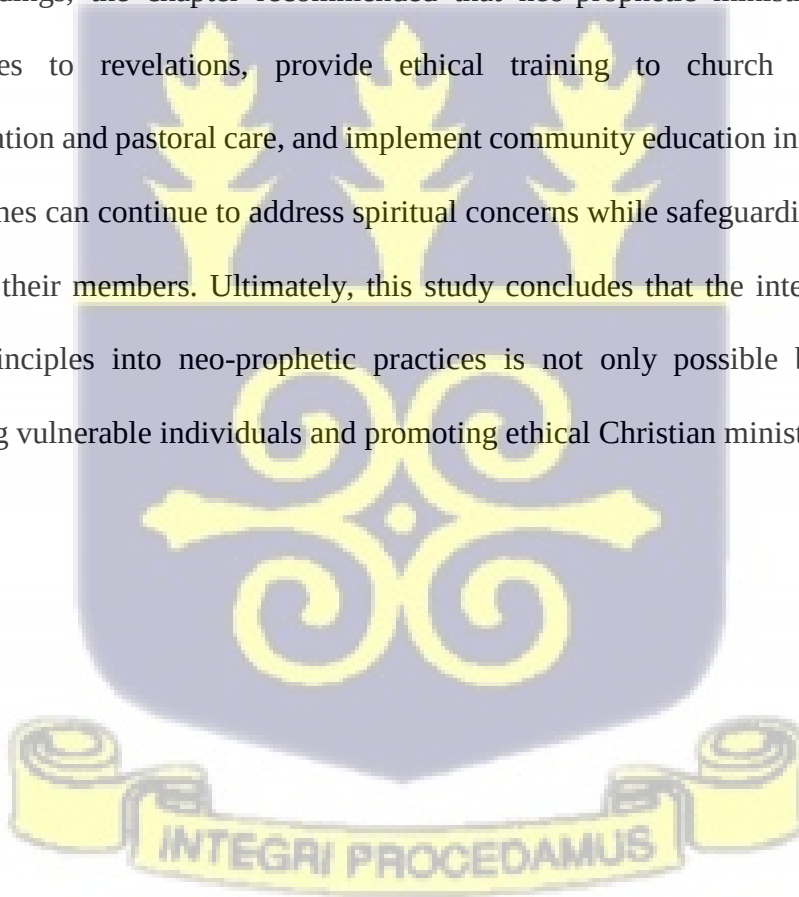
The findings of this study highlight that accusations of witchcraft within neo-prophetic ministries often emerge in public spaces, leaving the accused vulnerable to humiliation, stigma, and emotional trauma. Such outcomes point to the need for more discreet handling of prophetic revelations, alongside greater emphasis on pastoral care and reconciliation rather than condemnation. By creating church environments where dignity and healing are

prioritized, congregants can engage their faith without fear of rejection or ridicule. The analysis further reveals gaps in ethical formation among church leaders, which frequently results in the mishandling of sensitive issues. Structured ethical education, supported by clear guidelines on responsible leadership, becomes critical in preventing abuse of prophetic authority and ensuring that accusations are approached with integrity, discretion, and compassion. In this way, neo-prophetic ministries can address the complex intersection between spirituality, culture, and human rights in ways that affirm both their religious mission and the well-being of their members.

The study also underscores the broader social implications of witchcraft accusations, showing how they intersect with questions of justice, human dignity, and community cohesion. Effective responses require more than individual pastoral action; they demand collective education and engagement. Community-based initiatives such as workshops and teachings can help reshape harmful narratives, reduce stigma, and promote ethical awareness within congregations. At the same time, aligning ministry practices with human rights principles offers a framework for balancing spiritual responsibilities with legal and moral obligations. Such alignment can strengthen trust between leaders and congregants while ensuring that vulnerable individuals are safeguarded from harm. Ultimately, by grounding their responses in compassion, justice, and doctrinal clarity, neo-prophetic ministries can transform the way witchcraft accusations are handled; moving away from fear and condemnation toward approaches that foster healing, accountability, and unity within both the church and the wider society.

5.6 Conclusion

This final chapter has drawn together the findings of the study and reflected on their implications. It was established that witchcraft accusations in neo-prophetic ministries are widespread and are often directed at vulnerable individuals such as women, children, and the elderly. These accusations raise significant ethical issues, including violations of privacy, psychological trauma, and the erosion of human dignity. The study also found that while cultural and theological factors sustain the belief in witchcraft, the ways in which accusations are managed in churches often contradict human rights principles. In light of these findings, the chapter recommended that neo-prophetic ministries adopt private approaches to revelations, provide ethical training to church leaders, promote reconciliation and pastoral care, and implement community education initiatives. By doing so, churches can continue to address spiritual concerns while safeguarding the dignity and rights of their members. Ultimately, this study concludes that the integration of human rights principles into neo-prophetic practices is not only possible but necessary for protecting vulnerable individuals and promoting ethical Christian ministry in Ghana.



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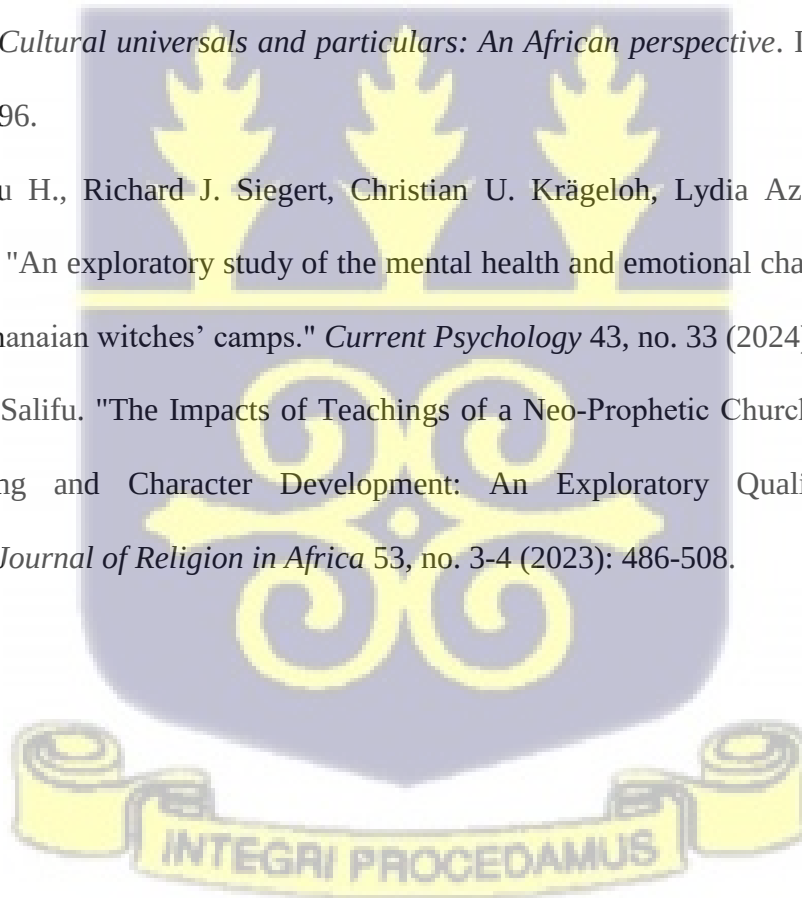
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Guide

This semi-structured interview guide was used to collect primary data from participants in the two neo-prophetic ministries under study. It was designed to explore their perceptions, experiences, and ethical views regarding witchcraft accusations.

1. Can you briefly tell me about yourself (age, occupation, role in the church)?
2. How long have you been a member of this church?
3. What is your understanding of witchcraft?
4. Do witches exist?
5. Are there types of witches?
6. In your prophetic ministrations, have you ever encountered a witch?
7. How did you handle it?
8. Did you think about the ethical issues?
9. Did you consider privacy?
10. What feedback did you get from how you handled it?
11. Do you pray against them to die or for them to live long?
12. In your view, how common are witchcraft accusations in your community or church?
13. Have you ever witnessed someone being accused of witchcraft in the church?

14. How was the accusation made (publicly, privately, during service, etc.)?
15. What was the impact of the accusation on the person accused?
16. How do these accusations affect the dignity and rights of those accused?
17. Is there a better way to present and minister deliverance to 'those people' without infringing on their rights?
18. What do you think church leaders can do differently to handle witchcraft accusations?
19. What role should the wider Christian community, government, or human rights institutions play in addressing this issue?



Appendix B: Thematic Table

Theme	Sub-Themes	Illustrative Quotes
Witchcraft Accusations	Public vs. Private Accusations	“The prophet pointed at her during the service and called her a witch.”
	Gender and Vulnerability	“It is mostly older women or children who are accused.”
Psychological Impact	Trauma, Fear, and Stigma	“After the accusation, she could not return to her home because of shame and rejection.”
Ethical Issues	Privacy and Dignity	“Some things should be said in counselling, not in front of the whole church.”
	Defamation and Lack of Recourse	“Once you are accused, even if it is false, people never forget.”
Human Rights Concerns	Right to Life, Dignity, and Privacy	“Public accusations go against the person’s

		dignity; it destroys their reputation.”
Addressing Ethical Concerns	Need for Private Handling	“The prophet should talk to the person privately instead of announcing it.”
	Training for Church Leaders	“Pastors need education on ethics and human rights.”
	Community Education	“Churches should teach members not to stigmatize those accused.”

