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Saved yet Bound? Generational Curse Beliefs and Distorted Lived Soteriology in an Urban African Evangelical Congregation

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to investigate the persistence of generational curse beliefs among congregants of Nairobi Chapel Ngong Road, an evangelical congregation in Nairobi, Kenya, and to examine what this persistence reveals about their understanding of biblical soteriology. Using a qualitative phenomenological design, data were collected from 33 purposively and snowball-selected congregants through semi-structured interviews focus group discussions, and questionnaires. The data were coded in ATLAS.ti and analysed using Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis. The findings reveal that generational curse beliefs persist because of three interrelated factors: an African cosmological worldview that integrates spiritual and physical causation, recurring family suffering interpreted as evidence of generational bondage, and external religious influences that fill the gap created by limited institutional teaching on the subject. The study identifies a pattern of distorted lived soteriology, whereby congregants affirm orthodox beliefs about salvation while functionally embracing a two-tier understanding in which Christ is sufficient for eternal salvation but inadequate to break generational curses. This distortion weakens Christology, shifts reliance from grace to ritual practices, and contributes to spiritual and psychological exhaustion. The article argues for integrated pastoral responses that combine biblical teaching on Christ's redemptive work, worldview-oriented discipleship, and pastoral care that addresses believers' lived experiences. The study contributes an empirical understanding of generational curse beliefs within an urban African evangelical context and offers practical insights for strengthening biblical soteriology.

Key words: African traditional religion, biblical soteriology, Christus Victor, distorted lived soteriology, evangelical Christianity, generational curses.



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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Kenyan Christianity has seen a rise in teaching on the breaking of generational curses, including a growing deliverance ministry movement. Philomena Mwaura observes that among the beliefs shaping this landscape are “*sorcery and witchcraft; consultation of witches, wizards and sorcerers; generational curses; and evil Omens*”(Mwaura, n.d., p. 58), pointing to how pre-Christian cosmological convictions continue to shape the theological imagination of many Kenyan believers. This has made it plausible for congregations across the Kenyan context, including the ones that hold evangelical doctrines, to be shaped by this same environment.

For the purposes of this study, generational curses are understood to be negative patterns, behaviours, and life challenges that result from being passed down from one’s sinful ancestor, a situation that continues to recur through subsequent generations until they are deliberately broken. Biblical soteriology refers to salvation through Christ Jesus as outlined in the Bible, whereby a sinner is saved by the grace of God and through faith in Christ Jesus. Its sufficiency and completeness, as used here, denote the adequacy of that salvation to free believers from both the power of sin and the consequences of their own past and their ancestors’ past.

One of the most persistent theological paradoxes in African evangelical Christianity is the coexistence of an orthodox confession of salvation with a functional belief in ongoing ancestral curse bondage. Believers who affirm that Christ’s work on the cross is complete and sufficient simultaneously live as though that work has not affected their negative family histories. They are, in their own words, saved but bound. This study investigates that paradox within Nairobi Chapel Ngong Road, an urban evangelical congregation that affirms orthodox teaching on salvation, yet members privately maintain beliefs in generational curses, often interpreting persistent misfortune, barrenness, financial stagnation, recurrent illness, delayed marriage, and untimely death as evidence of inherited curses. Collium Banda draws attention to

precisely this phenomenon, observing a “*fearful belief that Christians are vulnerable to generational curses*” (Banda, 2020a, p. 3) that “*thrives on a soteriology that is not well grounded on the fact that spiritual regeneration is an act of God*”(Banda, 2020a, p. 3). He further argues that once Christians recognise “*that salvation is the exclusive work of God, it will help them to realise that God does not give birth to Christians (John 1:13; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23), only to leave them wallowing in their inherited curses*” (Banda, 2020a, p. 8).

Despite a growing body of theoretical literature on this subject, congregation-specific empirical research examining how generational curse belief functions within evangelical churches that do not formally teach the subject remains scarce. This article addresses that gap as it reports findings from a qualitative phenomenological study of thirty-three congregants, examining the factors sustaining these beliefs, how congregants simultaneously hold salvation and bondage, what this reveals about their operative soteriology, and what pastoral responses may be most effective. Its central argument is that this paradox reflects a distorted understanding of salvation, a condition in which orthodox doctrinal confession by congregants and a functionally diminished understanding of salvation coexist without the believer recognising the contradiction.

In doing so, the study contributes an empirical account from a congregation whose official doctrine already excludes generational curse teaching, a situation that existing scholarship has largely left unexamined. The study also contributes a theological framework that is capable of naming and addressing this distortion pastorally.

The remainder of the article is organized as follows: the literature review situating the study within existing scholarship on African cosmology, Biblical soteriology, and Christus Victor as a theological resource for addressing beliefs in generational curses. The methodology section describes the phenomenological design and how data were gathered and analysed, and the results and discussion sections present the study’s findings across four

research questions. The conclusion section offers pastoral and theological recommendations arising directly from the findings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature that is related to generational curse beliefs among African Christians cuts across three levels of scholarship as organised in this article. They include theoretical work on African cosmology and worldview that is largely continental and global in scope, contextual studies that examine how these categories function within specific African societies and church movements, and a smaller body of Kenyan scholarship that contextualises this study. Each of the five sections below is organised along this same pattern, moving from the global theological and hermeneutical foundation, through to how Africa has appropriated the literature, and to what, if anything, the Kenyan scholarship has said on the issue. This movement allows the review to show what the literature affirms and also, where the literature is narrow, as it approaches the specific congregational context this study investigates. It is this narrowing of literature that justifies the empirical research highlighted in the sections that follow below.

The African Cosmological Framework

Across the global literature, definitions of cosmology exhibit a common conceptual foundation, but they vary in their emphasis. Ioannis Kyriakakis describes cosmology as “*a set of principles and mechanisms that regulate the world, both natural and social; these principles and mechanisms being constantly present and operative in everyday life*” (Kyriakakis, 2012, p. 4). Ekeke, quoting Okon, defines it more broadly, treating cosmology as “*the sum total of people’s opinion concerning life, happiness, fears, purpose of life, death and after-life*” (Ekeke, n.d., p. 4). Both agree that cosmology functions as a comprehensive interpretive system, yet neither explains how such a system persists within a professedly Christian community. Mburu’s discussion of worldview addresses part of this gap. She cites Wolters’s definition of worldview as “*the comprehensive framework of one’s basic beliefs about things*” (Mburu, 2019, p. 22), then critiques it

for confining worldview to the cognitive dimension alone.

Ferdinando corrects that limitation by locating worldview in lived practice rather than mere assent, describing it as “*the way in which people who belong to a particular culture make sense of the world they live in and how it works, and of their own place and role in it- their lives and experiences*” (Ferdinando, 2016, p. 3). This practice-oriented definition, more than the purely cognitive ones Mburu critiques, explains how a congregant can affirm Biblical soteriology at the cognitive level, while still reading misfortune through an inherited cosmological lens.

At the African level, this worldview has been documented across diverse communities, suggesting a shared cosmological pattern despite there being cultural and ethnic differences. Banda’s fieldwork among the Ndebele of Zimbabwe provides an illustration of this shared worldview, documenting beliefs in ancestral spirits blamed for poverty and the consultation of traditional healers to protect children against “*the spirit of vagrancy-urombe*” (Banda, 2020c, p. 2). Similarly, Godwin Adeboye’s study in the Nigerian context identifies another feature that reflects this common African worldview and cosmology. He observes that there is no clear distinction between the spiritual and the non-spiritual, arguing that this is “*caused by the influence of African traditional cosmology in which the spiritual is not separated from the non-spiritual*” (Adeboye, 2023, p. 8).

These African case studies converge in demonstrating that this worldview persists within the church through syncretism. Ferdinando defines syncretism as “*the mixing of the gospel with major elements drawn from a non-Christian worldview, whose tendency is to compromise the integrity of the Christian faith that is outwardly professed*” (Ferdinando, 2016, p. 5). This definition is more detailed than O’Donovan’s simpler description of syncretism as merely “*a mixture of two or more religions together*” (O’Donovan, 2022, p. 254). While O’Donovan describes syncretism as a blending of religious traditions, Ferdinando locates

the problem at the level of worldview, making his explanation more useful for explaining why non-Christian assumptions continue to shape the beliefs and practices of professing Christians. This perspective is reinforced by Yusuf Turaki, who observes that “*dual religious beliefs and practices are common among modern African Christians, that even after becoming Christians, many still hold to some of their ‘precious’ traditional religious beliefs, practices and behaviors*” (Turaki, 2020). His observation captures the coexistence of Christian faith and traditional cosmology that this study investigates.

Contemporary preaching shows how this syncretism is transmitted rather than merely theorised. Duncan-Williams of Ghana teaches that “*when something that should make sense is not making sense, 90 per cent of the time... something is controlling the situation spiritually*” (Archbishop Nicholas Duncan-Williams, 2025). A similar perspective is evident in the teaching of the Kenyan deliverance preacher Dr Oracle, who claims that “*there are battles believers do not know about, an enemy working behind the scenes causing families to live in poverty and disease... all of which, originate from evil altars*” (Rev Francis Oracle, 2022). This interpretive lens encourages believers to attribute otherwise unexplained circumstances to unseen spiritual forces. The influence of both preachers is amplified through digital media, where this interpretive framework reaches ordinary African Christians, including evangelicals who may never attend their deliverance services but nevertheless consume such content through the media environment.

This same interpretative framework is present in the Kenyan context. Among the Agikuyu, Louis Leakey notes that ancestor worship was grounded in the belief that people lived “*in a spirit world and in the ability of the spirits of those who had died to exert their influence over the living*” (Leakey et al., 1977, p. 737). Within this worldview, it is believed that inherited curses “*run across generations being transmitted from the fore parents who are said to have done something seriously wrong or ignored with contempt some cultural or traditional taboos or*

norms of morality or family ethics or ancestral solidarity” (Wachege, 2013, p. 7).

The continuity between this belief and contemporary generational curse teaching is evident in their shared worldview that present suffering can be traced to ancestral actions. Wachege further explains that “*the victim members can do nothing about it. Neither can the aforesaid curses be eradicated because such curses are not acquired but are inborn. Perhaps, the curse victims are predestined to be so cursed and (innocently) suffer the consequences*” (Wachege, 2013, p. 7). This fatalistic understanding of inherited punishment explains why beliefs about generational curses continue to resonate among many evangelical Christians.

Taken together, the literature demonstrates that this cosmology exists and continues to shape how many African Christians interpret reality, understand suffering, and make sense of everyday life. However, it is much less developed in the area that is most relevant to this study. Nearly all the African casestudies on generational curses are drawn from churches where generational curses are explicitly taught and curse-breaking practices form part of the church life. What remains largely unexplored is whether the same cosmological categories persist among believers whose churches neither teach generational curse doctrine nor practice deliverance ministry.

This is the gap this study addresses. Similarly, beyond Wachege's work on the Agikuyu, there is little Kenyan scholarship that examines this worldview within a specific urban evangelical congregation. The existing literature confirms that this cosmology is present in the Kenyan context, but it does not explain how it continues to shape believers in churches where generational curse inheritance is neither taught nor acknowledged.

Biblical Soteriology and the Generational Curse Problem

The global theological literature on salvation is consistent in affirming its completeness, which is exactly what makes generational curse beliefs

difficult to sustain theologically. O'Donovan's threefold framework of salvation as past, present, and future deliverance is helpful here because it demonstrates that the fear and anxiety associated with generational curses have already been addressed through Christ's redemptive work and the believer's standing before God.

Regarding the past dimension of salvation, O'Donovan argues that believers *"have been spared from the wrath of God... we have been cleansed and declared righteous in God's eyes"* (O'Donovan, 2022, p. 108). This understanding is difficult to reconcile with any teaching that treats ancestral sin as unfinished business or suggests that its effects remain active in believers' lives. Regarding the present dimension, O'Donovan locates the believer's ongoing struggle within the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit rather than in ancestral bondage, and he instead emphasises the enabling power of the Spirit in the believer, rather than inherited curses.

Looking to the future, he situates the present suffering within the hope of salvation's final consummation, when Christ will remove the very presence of sin and its effects. This future aspect of salvation extends the believer's perspective beyond present negative experiences and situates the Christian life within God's plan in the future. Generational curse beliefs tend to concentrate almost exclusively on immediate difficulties or repeated patterns of hardship and interpret them as signs of ancestral curses. Such a narrow focus misses the New Testament's emphasis on the final stage of salvation, when God will remove every remaining effect of sin.

Yet scripture presents the defeat of these powers not only as a future hope but as an accomplished reality at the cross. Don Carson interprets Paul's statement in Colossians 2:14-15 that Christ *"disarmed the rulers and authorities and disgraced them publicly"* as speaking directly to the fear of evil spiritual powers. As he explains, *"the word of the cross was a message of hope for those who lived in fear of evil, supernatural powers. God defeated and disarmed the evil powers of their authority"* (Carson, 1994, p.

1271). Kunhiyop takes this argument further as he insists that Christ's work was *"to destroy the devil's work"* and to *"free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death"* (Kunhiyop, 2012, p. 86).

Banda's appropriation of this doctrine connects Biblical soteriology directly to the generational curse question. He defines salvation as *"an act of spiritual recreation transforming people from a cursed state to a blessed one"* (Banda, 2020a, p. 9), supporting this in Paul's language of new creation in 2 Corinthians 5:17. On this basis he concludes that the believer's identity *"is not dual, partly bound, partly free, but wholly reconstituted in Christ"* (Banda, 2020a, p. 9). Such a view leaves no room for the claim that any remnant of the old, cursed self persists beyond conversion to be addressed afterwards. Byamukama, writing for the Gospel Coalition Africa, extends this to a claim about the believer's position, contending that whether a believer is cursed or blessed *"depends on our location, because God's judgement of our sin fell on Christ so that we are now redeemed from the curse we deserved but only if we are in Christ"* (Byamukama, 2020).

Kenyan scholarship engaging generational curse beliefs from a soteriological perspective is largely absent. As a result, Kenyan evangelicals rely mainly on global and pan-African theological resources, with little local scholarship addressing the tension between salvation's sufficiency and the persistent experience of feeling bound by curses. While the existing literature clearly establishes the doctrinal incompatibility between the two, it fails to explain why many believers continue to hold both beliefs without feeling the tension. This remains the gap the present study addresses.

Hermeneutics and Proof-Texting

Two Biblical texts recur throughout the literature as the primary scriptural basis used to teach generational curse beliefs, although they are often misinterpreted. Duvall and Hays argue that responsible Biblical interpretation begins by establishing what a passage meant in its original context before asking what it means for readers

today. As they explain, “from careful reading we are able to determine what the passage meant in the Biblical context—that is, what it meant to the Biblical audience” (Duvall & Hays, 2018, p. 40). They caution against moving directly to application because “when we try to apply this meaning directly to ourselves, we run into problems because we are separated from the Biblical audience by culture and customs, language, situation, and a vast expanse of time” (Duvall & Hays, 2018, p. 40).

One of the passages most frequently cited in support of generational curse teaching is Exodus 20:5, where God says He visits the iniquity of the fathers on the children. Central to the interpretation of this passage is the Hebrew verb *‘paqad’* (Strong’s H6485), translated as “visiting.” Scholars agree that *paqad* is “perplexingly multivalent,” (Ademiluka, 2023, p. 2), carrying a wide range of meanings, including “to attend to, reckon, visit, punish, to be appointed, to visit (with friendly or hostile intent), specifically visit for different purposes” (H6485 - *Pāqad* - Strong’s Hebrew Lexicon (ESV), n.d.).

Because the term carries several possible meanings, it cannot be reduced to a single interpretation or treated as a straightforward proof that generational curses are transmitted across successive generations. This diversity of interpretation is evident in the scholars discussed by Solomon Ademiluka.

Scharbert, as cited by Ademiluka, argues that it “connotes the idea of investigation with a view to awarding appropriate punishment” (Ademiluka, 2023, p. 2).

Similarly, Johnstone, also quoted by Ademiluka, maintains that *‘paqad’* “implies carrying out thorough investigation and the taking of necessary steps towards recovery and preservation, but it does not mean to inflict penalty” (Ademiluka, 2023, p. 2). Likewise, Egger, cited by Ademiluka, offers a more nuanced understanding, arguing “that when Yahweh is the subject of the *‘paqad’* (visiting), His action is either starkly positive, visiting His people to bestow provision or deliverance, or starkly negative in

which case He visits with devastating punishment for iniquity” (Ademiluka, 2023, p. 5).

The fact that these scholars reach different conclusions is itself evidence against treating the verse as a settled proof text for transmission of generational curses in families. Scott Osenbaugh’s reading provides more clarity that the divine visitation described “is not for continual generations; it is limited to four generations and specifically of those who have chosen to continue in themselves a hatred for the Lord” (Osenbaugh, 2025, p. 16). Read alongside the broader witness of the Old Testament texts such as Ezekiel 18 and Deuteronomy 24:16, this passage is best understood as a covenantal warning against persistent apostasy rather than a doctrine of automatic inheritance of punishment across generations.

The second popularly proof text verse on the generational teaching is Lamentations 5:7. Robert Salters reads the verse as reflecting a belief that “previous generations are bound up with present generations in such a way that sins committed in a previous generation may be punished later; and he identifies the tragic events of his day as punishment by Yahweh for the sins of the past” (Salters, 2010, p. 350). Smith offers a broader Old Testament perspective, observing that “the OT clearly teaches that every individual sinner is punished for his own sin (Jer 31:30; Ezek 18:1ff); but if children continue to walk in the footsteps of their wicked fathers and even surpass their fathers in wickedness they may expect to be punished with ever increasing severity” (Smith, n.d., p. 31).

Berlin adds a further caution against “taking too literally the term fathers” (Berlin, 2004, p. 89), because the verse belongs to Israel’s covenantal context during the exile rather than serving as a timeless principle for individual application today. Taken together, these studies suggest that both Exodus 20:5 and Lamentations 5:7 require careful interpretation rather than proof-texting. Yet this discussion is almost entirely absent from the Kenyan scholarship.

No Kenyan scholarship offers a dedicated exegetical or empirical treatment of either text within Kenyan generational curse discourse. What can be said, largely on the strength of Ademiluka's Nigerian material, is that neo-Pentecostal hermeneutical patterns are not confined by any boundaries. Nairobi Chapel congregants are unlikely to be hermeneutically isolated even though their own church does not teach this doctrine. The congregants encounter these same proof-texting patterns through popular preaching, social media ministries, and interdenominational crusades that circulate widely in Kenya. This gap leaves unexplained how a congregation can hear doctrinally sound Biblical teaching from their pulpit yet continue to interpret Scripture through a different hermeneutical method that is shaped outside their church.

Christus Victor in the African Context

Since fear of ancestral sin lies at the heart of generational curse beliefs, the question is whether Christ's redemptive work has dealt with those powers. The Christus Victor model addresses this question more than any other atonement model because it presents salvation as Christ's victory over the powers that keep humanity in bondage. Gustaf Aulen describes the Christus Victor model as the *"dramatic, its central theme being the atonement as a divine conflict and victory; Christ-Christus Victor-fights against and triumphs over the evil powers of the world, the tyrants under which mankind is in bondage and suffering"* (Aulen, 2003, p. 8). He concludes that Christ's victory *"creates a new situation bringing their rule to an end and setting men free from their dominion"* (Aulen, 2003, p. 17). If this is the case, then the fear that generational curses and ancestral powers continue to hold believers in bondage becomes difficult to sustain.

This is because in Colossians 2:14-15, Paul declares that Christ has decisively disarmed the rulers and authorities. The question then is not whether Christ has triumphed over the powers but how His triumph should be understood. Wright, Tasker, and Morris caution that *"the overall point of Colossians 2:15 is clear, but the details are extremely tricky to unravel"* (Wright et al., 1994, p. 111), since it is not obvious

precisely what has been done to the powers, and by whom, or where. Boyd however is more definitive, arguing that *"because the main thing Christ accomplished was that He defeated the devil, we are not surprised to find that salvation in the New Testament is frequently depicted as freedom from the devil's oppression."* (Beilby et al., 2009, p. 24). Thomas Schreiner disagrees with this notion, arguing that Boyd is mistaken *"in claiming that the Christus Victor theme is fundamental and the main thing that God accomplished in Christ's death"* (Beilby et al., 2009, p. 38).

He further cautions that Boyd's approach risks implying *"that human beings are merely victims of sin while stressing that sin is satanically inspired and the real struggle is against spiritual powers"* (Beilby et al., 2009, p. 39), thereby weakening the New Testament's emphasis on personal responsibility. Schreiner's concern is a significant one, particularly because generational curse teaching often shifts responsibility for persistent struggles from the individual to ancestral or spiritual causes. His conclusion, however, that forgiveness of sins is the New Testament's primary salvific theme is more his assertion and not necessarily what is demonstrated.

In Luke 4:18-19, Jesus describes His own ministry in terms of release, recovery, and freedom for the oppressed alongside the proclamation of good news. This suggests that the New Testament presents salvation as more than the forgiveness of sins alone, as Schreiner implies. This study therefore does not treat the Christus Victor motif and personal responsibility as competing themes; rather, Christ's victory over the powers assures believers that they are no longer under their dominion, while personal responsibility guards against explaining sin and suffering solely in terms of ancestral bondage. Within the African context, the Christus Victor motif speaks directly to a worldview in which spiritual powers are taken seriously.

John Mbiti, as quoted by Gomis through Stinton, observes that *"the greatest need among African peoples is to see, to know, and to experience Jesus*

Christ as the victor over the powers and forces [from] which Africa knows no means of deliverance" (Gomis, 2014, p. 3). Robert Falconer likewise draws on Chike's observation that "Africans see Jesus as the victor because life is, as it were, a spiritual battle," [in which] "the African Christian is involved in many fights and so needs a warrior on his side, where the fight might include overcoming evil spirits, poverty or illness" (Falconer Robert, 2023, pp. 118–119). This literature shows why the Christus Victor motif has resonated with African Christianity. It speaks directly to a context where spiritual conflict is often understood as part of everyday life.

The Kenyan literature, however, has not applied the Christus Victor motif specifically to the subject of generational curse beliefs. While African scholarship shows that Christ's victory over evil powers resonates within the continent, it does not examine whether believers who affirm that victory continue to interpret recurring hardship through the lens of generational curses. This leaves unanswered the question of whether belief in Christ's triumph over the powers actually reshapes how Christians understand suffering, recurring negative patterns, and ancestral bondage. It is this gap that the present study seeks to address.

Pastoral Responses in the Literature

The pastoral literature provides different ways of addressing the phenomenon of generational curse beliefs, where each has its own strengths and limitations. Kamai, Kanu, and Pilani argue that the New Testament marks "a crucial theological shift in the NT which is a rejection of hereditary or collective guilt" (Kamai et al., 2025, p. 6). Drawing on the healing of the man born blind in John chapter 9, they show "a departure from OT notions of generational punishment and reinforces the principle of individual moral responsibility as also seen in Ezekiel 18:20" (Kamai et al., 2025, p. 6). They build on this theological foundation by recommending that churches teach that "Christ's atoning sacrifice is fully sufficient for redemption and that baptism severs all spiritual bondage (Rom 6:3-4; Gal 3:27)" (Kamai et al., 2025, p. 13).

They also suggest that churches should "invest in robust discipleship programs that reinforces a Biblical worldview, helping believers move away from syncretic tendencies" (Kamai et al., 2025, p. 14). The goal would be to help believers move away from fear-based Christianity. While this proposal is both theologically coherent and pastorally hopeful, it assumes that churches have the structures and capacity to sustain the kind of discipleship they envision, something that may not always be the case. A second pastoral response highlighted is an example published by Just Africa Mission where a young woman sought deliverance from what she believed was an ancestral curse. But her pastor explained to her that "although she was reacting as her father had, it was learned behavior, and that the teaching of ancestral curse is not scriptural. He reminded her that outbursts of wrath are one of the works of the flesh and that the Holy Spirit gives her power to overcome it" (Reddin, n.d.). What this response does is redirect the believer to the transforming work of the Holy Spirit, rather than reinforce the fear of generational curses. However, while this approach addresses the theological problem, it fails to engage the cultural and emotional concerns that often make generational curse beliefs compelling in the first place.

Banda approaches the issue from a different perspective as he argues that generational curse teaching continues to attract Christians because it appears to explain why suffering and evil persist. He suggests, "pastors must provide meaningful answers to the problem of perpetual pain and suffering in Africa. This means that Christian salvation must unpack what it means to be saved and blessed by God and yet struggle with problems such as infertility, sickness, poverty and economic injustice" (Banda, 2020b, p. 4). His concern is not a call to a rejection of generational curse beliefs, but an appeal to ensure that Biblical soteriology speaks meaningfully to the painful realities believers continue to experience.

This way, Banda moves the discussion beyond correcting the doctrine to addressing the pastoral questions that make the doctrine appealing. A

different pastoral response is found in the teaching of Nellie Shani of Breaking Barriers International, a Nairobi-based ministry. Nelly explains that the way to experience freedom is to first “*recognise the presence of a curse when you see a pattern in your life and in the lives of those close to you, relatives you are connected with through a bloodline*” (CEO on Generational Barriers - Breaking Barriers International, 2024). After recognising the presence of a curse, she teaches that one must repent, and this involves “*standing in the gap for the ancestors and acknowledging their guilt as if one was there and participated in their idolatry*”(CEO on Generational Barriers - Breaking Barriers International, 2024). While this approach is pragmatic and seeks to bring freedom, it also reintroduces guilt and fear into Christian practice and risks reinforcing the idea that salvation is incomplete without further spiritual intervention. In doing this, it mirrors the very paradox this study seeks to investigate of believers who affirm salvation in Christ yet continue to understand themselves as bound by ancestral curses.

Taken together, the literature demonstrates that pastoral responses are shaped by different theological assumptions about the nature of salvation, suffering, and spiritual bondage. Some responses have emphasised the sufficiency of Christ's work and individual responsibility, while others continue to interpret recurring suffering through the lens of inherited curses. What is missing from the literature is any empirical examination of how these different pastoral approaches are received within a Kenyan evangelical congregation that does not officially teach the subject of generational curses. Although Nairobi Chapel does not explicitly affirm the doctrine of generational curses, its congregants are exposed to other outside pastoral voices through popular ministries, media platforms, and interdenominational networks. It is this lack of empirical pastoral response approaches that the present study seeks to address.

Synthesis: Gaps in the Literature and the Need for This Study

This literature review provides a theological account of generational curse beliefs at both the global and

African levels, but it becomes much narrower when the discussion turns to the Kenyan context. Three gaps have emerged consistently across the review. First, most African studies examine churches where generational curse teaching and deliverance practices are already part of congregational life. Less attention has been given to churches that do not officially teach generational curses, yet whose members continue to hold these beliefs. A Second gap that has emerged is that there is little scholarship available that examines how African cosmology,

Biblical interpretation, and pastoral care interact within a Kenyan evangelical congregation, particularly one that is urban, educated, and theologically conservative, such as Nairobi Chapel Ngong Road. A third gap is that the literature offers, on one hand, a theological critique of generational curse beliefs, but rarely does it examine how these beliefs are developed and sustained within the life of an evangelical congregation. This has resulted in explaining why the paradox of being saved but bound should not exist, but leaves largely unanswered why it continues to persist.

This study addresses these gaps through a qualitative phenomenological investigation of thirty-three adult, ministry-active congregants at Nairobi Chapel Ngong Road. Rather than asking whether the doctrine of salvation is sufficient, the study asks why believers who affirm that doctrine continue to interpret recurring struggles through the lens of generational curses. In doing so, the study shifts the discussion from a theological explanation to a congregational experience, showing how orthodox doctrinal confession and a functionally diminished understanding of salvation can exist side by side within the same believer. By examining this paradox within a church that neither teaches the doctrine of generational curses, the study contributes empirical evidence to a question the existing literature has largely left unexplored.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological design. Merriam and Tisdell define qualitative research as being “interested in understanding how

people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 16). A phenomenological design was chosen rather than another qualitative approach, because generational curse beliefs are shaped by this kind of interpretative process where congregants read life’s suffering through a spiritual lens rather than a natural one. Other approaches such as ethnography would have focused on the congregants’ shared culture, while grounded theory would have aimed at building a new theory. The phenomenological approach let the study stay close to how individual participants described, interpreted, and made sense of the phenomenon of being ‘saved but bound’ in their own words, without the researcher imposing a prior theoretical outlook on their experiences.

Data were collected from thirty-three adult, ministry-active congregants of Nairobi Chapel Ngong Road. They were selected through purposive sampling and supplemented by snowball sampling. Participants were drawn from the congregation’s Ecclesia groups and a school of ministry cohort, on the criterion that active involvement in these discipleship spaces made congregants more likely to have encountered, discussed, or wrestled with generational curse beliefs within the church’s own community life. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to intentionally select participants most relevant to the research questions, while snowball sampling allowed existing participants to recruit others with similar characteristics.

This was particularly where individuals were otherwise hesitant to engage on a subject this personal. The original design anticipated a sample of twenty to twenty-five participants; however, this expanded to thirty-three once questionnaires were included, a decision made during fieldwork after some potential participants indicated willingness to share their experiences only in written form. One further adjustment arose when the church’s pastoral team, having been approached for participation, largely declined to take part. One pastor agreed to contribute, but only through an anonymous written questionnaire, and in keeping with that condition, no

identifying detail is disclosed about this respondent. Female participants were the majority, while male reluctance to engage was noted as a significant contextual observation warranting further investigation beyond the scope of this study.

Three data collection methods were used, which included semi-structured individual interviews conducted with six participants, where an interview guide was used, organised around the study’s research questions. This allowed space for participants to elaborate on their experiences beyond the guide’s prompts where their experiences called for it. Focus group discussions were held with twenty participants across three existing groups, Egroup-Q (six members), Egroup-Ex (nine members), and the school of ministry’s Knowing the Holy Spirit cohort (five members). These groups were selected because they were already meeting regularly, which allowed the discussions to draw on an existing level of trust among members.

Written questionnaires, which were structured around the same four themes as the interview guide and composed of open-ended questions, were completed by seven participants, including the one anonymous pastoral respondent. All seven distributed questionnaires were returned.

The researcher solely facilitated all interviews and focus group discussions. Access to congregants was arranged through Nairobi Chapel Ngong Road’s leadership, from whom permission was sought and granted prior to the recruitment of participants. Confidentiality with these gatekeepers was maintained by sharing only the study’s general purpose and consent procedures rather than the participants’ individual responses. All transcripts and questionnaire responses were coded in Atlas.ti 26, generating eighty-four codes across the full data set. The researcher clustered data by their similarity across the transcripts, working from what participants across different interviews and groups actually said, before assigning themes. Atlas.ti’s automated code suggestions were treated as a starting point and not the final decision maker.

Suggested codes by Atlas.ti were retained only where they accurately reflected participants' own language and meaning, and they were otherwise revised or replaced with codes generated directly from the data. Coding was conducted by a single researcher with credibility maintained through a documented audit trail of working notes, kept throughout the analysis process, recording how codes were clustered into themes and why. These eight-four codes were reviewed, clustered, and organised into fourteen themes distributed across the four research questions, following Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis framework (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Ethical approval for this study was granted by Africa International University Ethics Board, prior to commencement of the data collection process. All participants gave informed consent; they were assured of confidentiality and their freedom to withdraw at any stage. They were also offered pastoral referral should the discussion of generational curses raise emotional distress. Confidentiality was maintained through the consistent use of pseudonyms, applied to each participant across every transcript, so that no participant's real identity appears in the data set or in this article. Recordings and transcripts were stored on a password-protected cloud drive accessible only to the researcher, in keeping with an assurance given to participants that all recordings would be deleted once the research process is complete. The study's primary limitation is that its findings reflect the dynamics of one specific congregation and cannot be generalised to the broader Kenyan or African evangelical context without further comparative research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Cultural, Historical, and Experiential Factors

Four themes emerged under the first research question. The first theme is the African cosmological worldview that functions as the primary interpretive lens for the congregants. Participants consistently assumed the operation of unseen forces behind everyday events. Anne stated that:

Life is not just about the physical, and our relationship with others can be affected by things you don't see." Another participant, Keturah, elaborated and said, "by the time we are seeing things happening in the physical, they've already happened in the spiritual realm... what we are seeing is a manifestation of something that has already happened in the spiritual.

Kali described generational curses as operating through spiritual altars, where she said it is "*like having a different altar in the family*". Her belief is a distinctly ATR conceptual category which she has imported into the Christian context without feeling any tension.

The second theme is lived experience of recurring negative family patterns which supplies confirmatory evidence of generational curses as the data consistently shows. Courage identified repetition as the defining marker, stating that "*what makes them [negative family patterns] a curse is the repetitiveness...the same pattern.*" Similarly, Neema connected her repeated alcohol dependency to her father's introduction of her to drinking as a child yet interpreted this as a generational curse rather than a learned behaviour. Participant Four described "*a clear occurrence of accusation and financial struggle at a certain age and never recovering after*" across three generations as evidence of a generational curse being active in his family. The interpretive movement was similar and consistent across the different participants. They would describe an observed pattern, then would make a diagnosis of its repetitiveness as the explanation for a generational curse.

A third theme is the external religious authorities who provided the scriptural grounding that gave these beliefs their theological legitimacy. Participants named specific religious figures who shaped their understanding of generational curses, among them Joshua Selman, the late T.B. Joshua, Harrison Ng'ang'a, Derek Prince, Kenneth Hagin,

and Pastor Moses Wanyonyi of Deliverance Church. These religious figures were often encountered through the digital space, as Zawadi's account illustrates. She described how digital algorithms accelerated exposure to the generational curse teachings, specifically saying, "now the algorithm is doing its job, you listen to one pastor then they tell you to do this, then you go to the next pastor." The data revealed that once a believer enters the ecosystem of generational curse content online, algorithmic reinforcement of the digital space deepens their exposure to the teaching.

The theme of institutional silence was also identified as a function that sustained generational curse beliefs within the Nairobi chapel congregation. The sole pastor who participated in the research said:

I don't think we've done a teaching on the pulpit on the same for the period I've been there. Unfortunately, some pastors believe in generational curses too and that hinders efforts of dealing with the subject collectively as a church.

This disclosure revealed not merely silence but a divided pastoral team on this doctrinal issue, hindering a coherent institutional response, and leaving congregants without guidance on the issue from their own church.

Affirming Salvation While Feeling Bound

Three themes emerged from the data under research question two, with the central finding being what this study terms a two-tier soteriology, where salvation is deemed to address only the eternal dimension, while generational curses belong to a separate, earthly, family-level category that salvation does not reach. Anne articulated this explicitly by stating that:

Salvation is your relationship with God... you can be saved and your salvation puts you in a right relationship with God. Then you need to go further and seek deliverance from this, [generational

curse]. There are other things you need to do. It is not [salvation], a cure of your spiritual battles." Mikel also agreed by stating that, "as a born-again Christian I am spiritually redeemed from curses. However, family patterns, habits and consequences can still influence my life until they are intentionally addressed.

This two-tier logic categorising the scope of salvation and what is left for the believer to do was consistent across the different participants, who held the belief that Christ handles the vertical relationship with God, while the believer must handle the horizontal issue involving the curse inheritance dimension.

Ongoing suffering appeared to erode confidence in the sufficiency of salvation. For instance, Kali asked directly, "if salvation covers generational curses, why are they still there?" Kali's question exposes an interpretive logic in which experiential evidence functions as the standard against which doctrinal beliefs are established. The implied understanding by this respondent is that salvation's sufficiency should be empirically verifiable through the cessation of suffering. That this understanding was common among participants points to an epistemological problem. For many of them, lived experience had displaced Scripture as the primary arbiter of theological truth. The persistence of misfortune was not only a pastoral concern, but also functioned as an exegetical tool, the lens through which the limits of salvation were understood.

The data also pointed to a transactional dimension in how participants understood their experiences. Zawadi described two years of intensive spiritual warfare prayers that would go something like this:

Yes, go for a fast, I do. Call down fire from heaven, break this generational things, I did that for so long.... I've prayed, I've fasted, now I don't know what else I can do.

The logical reasoning of her account reveals that she operated on the premise that spiritual effort, applied with sufficient intensity, obligated and guaranteed a divine response. Her final words, *"I don't know what else I can do,"* are the language of a transaction, not the language of a person in a relationship with God. The exhaustion she confessed she felt is the logical endpoint to the theology of generational curse beliefs.

Neema's self-accusation makes the understanding of curses even clearer. She says that *"many are the times I keep questioning Him, what is that very bad thing that I did that God you are not forgiving me for it?"* Her reasoning follows a retributive logic that if suffering persists, therefore God has not forgiven something, therefore she must have done something terrible to warrant it. The assumption beneath this has to do with her understanding of forgiveness, where she sees it as no longer a completed act, but a conditional state measured by conduct and detectable through circumstances.

The pastor described what this pattern is accurately as *"God is not viewed in a relational way but in a transactional manner"*. This study argues that this is a worldview tension within which unanswered prayer becomes a breach of contract and salvation becomes an outcome that must be continuously secured through ritual compliance rather than an accomplished reality received by faith. That the pastor could identify this distortion while the congregants lived inside it points to a telling distance between what was taught and what was actually believed and lived, and one that this study's findings expose.

Soteriological Implications

Three themes emerged regarding how generational curse beliefs challenge Biblical soteriology.

First, there is scriptural reinterpretation as evidenced by Tamara's response to Lamentations 5:7. She read the text and immediately exclaimed: *"exactly! My father got a child out of wedlock...see me now, having to raise a child out of wedlock alone."* Tamara did not come to the text asking what it

meant, but she came to it and found what she already believed confirmed. Participant three's handling of 2 Corinthians 5:17 operated by the same logic in reverse, arguing that, *"the old is the old spirit man; it has nothing to do with consequences of sins in families."* Where Tamara expanded her frustration into a doctrinal principle, participant three narrowed an apostolic declaration to protect an existing belief from its implications. In both moves, Scripture was being managed rather than heard, and the believer assumed interpretive authority over the text rather than submitting to the text as authority over the believer.

The second theme that emerged as revealed by the data was a functionally diminished Christology. Keturah's analogy shows that salvation had provided the house with a new owner, but the re-wiring had not been done. Her rationale implied that while Christ was the beginning of freedom, He was not its completion. Her analogy assigns the remaining work to the believer, which means that Christ's work becomes the pre-requisite for freedom rather than its substance. The consequence of this analogy was identified by the pastor when he said that *"the belief itself points to Christ not being enough for us. Congregants will therefore end up holding onto Christ loosely,"* and this raises a theological concern. When salvation is understood as initiatory rather than a complete work, Christ becomes the door through which one enters a process rather than the person in whom the work is finished.

The third theme is the displacement of grace by works and ritual performance. Participant two stated that Jesus had taken away her sins but that she must still pray for generational curses to be lifted. Likewise, participant three stated that, *"it requires additional work; it has to be claimed."* While participants are adding works to grace, it is apparent that they are doing so unaware of the contradiction. Participant four pointed to this contradiction when he stated that, *"He paid it all and freed me from bondage,"* but then follows this up by offering a prescribed sequence when he says, *"repent, speak to the curse, break it using scripture."* What this participant declares and the procedure he offers sit

side by side without a resolution. The pastor identified the core issue in this tension and said:

Some tend to hold Christianity as another option of dealing with this other belief system. In other words, being in Christ is not enough by itself; you have to deploy an extra weapon as an individual.

Pastoral Strategies

The most consistent finding was the perceived inadequacy of current pastoral engagement. For instance, Courage noted that questions on generational curses “*tend to be redirected to statements like ‘God is powerful’ rather than fully engaging the question. So it can feel like avoidance.*” This frustration by Courage suggests the question is being treated as too ‘dangerous’ to engage directly. Similarly, one school of ministry participant’s account confirmed that she was told by a fellow congregant, “*you know, Nairobi Chapel will not address those things you are struggling with, just come to City Lighters.*” These revelations point to a kind of pastoral abandonment where the questions are acknowledged, but congregants are left to resolve the tension privately, leading to precisely the condition in which distorted beliefs are formed.

Another participant, DeeGee, called for institutional clarity, drawing a comparison to the congregation’s already existing pattern when she called for the church to state its position on the issue of generational curses. She said:

You see like the way the church keeps announcing over and over their position on child baptism, it’s very clear... they also announce their position on divorce... So I think this first and foremost should come out clearly and be reinforced a couple of times, what is actually the church’s position.

The comparison points to the absence of clarity on generational curses, possibly exposing a priority

problem or a lack of awareness on the pressing issues congregants are dealing with. The resultant outcome where the institution does not speak on issues affecting the congregants’ spiritual well-being is a distorted theology, a wrong view of Biblical soteriology and worse still, a diminished Christology. What congregants are asking for is not agreement with the doctrine of generational curses, but clarity and a clearly stated church position, followed by teaching that engages what scripture actually says in light of their lived realities.

Mind renewal emerged as the primary suggestion provided by most participants, as the most viable pastoral-theological framework. K, describing her own freedom, said:

To be honest, it’s just a renewal of the mind... the moment my mind changed to see this thing is not an actual demon, it stopped having power over me... there was no magic, there was no special prayer, I didn’t go to any pastor to lay their hands on me.

Her testimony locates transformation in theological reorientation rather than a ritual performance, directly contradicting the transactional logic documented in the previous themes. Tamara also recommended structuring sermons around the “*renewal of the mind,*” and Participant Five called for an approach that addresses “*both the scriptural understanding and the personal experiences behind the question on generational curses.*”

Discussion

The Persistence of Generational Curse Beliefs in an Evangelical Congregation

The central finding, that congregants simultaneously affirm Biblical salvation and maintain belief in generational curses, confirms what the literature anticipated but could not empirically demonstrate. Ferdinando’s argument that syncretism occurs at the worldview level comes out clearly since participants did not describe a conscious blending of African traditional categories and Christian categories.

Instead, they described two frameworks operating side by side in their thinking, each functioning without tension or contradiction.

The data revealed that the ATR cosmological framework does not disappear at conversion; rather, it retreats inward and continues to govern how lived experiences are interpreted. The data adds a more precise account of how this coexistence is maintained. For instance, salvation was assigned to one domain of eternal life, forgiveness of sins, and a relationship with God, while generational curses occupied another domain, that is, earthly, family-level, and comprising inherited negative afflictions. This directly contradicts Banda's argument that God does not birth people only to leave them to navigate spiritual struggles on their own. Biblical soteriology as stated by Banda maintains that the believer is wholly reconstituted in Christ, not partly bound and partly free. The problem among these congregants is not a failure of understanding, but that their view of salvation does not address the problem of generational curses.

African Cosmology as the Primary Interpretive Lens

The literature established that the ATR worldview provides the framework within which generational curse beliefs become plausible. The data confirms this, and also points out a significant clarification. Participants did not first encounter a doctrine of generational curses and then adopt it; rather, they encountered recurring suffering and interpreted it through a cosmological lens that was already in place. The movement from an observed negative pattern to a spiritual diagnosis was consistent and largely not reasoned but was assumed. This confirms Turaki's observation that the African conviction that all of life is spiritual does not disappear when one becomes a Christian. This conviction continues to shape the categories through which the Christian experience is processed.

The literature fails to sufficiently account for how lived experience functions as confirmatory evidence within that framework, with repetition serving as the decisive marker. For instance, Courage precisely

captured this logic by observing that "*what makes them [negative experiences] a curse is their repetitiveness.*" The pattern would be observed, then the cosmological framework would supply the diagnosis, and the diagnosis became self-confirming with each subsequent misfortune validating the prior interpretation. This way of interpreting lived experiences creates a closed hermeneutical loop in which suffering produces the very conclusion that makes suffering interpretable. Scripture enters this loop as a confirmation tool rather than a corrective one, which is why Tamara could read Lamentations 5:7 and immediately exclaim, "*Exactly! My father got a child out of wedlock see me now..... having to raise a child out of wedlock, alone.*" Instead of the text challenging her assumptions, she used her existing cosmological framework to dictate the meaning of the text.

Two-Tier Soteriology

The most theologically significant finding is what this study terms a distorted lived soteriology, where orthodox doctrinal confession coexists with a functionally diminished salvific understanding. This happens without the believer recognising any contradiction. The two-tier soteriology participants operated was not a consciously held theological position. It was a functional arrangement that emerged from the experiences of the congregants. The understanding by the participants is that Christ addresses the vertical and eternal dimension of their lives, while the horizontal, inherited dimension remains the believer's problem to solve. What makes this arrangement durable is that it holds a Biblical understanding of salvation at the surface level, while undermining it in practice.

The data revealed how participants could affirm 2 Corinthians 5:17 and simultaneously restrict its scope, not because they reasoned their way to that restriction, but because it resolved the tension between what they confessed and what they experienced. Existing scholarship identifies the doctrinal problem but does not explain why theologically informed believers in an evangelical congregation maintain generational curse beliefs despite holding an orthodox understanding of

Biblical soteriology. The data provides the theological answer that when suffering persists, it functions as a form of exegesis, with the limits of salvation inferred from whatever suffering has apparently left unresolved. Kali's question "*if salvation covers generational curses, why are they still there?*" is born not out of ignorance, but out of an interpretive logic where experiential evidence serves as the standard against which doctrinal claims are evaluated. The two-tier soteriology does not merely supply an alternative theology; it supplies an alternative epistemology, one in which lived reality adjudicates truth instead of Scripture deciding what is true.

Diminished Christology

The findings confirm and deepen what the literature establishes about the Christological consequences of generational curse beliefs. Aulen's Christus Victor motif presupposes exactly what the data shows participants lack: a conviction that Christ's victory is both decisive and comprehensive. Keturah's analogy, where she pointed to salvation as a new owner who has not completed the rewiring, locates the incompleteness of freedom not in the believer's sanctification but in the scope of Christ's work itself. This is not a Christus Victor deficiency but a Christus Victor inversion where Christ has won a partial victory, and the remaining work falls on the hands of the believer.

This inversion finds its clearest illustration in participant four's statement that "*He paid it all and freed me from bondage,*" followed immediately by a prescribed sequence for obtaining complete freedom that included repentance, declaration of victory, and breaking of curses. Here, the declaration and the ritual meant to enact it sit side by side without resolution, where the work of Christ is affirmed in principle but restricted in scope. The body of literature fails to account for this specific configuration, in which the work of Christ is sidelined not through rejecting the gospel but by severely restricting its scope.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion: This study investigated how thirty-three participants of the Nairobi Chapel Ngong Road simultaneously maintain a confession of Biblical soteriology while functionally acting as though it is incomplete. The data indicate that this paradox does not stem from hypocrisy or ignorance, but from a mental compartmentalisation where believers organise opposing theological systems into separate domains of operation to avoid conflict. As a result, beliefs regarding salvation and generational curses coexist independently, allowing the contradiction to persist unrecognised by believers who remain committed to their faith. This compartmentalised framework is sustained by factors such as a cosmological worldview that combines the spiritual and physical domains, reinforced by the lived experiences of suffering, and supplied with theological vocabulary by external religious influencers.

The phenomenon is also left unaddressed by the local church, and together, these elements form a system that sustains this paradox among the congregants. As a result, this dynamic produces a distorted lived soteriology, a condition wherein a divergence exists between a believer's professed theology of salvation and their operational theology. In this framework, salvation is not explicitly rejected, but its operational scope is restricted. Likewise, Christ's authority is not denied, but it is functionally subordinated.

The empirical evidence from Keturah's analogy of incomplete ownership, Participant Four's simultaneous reliance on declaration and procedural rituals, Neema's retributive framework, and Kali's interpretation of suffering demonstrates symptoms of a functionally reduced understanding of Biblical soteriology.

Therefore, the necessary pastoral and institutional response is not a matter of changing church programs, but of reshaping how people think. The data exposes a critical disconnect between what the congregants mentally believe and the frameworks that actually govern how they interpret their lived

experiences. For example, K's breakthrough came through an interpretive reorientation where Scripture began to judge her experience, rather than her experience judging Scripture. This shift in how a believer processes reality must be the primary goal of pastoral response, including expository preaching and discipleship.

Recommendations: This study contributes an empirical account of how generational curse beliefs persist even within a congregation whose official doctrine does not teach them. In doing so, it identifies the specific mechanism and mental compartmentalisation by which orthodox confession and lived bondage coexist without believers perceiving the contradiction. The recommendations below are drawn directly from this study's findings and are addressed to Nairobi Chapel Ngong Road specifically, though they may be of use to other comparable urban evangelical congregations.

Congregants consistently expressed their desire for the church to state its position clearly on generational curses, just as it has done on subjects like divorce and remarriage. Left unaddressed, this silence does not create neutrality, but it creates a doctrinal vacuum. Believers do not stop forming convictions about generational curses simply because the pulpit stays quiet; instead, they turn to family tradition, cultural assumptions, or fear-driven deliverance ministries for answers the church has not given.

The first recommendation, therefore, is that Nairobi Chapel Ngong Road develop clear and sustained expositional teaching on the completeness of salvation, addressed specifically to what Christ's work accomplishes in relation to generational curses.

Secondly, in response to the finding that congregants affirm salvation doctrinally while allowing

generational curse beliefs to govern their response in times of suffering, the study recommends pastoral frameworks that move beyond doctrinal correction toward helping congregants appropriate Biblical truth on salvation, as the lens through which they interpret suffering, rather than allowing suffering to interpret the limits of salvation.

A further recommendation concerns the pastoral team itself, which was found to be doctrinally divided on the subject of generational curses. The study recommends the team pursue theological alignment on this specific phenomenon. At the same time, pastoral care strategies must be equipped to engage congregants fear and suffering using the Christus Victor motif, which speaks directly to the African cosmological conviction that spiritual forces are real without reinforcing the generational curse logic that leaves believers feeling responsible for securing their own freedom.

A fourth recommendation concerns the worldview level at which generational curse beliefs actually operate, which the study found to be the African cosmological framework functioning as the congregants' interpretive lens for their lived experiences. The study recommends that pulpit teaching, Egroup discipleship, and pastoral care be deliberately structured to target this level, not merely correcting doctrinal error, but focusing on forming a Biblical epistemology in its place. At the same time, discipleship and teaching approaches must be intentionally geared towards reaching a renewal of the mind that relocates the very framework believers use to interpret their circumstances. This is so that Scripture can become the lens through which congregants read their suffering, rather than their suffering continuing to be the lens through which they read the Scriptures.

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